



# Solidarity

For social ownership of the banks and industry

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## WITH GREECE AGAINST THE BANKS



**SEE PAGES 6-7**



## 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!

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# Blow to fracking

By Paul Vernadsky

**The UK's flailing fracking industry was dealt another blow this week, after Lancashire Council rejected a bid to resume drilling operations in the county.**

On Monday 29 June, the council denied permission to shale gas firm Cuadrilla to frack at two sites between Preston and Blackpool after a robust campaign by local people and environmentalists.

The council opposed the application on the grounds that it would "lead to the industrialisation of the countryside and adversely affect the landscape character".

The result was something of a surprise, as councillors had come under enormous pressure from the industry, with veiled threats of massive legal action if they opposed the planning application.

If they received the go ahead, it would have been the UK's first fracking oper-

ation in four years, since the process was suspended in 2011.

The decision — the first of a number of planning applications — suggests that the tide is turning against dirty shale gas, which would have enormous consequences for carbon emissions if the industry gets the go ahead in the UK and across Europe. France, Bulgaria and the Netherlands currently have a moratorium on fracking.

The Scottish government also has a moratorium and the Welsh assembly may do the same. Although fracking is technically legal in Germany, protests have forced authorities to impose stiff controls. Governments in Denmark, Poland and the UK are actively backing the fracking industry.

The industry could face yet another setback, as the Information Commissioner has ruled that a heavily-redacted government report from 2014 on the impacts of fracking on house prices, businesses and services in rural areas must be pub-



**Anti-fracking campaigners celebrate after the decision by Lancashire county council**

lished in full.

The Lancashire decision is a boost for local anti-fracking groups and a big step forward for climate campaigners. However, the Westminster government is unlikely to walk away from the industry.

It has already begun to make the application process easier for the industry, as well as giving it political support (sadly now joined by the GMB leadership). The government has announced it will cut subsi-

dies to onshore wind, which will probably ruin the wind industry in the UK.

**Therefore it is vital for socialists and trade union activists join the anti-fracking campaign and argue for a working class-based orientation.**

**Airports Commission recommends third runway at Heathrow**  
[bit.ly/1C2xYdq](http://bit.ly/1C2xYdq)

## Lewisham Academies: "Don't give up fighting"

**Luke Morgans, a student at Hilly Fields school who was involved in the successful anti-academies campaign in Lewisham, spoke to *Solidarity*.**

**I wasn't one of the very first students to be involved. I got involved when we started having demonstrations in February and March.**

I was already broadly left-wing, but I hadn't done anything with my politics.

It was separate from the workers' campaign. Staff were told they weren't allowed to talk to us about it. We knew our teachers were sympathetic, but they couldn't go on our protests. We linked up at the community protests on some Saturdays and on strike days. The workers' action had a good effect on the student campaign. It gave us a sense of momentum and solidarity.

We met students from other schools on the strike days and protests. Some students from Sedgemoor were in touch. We didn't manage to establish real links with Ladywell Fields. Our main links were with Prendergast Vale, where

there was a very active campaign and where one of the leading student activists is based. We did some coordinated lunchtime protests with them.

I think Hilly Fields took a leading role because we are the only one of the schools with a sixth form. In fact, the number of sixth formers involved wasn't massive — we had much bigger numbers from lower years. But the sixth formers were important in giving people a lead and some confidence.

### MARCH

**We had a student march between the two sites of Hilly Fields, which are near each other.**

At the Vale they had a lunchtime march through the school corridors! That's what led to people being threatened with suspensions, but the action went ahead and the suspensions were withdrawn. We organised student ballots at both schools, and at both it was 97 percent against academisation!

There was a protest at Leathersellers, which is the "charity" owned by really rich people that partly runs our schools. That was or-

ganised by the unions, but a lot of students went along. Students also went to the workers' pickets lines on strike days, although smaller numbers.

Hardly anyone was in favour of academies, but lots of people said you can't do anything, there's big money involved, stuff like that. Once we had our second Hilly Fields protest, which was maybe 250 out of 800 students, people were impressed and became less sceptical that we might win.

We argued with people that "we've got to try". If we don't do anything, we definitely won't stop it. If we fight we might win and if we lose at least we've held our heads up.

Before the election, we thought we'd have a much better chance with a Labour government; Vicki Foxcroft [MP for Lewisham Deptford] has supported us and she said she'd take it up with a Labour education minister. When the Tories won, we mostly thought that was that, we had no chance. I'd say the lesson is, don't give up. Even if when something seems like a lost cause, it isn't necessarily.

I think they'll come back for us, particularly with the Tories urging them, but probably not next year. They'll want to let the dust settle. They'll probably try again in two or three years' time. There'll be a fight but it will be a hard fight, because academies are very much the national trend.

I'm sure some of the students involved in the campaign will continue to be politically active. Some are involved in climate change campaigns; some went on the anti-austerity demo on 20 June. A lot of the leading people are leaving school, but I'm sure some will be activists when they get to university. Perhaps some of the younger students will find ways to stay active too, and some of them will still be around if academisation comes back.

I think most of those involved were already left-wing but the experience of this struggle has made things sharper and more solid. I'm definitely leaning towards socialism.

**If you're involved in a fight, keep fighting. If you're thinking about organising, give it a go. Good luck to you.**



# Bob Carnegie wins!

**By Shane Bentley (MUA member, Sydney)**

Workers' Liberty supporter Bob Carnegie has been elected to the Queensland Branch Secretary position of the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) in this year's Quadrennial elections. Bob assumes office for a four year term on 1 July.

Bob was one of four challengers for the position vacated by retiring incumbent Mick Carr. Bob was defeated at the last MUA Quadrennial elections of 2011 by Carr by only two votes (504 to 506).

This time around, Bob won easily with a margin of fifty votes. The final tally was Bob with 315 votes, former Queensland Deputy Secretary Trevor Munday with 265 votes, seafarer Brian Gallagher with 170 votes, and "wharfie" (docker) Steve Cumberlidge with 116 votes.

Bob's running mate Paul Petersen, who ran for the Queensland Assistant Branch Secretary spot, was not so fortunate. Paul, an outspoken delegate who was sacked by stevedoring company Patrick in 2009, was beaten by Paul Gallagher (446 votes to 319) with the other challenger Mark Maguire running a distant third.

The Queensland Assistant Branch Secretary position was easily won by current MUA Gladstone organiser Jason Miners, who beat his opponent Mark Keech by 588 votes to 277.

Bob started his campaign early on March 7, just one

day after nominations had opened, with visits to work-sites in the north of Queensland. Bob's campaign saw him make several visits to numerous workplaces dotted up and down Queensland's 2,000 km (1,250 mile) long coastline.

Bob also published a four-page newsletter which was sent to every MUA member in Queensland. The newsletter outlined his policies for turning the MUA Queensland Branch into a genuine rank-and-file organisation.

## POLICIES

**Policies included more regular visits to job sites by elected officials.**

Full and effective defence of any MUA delegate faced with the sack; an unwavering fight against casualisation; pushing for a 30-hour week with no loss in pay in the stevedoring sector (which is facing massive job losses due to automation); and genuine union democracy, including the rotation of elected officials so that they serve no more than two four-year terms in the same position.

Bob's sense of working class internationalism saw him interrupt his election campaign to take part in a speaking tour of Britain. Bob spoke in mid-May at over a dozen public meetings and union conferences, including national conferences of the Fire Brigades Union and the Public and Commercial Services Union, along with numerous public meetings with Dave Smith from the Black-list Support Group.

The employers have al-

## Grounded in the working class

**By Bob Carnegie**

**Today, Wednesday 1 July, sees me take up office as the Secretary of Maritime Union of Australia Queensland Branch.**

My campaign relied on a strong left-wing campaign platform, a 4 page campaign leaflet, a running partner of great integrity in Paul Petersen, and my long time reputation as a fighter for working people's rights in my home state of Queensland.

I was also fortunate that my political opponents could not contain their desire for office and fielded three candidates against me. The Stalinists could not organise their forces against a single Trotskyist. Ironical don't you think?

On Friday 26 June at the union's branch committee I explained that for me, in my life, the single greatest political influence comes from the man I consider the most outstanding of the 20th Century; out-

standing political organiser, thinker and revolutionary, military genius, literary critic, and journalist to name just a few of his achievements... I am of course talking of Leon Trotsky.

I would like to thank many people but in particular my partner Melissa, a brilliant and beautiful woman who has been with me through some very tough times. Shane Bentley and Lucy Honey for all their work and support.

Last of all I want to thank Workers' Liberty's Martin Thomas. Over the past dozen years Martin has had an enormous influence on my life.

So as I enter my first day in office I will do my very best for MUA members and the working class movement.

**I will try to stay grounded in the working class revolutionary movement and strive against opportunism and the dreaded "Big Headitis" many trade union officials fall prey to.**

ready taken note of Bob's victory. "Workforce Daily", an employers' news service from the Thomson Reuters group, has already spoken to Bob. Its 25 June edition refers to Bob as coming from a "lost time of union working-class militancy" and a "very solid revolu-

tionary socialist background" that he is proud of.

**The article concluded by saying that Bob believes that "society should be based on human need not human greed".**

• [bob4muaqld.org](mailto:bob4muaqld.org)  
• [www.facebook.com/bob4muaqld](https://www.facebook.com/bob4muaqld)

## New centres of capital

**By Rhodri Evans**

**As of 2014, "developing Asia" — China, Singapore, South Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, and other countries — became a bigger exporter of foreign direct investment than North America (the US and Canada) or the whole of Europe.**

The United Nations agency which monitors such things, UNCTAD, reports that "developing economies" produced 36% of all foreign direct investment in 2014, up from less than 10% as recently as 2003 (UNCTAD World Investment Report 2015).

The shift is not a blip, or a sudden and temporary development due to economic difficulties in the USA and Europe. It is the latest step in a trend which, with ups and downs, has been proceeding for a long time.

As long ago as 1982, the USA became a net importer of capital. The inflows which outpaced its outflows were and are mainly financial investments, such things as oil-exporting countries and China buying US government bonds (IOUs).

The USA still has a bigger outflow of foreign direct investment (US capitalists setting up, or buying shares in, or expanding their stake in, businesses operating abroad) than inflow (non-US capitalists setting up, buying up, etc. businesses operating in the USA). And it still has a much bigger stock of foreign direct investment than any other country.

But the balance is shift-

ing. Some old-established centres for export of capital now have a bigger flow of foreign-based capital buying up or setting up businesses in their countries than of their own capital buying up or setting up businesses abroad. The UK is an example. Adding up the years 2012-4, so is the European Union as a whole, to a smaller degree.

In 2014, however, China (including Hong Kong) start to send out more foreign direct investment than it received.

Other countries once reckoned "peripheral" in the world economy which have now become big centres of net outflows of foreign direct investment are South Korea, Taiwan, Chile, Kuwait, and Russia.

Lenin's famous account of imperialism, written in 1916, is often said (not quite accurately) to have described export of capital as the main mechanism of imperialism. It was a broad-brush fact of the world in 1916 that capital was exported, in increasing quantities, mostly from the richer countries of Europe and the USA, and a sizeable chunk (though not most) of it to colonies and semi-colonies.

The broad-brush facts are now very different. We do not, as some say, now have a "flat world". There are huge inequalities.

**But many countries are now autonomous centres of capital, and not just outposts of capital originating from and controlled from the older industrial countries.**

# Mobilising for a right to strike!

**By Ira Berkovic**

**Both RMT and ASLEF's tube strike ballots (see page 11) met the arbitrary and hypocritical thresholds the Tories plan to impose: both had turnouts of over 50%, and both had majorities of more than 40% of all those eligible to vote.**

It is a superb symbolic and rhetorical victory for the RMT, against whom much of the right-wing ire about "disruptive" strikes is

focused, that their highest-profile ballots since the new laws were proposed, on Network Rail and now London Underground, have cleared the Tories' thresholds. It gives an immense democratic mandate to the LU strikes, even on the Tories' terms.

But justifiable pride at having returned such results should not get in the way of a militant campaign to stop the imposition of new laws. RMT's AGM discussed, and passed unanimously, several reso-

lutions (including some moved by Workers' Liberty members active in RMT branches) committing the union to work towards a real national campaign, including a demonstration, against the laws.

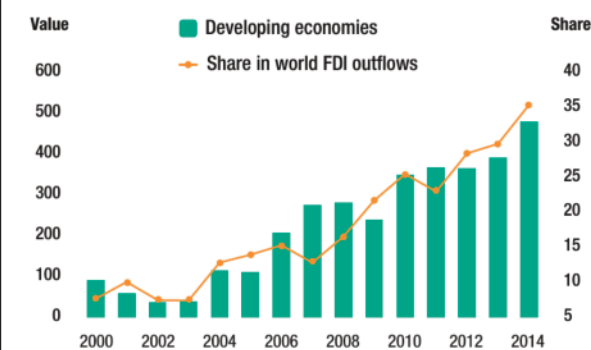
**Activists in branches across unions, including Lambeth Unison, DWP East London PCS, and Unite NW/0152M (University of Liverpool), with others passing motions this week, have formed a "Right To Strike" mobilis-**



**ing committee to help co-ordinate grassroots activity.**

• More information: [bit.ly/RighttoStrike](http://bit.ly/RighttoStrike)

**Developing economies: FDI outflows and their share in total world outflows, 2000-2014**  
(Billions of dollars and per cent)



Source: UNCTAD, FDI/MNE database ([www.unctad.org/fdistatistics](http://www.unctad.org/fdistatistics)).  
Note: Excludes Caribbean offshore financial centres.



# For Corbyn, and for different politics

The Left  
by Colin Foster



**“It is the duty of the activists within the Labour Party and Socialist Campaign for Labour Victory to fight alongside the public sector workers”, wrote Jeremy Corbyn during the “Winter of Discontent”, the great wave of public sector workers’ strikes towards the end of the 1974-9 Labour government.**

Corbyn is now the left candidate for leader of the Labour Party. Back in 1979 he was a young union official and a left-wing Labour councillor in Haringey, north London.

He was writing in the first regular monthly issue of *Socialist Organiser*. The core people in the production and promotion of *Socialist Organiser* were the forerunners of today’s *Solidarity* and *Workers’ Liberty*.

We produced it with a broad coalition of Labour left-wingers and with much debate in its pages. *Socialist Organiser* was also a campaigning paper. Its broad coalition subscribed to much clearer and more radical ideas than the general “broad left” of the labour movement, which in those days was dominated by the Communist Party and its influence. It called for “working-class action to raze the capitalist system down to its foundations, and to put a working-class socialist system in its place... to make the decisive sectors of industry social property, under workers’ control”.

## CONFRONTATION

**The coalition around *Socialist Organiser* broke up in 1980 over choices for left-Labour councils (then numerous) facing Thatcher’s Tory government.**

We argued for them to use the town halls as platforms to mobilise for confrontation. Others argued for them to “gain time” by increasing rates (local property taxes) to offset cuts in central government finance.

The core rate-raisers were another group within the Socialist Organiser coalition from a Trotskyist background, then called the Chartists and previously Revolutionary Communist League. The main document in which the Chartists laid out their basis for splitting from Socialist Organiser was signed by their leading people and one other person, Jeremy Corbyn.

The Chartists went off to produce *Labour Briefing* (two rival journals of that name continue today). Corbyn was less factional about the split than the Chartists were, and remained open to working with *Socialist Organiser*. Some of his supporters may be offended by the criticisms of his politics which we will make in this article, but I would expect Corbyn himself to take them as legitimate debate.

In 1983 Corbyn became Labour MP for Islington North. He has been a consistent rebel in Parliament against the Labour

leadership. His local record of support for workers’ and community struggles, including against local Labour council administrations, is excellent.

But Jeremy Corbyn’s broader politics have changed. Today he writes regularly for the *Morning Star*, the paper linked to the Communist Party of Britain, which bills him as “a friend of the Star”.

People voting for Corbyn for Labour leader will be voting to support battles against cuts, to solidarise with immigrants, and to uphold the right to strike.

That’s good. But to build something solid out of it, we also need broader political ideas. And, there, the ideas and the spirit of the *Morning Star* will undermine us as much as in 1979.

## IDEAS

**If we don’t formulate and push our own socialist “big ideas”, then we will be held back by the influence of the “big ideas” promoted every day by the ruling class.**

Jeremy Corbyn is surely a socialist. But in his articles for the *Morning Star* he rarely or never says that. He calls for a “popular movement against cuts”. He advocates “raising taxes for the very richest, collecting tax from corporations”. But not social ownership of industry. Not expropriating the banks. Not workers’ control.

Corbyn has lauded “the great left peace campaigner Konni Zilliacus” (*Morning Star*, 9 October 2014). Zilliacus, a Labour MP 1945-50 and 1955-67, was the leader in his time of Stalinism within the Labour Party. He was an unorthodox Stalinist: he backed Tito against Stalin, and condemned the Slansky show trial in Czechoslovakia. He presented himself above all as a “left peace campaigner”. As a reviewer of a biography commented: “one can find precious little indication [in Zilliacus’s writings] of any recognition of the idea of socialism as the self-emancipation of the working class”.

Zilliacus politics were no basis to build a left, and Zilliacus politics 70 years on, minus the USSR or Tito, even less so.

When Corbyn wrote about Ed Miliband in the *Morning Star*, it was usually to praise something Miliband had just done, then to bemoan its limits. Even when asked to comment on Blair’s record, he started by saying there were two sides to it, and praising the “positive” side before bemoaning the “negative”.

Corbyn rarely uses the word “socialist”, but he has commented on Chavez’s Venezuela, Evo Morales’s Bolivia, and Castro’s Cuba as if they are, more or less, models of a future society.

That model of a future society is one to which workers in a country like Britain could never be won. Or, if they were won to it, it would be a grievous sidetrack, similar to the winning of millions of French and Italian workers after World War Two to the USSR as a model of future society.

On some issues publicly (and possibly on many privately) Corbyn is better than the *Morning Star*. He supports Tibet’s national rights, he opposed Russia’s seizure of Crimea and “Russian militarism” in Ukraine. In the *Independent* (10 June 2015) he wrote: “There are strong arguments for staying in the EU”, while making reasonable criticisms of the EU as it exists. But on international politics, mostly, he limits himself to deploring military moves by the US and its allies and appealing for peace. So, for example, he expresses “concern over human rights in Iran”, He notes the “appalling human rights record of the Syrian regime”. He opposed Hamas’s rocket attacks on Israel, and seems, though it is not clear, to support a two-states settlement in Israel/ Palestine.

The result is as with the more-or-less pro-Stalinist left of the era between the 1960s and 1989-91. Repression in the Stalinist states? Reprehensible invasions? Bad. But they would shrug sadly at those things, rather than denouncing them loudly, because, they said, to denounce might help the “cold warriors”. Never be “anti-Soviet”!

In truth socialists needed to oppose US and British imperialism, and simultaneously denounce Stalinism with vigour, and some did. The “sad shrug” approach only compromised and discredited the leftists who took that line, and increased demoralisation after 1991. We should not copy the approach with Hamas in place of the USSR.

## MIGRANTS

**Corbyn has spoken out for migrant rights. But his case is addled and warped by his repeated insistence that the only cause of migrant flows is “Western wars”.**

Eritreans are fleeing Eritrea, for example, or Syrians fleeing Syria, for other reasons. And they need our solidarity even so.

In the *Morning Star* of 30 October 2013 Corbyn criticised Cameron’s plans for celebrating the anniversary of World War One. Rightly. But on grounds whose blandness summed up the problem: Cameron ignored “the enormous anti-war movement that existed on both sides in 1914”.

There had been enormous anti-war agitation before August 1914 by the socialist labour movement. Because the agitation wasn’t sharp and clear, it collapsed like a punctured balloon within days of the outbreak of war. The “anti-war movement” was reduced to a brave few.

In face of the great bourgeois offensive against socialism of the last quarter-century, we need the spirit of those brave few: Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin, John Maclean, Karl Liebknecht, not mealy-mouthed attempts to smuggle in socialist ideas under cover of advocating no more than “peace” and respect for “enormous movements”.

**The Corbyn campaign can help us win people to that spirit, but only if we carry that spirit into it, in debate with Corbyn supporters as well as with the right wing.**

# A workerful world

**85 years ago, John Maynard Keynes wrote: “The increase of technical efficiency has been taking place faster than we can deal with the problem of labour absorption”, and predicted that that generation’s grandchildren (that is, the “baby boom” generation now in their sixties) would work only three hours a day.**

Twenty years ago Jeremy Rifkin published a book entitled “The End of Work”, and predicting “a near-workerless world”.

Keynes and Rifkin were not wrong about technical progress. The 1930s, despite the slump, saw the start of the modern chemical industry, and modern plastics. Computers came into widespread use in industry with the IBM System/360 in 1965. Small computers for individual use started to spread in the 1980s. The widespread use of the internet and the large and accelerating use of industrial robots dates from around 1995.

But our bosses are still squeezing us for more work, not sending us home early! Unemployment is high, at 5%-6% in the UK and the USA. But it’s lower than it was in the mid-70s, and indeed lower than it was in the UK and the USA in 1895. The employment rate, the measure of whether we have a workerful world, in the UK is the highest on record. We

are moving further away from a workerless world, not closer to it.

Why? Because if capital can cut costs and increase profits here, it will start new lines of enterprise there. Accumulation of capital, as Karl Marx put, means increasing the size of the proletariat. On the way, thousands and millions are thrown out of work and pauperised. Marx also railed against “the apologist [who] calls [the long-term trend for expansion of capital to bring expansion of the working class] a compensation for the misery, the sufferings, the possible death of the displaced labourers during the transition period that banishes them into the industrial reserve army!” We must and do fight the bosses on the terms and modes in which new technologies are introduced.

I disagree with John Cunningham (*Solidarity* 369) when he repeats Keynes’s or Rifkin’s predictions. I agree with most of Bruce Robinson’s article in the same issue, but I disagree about his apparent wish to exclude technologies such as automatic piloting of planes and cars.

Every technology marginalises some skills. The introduction of agriculture marginalised hunting-and-gathering skills. Printing marginalises the skills of illuminated manu-

script-copying.

I recently had a major medical operation. It was done by robot. Presumably that tends to marginalise the surgeon’s manual skills. But the robot also makes the operation safer, more reliable, easier to recover from. Some surgeons will still have manual skills, as some people are still skilled hunters or calligraphers. Others will develop new skills around guiding and improving the robots. That is fine. To want to have all traditional skills kept in general use sounds nice, but is a way to condemn us to a more drudgery-heavy, injury-heavy life and a more static, stereotype set of skills.

Most plane crashes and car crashes happen not because people fail to reach heights of moral judgement inaccessible to a robot, but because the pilot or driver is inattentive, distracted, unwell, drunk, sleepy... In the USA, 85% of all aviation deaths are in small private planes without automation, although they are account for a tiny proportion of air passengers.

**Driverless cars and autopiloted planes are an advance, not a step backwards.**

Martin Thomas, north London



# How to fight Daesh

**The killing of at least 39 people by a gunman in Sousse, Tunisia, along with the destruction of a Shia mosque in Kuwait, on Friday 26 June, may signal a shift in strategy for Daesh (ISIS).**

Until now, their declared aim was the establishment of a caliphate in Iraq-Syria. This latest development could be the start of a new global jihad. The targeting of tourists is a move away from the targeting of religious minorities and non Sunni Muslims.

The flow of foreign fighters to Daesh's capital in Raqqa, Syria, is another alarming trend. Tunisian nationals now make up the largest proportion of foreign fighters.

And Daesh will be the beneficiaries of intensifying sectarian division and conflict in area where Daesh has established itself in Iraq.

Online pictures and videos show Iraqi Shia militias, many funded by Iran, aping the brutality of Daesh. In one film a militia hang a man upside down and burns him alive. In another supposed Daesh supporters are shown being beheaded. And in yet another an alleged child supporter of the Sunni jihadists is shot.

Shia militias deny having units within Anbar province where much of the fighting between Daesh and Iraqi Government forces has taken place. But reports, including from Human Rights Watch, say that Shia groups harass Sunnis, anyone they suspect of supporting or even tolerating the presence of Daesh, long after Daesh have been driven out of the area.

## COMPETITION

**Both sides are now engaged in a vicious competition over which can commit the most terrifying atrocity, demonstrate the most brutality. Of course Daesh use Shia militia videos to recruit to their operation.**

As well as continuing fighting with Kurdish forces, Daesh are attacking members of rival Islamist groups within Syria. Online videos show 12 men being beheaded, some of whom were from Jaysh al Islam and the al Nusra Front, who make up the largest jihadist opposition to Daesh within Syria.

In Yemen where al Qaeda claim their strongest base, Daesh attacked Shia al Houthis rebel leaders in the Yemeni capital. This strategy may be aimed at pushing out al Qaeda, who have used the rebellion by the al Houthis to consolidate power in the south-east of the country, but not resorted to heavy sectarian violence.

In an interview with the *Guardian* (10 June) al Qaeda ideologues, Abu Muhammad al-Maqqisi and Abu Qatada (recently released from jail) discussed the rift with Daesh which has led to it supplanting al Qaeda as the foremost jihadist network.

Maqqisi, who remains close to Ayman al-Zawahiri Al Qaeda's leader, says Daesh were a seemingly loyal group when operating as Al Qaeda in Iraq, but the appointment of Abu Bakr al Bagdadi as their leader, following the death of founder al Zarqawi, displeased al Qaeda. Permission for al Bagdadi's elevation was not sort from Bin Laden. A later falling out between al Bagdadi's group and the Syrian al Qaeda affiliate, Jabhat al Nusra caused the final split.

Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, Daesh's spokesperson and one of their senior propagandists, has declared al Qaeda's leaders are western stooges and "misleading scholars". Maqqisi states that "Bin Laden was a star. He had special charisma" where as Zawahiri does not have the ability to be listened and obeyed, leaving him isolated and without the infrastructure of global affiliation that helped to sustain al Qaeda.

After 9/11 al Qaeda was able to gather groups across much of the Arab world as well as in Europe, Africa and South Asia, where it based itself on the Afghan/Pakistan border. Individual groups were given freedom to operate as it was believed that strategy would bring in supporters and promote the establishment of a Caliphate. The leadership would vet and select commanders to ensure they were loyal, but did not interfere in the day-to-day running of the separate organisations. Daesh's universal declaration of a Caliphate with a chosen Caliph and the call for all devout Muslims to join it,



**Abu Muhammad al-Maqqisi and Abu Qatada**

and swear allegiance to it, has completely undercut al Qaeda's methods.

Much of what Maqqisi and Qatada say shows a generational split between Daesh and its commanders and the older, more established figures in al Qaeda. Maqqisi says he wants a more "moderate" organisation, more like Hamas in Gaza then Daesh in Raqqa. Such a shift may prove popular with those appalled by Daesh brutality. But Hamas and Al Qaeda are not "acceptable" versions of Daesh; their ideology and outlook is very similar, it is only tactics which divide them.

Some of the roots of this seemingly unstoppable wave of reaction lie in what the USA did after invading Iraq in 2003. It disbanded much of the Iraqi state machine and promoted "de-Ba'athification". In the chaos and destruction which followed everyday governance collapsed. Its slow replacement by a fragile political system which depended upon the representation of ethnic identities has, in the long-run, completely failed. Although sectarian conflict waned for a few years, forces around the mosques and the Islamist factions were able to come to the fore. And for some time now corrupt Shia sectarianism has been dominant in government.

All these factors have allowed Daesh to gain a base among disaffected Sunni Arabs of the northern and western areas of Arab Iraq. They have recruited former Ba'athist intelligence officers and military commanders and that has helped them establish an army of experienced and able soldiers and military commanders extremely quickly.

Haji Bakr, who is said to have been the architect of Daesh's takeover of northern Syria brought an entire Ba'athist unit with him when he joined the group.

For Workers' Liberty, the appalling events in Tunisia and the continuing expansion of Daesh's influence across the region underline the need for step up solidarity. But what do we say politically?

We are against the British government's shallow and potentially dangerously counter-productive propaganda initiative in schools. The Tunisian events have triggered announcements about spying on schools students' internet use, but the government have been planning this for some time. But young people in schools should be allowed a democratic space to debate issues about religion and racism, a space where Daesh's distorted worldview can be challenged.

The campaign shows a dangerous lack of grip, but this is unfortunately not unusual. It is mirrored by the actions of the Tunisian government which after the attack on the Bardo museum in Tunis, cracked down on radical Islamist groups, and closed mosques. These measures absolutely failed to deal with the ideological hold that Salafism holds over sections of predominantly young, and mainly unemployed people in the country. Tackling social problems was left to a weak left and labour movement, which has been unable to fill the gap.

We also have no political confidence in the call for air attacks on Daesh in Syria. If it happens, and that is not clear, we would be glad if it pushes the group back but it is not our basic approach.

Solidarity with the beleaguered workers', women's and democratic organisations of the region is what is required. Backing Kurdish forces, ensuring they are armed, is better. The Kurdish defence stands in positive contrast to all other forms of physical confrontation with Daesh.

**We have no illusions that the mainstream Kurdish forces stand for liberatory socialism but they are fighting to preserve basic human freedoms and that is a fight they must win.**

# Help us raise £15,000

**As Solidarity goes to press this week our comrade Jill Mountford is leading a radical walking tour of East London.**

Part of Ideas for Freedom, the Walking with Sylvia tour will visit places where the socialist feminist Sylvia Pankhurst organised, discuss her politics and the lessons we can learn from her life.

When the fight for women's suffrage is taught in schools Sylvia's role and politics is left aside in favour of the more "palatable" story of her mother and sister. We know about Sylvia, and of the east London working women's movement, because socialists between now and then have written about it, read about it and run meetings on it.

The theme of this year's Ideas for Freedom was imagining the future. But, in fact, that past is the only thing we actually know about. In order to imagine, and have the tools to fight for, the future we must learn from past.

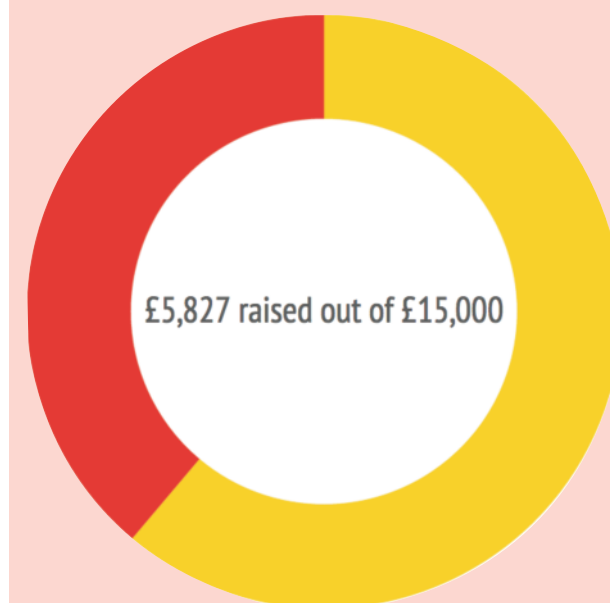
As regular readers of *Solidarity* will know, our newspaper and our organisation plays an irreplaceable role in recording the history of our movement, and educating others in the lessons of the past in order to equip them to fight for the future. For our organisation to play that role we need money.

Please consider:

- Getting a subscription to our weekly newspaper, *Solidarity* — [workersliberty.org/subscribe](http://workersliberty.org/subscribe)
- Taking out a monthly standing order.
- Making a one-off donation
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For information on standing orders or how to donate visit [workersliberty.org/donate](http://workersliberty.org/donate) For more ideas and information on fundraising visit [workersliberty.org/fundraising](http://workersliberty.org/fundraising)

**Thanks this week to Stuart and John. So far we have raised £5827.**



**Solidarity 371 will be out 15 July; 372, 29 July; 373, 19 August; 374, 2 September, and then back to the usual weekly schedule**



## How the talks broke down

Up to Friday 26 June the Greek government of Syriza-ANEL was very close to reaching an agreement with the eurozone leaders. It looked set to abandon its last “red lines” and accept 90-95% of the conditions for a new bailout, including direct wage and pension reductions and explicitly maintaining the framework of the last five years of Memorandum.

The Greek government had accepted the logic that increased tax revenues would be based on VAT increases and the preservation of the regressive property tax; the principle of zero deficit for the financing of the pension system; the gradual withdrawal of the Pensioners’ Social Solidarity Benefit (EKAS), and the extension of the retirement age to 67.

In the end no deal was reached. On Saturday 27th, after a long cabinet meeting Alexis Tsipras announced a referendum. The eurozone leaders would not even cede enough to make a “honourable compromise” for the Syriza parliamentary group and Syriza’s rank and file and electoral base.

The only talk of debt restructuring the eurozone leaders would accept was a vague reference to a debate on the Greek debt in the future based upon a framework sketched with Venizelos and Samaras back in 2012.

The drama of the negotiation for the last five months has been largely the refutation of the Syriza leaders’ central illusions, of a return to progressive development achieved through rational negotiations and by exploiting the “internal contradictions” within the creditors’ camp. The government’s negotiating team had the illusion that the eurozone leaders were sure eventually to back down, even at the eleventh hour, and concede a poor but nonetheless manageable political agreement, because they feared the economic cost of a rupture and because of their internal contradictions.

### PUNISH

**The eurozone ministers, accustomed to the servility of Papandreou, Samaras and Venizelos, thought that Alexis Tsipras was a puppy that barked but would not bite.**

In the end, under the threat of a bank run, they were sure that Tsipras would sign an agreement that would dissolve his government and his party, and initiate the conversion of a mutilated Syriza into a neoliberal social democratic party with a new government coalition.

Alexis Tsipras and the Greek delegation were treated in Brussels as troublemakers who needed exemplary punishment. As journalist Stavros Lygeros put it: “they are not satisfied with chopping his head off. They would like to parade his head as an example to everyone else”.

On Monday night 29th, Alexis Tsipras invited the Greek people to vote “no” in the referendum on Sunday 5 July. Then on Tuesday 30th he made another U-turn. He wrote a new letter to the eurozone leaders asking for a €30 billion euro loan from the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) to pay the lenders up to 2017; virtually accepting the eurozone ministers’ proposal of 28 June; but also calling for debt restructuring.

The eurozone leaders rejected his new approach, but it adds confusion to the referendum. Doesn’t the leadership of Syriza understand that this is a contradictory line: “no” in the referendum and yet “yes” to a new memorandum with slight modifications?

**The leaders of the government and of Syriza — in the first place, the right wing of Dragasakis, Papadimoulis, Stathakis and Co., but helped by tolerance from the Left Platform leaders, regardless of their intentions, have in practice contributed to undermining the “no” mobilisation and shaping conditions for a possible “yes” victory.**

# Greek left mobilises for “no” on 5 July

By Dora Polenta

On Saturday morning 27 June the Greek people woke up to find that the call from Alexis Tsipras and his government for a no vote against the persistent blackmailing of the creditors, the “partners”, the “institutions”, or whatever else we call them, has finally got us (albeit in an unprepared way, somewhat sideways) out of the black hole and deadlock of the “compromise” made by the Syriza government with the eurozone finance ministers on 20 February.

Since then we have seen harsh class struggle and conflict, with the national and international ruling class exhibiting co-ordination and “solidarity” in order to protect their vested interests. The ruling classes and the oligarchies, both internationally and in Greece, are trying to impose the power of fear as the only permissible ideology.

Since 27 June, there has been a high level of political activity from both camps. The united front of New Democracy, Pasok, and Potami in Greece, work alongside the international financial oligarchy represented by the likes of Christine Lagarde, Jean-Claude Juncker, Angela Merkel, Jeroen Dijsselbloem, Mario Draghi and Wolfgang Schäuble. The mainstream media try to create a climate of panic, with continuous reporting and live interviews from the queues outside the ATMs. It reached a crescendo with a Sky journalist publicly announcing he had cancelled a holiday in Corfu because of the “unstable and chaotic situation”.

Some bosses have announce the suspension of work, or reduced production. Others have threatened lock outs and mandatory unpaid leave for their workers. Yet others say that their companies will not open if next Monday if the “no” vote prevails on 5 July, and some openly threaten their workers with redundancy if they do not vote “yes”. Many companies have announced that they will not be paying the wages of their workers until further notice.

### POWER

**The trouble is that for five months the government has left untouched the power of the industrialists, the contractors, the bankers, the media barons, the pharmaceutical manufacturers and the ship owners.**

Intimidation and terror by the capitalist bosses will escalate as the referendum approaches. The revolutionary left in and outside Syriza, workers, trade unions and community and social organisations, should immediately expose and fight back against the capitalist bosses terrorism.

The trade union confederation GSEE (for private sector workers), with its leadership controlled by the trade-union fractions of Pasok and New Democracy, has had the audacity to demand that the government withdraw the referendum and declared support for a “yes” vote.

There have sizeable demonstrations and rallies in support of the “no” camp in virtually every city of Greece, with support from all major trade unions, with the sad exception of GSEE, and community movements, anti-fascists committee and solidarity networks. The “yes” counter-demonstrations have mobilised the cream of the reactionary intelligentsia of the country, minor celebrities, and some lower middle class people.

The official Syriza guidelines for Syriza’s activity in the “no” campaign says it will emphasize the need for national unity whatever the outcome of the referendum.

It will campaign on three points.

1. The social character of “no” in the referendum, highlighting the impact of the memoranda and supported the need to overthrow austerity policies. The “no” vote, say the Syriza leaders, will be a negotiating tool in the hands of the government to continue negotiations from 6 July freshly em-



Alexis Tsipras. Will his political gamble pay off?

powered by a re-affirmed popular mandate.

2. To highlighted the right for the Greek people to be left undisturbed to vote without foreign interference. The slogan is “no, for dignity and democracy.”

3. Emphasis on Syriza being a European party that seeks equitable participation of the country in the EU and that it is trying to build a new Europe.

**Syriza’s rank and file have been back on the streets again, and given the “no” vote a meaning beyond the government’s intentions — a bold “no” to all memoranda and a bold demand on the government to adhere, “unilaterally” and against the “institutions”, to the Thessaloniki declaration on which it was elected.**

## “This is a class vote”

By Thanassis Kourkoulas, DEA Central Committee

**The attitude of the vast majority of workers is to say “no” to memorandum policies.**

At the same time many people are confused in the face of the terror propaganda of the pro-system bloc. The outcome will be 50-50. Everybody in workers’ unions and the left is doing our best to get a clear vote for no.

DEA is in the front line of the “no” campaign. We are for a clear “no” to the memorandum policies, including a new memorandum agreement which is possible from Monday, whatever the result of the vote on Sunday.

The main issue now is to get the victory of the “no” vote, so that the government is not overthrown.

The government will definitely be overthrown from the right in the event of a “yes” vote. The system has gathered all its forces together with the memorandum parties, famous actors, neoliberal economists etc. etc. The campaign is bolstered by the union of Greek factory owners.

This is not the issue of national sovereignty being undermined. Only Golden Dawn says this. It is clear that the no campaign has a very clear class basis. For the majority of supporters of the no vote, this is a class issue, not a national issue.

**This is about salaries, pensions in Greece and all around Europe. This is also clear for the Syriza majority.**





# A “no” vote demands radical policies

By Dora Polenta

**The eurozone leaders warn that they will take a “no” vote as a mandate to expel Greece from the eurozone.**

Inside the eurozone, there at least appeared to be possibilities for piecemeal relief via a serious easing-off by the eurozone leaders and the European Central Bank. That was entirely possible in economic terms, and refused by them only because they want to warn workers everywhere else in Europe that resistance as in Greece cannot bring results.

If Greece is forced out of the eurozone, the tempo changes. Only thorough and radical measures by the government can limit disruption and chaos and enable reconstruction.

The revolutionary left must demand that the government implement these measures:

Immediate nationalisation of banks. Protect the deposits of small and medium savers with transparency and methods of social control. Running of the banks by elected and revocable administrations, involving representatives of government, of bank workers, and of the organisations of the working class.

As Lenin wrote (“The Impending Catastrophe”, September 1917): “To talk about ‘regulating economic life’ and yet evade the question of the nationalisation of the banks means either betraying the most profound ignorance or deceiving the ‘common people’ by florid words and grandiloquent promises with the deliberate intention of not fulfilling these promises. It is absurd to control and regulate deliveries of grain, or the production and distribution of goods generally, without controlling and regulating bank operations.

## BANKS

**“It is like trying to snatch at odd kopeks and closing one’s eyes to millions of rubles. Banks nowadays are so closely and intimately bound up with trade (in grain and everything else) and with industry that without ‘laying hands’ on the banks nothing of any value, nothing ‘revolutionary-democratic’, can be accomplished”.**

The current connection of banks with the (“illegal and onerous”) government debt demands the unilateral stopping of debt payments, as a necessary measure for the rehabilitation of nationalised banking system.

The dependency of the country’s larger companies on the indebted banks, and their interweaving with them, requires the immediate implementation of a plan of nationalisation of large enterprises in industry under workers’ control.

Large businesses whose owners blackmail and threaten the workers to vote “yes”; large business which have falsified information in order to avoid paying workers’ wages and are involved in fraud, and tax evasion should be expropriated immediately without compensation under workers’ control.

It is inevitable in the coming days that shortages will appear in hospitals and the state health system. For the government to find the resources needed to pay in full the pensions and to ensure money for health it should enforce an immediate special, heavy emergency levy on high incomes, the large estate owners and the Greek oligarchs who have supported the economic war of the Troika. It should expropriate all the assets of churches and monasteries: the religious have a right to use their places of worship, but not to have a government subsidy.

To ensure the sufficient supply of food and medicine requires the immediate nationalisation of the large industrial groups in the food and pharmaceutical industries, and the large supermarket chains under workers’ power and control.

To ensure the fuel supplies requires the immediate nationalisation of energy companies under workers’ power and control.

Television and radio frequencies should right now be released from their status as hostages to the capitalist oligarchy. They should be expropriated immediately and all private media and frequencies and equipment should be passed over in citizens’ associations for free and equitable use based on the principle of truly pluralistic media.

These radical measures in order to have a viable prospect, should be part of an overall programmatic plan socialist transformation of society.

The clique that runs the EU and the Eurozone are the brutal servants of the interests of big capital and European multinationals. That is capitalism, that’s imperialism. The capital of Europe and the multinationals will always be predatory and imperialist

The Europe of the workers and popular strata, the Europe of solidarity and joint struggle for our common problems, only this is our “own” Europe. The Syriza government needs to turn and seek allies and comrades there.

Along with the working classes of Europe we must fight the battle for the future. The peoples of Europe can aim to better days only under the prospect of a united socialist Europe! This is the fight that is ahead of us! It will take time and class confrontations! But there is no other way!

There will be no return path for the government, the people and the country after this Sunday if the “no vote” prevails. The people who will vote “no” to the agreement of the lenders will know very well the consequence and the gravity of their vote, regardless of the limited question of the referendum, and will be ready to accept the road of rupture and confrontation and class struggle if the revolutionary left fights for it boldly and clearly.

**The events of this week, the polarisation and the conflicts at all levels, have dragged both camps into a vortex of radicalisation.**

## KKE abstains in the battle

**The revolutionary left in and outside Syriza has campaigned for a “no” in the referendum right from the start.**

Whatever the intentions of the government, the referendum objectively creates conditions of rupture with the EU/ECB/IMF Troika and provides a historic opportunity for the working class and youth to enter the political stage.

But the Greek Communist Party (KKE) voted in parliament against the government’s proposal to proceed to the referendum and is asking its members and supporters to spoil their ballot papers. They call this “a working-class triple no” against the memorandum of the creditors against the memorandum of the government and against the EU and Eurozone.

So KKE has again abstained from the class struggle as it is expressed through the internal contradictions of the capitalist system. Of course the referendum is a restricted democratic process, far short of workers power and control and extensive workers’ daily democracy. However, is an arena

that the workers’ vanguard and the revolutionary left must engage with, in the same way that trade unions engage with the arena of working-class exploitation and the reproduction of the capitalist system. KKE is disengaging from the current struggle of the working class and transferring all hopes to Saint Long Distance Socialism.

It indicates KKE’s fear of defeat and victory at the same time, its inverted tailism (opposition to the Syriza government’s tactics and political moves at all costs), and its lack of consistent and principled working class analysis of the concrete situation and concrete duties. The duty of the Revolutionary left is to form a United Front and align all its forces for the victory of a “thunderous” and revolutionary “no”.

If this battle is not won and the “no” vote does not prevail, then that will bring a very serious defeat for working people, with significant effects on morale and fighting spirit.

**It will open the way for new harsh austerity Memoranda and be the nail in the coffin of the project of a government of the left.**



# How the left became “Little Englanders”

In a 1975 referendum on UK’s membership of the European Economic Community (Common Market), forerunner of the European Union, most of the left argued for UK withdrawal. That was the culmination of a step-by-step opportunist collapse into left-nationalism since the 1960s, when all the would-be Trotskyist groups said the answer to limited European capitalist integration was European workers’ unity, not national withdrawal. This article, taken from *Permanent Revolution* No. 3\*, describes the evolution.

“We must never play with slogans that are not revolutionary by their own content but that can play a quite different role according to the political conjuncture, the relationship of forces, etc...” Leon Trotsky: ‘Theses on Unity and the Youth’, *Writings* 1934-5.

“The will of the ‘nation’ or of its majority; is not a sort of God for Social Democracy before which it humbly prostrates itself; on the contrary, Social Democracy’s whole historic mission depends above all on revolutionising, on forming, the will of the ‘nation’ — that is, its working majority”. Rosa Luxemburg, 1908. Quoted in J P Netti’s biography

“The method of ideological imitation of the opponent and of the class enemy — a method which is thoroughly contradictory to the theory and the psychology of Bolshevism — flows quite organically from the essence of centrism, from its unprincipledness, inconsistency, ideological hollowiness (in the Comintern we see one and the same spirit of mimicry, constant imitation of the opponent, a striving not to use their own weapons — which, alas they do not possess — but weapons stolen from the arsenal of the enemy”. (Leon Trotsky: “Against National Communism” August 1931. *From The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*.)

**The orgy of anti-marketeering to which the “revolutionary left”, following the so-called Communist Party and the Labour Party reformists, abandoned itself in the run-up to the referendum was all the more shameless and unbalanced because the leaders of the organisations conducting it did not actually believe most of what they said.**

They believed only that it was necessary at whatever cost to get into step with the trade union bureaucracy and the reformist/state-capitalist “left” in the Labour Party, and with the rank and file working class militants who follow their lead. What they said about the Common Market was dictated by that goal and by those considerations — not by a principled assessment of the issue on its merits and in the light of the real interests of the working class.

Almost the entire “revolutionary” left abandoned the high ground of communist principle and waded into the swamp of chauvinism.

The charge is irrefutable in the light of this fact: with the partial exception of the Workers’ Revolutionary Party, whose ideology is not to be taken seriously, those on the revolutionary left who campaigned against the Common Market had originally the self-same “abstentionist” position that Workers’ Fight [forerunner of AWL] maintained throughout the campaign, and they abandoned it, one after the other, when, and only when, the anti-Market campaign had gained such force as to be a threat to their credibility with militants on the broad left. Previously, when the revolutionary organisations allowed themselves to make an independent assessment of the issue on its merits all of them arrived at politics the very opposite of those they advocated in the referendum campaign.

*The International Socialism group* [forerunner of the SWP]: “In or out of the Common Market, the problems facing the British labour movement are likely to be very much the same. Indeed the point is that the issues facing us are more similar to those facing European and American workers than at any time in the past 40 years” (John Palmer, *IS Journal* no. 12, Spring 1963). *IS* was to maintain that position until late in 1971.

*The International Marxist Group*. In the early 60s, the IMG was a tiny splinter from the then British Section of the [mainstream orthodox Trotskyist international grouping] USFI. So let us quote for the present IMG, the opinion at that time of Ernest Mandel, their most authoritative spokesman. Writing

under his pen name of Ernest Germain he said this:

“... The Soviet Government oscillates between denouncing the Common Market with idiotic arguments (“an attempt to put Europe under the bondage of the US and impoverish the workers”) and a recognition of its spurious ‘benefits’. The initiative is constantly left to the class enemy so that the masses cannot be mobilised and aroused in effective opposition.

“For revolutionary Marxists, this conflict (about Britain’s application to join the EEC and De Gaulle’s opposition) is a typical inter-imperialist competitive struggle in which the working class has no reason for supporting one side against the other. To the policies of both sides, they must counterpose the struggle for a Socialist United States of Europe, for a really unified Europe which could effectively surmount the antagonisms bred by capitalist competition; that could only be a Europe which has abolished both capitalist property and the bourgeois state.

“It is not by accident, moreover, that the present crisis in the Common Market coincides with a slackening of economic expansion which could be the preliminary signal of any ongoing recession in all capitalist countries. Before the advent of the recession, and still more harshly during it, the employers would unleash an offensive to improve its competitive conditions at the expense of their own working class.

## SUICIDE

**“It would be pure suicide for the working class to solidarise itself, either with its own bourgeoisie or with that of the opposing camp.**

“Its only effective reply can be to affirm its basic class solidarity: workers of all European countries unite against the Europe of the monopolies, whether it raises the slogan of the Europe of ‘fatherlands’, the ‘open’ Europe, or the European ‘community’. This should be the line of action for the working class movements of Europe.” (From ‘Crisis in the Common Market’, *International Socialist Review* Spring 1963).

Some details of the argument had changed, especially when it was an internal British debate and a referendum to decide: in or out. The basic issue remained the same, however: working class “advice” on one or other option for the ruling class.

Mandel’s 1963 exposition adequately covers the changes and gives a clear answer to the current question: “Yes or No to the Common Market” don’t get drawn in. Especially to be remarked is the sentence about a line of action for the working class movement of Europe. That alone — the need to build European working-class solidarity in relation to the Common Market — indicates why a campaign for a No vote is impermissible for revolutionaries and unavoidably means a collapse into chauvinism. This is especially so when, as in Britain

recently, the anti-Common Market campaign was primarily from the working class movement. It makes it all the more incredible that the same Ernest Mandel who thus jotted down such a comprehensive outline of a principled communist approach to the Common Market has recently toured Britain campaigning for the IMG on the slogans: “No to the bosses’ EEC — Yes to the Socialist United States of Europe!”

*The Militant* [forerunner of the Socialist Party]: Mandel’s 1963 position spoke for them too. Reading their paper today there are still traces of it: the “no” is just stuck “on listlessly and passively with little effort to rationalise it or explain how it arises from their “analysis”.

*The Workers Revolutionary Party* [once the largest Trotskyist group in the UK, now a small sect-like group]: “What in fact has happened is that labour and trade union ‘personalities’ and journals have found themselves quite naturally taking sides on the question: what is best for British capitalism? In most cases that is not surprising, but it exposes the misleadership or lack of leadership of both the rightwing and the *Tribune* and other Lefts.

“It is scarcely necessary for the labour movement to get involved in a detailed and necessarily inconclusive discussion about the pros and cons of the Common Market. This cannot inspire the rank and file or build its strength. Indeed the whole argument may change course if a break takes place in the relative economic stability which at present prevails in Britain and in Europe. Consistent socialists should be unequivocally in favour of breaking down national barriers, not under the auspices of the trusts seeking to exploit labour power more methodically and play one section off against another more successfully, but by working for a workers’ government which alone can do the job in a genuinely internationalist way.

“Taking sides for or against the Tories joining the Common Market means arguing about just how Europe’s workers should be exploited. Instead, the working class movement must unite around a programme for the socialist planning of European industry.” (Tom Kemp ‘Socialism and the European Common Market’, in the *Newsletter*, 24 June 1961.)

Nothing fundamental had changed by 1975 in the Common Market in its structure, role, objective relationship to the Soviet Union, China and the Third, World, or to the working class in the member states.

Equally, nothing has changed in the tasks of revolutionaries, to nurture, create, propagandise for international working class unity and to fight uncompromisingly against everything that militates against it and specifically against chauvinism.

In 1962-3 [the revolutionary left] had all mocked and castigated the CP drumbeating and flagwaving for “Little Britain

## Abstain or vote “yes”?

By Martin Thomas

**How does advocacy of a vote against British withdrawal from the EU in the coming referendum reconcile with our line of “bosses’ Europe, bosses’ Britain, no choice” in the early 1970s, and our argument around 2002 for abstention if a referendum on euro entry were held then?**

We have always regarded even a limited voluntary integration of states, even on a bourgeois basis, as better than the walling-off of nations. Even in the 1970s, we used to deliberately spoof leftists by telling them that Edward Heath was to the left of Tony Benn on the issue.

In 1972-3 we did not positively support British entry into the EU (EEC) because we did not want to endorse the conditions of that integration, including integration into the Common Agricultural Policy, which increased food prices.

We did have some comrades in our group who were in favour of voting “yes” to joining the euro. We are in favour of economic integration, which would include a common currency, but the euro (complete with unelected European Central Bank, Maastricht criteria, and the rest) was a bad way of doing it, as recent years have dramatically shown.

In the 1975 referendum we just cut-and-pasted our stance from 1972-3. There’s a reasonable case that we were wrong about that. Once Britain was in the EU, we should certainly

still have campaigned for drastic changes in the EU, but against withdrawal.

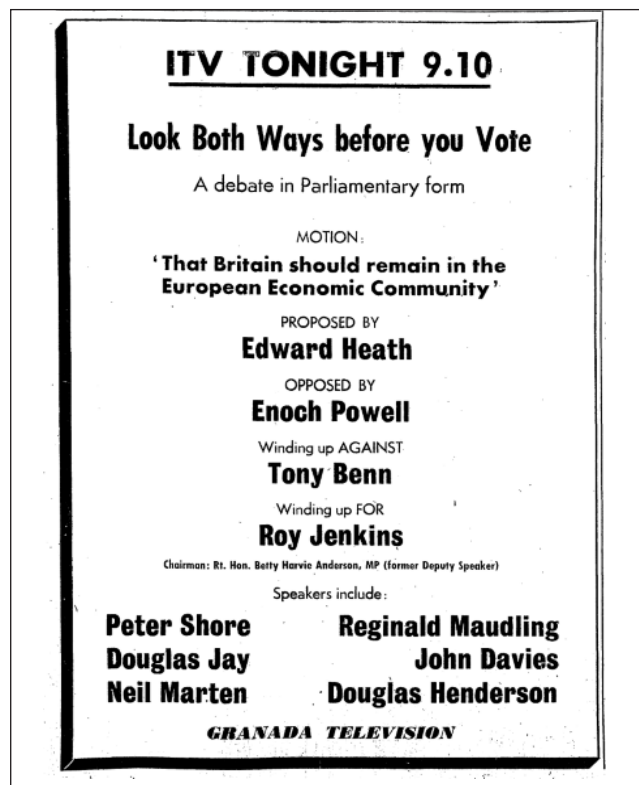
There were differences in 1975. Britain’s social provision and labour regulations were then in many areas better, not worse, than the EU average. No-one proposed exit from the EU as a way to stop immigration from the other EU countries (only eight of them at the time). The referendum appeared as a vote between “left” and “right”, where the “left” argued for withdrawal to protect Britain’s somewhat-better social conditions, and the “right” for integration in order to hasten international market forces. It was reasonable to take account of that in our detailed tactics. But...

Today, voting against British withdrawal from the EU implies no endorsement of any of the EU’s membership conditions or regulations: it means only that we want to change things by going forward from the current limited, bureaucratic, capitalist integration rather by going backwards to walled-off nation-states. Would we have voted for the Act of Union in 1707? No. But voting “No” in the Scottish referendum implied no endorsement of the status quo. Voting “No” means voting for better “starting conditions” from which to change the status quo.

**Marx and Engels denounced the particular manner in which Germany was unified in 1871. But thereafter they argued from starting from this bureaucratic, militarist united Germany, and would have given no support to calls for restoring the old petty principalities.**

\* Abridged. Full article available online in PDF format [bit.ly/1UcNk4X](http://bit.ly/1UcNk4X)





**Labour left (Tony Benn) collaborates with Tory right (Enoch Powell) on opposing UK membership of Common Market.**

so long as it serves “the great-Russian chauvinist Russian bureaucracy”. Since Britain moved to enter the Common Market in 1970-71 they have played shamefaced variations on CP-type defence of British “independence”.

The Workers Revolutionary Party had the doubtful honour of pioneering the Gadarene stampede of the so-called revolutionary left towards the camp of the chauvinists, sniffing the wind well ahead of the others. In an orgy of general sectarianism back in 1967 it denounced the Labour Government’s attempt to join the Common Market. To attempt to explain the turns of the group in terms of any political logic other than its leadership’s well-developed eye for the main chance and the vestigial level of development of its understanding of Marxist principles is usually pointless.

Here there appears, however, to be a political logic that goes back to the early 1950s, when the proto-Socialist Labour League [forerunner of WRP], under the directives of the Fourth International of which it was then the British section, raised the slogan “Labour to power with a socialist programme”. Fifteen years later, the same Fabian conception of socialist revolution underlay many of the hysterical diatribes of the SLL against the Labour Government. Labour wasn’t carrying out a socialist programme, but a programme of monopolist modernisation. Thus Common Market entry was a departure from socialism. The issue is not, as with the CP, national sovereignty but what the government does: whether it pushes through socialist policies in Britain or strengthens its right wing nature by an international linkup. Thus, oppose the linkup.

In no organisation, however, was the fall greater than in the International Socialism group. In the period before the referendum IS’s weekly *Socialist Worker* indulged in a frenzy of anti-Marketeting in which every problem, battle, ruling class imposition and working class interest were meshed into a single focus point — getting a “no” vote in the referendum. It was almost as if the ideologues of IS had got their lines crossed, confusing Britain with Russia, and had concluded that if only the international integument in which Britain is interlocked could be cut away then Britain would cease to be capitalist; or, more ludicrously, that if that form of British relationship to the world market represented by Common Market membership could be ended, you would have the same result — a result moreover to be achieved by a “no” vote in the referendum.

Bandwagon-jumping is an undignified business. The last organisation to jump on the anti-Common Market wagon presents an especially obscene spectacle: there is little disguising the rush and panic that is actually motivating its action.

Formally IS qualifies as the last group to change. The IMG had jumped before IS. But it was not quite the same IMG, nor quite the same leadership of the IMG. In fact when Workers’ Fight negotiated with the IMG in 1972 [over fusing with them] we were informed by representative leaders of both the present major factions that they agreed entirely with our position, that the previous record of the IMG after 1970, left a great deal

to be desired, and in future things would be different. They were Tariq Ali and John Ross.

And truly the zeal of the IMG, this most internationalist of all internationalist organisations in Britain, for the anti-EEC cause had all the force and abandon to be expected from a recent convert. Massive world-wide scenarios were drawn in which the master strategists of this small organisation dealt with NATO, the defence of the USSR, with everything and anything in world politics, the balance of armies and the inter-imperialist alliances — everything, that is, except that which should be central to revolutionaries — the class consciousness of the working class they are relating to.

To the question — if it is so important for Britain to be out of the Common Market and if in campaigning against it the IMG is behaving as a responsible organisation acting on an internationalist programme then why are not the European sections of the USFI, within the Common Market, doing likewise? — there is no answer. Or rather only one that reveals that crassly opportunist chameleon politics of the weather-cock “Trotskyism” which the IMG represents!

From the proletarian point of view to get drawn into calculations regarding world power relationships and for the vanguard to surrender its principles and independence to qualify to join in the ballyhoo is a total defeat — especially where reactionary ruling class ideas find their most forceful expression, after the ruling class itself has abandoned them, in their old form within the working class.

The Communist Party starts from the attitude of Russia and has a deeply ingrained British chauvinism all the more crude because of the difficulty of giving conviction to their “British” character despite the Russian ties.

The Labour left stand for the ingrained chauvinism and insularity of the British labour movement and their parliamentary reformist, Fabian conception of socialism, tintured with elements of the Stalinist model.

## ACCOMMODATION

**The revolutionary left, rejecting talk of British sovereignty common to the CP and Labour left, nevertheless accepts the conclusions, voting “no” and attempting also to slip in “its own” politics as the cuckoo disposes of its egg.**

In fact the revolutionary left can’t avoid, wriggle as it likes and mutter prayerful gibberish about the Socialist United States of Europe as it will, the argument that the EEC is worse. Accepting the conclusion it implicitly accepts the premise.

Trotsky long ago dealt with this sort of accommodation to nationalists (the Nazis). What he said about defeated and humiliated Germany, bound by the Versailles Treaty applies with a hundred times as much force today to Britain.

“... At the most important place in his conclusion, Thaelmann put the idea that Germany is today a ball in the hands of the entente. It is in consequence primarily a matter of national liberation. But in a certain sense. France and Italy also, and even England are ‘balls’ in the hands of the United States. The dependence of Europe upon America... has a far deeper significance for the revolution than the dependence of Germany upon the Entente. This is why — by the way — the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe, and not the single bare slogan, ‘Down with the Versailles peace’, is the proletarian answer to the ‘convulsions of the European continent’.

“But all these questions nevertheless occupy second place. Our policy is determined not by the fact that Germany is a ‘ball’ in the hands of the entrants, but primarily by the fact that the German proletariat which is split up, powerless, and oppressed, is a ball in the hands of the German bourgeoisie. ‘The main enemy is at home’, Karl Liebknecht taught at one time. Or perhaps you have forgotten this, friends? Or perhaps his teaching is no longer any good?”

The main enemy is at home. But the revolutionary left find it permissible to snuggle up to the official labour movement on a chauvinist binge, even if it means snuggling up to that enemy.

To the reformists it is logical to defend British “parliamentary democracy”. Their socialism is a bastard stew composed of parliamentary reform (on the basis historically of Britain’s traditional privileges vis-a-vis the colonies), elitist, Fabian-type nationalisation and municipalisation from above, with massive slabs of Stalinist coloration. It is not at all incompatible with nationalism — on the contrary, for these “socialists” of a privileged metropolis, England is a little world all on its own.

A vulgar reformism influenced by Marxist ideas, with a typically organic evolutionist approach, would logically favour the Common Market, not oppose it, as Britain’s actual parliamentary reformists do. It would favour it for bringing the threads of a future world state nearer, for eliminating the conditions that have bred two world wars, European civil

wars, this century. The pro-Common Market symbol of a dove would not be obnoxious to such a serious reformist approach only the peculiar British reformist tradition and the ideological backwardness of the movement has produced, or could produce, the chauvinist wave.

Compared to the *Tribune* left, with its reactionary-utopian ideal of a British autarchic state (a siege economy) in which the ugly utopian elitist “socialism” of the Fabians merges into the monstrous bureaucratic practices of Stalinism, the whole of it unreal, reactionary, utopian, and from the point of view of the working class irrelevant and diversionary — compared with that, the Williams-Jenkins wing of the Labour Party and the anti-working class hatchetman Heath of the Conservative party have appeared (within the terms of reference of the campaign which were the confines the left chose for itself) progressive.

It’s been like a historically somewhat telescoped debate between advanced liberal cosmopolitanism and anti-Free Trade Toryism of the 19th century — with the working class movement locked into a corporatist and nationalist trade unionism traditionally linked to the strength of the British state and still linked to it ideologically. The trade unions have been soldiers of the legion of the rearguard of traditional British bourgeois attitudes. The fact that the link has a “socialist” parliamentary reformist expression makes it no less bourgeois; only an example of working class aspirations — socialism — being overwhelmed with bourgeois ideas, conditioning, the ideological memory of crimes committed in common with the ruling class against the colonial people; of the fact that even when the labour movement wants a non-bourgeois government it does not thereby (and has not) free itself from bourgeois conceptions of how to achieve it.

The “right” were, within the given issues and within this system (and all parties to the yes — no debate were within that framework) the progressive liberal cosmopolitans. That is the measure of the degradation, the backwardness and the shameful condition the left has let itself be reduced to, living on the dregs of a vanished imperialist little Englandism, an ideology thrown on the junkheap by the ruling class it once served, and served not least to dupe and con the labour movement. These “lefts” haven’t even blushed to invoke the Commonwealth as an alternative policy for capitalism, to seek refuge with euphemisms for the slave empire of the British ruling class in its period of decline, liquidation, and demise.

It is conceivable that revolutionary Marxists would favour the Common Market, defending working class interests at every point, but grudgingly and reluctantly recognising it for what it is: a limited and qualified capitalist attempt to solve the long overdue problem of the Balkanisation of Europe; and recognising also that it takes this form in history because of the defeats of the working class and the consequent belatedness of the working class reorganisation of society. If we were living in a period of new organic growth than such would be the only approach. That is not the perspective now, but never under no circumstances could revolutionaries who want to be Marxists starkly themselves to such a development. The “revolutionary” left marches not under the banner of Marxism, but under the pressure of the backward labour movement, which itself marches under the butcher’s apron. If we say anything, we say yes.

But, saying “No to the Common Market. Yes to the Socialist United States of Europe” is that not plainly a principled position an explicit rejection of little Englandism? Abstractly — yes. Really, no — the argument is a scandalous sophism.

The revolutionary left has not conducted its own campaign in parallel to the mass concern, above and apart from it in a purer and rarified atmosphere where good intentions and private reservations count. It has attempted to insert its slogans into an existing campaign where the alternative to the EEC is little Britain, whether as conceived by Enoch Powell, that is a utopian capitalist free trade state, or as the autarchic state capitalist (and happily impossible) “alternative” of the Stalinist and *Tribune* left. It is the “No the Common Market” that is stressed and the rest is lost in the hubbub. It is the nonsensical blaming of the Common Market not capitalism for the problems of workers that emerges, nothing else. (IS has done this explicitly, shamelessly and consciously).

In fact the “no” in the actual situation is reactionary and not really linked to the Socialist United States of Europe at all. The revolutionary left has been like a little boy in front of a large orchestra laying “Rule Britannia”. He positions himself and his tin whistle with the thought: I only play the first few notes of “Rule Britannia”. I can then switch to the ‘Internationale’. They’ll all hear me and listen as I drown out the orchestra. The fatal “No” vitiates everything. Once in step with the “antis” the rest is drowned out. The revolutionary left hoped,

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## “Little Englanders”

From page 9

perhaps, that once inside the “No” campaign they could get a hearing for the internationalist propaganda. On the contrary: their propaganda merely gave an ‘Internationalist’ deodorant to the actual nationalist movement.’

Of course socialists should make propaganda for the Socialist United States of Europe. But its logical starting point is “In or out the fight goes on: neither little Britain, nor EFTA, nor the EEC, but the Socialist United States of Europe”.

The controversies between Lenin and Trotsky on the slogan of United States of Europe rested on Lenin’s fear of vapid abstraction and grand ideals being counterposed to concrete tasks and a realistic assessment of the real situation and possibilities. He feared that a responsible attitude towards tasks in a given country could be evaded by appeals to a greater, wider, more international task.

He knew that retreating up the ladder of virtuous generalities and abstractions could be as easily the route to an opportunist bolthole as the supine prostration of right opportunism. He saw revolutionary phrasemongering and right opportunism as complementary twins. The use to which the revolutionary left tainted with chauvinism, has put the “Socialist United States of Europe” indicates that Lenin’s fears are not quite a matter of history.

If the decree of actual accommodation to chauvinism on the common Market issue is translated back to World War Two, then the Trotskyists would have been defencists. But even when the “national enemy” was an imperialist power under a regime which would have smashed the labour movement, the Trotskyists stood against patriotism. They didn’t focus on “No to Hitler”, the common working class feeling exploited by the ruling class, but on “No to British capitalism”. The main enemy is still at home. The ideas of that enemy, even his partly discarded ones, still have a powerful hold on the working class.

The defeat of the anti-Common Market forces in the referendum was not defeat for the left, though it was a deserved slap in the face for the pseudo-left, including the revolutionaries. There was no real left in the campaign: there couldn’t be. The result was, it must be said, according to the terms posed in the debate, a defeat for retrograde chauvinism, though the fact of the working class getting drawn into the debate at all was a defeat for it and a victory for the ruling class.

In the history of British labour, the period before entry will be depicted as one in which the issue deflected attention from the Industrial Relations Bill, and the recent campaign to get Britain out as one which gave an escape hatch to [trade union leader] Jack Jones and Co vis-a-vis the Labour government — while both were busy foisting the Social Contract on the working class.

The terrible exhibition of capitulation to chauvinism by a left faced with racism and the Irish problem as life and death issues is possible because of the vain chase after numbers, the delusory snare of the notion that little groups can get rich quickly by ideological conmanship. It is a refusal to understand the fundamental basis of communist activity: internationalist propaganda, the necessary functioning of a propaganda group, often against the stream and facing isolation. It is above all to misunderstand the fundamental role of revolutionaries in the working class and the necessary bedrock of revolutionary party building — the ideological struggle.

Little short of collapse into chauvinism in an imperialist war could add up to a worse picture of the “revolutionary” left than that presented — over four or five years without sobering up — on the Common Market question. Their entire wisdom was summed up in the idea that abstention is not a good thing. Faced with chauvinism they combined nodding in obeisance to the conclusions of the reformist and Stalinist chauvinists with using the profound programmatic slogan “For the Socialist United States of Europe” as a piece of flummery, gutted of all meaning and pinned, symbolically to the chauvinist totem poles of the “no” campaign. That combination does not protect the left from the charge of treachery as they imagine: it makes the charge only more inescapable.

**There has on the Common Market issue been a major battle in the class struggle — a battle on the ideological front for that most precious of all proletarian values: communist internationalism. Not all, but most of the revolutionary Marxists have fought against the working class interest in the campaign. For ourselves we kept aloft the standard of communist internationalism. To do less would have been to deserve the odium of renegacy. If it means, for now, a degree of isolation, it is a small price.**

## Arguments for Corbyn

Questions and answers on supporting Jeremy Corbyn in the ballot for Labour Leader, by Michael Johnson

**The 2015 election shows that the Labour Party is dead. The Corbyn campaign is just one last twitch from the corpse.**

Rumours of the death of Labour have been greatly exaggerated. Labour got over 9 million votes in the last election and retains the affiliation of 14 trade unions, representing around three million workers.

The Labour Party still occupies a central position in labour movement politics, which socialists simply cannot ignore.

Though the link between the unions and Labour is under threat, the unions still have 50% of the votes at the Labour Party conference and its National Policy Forum, and representation at all levels of the party.

The problem with your view is that you wish to go around the existing labour movement — the trade unions, including their link to the Labour Party. We should start from where workers are at and propose how we can fight from here.

The Corbyn campaign has had a wide resonance, even with people who did not vote Labour or are members of other parties such as Left Unity or the Greens. This is an implicit understanding, however vaguely expressed or unsystematically thought-through, that the unions’ links to Labour make that party a crucial site of struggle for socialists.

It is our job to develop that insight and convince people of the need to transform our whole labour movement.

**Yes, but the main reason that the unions are so timid is because they are tied to the Labour leadership. They should break from Labour and form a new left party.**

If only it was the case that the unions were pushing militant struggles and radical politics, only to be held back by the Labour Party! You’ve got things upside down.

One of the major reasons why Labour ran such a flat and uninspiring platform in 2015 was that the unions, most of which have policies far to the left of the Labour’s, did not assert themselves through the party. At the National Policy Forum in 2014, Unite had the chance to vote for an anti-austerity alternative budget proposal and decided to back Ed Balls’s cuts instead!

The problem is that the unions’ leaderships and political structures are not held accountable to members. All too often, the unions think if they box clever, and avoid a public fight, they can gain some concessions from the Labour Party.

This channel between the bureaucratic leadership of the Labour Party and the union bureaucracy would be a problem even if the unions disaffiliated from Labour and backed a more radical party. All the same problems, flowing from the democratic deficit in our unions, would be replicated no matter what the political set-up.

We need to build rank-and-file networks to assert members’ control over what our unions’ political representatives are doing in the Labour Party, to make sure they push union policy and to replace them when they don’t.

**I support Jeremy Corbyn but if he doesn’t win the left should accept it’s been the final push and should leave Labour. Afterwards, I’m going to join the Greens, or maybe Left Unity.**

But the Corbyn campaign isn’t about Jeremy Corbyn as an individual candidate! It is about organising an opportunity to transform the labour movement organisationally and politically. Even if he won, it would not overnight solve the problems of the labour movement, with many union and party branches and members inactive, and passive leaderships.

In several trade unions, activists have set up networks of trade unionists for Corbyn to pressure their unions to back his campaign. They would be joining the transport workers (RMT) and the firefighters (FBU). Local constituency parties are organising meetings, and new or previously inactive people have been drawn in to support Corbyn.

Win or lose, we should fight to preserve these networks and argue that the campaign should be used to forge enduring links between trade union militants, Labour Party members and wider activists around a perspective of building a movement capable of asserting working-class interests.

The worst thing would be if people were stirred up to vote Corbyn and, if he lost, then peeled away in ones and twos afterwards in disillusionment.

Even if the Corbyn campaign and its supporters split to



form something new (unlikely), it would not answer the question of how we turn around our whole movement, most of which would still be tied to Labour.

A much better perspective for re-founding independent representation in politics would come from a renewal of trade union self-assertion on the political front, including in Labour,

but also around mounting public campaigns, for example, around the new anti-union laws.

Pushing the unions to back Corbyn has to be seen as part of that process, and not just an exciting new bandwagon for lefties to jump on until the next big demo.

**Your perspective sounds like staying in the Labour Party unconditionally.**

We don’t fetishise the current structures of the labour movement. But they are a reflection of the current state of the class struggle, and this low level of struggle, industrially and politically, is what we need to overcome.

If trade union self-assertion grew until it hit the point where it could no longer be accommodated within the shell of the Labour Party, so be it.

It could be that an assertive labour movement would push the Labour Party to a split, either with the Blairites closing down the unions’ political power in the party, or splitting off themselves to form a “progressive re-alignment” with the Liberal Democrats.

This could open up immense new possibility for independent working-class political representation, with local labour movement conferences, trades councils, active union branches and left-wing constituency parties meeting to develop this idea collectively. But this is very different from calling for a split now as a solution to the labour movements’ problems.

**I like Jeremy Corbyn because I’m “old Labour”. The Labour Party used to be a vehicle for socialism and maybe if Corbyn wins that may be true again.**

There was no “golden age” of the Labour Party. It was never a socialist party, committed to the overthrow of capitalism and its replacement with socialism. Marxists have never thought that it would be the vehicle through which the working-class will win socialism.

The fundamental reason why the Labour Party is important for socialists is because we look to the organised working-class as the key agent in capitalist society; it has the power to shake the current system to its roots and replace it with something better. And in Britain, the organised working class is still, on the whole, affiliated to the Labour Party.

The Labour Party is still what Lenin called a “bourgeois workers’ party”. It is a contradictory formation, with a leadership that holds bourgeois pro-capitalist ideas yet at the same time maintaining structural links to the organised working class.

It is now much closer now to the bourgeois “pole” than it was when Lenin was writing in the 1920s, and if it sheds its links to the unions, it would cease to be a meaningfully working-class party, let alone a socialist one. But that has not yet happened and, in the current circumstances, if it did, it would be a defeat for the idea that the labour movement should be represented in politics by its own political party.

But even a very left-wing Labour government, even one led by someone like Corbyn, would be unable to take power and “legislate for socialism” from above. The task of constructing a socialist society, of thoroughgoing social ownership and democratic control over the economy, in every workplace and community, requires the conscious participation of millions of workers.

And for this, we need more than just trade unions to bargain for our wages within capitalism, or a Labour Party committed to reforms through the political system.

**We need socialists to organise together to fight the ideological battle against capitalist ideas in the labour movement, and to promote the idea of a socialist society based on common ownership and democracy.**



## RMT AGM pledges to fight attacks

**By Janine Booth, delegate from Central Line East branch**

**The Annual General Meeting of the Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union voted to back Jeremy Corbyn's bid for Labour leader, fight the Tories' attacks on trade union rights, and step up its work on equalities.**

As well as committing to militant industrial struggles, delegates also voted unanimously for several emergency resolutions from branches opposing the tightening of anti-union laws promised in the Queen's Speech. These included support for a national demonstration and rank-and-file conference this year.

Delegates voted unanimously for the union to defend migrant workers from increasing hostility and government attacks. The resolution — submitted by Central Line East branch — stressed the common interests of British-born and migrant workers and committed the union to circulating facts in the face of disinformation about migration, and to aim the union's fire at employers not workers of other nationalities.

However, the AGM also reaffirmed RMT's intention to campaign for the UK to leave the European Union. Around one-fifth of delegates opposed this, following speeches which highlighted that the referendum will see a 'frenzy of anti-migrant prejudice' and that a UK exit would strengthen the right wing and lead to more attacks on workers.

The AGM adopted the Executive's report on the General Election, meaning motions in support of TUSC, and proposing re-affiliating to the Labour Party, were not discussed.

The Executive report assessed the impact of RMT's approach to the General Election, which had been to back candidates who were members of its Parliamentary group (over 20 Labour MPs plus the Greens' Caroline Lucas) and consider requests from branches to back other candidates. While praising its candidates and the stance they took, the report promised to review the situation with TUSC, highlighting its low vote and instances where it had stood or supported candidates against RMT-backed candidates. It also affirmed that RMT would not seek re-affiliation to Labour.

The AGM passed several broadly-progressive changes to the union's structure, including making the whole National Executive full-time, creating a Cleaners' Industrial Organising Conference, and allowing branches to submit resolutions directly to the National Executive. It also voted by a large majority to create a Disabled Members' Committee and Conference, overturning the Executive's decision not to do so. The rule change needed to achieve this will be submitted next year.

On international issues, the AGM supported the 'anti-fascist resistance' in Ukraine, rejecting the arguments of delegates who said the motion failed to oppose Russian aggression and falsely painting the Kiev government as "fascist".

**A fundraiser fringe event for Rainbow International LGBT Activist Solidarity Fund, hosted by National President Peter Pinkney, and including a speech from Newcastle Rainbow supporter Ed Whitby and performances from delegates, raised £100.**

## Tube strikes set for 8-9 July

**By Ollie Moore**

**Members of all four Tube unions will strike on 8-9 July, in disputes over pay, the implementation of 24-hour running ("Night Tube"), and job cuts.**

Drivers' union ASLEF returned a 98% majority for strikes, on a turnout of over 80%. Members of RMT, the largest union on the Tube,

voted by over 90% for strikes in two ballots (one of all grades, over pay and Night Tube, and one of station workers over job cuts), on turnouts of around 53%. TSSA and Unite members also voted for strikes by over 70%.

Action will begin on the evening of 8 July, and conclude on the evening of the 9th. Combined strike action by all four unions is almost

unprecedented, and could bring the Tube to an almost complete standstill.

The rank-and-file socialist bulletin *Tubeworker*, published by Workers' Liberty, said:

"Unions also need to steel themselves for management to try every trick in the book over the week ahead to stop the strike. There'll be talks (rightly), and no doubt deals will be offered. The company will probably try to exploit potential divisions between grades by offering a better deal for drivers, hoping that ASLEF will settle and peel away. Activists in ASLEF must pressure their officers to make sure this doesn't happen. We can only win if we remain united.

"We don't want to strike for the sake of it; we're striking to win our demands. So if management back down between now and next Wednesday [8



July], and promise a collectively-negotiated agreement on Night Tube that protects our health and work/life balance; a decent pay deal that reflects increases in the cost of living; and a moratorium on the imposition of job cuts and a new "Framework Agreement" for station staff... then there's no need for the strike to take place.

**"But we all know that's unlikely. We all know it will take this strike, and almost certainly more strikes after this, to push management back."**

## First Great Western strike

**RMT members working for First Great Western will strike for 48 hours over 8-9 July.**

They are fighting to save jobs, as the company plans to transition to a new fleet of high-speed trains.

RMT General Secretary Mick Cash said: "RMT has made every effort to secure a series of very basic assurances from FGW over jobs, services and safety as a result of the introduction of the new Hitachi fleet and they have simply ig-

nored us."

Workers voted by an 80% majority for strikes, and by 92% for action short of strikes.

**The union's demands are: to keep a safety-competent guard on every train; to keep safety-critical station dispatch staff; to keep buffet car facilities on every train; to ensure that the maintenance of new rolling stock remains in-house; and no job losses.**

## CalMac ferry strike over transfer threat

**By Dale Street**

**RMT members employed by Caledonian MacBrayne (CalMac) staged three days of industrial action, including a one-day strike, in the last week of June.**

A ballot in May saw a 92% vote for strikes, and 98% for action short of a strike, on a 60% turnout.

The dispute centres on the threat to jobs, pensions and working conditions resulting from the fact that the Clyde and Hebrides

ferry services, currently provided by CalMac, have been put out to tender.

As well as CalMac, the international business-outsourcing company Serco is also bidding for the eight-year contract for the ferry services and the £1 billion a year funding that goes with it.

In 2012, Serco beat CalMac to win the contract for the Northern Isles ferry services — and then promptly attacked staffing levels and the pensions and terms and conditions of employment of the CalMac

employees who were transferred into Serco.

Serco also recently took over the Caledonian Sleeper rail service from Scotland to London in another tendering process run by the SNP Scottish government (which also saw Scottish domestic rail services handed over to Abellio).

The RMT is demanding guarantees that, whoever wins the Clyde and Hebrides contract, there will be no compulsory redundancies, and pensions and terms and conditions of employment will be preserved.

The SNP government — which is overseeing the tendering process, as well as being the sole shareholder in David MacBrayne Ltd., of which CalMac is a subsidiary — has repeatedly refused to give such assurances.

**Instead, its Transport Minister, David Mackay, has claimed that the tendering process — despite the risk of Serco winning the contract — does not amount to privatisation!**

• Full article: [bit.ly/CalMacStrike](http://bit.ly/CalMacStrike)

## SNP and Labour fail homelessness caseworkers

**By Anne Field**

**Glasgow City Council Homelessness Caseworkers are now in the fifteenth week of their all-out strike for pay re-grading.**

The length of the dispute has not dampened the strikers' morale. Support for the strike remains strong in the broader trade union movement, and not just in Glasgow but throughout the country.

But Labour Group Leader

Gordon Matheson has refused to budge. His position is that the strike is nothing to do with him but something to be sorted out between Unison and Social Work management.

The strike involves "just" 70 Council employees. But much larger conflicts are on the horizon.

Faced with underfunding of £103 millions over the next two years, the Labour-run Council plans to axe 3,000 jobs — 15% of the workforce. These cuts would come on top of the

4,000 Council jobs already lost since 2010.

Matheson's argues the jobs can be cut through "natural wastage" and "efficiency savings".

The SNP line is no better. It wants a guarantee of no compulsory redundancies, cuts to be implemented in consultation with staff and unions, and a search for other (unspecified) ways to save money.

Matheson's position has triggered a revolt within the Labour Group, spearheaded by councillors representing

wards in the Shettleston constituency.

According to Frank McAveety: "The majority of the Group think it would be better if Gordon's transition (i.e. removal as leader) is sooner rather than later."

**Constituency Labour Parties which have not yet adjourned for the summer should demand regrading of the homelessness caseworkers, Matheson's resignation as Group Leader, and no support for Matheson's deputy leadership bid.**

### Other industrial news

**National gallery dispute continues — [bit.ly/1LFLexG](http://bit.ly/1LFLexG)**

**Strikes at Bradford college — [bit.ly/1f5jBuK](http://bit.ly/1f5jBuK)**





## US ends state ban on same-sex marriage

By Ann Coleman, Alan Maass, and Nicole Colson

**The U.S. Supreme Court's 5-4 ruling on same-sex marriage (26 June) was a victory in the decades-long struggle to recognize the humanity and dignity of LGBT people.**

There were large celebrations in cities across the U.S., with "Pride" parades and rallies in many cities taking on a new significance and joyful atmosphere.

In New York City, thousands of people, waving "Love rules" signs and carrying rainbow flags, gathered in the streets outside of the Stonewall Inn. "To see this just means so much," Stonewall Inn owner Stacy Lenz told one reporter. "It's not about just the idea of marriage. It's about equality."

"I can go on with my life," an elated Joe Vitale told CBS New York. Vitale, along with his husband Rob Ralmas, have a two-year-old adopted son named Cooper. Until now, their marriage and rights as Cooper's parents were not recognised in every state. Ohio, where Cooper was born, has refused to issue a birth certificate listing both of Cooper's parents.

Cooper was, in fact, the youngest of 31 plaintiffs in the several cases that the Supreme Court decided last week. In striking down state bans on same-sex marriage, the Supreme Court ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges* and three related cases effectively ended a "state's rights" approach to marriage.

Plaintiff Jim Obergefell had married his longtime partner John Arthur in Maryland in 2013, where same-sex marriage is legal. When Arthur died in Ohio three months and 11 days later, the state, where same-sex marriage had been banned, refused to list Obergefell as Arthur's spouse on the death certificate.

The mainstream media will highlight the legal strategy that led to victory, which dates back to the 2003 court ruling in Massachusetts that overturned a state ban on same-sex marriage. But those of us who were organising and protesting every step of the way need to remember that it was pressure at the grassroots that got us to this point.

Just a decade ago, the right wing had the momentum on the issue of marriage equality.

In the 2004 election campaign, the Republicans made same-sex marriage a "wedge issue" to mobilize conservative voters, putting forward referendums for state constitutions to define marriage as exclusively between a man and a woman. Voters in 11 states — Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon and Utah — all approved the bans on same-sex marriage by double-digit margins.

**CAUTIONED**  
**Mainstream LGBT rights advocates cautioned against any further efforts to push for equality, believing that this would only fuel the Republican-driven backlash.**

Most Democratic political figures followed the likes of Bill Clinton and then-recently-elected Sen. Hillary Clinton in reiterating their commitment to marriage being between a man and woman.

But the Republican backlash was itself going in the opposite direction of public opinion. That became clear in the aftermath of another defeat for marriage equality — the passage of California's anti-gay marriage Prop 8 in November 2008.

This time, the response was different: On the night of the election itself, there were sizeable and angry demonstrations in San Francisco, Los Angeles and other cities. Within days, the protests spread across

the state, then to cities in other states, and finally across the country.

A new movement was born, one very different in character to the mainstream LGBT organizations that remained cautious about same-sex marriage. In city after city, the issue got people new to politics involved in organizing for the first time.

Less than a year after Prop 8 won in California, there was a national mobilization of 200,000 people to Washington, D.C. for the National Equality March, which put the issue of same-sex marriage front and centre, but also raised a range of other questions, from the military's don't-ask-don't-tell ban on gays and lesbians to the inclusion of trans people in the proposed Employment Non-Discrimination Act, and more.

**TIDE**  
**The tide was turning.**

When, five years later, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to consider challenges to lower-court rulings upholding marriage equality, the total number of states with equal marriage rights became a majority. One year after that, three-quarters of the 50 states recognized same-sex marriage.

In 1996 polls 68 percent of people opposed marriage equality and only 27 percent supported it. By 2004 support had grown to 42 percent. The polls hit the 50 percent mark in 2011 and remained above that number since 2012, reaching 60 percent this spring.

Unsurprisingly, the right wing was apoplectic at the ruling.

Chief Justice John Roberts recycled the myth that "people around the world have viewed [marriage] in a particular way for thousands of years" and took the point a step further, calling the present generation "pretentious" for attempting "to burst the bonds of that history and tradition."

Probably the most absurd



**On Saturday 27 June Workers' Liberty members joined the NCAFC and LGSM on the trade union section of Pride. We shouted slogans including "Say it loud, say it queer, immigrants are welcome here!"**

opinion came from Justice Clarence Thomas, however, who lectured that denial of the right to marriage doesn't deprive people of their dignity, because:

"human dignity cannot be taken away by the government. Slaves did not lose their dignity (any more than they lost their humanity) because the government allowed them to be enslaved. Those held in internment camps did not lose their dignity because the government confined them. And those denied governmental benefits certainly do not lose their dignity because the government denies them those benefits."

Among the Republican presidential hopefuls, Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal declared that we may need to "get rid" of the Supreme Court in the wake of the decision. Texas Sen. Ted Cruz called for "civil disobedience" — arguing that local clerks should refuse to issue marriage licenses on the grounds of religious objections, because "ours is a country that was built by men and women fleeing religious oppression."

Some on the left have reacted by focusing on the oppressive history of marriage



as a social institution and dismissing the celebrations as being about a ruling that will mainly affect "rich, white" gays and lesbians.

This attitude neglects the very real impact that a legal victory for marriage equality will have on the lives of LGBT people like Jim Obergefell or Joe Vitale — in the form of more than 1,000 federal rights formerly only available to different-sex married couples. The effect of this expansion of rights will be felt by countless working-class and poor LGBT people of every race.

Plus, there is the example set by a successful struggle — one that actively involved hundreds of thousands of people over decades and that will continue to fight for the hu-

manity and dignity of all LGBT people. The struggle that came together around marriage equality won't stop there — it has lessons for all the fights taking place in every corner of an unjust and unequal society.

Besides opening the door for LGBT couples on issues around citizenship, child custody, health care, access to retirement benefits, and more, the Supreme Court decision on marriage equality is a reminder of that most important political lesson: when we fight we can win.

**Ours is a movement for humanity and dignity, and it will triumph in the end, no matter how the judges interpret the constitution.**

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