



Solidarity

For social ownership of the banks and industry

No 396 2 March 2016 50p/£1

BRING DOWN THE BORDERS!

French authorities have set about dismantling a large section of the “Jungle” refugee camp in Calais.

Demolition teams, protected by French riot police to disperse protesters, have been forcefully destroying hundreds temporary shelters.

The dismantling represents the violent destruction of what little the refugees had in the way of a home.

More pages 6-7



NO BREXIT! FIGHT FOR MIGRANT RIGHTS!

Inside:

Stop the Labour Party's purge!



Momentum steering committee member Jill Mountford has been expelled from the Labour Party. She spoke to *Solidarity*.

See page 5

Irish electorate pass judgement on austerity



Michéal MacEoin assesses the Irish election results.

See page 3

Can there be a left Brexit?



Dan Katz argues there is no such thing as a left-wing Brexit.

See page 4

Join Labour!

Young Labour
votes for free
education!

See page 10

French workers to strike against new labour code

A report by the Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste on proposed anti-labour laws and the 9 March general strike

The [French] government has postponed the passage of its "labour law".

Its hand has been forced by the wave of protests which has arisen against its plans. The petition against the law will soon reach one million signatories; youth organisations are mobilising; a first day of strikes and demonstrations has been called for 9 March. The objective must be the total withdrawal of this bill, which is an unprecedented attack against workers' rights.

The boss class and the right wing hardly dared dream of it. With this reform, the Labour Code would no longer be intended to protect workers but would place equal importance on both the "good functioning of the business" and workers' basic freedoms.

Working hours are the first target of the "Socialist" Labour Code.

- The set daily working time could rise from 10 hours to 12 hours and from 46 hours to 48 hours for the week.

- The daily minimum rest period of 11 hours could be split up, and restrictions placed on rest hours.

- Apprentices could work up to 10 hours per day and 40 hours per

week (as against 8 hours and 35 hours currently).

- Rest day allocation would be applicable in workplaces of fewer than 50 workers without a works agreement.

- Working time would be calculated over three years, in order to not pay overtime, and overtime pay would be reduced by 10%.

- The number of days of special leave for bereavements etc. would no longer be guaranteed.

Three is one objective here and that is safeguarding profits.

Increasing working hours without compensation would become possible, even where there are no economic difficulties whatever;

Sackings and pay cuts could be permitted in cases of temporary economic difficulties, limited to France and one workplace in a group;

Where a modification to the labour contract is refused, that means that it will be possible to fire staff for personal reasons, and the staff having no means of contesting the real reason;

Compensation for unfair dismissal will be capped at 15 months' wages (!).

But the heart of the attack is about up-ending the order of priorities: apart from a few basic rules, works contracts will be able to erode everything laid out in the Labour Code. What's more, such



Labour Minister Myriam El Khomri unveils changes to the Labour Code

works contracts will be able to be ratified by referendum, even where unions representing 70% or more of staff are opposed. In other words, contracts between boss and worker will be fixed in a way that minimises the strength of workers, where bosses can drive workers the furthest back.

This new government attack is aimed at permanently breaking the rights of workers, even more than the CPE ("first employment contract" of 2006), which was stopped through mobilisations ten years

ago. This government, which claims to be leftwing, wants the rule to be total freedom for bosses, with workers "free" to do as they wish, with a gun held to their head and unions out of the picture.

Like the Villepin government tried to impose the CPE through an "emergency procedure", the government means to employ once again the anti-democratic procedure to pass its law. This policy, from the "state of emergency" [following the Paris terror attacks, which gives the police sweeping powers and places restrictions on public gatherings] to repression against social movements, is designed to give the government all the tools that it could need to implement measures aimed at serving the bosses.

All workers, in all workplaces, must prepare for mobilisation. Workers in the SNCF (trains) will go on strike against a similar attack, the "bedrock" decree, which increases working hours and reduces pay.

All together, on 9 March, we will mobilise. Demonstrations are planned in most départements. We need to stop this government from taking us back to the 19th century.

The Kurds and Turkey's ambitions

Aso Kamal, a member of the Worker-communist Party of Kurdistan, spoke to Solidarity. This is the second part of the interview. We published the first last week.

There is no stability in the Middle East. Kurdistan stretches across different countries — Turkey, Iraq, Syria. There is conflict between the big powers: Russia and US.

In the region there are two poles: on the one hand, Iran and Assad, and on the other, Saudi Arabia and

Turkey. Political parties and powers are divided between those two poles in the region.

Erdogan sees the local administration of the Kurdish people in Syria as a threat to his power, and the Turkish state has a long long-running conflict with Turkey's Kurds.

In the last election in Turkey, the Kurdish party, HDP, won seats in parliament. The Turkish government started to attack Kurdish cities in Turkey, killing hundreds of people. They want to prevent the raising of the Kurdish question in the Middle East. Turkey has also at-

tacked Kurdish cities in Syria, to prevent Kurdish fighters from fighting Daesh.

Turkey allows the border with Syria to be used to pass weapons and fighters to Daesh and al-Nusra. The Kurdish fighters want to close that border traffic.

In Iraqi Kurdistan too, in the Kandil mountains, there are Kurdish fighters, under attack from Turkey. Turkey is intervening in Turkey, Iraq and Syria—it's like a declaration of war on Kurds everywhere.

Yet Turkey has good relations with the Kurdistan Regional Government, and with the KDP, the ruling party in Iraqi Kurdistan. Turkey gets oil very cheap from the KRG.

There have been protests outside Turkish embassies. Yet the Turkish government has killed several hundred people inside Turkey and won't want stop there.

The Turkish government has a plan to dominate the region. It wants influence in Syria, Iraq and other countries, and it wants to rival Iran.

The Turkish government sees Kurdish resistance as standing in the way of this planned "new Turkish empire". In the event of a collapse in Syria or Iraq, the Turkish regime wants to have a hand in the changes that will follow.

Whitewash on Regeni

By Hugh Edwards

At the end of February, a month after the disappearance in Cairo of Italian researcher Giulio Regeni, the official Egyptian investigation into his torture and death has reported.

The murder, so the Minister of the Interior claimed, was "most likely" due to a "personal vendetta", in a context of "young Arab/ foreign contacts" where drugs freely circulated.

This cynical nonsense was of a piece with the same minister's claim, when Regeni's body was first found, that death was "most likely" due to the victim being struck by a car.

The autopsy in Italy revealed no evidence of any drugs, but that refutation will not discomfort the dead-eyed thugs in power in Cairo. For them, this whitewash is only to prepare the ground for an official verdict, perhaps naming a killer, which will exonerate the real culprits: the state's murderous security apparatus.

The Minister signals his confidence that the Italian authorities, in spite of their repeated angry demands for a transparent investigation, will have to swallow what finally arrives on their plate. The Italians know that in Egypt, one regime after another has sought to outdo the previous in mass repression.

Italy has accepted without protest, as chief of the investigation, a person who in 1993 was condemned for torture, murder and falsifying his police report on a prisoner. His sentence was immediately annulled, and he was promoted for "good conduct" to



become Director of Security in Giza.

And Italy's own investigating team in Egypt was from the beginning excluded from any autonomous role.

The leaders of both countries know that the situation carries serious risks of damaging their lucrative commercial, political and strategic ties. That is all the more likely if the official stitch-up transforms the anger of the Italian population into public protests on the streets. In Egypt, too, Giulio was highly esteemed among the re-emerging forces of rebellion.

Italian prime minister Renzi faces upcoming regional elections and a referendum on institutional reform.

And the situation in Libya, a former Italian colony, only a few hundred miles away across the Mediterranean, and now contested by rival governments and gangs, is becoming more critical.

Renzi's ambition to prove himself the man who will redeem the global ambitions of the tricolour may push him to dice with a military adventure in deflect the deepening contradictions.

Not for the first time in the country's history, illusions of a colonial role in Libya may mark a critical change in the relationship of class forces in Italy.



Labour wiped out in Irish elections

By Michéal MacEoin

Elections in the Republic of Ireland were held on Friday 26 February.

With most of the votes now counted, it is clear that the electorate has passed a harsh judgement on the outgoing Fine Gael-Labour coalition, with the junior partner suffering a near meltdown. Labour has won just six seats — a massive drop from its previous 33.

The incumbent government came to power in 2011, three years into the economic crisis, and continued the work of its predecessors, implementing austerity under the supervision of the Troika (European Commission with the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund).

Tax rises, cuts in services, and startling levels of emigration have done lasting damage to Ireland's social fabric, and a wave of anger exploded in 2014 over the introduction of water-charges.

It was for these reasons that Fine Gael's (FG) slogan "Let's Keep The Recovery Going" did not resonate with voters, and that Labour's urban working-class vote has

largely abandoned it in favour of Sinn Féin, the Anti-Austerity Alliance-People Before Profit (AAA-PBP) coalition or the recently-formed Social Democrats.

If Labour does not pick up another TD in the remaining counts, it will not be eligible for speaking rights in the new Dáil. Labour has learned a harsh lesson on the fate of labour movement parties which enter government with the right-wing in order to manage capitalism.

FG lost over 10% of its vote, though still remains the largest party with 25.5% and 47 seats at the time of writing. One of the biggest surprises for most commentators was the resurrection of Fianna Fail (FF), presumed buried as recently as a year ago.

The party came within a percentage point of FG and is not far behind it in seats. The chameleon-like populist nationalist party, with deep roots and strong local organisation, caught the public mood better with a call for "an Ireland for all", and many voters who abandoned it in 2011 will have been seeking an excuse to return.

Even so, the era of two-party politics is over. Between them FG and FF have the support of fewer than



Anti-Austerity Alliance

50% of voters, with the rest of the electorate backing Sinn Féin (SF) (14% and 23 TDs), smaller parties to the left, or an eclectic variety of independents.

Though both FF and FG are on the centre-right of politics, a "grand

coalition" is unlikely given the deep historical animus between the two parties. If not another election, more likely is a Fine Gael government, perhaps with independents, which Fianna Fail will provide with a confidence arrangement in return for concessions. The latter can then collapse it at a propitious medium-term moment.

Another reason to rule out a FG-FF coalition is the rise of SF, who would be the main opposition party in such an outcome. As Daniel Finn from the *New Left Review* has written, SF is "a left-nationalist party that is more nationalist than left", with an undemocratic internal culture, a recent history of screeching u-turns and a marked ideological pragmatism. SF is neither socialist nor consistently anti-austerity, but the rise in its support reflects a burning sense of anger at the political establishment.

To the left is the AAA-PBP, Formed to give electoral expression to the anti-water charges movement. It is an electoral coalition of the respective anti-austerity fronts run by the Socialist Party (SP) and Socialist Workers Party (SWP). It received 3.95% for its 31 candidates, so far winning five seats and overtaking Labour in Dublin.

Though run by Trotskyist organisations, its platform was largely left-reformist. Nevertheless, the high profile of TDs such as the SP's Paul Murphy, who put themselves at the forefront of the anti-water charges movement, means that the radical left will have strong representation in parliament with which to resist any incoming right-wing government.

The next step should be to develop the AAA-PBP from a one-time electoral front into a more enduring and democratic revolutionary socialist project.



Jeremy Corbyn addresses the 60,000-strong demonstration against Trident renewal on Saturday 27 February.

Indian student leader arrested for "sedition"

By Gerry Bates

In the latest in a wave of arrests in India, Umar Khalid, 25, a graduate student at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) has been detained on charges of sedition.

Khalid was arrested in the middle of the night following allegations that he had participated in an "anti-Indian" demonstration. A week earlier, Kanhaiya Kumar, president of the student union at JNU, was arrested on the same charges.

The "anti-Indian" event was in fact a protest marking the anniversary of the execution of Kashmiri militant Afzal Guru, whose trial and execution six years ago was condemned by human rights' groups for the secrecy with which it was conducted. The sedition laws used to arrest the students are

hangovers from British colonial rule.

The arrests have been met with widespread protest, including from students and over 400 academics around the world. Opposition parties accuse Narendra Modi's Hindu-chauvinist BJP party of using old colonial laws to crush freedom of speech and intimidate opponents.

Since the arrests, Indian home minister, Rajnath Singh, has said on Twitter that people who are "anti-India ... will not be tolerated or spared". Meanwhile, pro-government counter-demonstrations have attacked demonstrations in support of the arrested students, beating up pro-free speech demonstrators and journalists and telling them to "go back to Pakistan".

The idea that being "anti-Indian" is a reason to be arrested is both ludicrous and deeply dangerous. To the extent that such a vague and abstract phrase can mean anything, it can only mean that Indians can be persecuted and arrested for criticizing their own government and state.

Two days before his arrest, Umar Khalid addressed a large student rally. "Today this is not just this university's struggle but the struggle of every university in this country," he said, "It is a battle for this society — it is a battle for what sort of a society we have in the days to come."



Umar Khalid

A Schäuble road to socialism?

By Martin Thomas

A long article in the *Socialist Economic Bulletin* (15 February) and on the Labour Left website *Left Futures* argues that the "centrepiece" of Labour Party economic policy should be a national investment bank.

This would be a publicly-owned bank, able to borrow more cheaply than commercial banks because of its government backing, and lending for infrastructure and industrial projects.

The model is the KfW, the German state's federal investment bank, set up under the Marshall Plan in the 1940s and still going strong.

A safe, conservative model, maybe a useful capitalist technique, but in no way anti-capitalist. The current chair of the KfW Supervisory Board is German finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble, Europe's sternest austerity-hawk.

The authors of the SEB/ LF article are Michael Burke, a regular contributor to SEB (which describes itself as "published by Ken Livingstone"), and John Ross, a professor at a Chinese university who is con-



nected to the Socialist Action group in Britain.

The odd thing is why they think there is anything specially socialist or left-wing about the proposals for a Schäuble-bank in Britain. Yet they think it so left-wing that in return for it they are willing to write that Labour "should not borrow over the course of the business cycle for current expenditure", a superstitious and unnecessary limitation. They denounce George Osborne not so much for class war as for "profligate international borrowing".

Germany, with the KfW, has since 2002 had some of the harshest attacks on lower-paid workers' conditions and welfare in Europe.

A socialist policy needs, not just a national investment bank, but public ownership and democratic control of all the banks.

World trade crashes

The *Financial Times* (26 February) bases itself on the first official estimate of total world trade in 2015, from the Netherlands government, to say that global exports and imports of goods fell 13.8% in dollar terms in 2015.

Before the 2008 crash, world trade had been growing fairly steadily at about 7% a year, and markedly faster than world output for decades.

The 2015 decline is partly down to the slump in the price of oil and some other basic commodities. But there is more to it than that. World trade has grown very slowly, by previous standards, since 2009.

Some declines have been startling, like the 60% reduction in container traffic from China to Brazil in January 2016 compared to January 2015.

The elements are gathering for a new crash. Even if that is avoided, a protracted depression is likely.

The left case for Brexit: illogical and dangerous

THE LEFT

By Dan Katz

If you wanted to make a case that much of the British far left is irredeemably stupid, you don't have to look further than the Socialist Party's and Socialist Workers Party's policies on Europe.

The Socialist Party's newspaper headline (23 February) reads: "EU referendum: our chance to vote OUT the Tories". They seem to be aiming for a world record for lack of sense in a single sentence.

With some sort of vague idea that this is a referendum, not an election, they explain that a defeat for Cameron in the referendum will lead to a crisis for Cameron and will bring down the government. The problem, however, is that not all damage to capitalism benefits the working class, and not every political crisis for Cameron will help the left.

It is surely true that a vote to leave the EU will lead to a big headache for Cameron. Presumably he would resign as Tory leader. Then what? He would be replaced by, I suppose, Boris Johnson, or similar, from the Leave campaign.

Would there be an election? Probably not (that would require a vote of no confidence or a very big majority of MPs to back it). The most likely outcome would be a worse, more right-wing and racist, unpleasant Tory government; a wave of nasty xenophobia; radically ramped up anti-migrant rhetoric and new rules against refugees and migrant

The Socialist Party says



EU referendum: Vote OUT the Tories

23 February The referendum on 23 June is not just about the EU but is also an opportunity to pass verdict on Cameron and his rotten government. An 'out' vote would strike a mortal blow at the government. More...

How the Socialist Party sees this

workers; a wave of new deportations.

But let's humour the SP and suppose there was an election in the aftermath of a right-wing victory to Leave the EU — amidst the flag waving, and vile chauvinist euphoria from the *Express*, *Telegraph* and the *Mail*. What then? The victory for the British right — UKIP, fascists and Tory right — would lead to the possibility of a left victory in an election called in its wake?

The 800 SP members would be waiting to take advantage?

That notion is delusional. The right would win a new election, presumably with gains.

The idea the left can chime in with the Leave campaign, which is dominated by much bigger reactionary forces, and a great deal of money, is absurd. The immediate effects of a Leave victory will be a very serious right-wing jolt in UK politics with foreign-born workers as the main victims.

Enter the SWP. Their new pamphlet *A left case for exit* by Joseph Choonara is a long-winded exposition full of non sequiturs. It manages to advocate a vote to Leave the EU in order to oppose the EU's racist policies,

even though that vote will immediately lead to a massive racist drive against migrants. Understand that? No, me neither.

In fact the SWP's pamphlet makes no sense even before they have even written a word. Even the graphic on the front cover is gibberish (a motorway sign with a left turn-off as an alternative to straight ahead.) There is no left turn possible here! The choice is more reasonably presented as a sharp right turn, or straight ahead.

Again: the idea that a victory for the Tory right and UKIP is, in fact, and against all indications to the contrary, a victory for us, is absurd.

Perhaps the immediate and terrible political effects of leaving the EU might be overridden by some sort of general, strategic gain? Here, in the realm of the strategic goals of Marxists, the SWP/SP break ranks again. For surely real Marxists are for European unity, for a united federal Europe, for free movement across Europe and against the erecting of barriers between UK workers and the rest of European labour?

How to square the circle? The SP is in favour of a Socialist United Europe! And the first step to get there, is, apparently, to leave Europe!

Sure, and the first step to a greener world is to burn down recycling centres.

Which brings me to the Spartacist League, also enthusiastic advocates of an Out vote. I had the good fortune to discuss with a French comrade last weekend. I suggested he better have his passport ready, because the first effect of an Out victory would be Boris Johnson telling him to get back to Paris.

He declared that his deportation would be a minor matter set against an overall victory for the working class. Honestly, I'm not making this up.

Prevent: a stilted script

LETTERS

I was very interested to read recent articles and correspondence regarding the government's Prevent strategy (Omar Raii, *Solidarity* 390, Patrick Murphy, *Solidarity* 391, Jim Denham, *Solidarity* 394)

As part of being formally inducted into a new role, I had the pleasure of receiving a session on Prevent. This consisted of a heavily prescribed and standardised script and DVD presentation. It was clear the tutor was not allowed to depart from the script, expand, or engage in discussion.

I was a little surprised that the "main terrorist threat to this country" is still regarded as being from Al-Qaeda.

Included in the script and DVD was an overarching "explanatory" "expert" narrative which explicitly regarded terrorism by Al-Qaeda and presumably ISIS as merely the latest in a long line of historical "ideological terrorisms", which included in the past people "fighting for a homeland" and even "for a communist society."

The sources and motivations behind Al-Qaeda and ISIS are undoubtedly complex and contradictory, but to equate these with the mass democratic struggles including armed actions by such as the African National Congress of South Africa, the Palestine Liberation Organisation, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Irish Republican Army and the Kurdistan Workers' Party, for national liberation, democratic self-determination, and some degree of social emancipation, seems to me to be not only ludicrous but to indicate an underlying dangerous and authoritarian ruling class ideology.

People are not required or expected to have agreed with every dot or comma or action by groups such as these, but there is surely a world of difference between movements and organisations fighting for basic democratic, national, human and social rights, and those which would seek to impose some form of clerical-fascistic/murderous dictatorship over the people.

Adam Southall

NUS, take responsibility!

In a blog published on 25 February, one of the National Union of Students' national LGBT officers, Fran Cowling, finally responded to press coverage of their "no-platforming" of Peter Tatchell. It's a confusing read, to say the least.

Fran writes that they "personally declined" an invitation to an event at Canterbury Christ Church University on the basis that Tatchell "has not always acted in the best interests of trans, Muslim and black communities".

By signing a public letter supporting the freedom of speech of trans-exclusionary radical feminists such as Germaine Greer on campuses, Fran argues that Tatchell "tacitly endorsed the right of individuals to espouse hate speech on campuses where vulnerable trans students may be affected".

Cowling also cites texts criticising Tatchell's politics around race and religion such as Jin Haritaworn et al's "Gay Imperialism" as another reason why they would not speak at an event where Tatchell was also on the panel. They even go as far as to say, "in declining to attend the event my aim was to stand in solidarity with marginalised groups within the LGBT community".

Cowling is completely baffling. They argue they were standing in solidarity with marginalised groups, but they "did not seek to make [their] opinion of Peter public".

Apparently "solidarity" is just not gracing a stage with your presence, Fran? What is the point in a national officer having a view about someone's "problematic" behaviour, if they just keep it to themselves?

Fran also writes that they "were not prepared for [their] opinion to be shared so publicly". Again — they are an elected national officer of the National Union of Students, and as such they are already Google-able; and they are a minor political figure. I feel bad for any negative effects of the publicity, and coming out has been exceptionally hard in my life, too, but they really can't claim to just be a private individual.

Furthermore, Fran writes that they have not "claimed my membership share my views". Well, isn't it your job to find out, Fran? Were you not elected to represent LGBT+ people in the student movement?!

However, it's not just Fran Cowling that deserves criticism in the student movement over free speech and liberation politics. It's any elected officer, delegate or activist who doesn't feel the need to explain themselves to anyone, because they undermine democracy in doing so. It's everyone who's stayed silent out of convenience and anyone who refuses to take a view because doing so is difficult.

I'm not a student, but I feel let down by Fran Cowling as a leader in the LGBT+ movement more widely. If you think Tatchell is a bit racist and transphobic surely you should actually voice that and talk to your members, because that is real "solidarity"!

It's time for the NUS and for its officers and activists to take responsibility for their actions. Stand by your decisions and explain yourselves clearly.

Kate Harris, north London

Racist slurs and attack on Corbyn

I couldn't agree with your article on press coverage of Sadiq Khan more (Anti-Muslim campaign targets Sadiq Khan, *Solidarity* 394)

It's also worth noting that these disgusting Islamophobic slurs are also part of the broader attack on Corbyn.

The right have been trying to brand Corbyn as a "terrorist sympathiser" and a "threat to national security" ever since the summer and at the moment they are doing everything they can to connect Khan and

Corbyn together in the public imaginary, while also trying to paint Khan as an "associate of extremists", or generally untrustworthy because of his race. If they can solidify the idea of Khan as an "extremist Muslim" and successfully associate him with Corbyn, it's just one more subliminal message that the country would be in danger under a Corbyn government and only the Tories can keep us "safe".

Project fear continues.

Dave Hodge, from website

Why Corbyn-haters are targeting Workers' Liberty

In the last two weeks, a number of activists connected in some way to the Alliance for Workers' Liberty have been expelled from the Labour Party. This comes after other such expulsions late last year.

The new expulsions include Jill Mountford, chair of Lewisham Momentum and a member of the Momentum national steering committee, and now the editor of *Solidarity*, Cathy Nugent.

Jill's expulsion letter arrived when she out was canvassing for Sadiq Khan for mayor of London. She is well known in the local Labour Party and her expulsion has provoked widespread outrage, not just on the left. Cathy is women's officer of Goldsmiths University Labour Society.

As well as those who are or have been linked with Workers' Liberty, or are said to be or have been linked, other left-wingers have been expelled or excluded from Labour. But since Jeremy Corbyn was elected leader we have been the main target of the "Compliance Unit".

Why have Cathy, Jill and others close to Workers' Liberty been targeted? Expulsion letters from the Compliance Unit have varied, but this is what they told Cathy and Jill:

"It has been brought to our attention that during your current period of Labour Party membership you have been closely involved with and supported the Alliance for Workers' Liberty. Although Workers' Liberty de-registered as a political party... it remains a political organisation the programme, principles and policies of which are not compatible with

those of the Labour Party..."

So the charge is retrospective. There is no due process: the "sentence" arrives before the charge.

And, interestingly, the target is now not any organisational breach but *political ideas*. These comrades have been expelled because they are fighting for a militant, class-struggle labour movement and for socialism.

Workers' Liberty's Marxist ideas are in a minority in the Labour Party and labour movement. But then so are the ideas of the Blairite officials driving the witch-hunt against us. Their neo-liberal, right-wing, explicitly pro-capitalist ideas and policies have never been popular with Labour members, and are now in a small minority.

The difference is that we proceed with arguments, debate and education, whereas their preferred weapons are bans, administrative suppression, the right wing press. They cannot defend their shameful record – of joining the persecution of migrants, say, helping the Tories justify austerity, or initiating privatisation in the NHS – in discussion.

With Labour Party members or trade unionists who are honestly convinced that the right of the Labour Party is correct on issues, we want to have a comradely discussion. The problem with most Blairite zealots, and particularly those at the top, is that they do not want to discuss.

That is not primarily because they are unreasonable people; it is because they have no loyalty to the labour movement, and do not want the labour movement's interests, concerns and democracy to disrupt their relationship with official society.



The architects of New Labour: their politics have never been popular with Labour members.

From the point of view of the Blairs and Mandelsons and their dwindling number of acolytes, we are dangerous, not because we want to disrupt the labour movement but quite the opposite – because we want to strengthen it. They hate us for the same reason they hate Jeremy Corbyn and the movement behind him.

What alarms the witch-hunters is our agitation for the labour movement to revive itself and to fight militantly for the interests of workers and oppressed people on every front, in official politics, in workplaces, unions and strikes, in communities and on

the streets, and in the battle of ideas.

That is what the Alliance for Workers' Liberty exists to do, and that is what we and our friends in the labour movement and left will continue to do, regardless of this persecution. For every person they have expelled, more in the Labour Party have been persuaded to help us, work with us and join us.

If you want to stop this witch-hunt so we can unite to take on the Tories; if you want a Labour Party and labour movement that fight on every front; if you want to fight against capitalism and for socialism – read our literature, discuss with us, work with us.

Liam McNulty reinstated

Following a several-months campaign against his expulsion from the Labour Party, well-known London Labour, Young Labour and socialist activist Liam McNulty has been reinstated.

Liam's campaign combined persistent challenges to the Compliance Unit through official channels with mobilising support from his local Labour Party in Haringey (despite sharp right wing opposition), his Momentum group, and trade unions, including his own union, Unite. He has also played a

prominent role in the Stop the Labour Purge initiative since it was set up in November.

Liam's victory is not the only one so far. There are some appeals pending, but pretty much every expelled socialist who has been able, through persistence, to get an appeal process has been reinstated.

That includes Workers' Liberty supporters Gemma Short and Daniel Randall.

• Stop the Labour Purge campaign: stopthelabourpurge.wordpress.com

Labour advertises for new witch-hunter

The Labour Party is short of cash, and it faces an uphill battle with coming elections. It urgently needs more staff to recruit new members and to organise campaigning.

Yet it is advertising, not for that sort of staff, but for an "investigator" to expel more members.

The job is "Compliance Officer — Investigations", paying £35,000 a year for work in Labour's shadowy "Compliance Unit".

The Compliance Unit is mentioned several times in the latest Labour Party rulebook, but in such contexts as "procedural guidelines determined by the NEC... are available from the Compliance Unit" (rule 1.2.5.B).

Nowhere does the rulebook confer any authority on the Unit, or state how it should be staffed and to whom it is accountable.

In most operations, the "compliance unit" are staff who check the compliance of the operation with public laws and regulations. This "Compliance Unit" is different. It is about making Labour Party members "com-

pliant" with the unelected staff!

The powers the Compliance Unit has asserted in recent months include "automatic exclusion", under which members are excluded without hearing or appeal and told that they cannot reapply until five years later.

The unit should be disbanded, and its staff reassigned to constructive work. Labour needs more organisers, not more witch-hunters. Where the Labour Party really needs to take disciplinary action, it can be done by the National Constitutional Committee, the body designated in the rulebook for the job.

The new "investigator" job has been advertised on the w4mpjobs website, which describes itself as "funded by the House of Commons to provide career development opportunities for those working for MPs and those who are looking for a job with an MP or in other areas of political activity."

So even worse. Public money is being used to fund internal party witch-hunts.

Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell has publicly called for the abolition of the Compliance Unit. He is right.

Expelled for thought-crime?

The Labour Party's "Compliance Unit's" campaign of expulsions targeting members and supporters of Workers' Liberty has taken a new turn.

Previous expulsions, some of which have now been overturned, cited a Labour Party rule which, read literally, banned Labour members from also joining or supporting any non-Labour political organisation. The rule is rarely interpreted literally, as it would exclude vast swathes of the Labour membership, many of whom are members of campaign groups, NGOs, and other bodies.

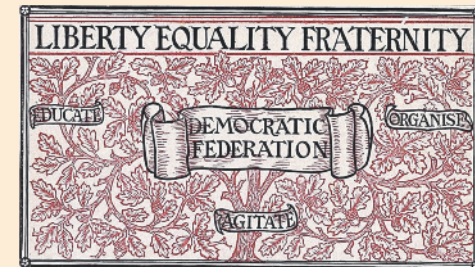
Now, Compliance Unit letters claim that Workers' Liberty's "principles and programme" are incompatible with those of the Labour Party, and therefore anyone even loosely associated with Workers' Liberty is ideologically unsuitable to be a Labour member.

RIGHT WING

This thought-policing mirrors the approach advocated by Labour right winger Luke Akehurst.

In October last year he wrote on the LabourList blog that Workers' Liberty's approach is "more intellectually consistent", "more constructive" than others on the left, with "more appealing and less crude" politics on many issues, and Workers' Liberty "includes many people who I admire". But no matter. Our revolutionary socialist politics necessarily exclude us from participation in the Labour Party, because Labour is reformist and social-democratic.

This fundamentally misunderstands the historical roots and role of the Labour Party. Of course, it has never been a revolutionary party. It emerged as the political expression



A Social Democratic Federation banner. The Marxist SDF was one of the founding groups of the Labour Party.

of the broad labour movement — the industrial trade unions, but also a variety of left-wing groups, including both reformists and revolutionaries. Its political composition has shifted as political struggles inside it have ebbed and flowed. It has always been a political coalition of the labour movement, not the monolith the Compliance Unit apparently wishes it to be.

It is significant that the Compliance Unit applies the political test only in one direction: revolutionary socialists are beyond the pale, but the status of such as Blair and Mandelson — no sort of socialist at all, reformist or revolutionary, but straightforward advocates of neo-liberal economic policy and market rule — is unchallenged.

Workers' Liberty members have no wish to apply the methods the Compliance Unit have applied to us to others: we do not call for Blair and Mandelson to be expelled.

Let the Labour Party be the political party of the broad labour movement, and let its future political direction be determined by open debate and discussion, not exclusions and bans!

Bring down the border

By Colin Foster

The EU is bureaucratic, capitalist, mean-spirited towards refugees, a mess. Surely Brexit would be better?

As if Britain is less capitalist! In any case, none of the Brexiters — not Ukip, not even the fantasists talking about a “left exit” — really believes in a Britain cut off from the naughty world by high barriers and doing its own idyllic thing on its own as if the world ended at Dover.

Oh? So what do they want?

In practice, they want a Britain tied into the capitalist world by a equally bureaucratic, equally capitalist, but messier set of treaties and agreements, and with a even more mean-spirited attitude to refugees and migrants.

That's what you say. What do they say for themselves?

The miserable, dull status-quo-worshipping official “vote in” campaign is right about one thing. The “vote out” people are evasive and contradictory about what they want. They have pointed at 25 different countries’ different current relations with the EU as possible models.

What is the balance of probabilities?

The “vote out” people most commonly quote Norway as a model. Norway is not in the European Union (it voted in a referendum not to join, primarily because its fisher people didn't like the EU's Common Fisheries Policy), but for almost everything other than fisheries it might as well be. It automatically accepts all EU single-market laws. It accepts free movement of people, capital, goods, and services. It pays into the EU budget; but it doesn't get EU assistance funds, and it has no say in the single-market laws. It is in the European Economic Area (EEA), a sort of outside ring of the EU.

That wouldn't satisfy the Brexiters!

They might settle for something like that. Even an Ukip government would want an extensive agreement with the EU to cover the interests of 1.8 million British citizens living in other EU countries, and to secure economic flows.

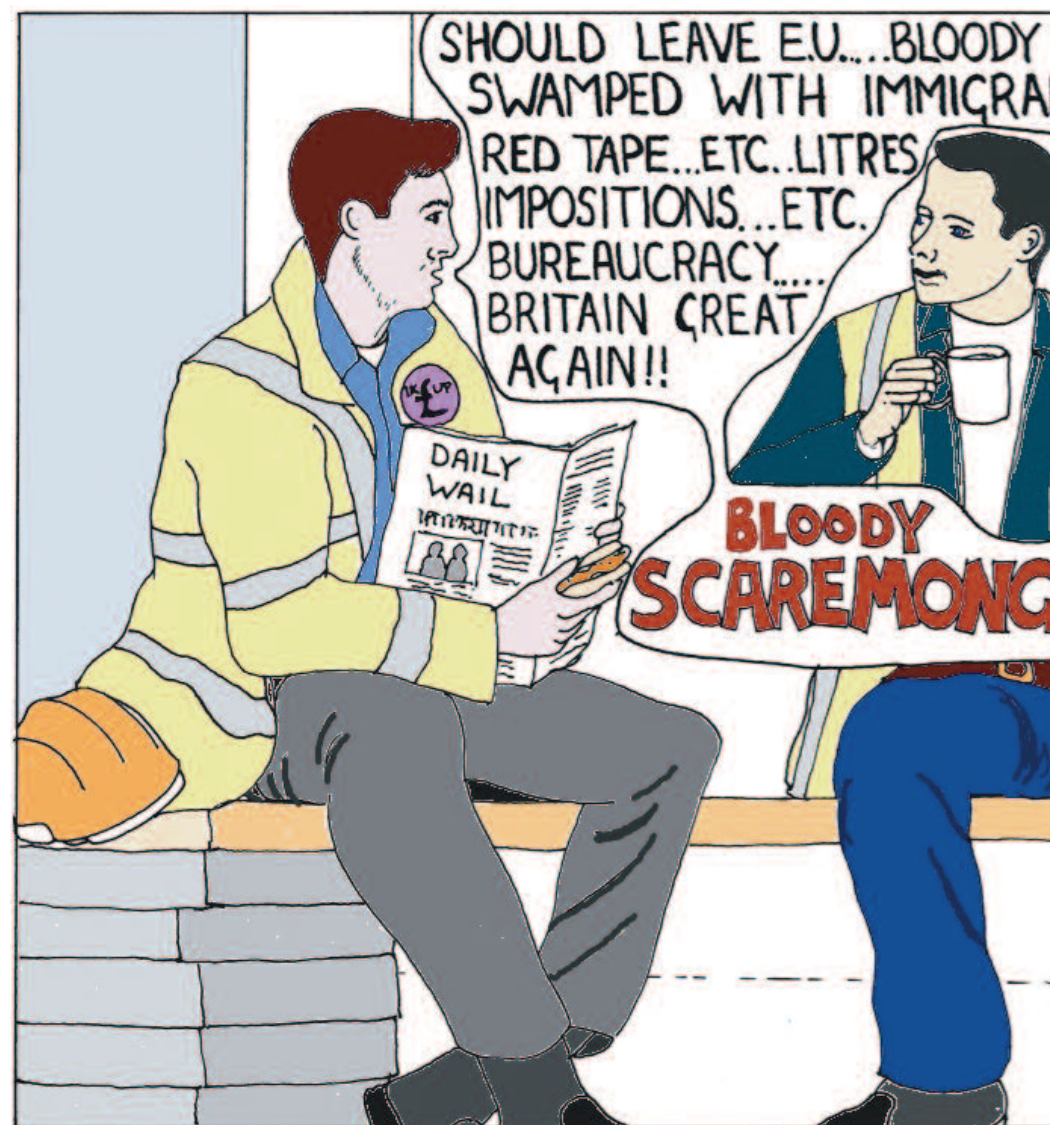
What has happened when countries have left the EU before?

There is only one example. Greenland voted to leave in 1982, and finished negotiating its exit in 1985. But Greenland is a tiny population (50,000-odd), and an autonomous region under Danish rule rather than an independent country. It uses the Danish currency and depends for much of its economic activity on Danish government spending in Greenland. It's of the same order of things as the Channel Islands, which are British “Crown dependencies” but strictly speaking outside the EU. Greenland's example has no relevance to Brexit.

What other models do they cite?

Switzerland, rather than have Norway's full access to the single market, negotiates access sector by sector, and accepts EU laws and regulations one by one. It also accepts free movement and pays fees to the EU. Switzerland's is a complicated arrangement, negotiated as a second-best after the country voted in a referendum in 1992 to reject EEA membership. It is under strain from two sides, from anti-immigration Swiss right-wingers and from exasperated EU leaders.

Turkey is (with some exceptions) inside the EU customs union, which means that products move freely and without tariffs between it and the EU countries, and its tariffs on imports from everywhere are determined by the EU. But it does not get the ability to export freely to other markets which EU countries get from EU-negotiated trade deals.



Canada is in the process of negotiating a free trade deal with the EU. But that process started in 2008 and the deal will not come into effect until 2017.

According to EU law, a British vote to leave opens a two-year period to negotiate the terms of quitting. The period can be extended only by unanimous agreement.

The process would be complicated. Britain would have to review or renegotiate about 15% of all its laws, over 12,000 EU regulations, and its trade agreements with more than 50 countries currently covered by EU deals.

All that makes it likely that even a Ukip government would go for adapting an “off-the-shelf” model like the EEA (Norway). The Brexit government would probably negotiate some incremental barriers to EU migration to Britain and some ability to slash EU-regulated worker protections (agency workers' rights, working-hours limitations, redundancy notice and payments, worker rights when jobs are transferred from one contractor to another), and pay for them by accepting some barriers to British exports.

So it wouldn't be that bad! Why not try it?

Even if the Brexiters could not make an immediate reality of all their rancid, mean-spirited, narrow-minded, xenophobic,

worker-bashing ambitions, the boost from a Brexit vote to them, and to narrow nationalists all across Europe, would be horrible. It would be something like what has happened in Switzerland since its anti-EEA vote in 1992. Switzerland was long considered one of the most democratic and liberal societies in the world. Now the leading party (by far) is the Swiss People's Party, a Ukip-type party, only more right-wing than Ukip.

Oh. And what?

And Brexit would almost surely mean Scottish separation (because Scotland would want to stay in the EU) and a sharpening of tensions in Ireland (because the North-South border in Ireland, currently eased, would become a British-EU border).

So you think the status quo is ok?

Not at all. To reject the more bureaucratic, more unrestrainedly capitalist, more mean-spirited Brexit is not to accept the already bureaucratic, capitalist, mean-spirited EU.

It is to say that labour movements and socialists prefer lower borders, easier interaction, more cosmopolitan relations, as the starting point for our efforts to weld cross-border workers' unity, force social levelling-up, win democracy, and secure migrant rights.

Why I'm voting to remain in the EU

By Anthony Johnson, student nurse in the “Bursary or Bust” campaign, personal capacity

Recently there has been a lot of talk amongst the left about how the EU referendum is a chance for change.

This discussion, about reforming the EU by allying with socialist movements in Europe, is valid.

Why? Because we need migrant nurses for our NHS. 14% of NHS nurses are migrant workers, 26% of doctors and 11% of the whole NHS workforce.

The government has instituted draconian measures upon the workforce. We currently have 600,000 nurses in the UK. Only 370,000 of them are actively working. More of these



will leave every day.

If we left the EU, that's it. Our NHS will implode and we'll lose our right to health care.

Don't vote out. A vote to leave is a vote against the NHS.

ders!



6500 people waiting at the border

Nikos Anastasiadis of DEA, the Workers' International Left in Greece, spoke to Solidarity

Greece has accepted tens of thousands of refugees.

Refugees came to Greece. Then they travel to Europe. But now the borders have closed and so most of the refugees are going to remain in Greece.

There are now 6500 people waiting at the borders, which have been closed for a little more than a week. They were closed because central European countries do not want to accept more refugees. This drive is led by Austria. They would like Greece to accept all the refugees.

Most of the refugees come from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and there are refugees from Africa.

We must say that the level of solidarity from Greek people is very high. People try to help any way they can. Now that there are camps the refugees settle as long as is necessary. People go to these camps and offer milk for infants, food and other necessary goods.

This has been going on for more than a year. It started with people who arrived in the islands, where people tried to help them in any way they could, to save them from the sea, feed them and give them medicines. This in spite of the fact that the state did nothing to help them and the whole effort was left to NGOs and citizens.

At first the Syriza government tried to say "there is no problem". They did not mobilise the state. So the whole attempt to rescue people and help them was left to private initiative and NGOs. But now the borders are closed, the government has created camps. The government called Frontex, and later NATO: there is a NATO armada in the



Migrants are stopped by Macedonian police on the Greek-Macedonian border.

Aegean Sea. This is not being done to help the refugees. They are trying to talk about how to stop refugees from coming to Greece.

The character of these camps is yet to be decided. It will be determined by the solidarity movement and what the Greek left will do to stop them being detention centres again.

LEFT

The Greek left tries to help any way it can. There are many movements around Greece, and the left is a part of them.

It tries to help refugees by collecting goods and organising marches and demonstrations against "Fortress Europe". For example, on 19 March there will be rallies all around Greece for the refugees, to say that the refugees must live in Greece with de-

centy. And also they will call for European countries to open their borders, because refugees cannot be stopped from their attempt to have a better life. So, we will march on 19 March.

Specifically what DEA is doing: in Athens, we support the Immigrant Sunday School, which has made many attempts to help the refugees, including by loading trucks with goods and sending them to the islands. Also we support the Deport Racism movement. The Deport Racism movement will join the demonstrations on 19 March. We are a component of Popular Unity, and we try to persuade comrades in Popular Unity to resolve the problem of immigration.

It is not only to do with the members of DEA, but with all of Popular Unity. We want them to do the best they can.

Migrants flee bulldozers and tear gas at Calais "Jungle"

By Phil Grimm

French authorities have set about dismantling a large section of the "Jungle" refugee camp in Calais.

Demolition teams, protected by French riot police to disperse protesters, have been forcefully destroying hundreds of temporary shelters.

Migrants and solidarity activists protested in the lead-up to the bulldozers moving in, and after, and were met with repression from riot police who fired tear gas and used a water cannon.

The camp is home to 651 children, of whom 423 are unaccompanied. It is unclear what accommodation and facilities will be made available to them. Video footage taken by solidarity activists from the UK showed children running from tear gas as the clearance began in the early hours of the morning on Monday 29 February.

Last week, French Minister of the Interior Bernard Cazeneuve had spoken of a "humanitarian" operation. Video footage from inside the camp showed residents running

away from clouds of tear gas, police surrounding the make-shift school, and shelters set on fire and bulldozed with migrants' belongings inside.

Calais authorities are attempting to force camp residents into shipping containers on another part of the site. They have also been offered places in 100 reception centres around France. However, charities say the real population of the camp section being dismantled is much higher than the figure claimed by the local authorities.

The fear is that the disparity between the amount of alternative accommodation provided and the number of people displaced will be used to force refugees to abandon their hope of reaching Britain.

Local charities and aid organisations are also outraged that many of the improvements they managed to make to the terrible living conditions in the camp will now be squandered. They also say that they have repeatedly been blocked from going to the camp by authorities. On the morning of the dismantling of the southern sector of the camp, Good Chance, a theatre group which



works in the camp, said police were preventing volunteers from entering the camp.

The dismantling also represents the violent destruction of what little the refugees had in

the way of a home.

A solidarity demonstration organised by Calais Migrant Solidarity took place outside the Institut Francais in London on 1 March.

Many interruptions, one struggle

Jill Mountford, a member of the Momentum Steering Committee, spoke to Solidarity about fighting her expulsion from the Labour Party.

What is your history with the Labour Party?

I joined Labour in 1983, because I got involved with class politics. Before that I was more involved with women's politics. I'd spent time at Greenham Common.

In 1983 I was a student, I went with students from my poly to picket lines in Warrington, for the NGA printers' dispute, against Eddie Shah.

After that things speeded up, and with the miners' strike everything became clearer, that we needed to transform the party and movement so we could give a political dimension to these struggles that were going on. After the defeat of the miners I continued that battle, but it became much harder, of course.

In the mid-1990s I was leading a movement called the Welfare State Network which put demands on Labour about rebuilding welfare and public services. But, under Blair, Labour was going the opposite direction. I moved out of Labour Party activity in the late 1990s. The Iraq war in 2003 was bad, but before then we'd already seen what Blair's Labour had done to the welfare state, to the NHS, to education, to teachers and in particular to welfare benefits.

And then in the 2000s you supported some left electoral challenges to Labour, and stood yourself in 2010, in Camberwell and Peckham, Harriet Harman's seat. Why? Wasn't the bigger priority Labour winning against the Tories?

Of course we were bothered about Labour winning. You'd have to be one of those socialists who live in cloud-cuckoo land not to be bothered. The Alliance for Workers' Liberty had supporters all over the country working for a Labour victory.

I see no contradiction whatsoever to that in standing candidates in safe Labour seats and making some clear propaganda about the kind of world we need to live in and how we get it. It's not the job of socialists to be flag-waving supporters for whatever the Labour leadership is saying. It's our job to make our case and arguments for a bigger and better program and push that forward.

Couldn't you have made those arguments inside the Labour Party?

I don't know what the Labour Party membership was in those years, but it certainly fell to a serious low, maybe half what it is now. Of course there were lots of good, stalwart socialists who stuck with Labour because they got a bigger picture and they wanted to make the Labour Party fight for the kind of agenda I had too.

But it was a very isolated argument at that time. Blair took pride in ignoring Labour conference decisions. Labour had changed enormously since the 1980s. There weren't many new, young socialists in the Labour Party. Why would they have joined, after all the inequality and austerity, and everything else like the Iraq war and migrants' rights?

The coup operated by Blair after 1994 had heavily blocked the channels through which some degree of working-class political representation might be possible through the Labour Party. The left challenges to Labour were an effort to reinstate a public assertion of working-class interests in electoral politics.

The difference now is that the Labour Party



has begun to open up. Today, any serious young left winger would join the Labour Party with the election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader. Compare and contrast!

Looking back on the 2010 election, what's your overall assessment?

Well obviously the independent socialist left didn't do well. There was a lesson there about the way things were going. There had been a decline of the activist left over that decade up to 2010. We had thought that the result of the Socialist Alliance in the 2001 election had been poor. As it turned out, that was not a faltering first step followed by advance. There was a decline of the left and a resurgence of the right. That was reflected in the Labour Party too. The left needs to look at itself and look at the different opportunities missed.

Having said that, I think it was right in the Blair-Brown years to try to find the biggest platform possible to raise socialist ideas and policies for working-class people to fight for.

So how did you rejoin Labour?

I stayed up all night during the 2015 election with a group of friends, miserable since ten o'clock the night before that Labour had lost. I'd been actively campaigning for a Labour government, with the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory, and I was bitterly disappointed.

Throughout that day I had loads of people coming into my work and saying they were going to join the Labour Party, some rejoining and others for the first time.

In May I went to a "Left Platform" meeting at NUT HQ, where we were pushing for a left candidate to stand for the Labour leadership. It's surreal looking back on it now.

I joined the Labour Party at the beginning of July and I threw myself into activity, canvassing, leafleting, producing materials, I took responsibility, I got elected to the GC and I've been arguing all over for people to join the party.

I was out canvassing for Sadiq Khan when a letter arrived expelling me, two weeks ago.

That letter said nothing about me standing for election six years ago. It just said my politics, the politics of AWL, are not compatible with the Labour Party. That shouldn't be the case — Labour has always been a broad church. It's always involved many different kind of socialists and that is particularly the case now.

It's also contradictory as many AWL people are Labour members in good standing; and some have been expelled, have appealed, and have been reinstated. They're not even being consistent. But the general point is: if the Blairites can be in the Labour Party, why can't I?

UKIP ACCEPTED

The week before I was expelled, Richard Barrett, a UKIP councillor in Hull who stood against Labour for parliament last year announced his defection to Labour. The Compliance Unit raised no objection.

In 1999, Shaun Woodward, who was a Tory shadow minister, defected to Labour. He was welcomed with open arms. He was parachuted into a safe seat for the next general election, against the left-leaning candidate the CLP wanted.

There are double standards here. I'm going to fight to get my place back in the party.

Why do you think you in particular have been expelled?

The idea in the *New Statesman*, that somehow the party missed my membership and didn't notice, is obviously absurd. I'm a well-known person in Lewisham, I'd say, and I've been extremely active, and of course this is an area with a Labour council and Labour MPs and lots of prominent people. Most people in the local party are really appalled and shocked.

I've been expelled because we set up a successful Momentum group in Lewisham, which meets regularly with a good turnout

and political discussions and actions as well as activity inside the Labour Party structures. Out of that, I was elected to the Momentum NC in February and then the steering committee.

Just as they're trying to give a kicking to Corbyn, the press are giving a kicking to Momentum and I was a target. The Compliance Unit acted at the behest of the Tory press, and that's really disgraceful.

I've also been attacked by prominent right-wing Labour MPs, like Gloria De Piero, who is an ex-member of Workers' Liberty.

The wider picture is not just about me, it's about Momentum and its potential for transforming the Labour Party. That's what they're worried about.

You don't wish now that you'd kept your head down in the Blair-Brown years?

We wanted a Labour government, very much so, but we weren't under any illusions that a Labour government then would put forward a working-class agenda. Remember that in 2010 Gordon Brown had just bailed out the banks, at huge expense. Who was going to pay for that? Not the rich, but the working class, through cuts. We had a completely different agenda to offer, and that was the reason for standing.

Let me just say one thing, about inequality. Camberwell and Peckham is a very poor constituency, with a lot of run-down social housing and expensive private landlords, massive unemployment, and of course a very big black and minority ethnic population. It also has some big houses being bought up by some very wealthy people. Even within the constituency, without looking further, there are very stark examples of rich and poor.

How could Harriet Harman with her lifestyle on £100,000 a year represent some of the poorest people in London? Her politics reflected her wealth. Harman was probably far from the worst. By 2010 Blair and Mandelson were off making their millions. and of course Mandelson said he was intensely relaxed about people getting filthy rich.

I seem to remember Blair made £20 million within two years of leaving the leadership. It's amazing what they got away with, and what they went on to do. Less than a hundred years after the Labour Party was founded to represent working-class people, you've got a layer of leaders who were there to cream off vast sums of money. What relationship did they have to the labour movement?

We were on a pledge to take an average worker's wage. The rest would have been donated to labour movement campaigns in the fight for equality.

In the context of such grotesque inequality between the people who lead the labour movement and those they're supposed to represent, in the context of industrial decline and then austerity, is it surprising that so many people turned to the right, to the BNP and then UKIP? That's the context in which we decided to stand. That's why I absolutely wouldn't apologise for standing. There was absolutely a need to raise a different set of politics.

What now?

The working class needs a Labour government elected in 2020, if not sooner; but a Labour government that will stand up for working-class interests against the rich and the bosses. I'll continue to fight for that.

I regard this as a temporary interruption, or not really an interruption at all.

Trapped: The village against nature

Les Hearn reviews Ófærð (Trapped), BBC4

Followers of Nordic noir will have been enjoying this new treat on BBC4. It has the typical features of the flawed police-man confronted with gruesome murders; but a dominant character in the drama, sometimes it seems the dominant character, is nature.

It is set in a remote Icelandic fishing village, Seyðisfjörður, at the end of a fjord and surrounded by mountains. Shot in a similar fishing village, Siglufjörður, it is in Icelandic with English subtitles. The Icelandic language is a very soft sounding tongue, somehow reminiscent of Welsh, and not at all how one would imagine descendants of Vikings speaking. The names have an ancient feel to them, as do those of the cast and crew: Andri Ólafsson, Agnes Eiríksdóttir, Þórhildur, Hjörtur, Ásgeir, Sigurður Gudmundsson... surnames are “son of” or “daughter of” (the letters Þ and ð are the sound “th” in “thin” and “this”, respectively).

The writing credits, while mostly Icelandic, hold a surprise: joint screenwriter is the award-winning English screenwriter and contributor to *Solidarity* Clive Bradley.

It starts, pre-credits, with a scene from the recent past, a tragedy in which a romantic tryst in a deserted factory between Hjörtur and Dagný Eiríksdóttir (police chief Andri

Ólafsson’s sister-in-law — in a small village of under a thousand inhabitants, many are related) ends with her death and his survival, though traumatised and scarred.

Forward seven years and a vehicle ferry from Denmark is landing in winter when a fishing boat hauls in a torso. The local police take control until a team can arrive from Reykjavik. They suspect the body has come from the ferry, so prevent it disembarking and leaving. Curiously, the captain is uncooperative.

Then nature starts to play a role: blizzards block all land and air connections and the local police, Andri and his staff of Hinrika and Ásgeir, are forced to try and solve the mystery with their meagre resources. At the same time, there is a Lithuanian people trafficker on the ferry with his terrified captives, two young Nigerian sisters; somehow, the ferry captain is involved.

In the village, the local MP is trying to force through a deal to sell much of the land to a Chinese consortium, with the connivance of the mayor (and former police chief) Hrafn but against the suspicious old fisher and hunter Guðmundur who refuses to sell (“over my dead body”).

The police are honest, essentially kind, and thoroughly wedded to their duty. They arrest the people trafficker but he escapes through Ásgeir’s naivety; Hinrika takes in the trafficked girls and is horrified at the details of their ordeal. Andri is overweight and



Ólafur Darri Ólafsson plays police chief Andri Ólafsson

unhappy that his ex-wife has arrived with her new partner, intending to take their two daughters back to Reykjavik.

Nevertheless (or perhaps because of this), he throws himself into the murder hunt and everything else that is going on. Hinrika discovers through a wheelchair-bound resident with a state-of-the-art telescope a lot of disturbing facts (her husband grows his own dope; Hrafn is involved in the murder and is also a wife-beater...). Ásgeir, who vomits at the sight of the body, is an artist and com-

puter buff, whose skills advance the inquiry.

Then an avalanche cuts off the power (and nearly kills Andri). But the weather improves and at last the police from Reykjavik can board their helicopter and set off to Seyðisfjörður. Will Andri and his team be able to solve the mystery before the “experts” arrive and unceremoniously shoulder them aside?

You have until 13 March to watch the first two episodes on BBC iPlayer. Well done, Clive!

• www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/b06xttds

Verses from the First World War: conscription

One hundred years ago this week, conscription came into force in Britain.

The Military Service Act placed men between 18 and 41 years of age into the army reserve unless they were married (this exemption was removed later in 1916), widowed with children, serving in the Royal Navy, a minister of religion, or working in a “reserved occupation”.

The initial rush of volunteers had dried up by this time, and while poverty continued to make signing up as a soldier an attractive option for some men, recruits were being killed at a faster rate than they could be replaced.

These three poems were published in socialist weekly *The Herald* during 1916.

Janine Booth

“Rallying,” “mustering,” with the nobler aim)
Weaklings from the work the weakest treasured;
Still on us the crime is and the shame;
Say not that their doom is unregarded!
One regards the wrong He shall requite.
Fear Him! When He maketh inquisition
Precious shall their blood be in His sight.

O my England! I, thy child and lover,
Hear, in winds through woods grown sore and sad,
Evermore a knell, a word of warning —
“Whom the gods destroy they first make mad”
So the Doom found out the elder nations,
Frenzied ere their failure, one and all;
Shadowed in their sunset. Rouse thee, England,
Lest on thee, thee too, the shadow fall!

One of the grounds on which a man could claim exemption was that he was carrying out “work of national importance”.

In this poem, C E Maurice urges the Tribunals to define this term very broadly, to the point of counterposing positive, life-improving labours to the destructiveness of war.

C E Maurice was Charles Edward, biographer of social reformer Octavia Hall and son of the nineteenth-century leading Christian socialist Frederick Denison Maurice.

“Work of National Importance”

A Suggestion for Certain Committees

What can help the Nation’s weal,
Marred by fire and hate and steel?
What the tasks they can fulfil,
Who would save, and may not kill?

All that strengthens heart and hand;
All that makes a nobler land;
All that stirs the mind of youth
To new hopes for light and truth;

All that cleanses Britain’s air
From foul fogs that breed despair;
All that rescues each man’s life
From the pains of useless strife;
All that calls each human heart
To be worthy of its part;
These are works that build a State;
Then come nations wise and great.

Dora Sigerson Shorter was an Irish poet (and sculptor) who was 49 and living in London when conscription began.

She was a prominent figure in the Irish literary revival of the late nineteenth century.

Although the 1916 Military Service Act did not apply to Ireland, this poem addresses the fear that it may be extended there. The Kathleen ni-Houlihan named in the refrain line is a mythical figure representing Ireland personified as a woman. The government went on to attempt to conscript Irish men in 1918, but failed due to mass resistance.

Conscription

There is a shadow on the head I love,
There is a danger lurks thy path upon,
It murmurs low as coos the mating dove,
It calls in grey and gathered clouds above,
For thee, for thee, Kathleen ni-Houlihan.

It hides in seas that beat about thy shores,
The wind in passing whispers and is gone,
And the brown leaf no summer will restore,
Flutters this cry on Winter’s russet floor,
Danger to thee, Kathleen ni-Houlihan.

God of the seas disperse the gathered gloom,
God of the skies smile her sweet path upon,
God of the earth this danger swift entomb,
Slay the wild beast that creeps to bring her doom.
Save her, save her, Kathleen ni-Houlihan!

S Gertrude Ford’s poem, ‘The Unfit’, addressed the fact that many men previously certified as unfit were being conscripted.

One example was a man whose doctor wrote that his heart was probably “give out” on his first route march. He was not exempted.

Ford was an active feminist, whose poetry appeared in the *Poetry Review* and other publications, as well as in books including *A Fight to a Finish and Other Songs of Peace Sung in War Time*.

The Unfit

Can they fight for us? The ranks scarce know them,
Battle knows not, ere they fall and faint.
Yet at home they fought indeed out battle,
Warred with famine’s pest and fever’s taint;
Held at bay the wolf that slays the children,
Life of England’s life, her very breath;
Served and shielded us and saved us living -
Now they die; what profit in their death?

Still, we “comb” (the nobler words have perished,

Where we stand

Today one class, the working class, lives by selling its labour power to another, the capitalist class, which owns the means of production.

The capitalists' control over the economy and their relentless drive to increase their wealth 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 must unite to struggle against capitalist power in the workplace and in wider society.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty wants 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 trade unions and the Labour Party to break with "social partnership" with the bosses and to militantly assert working-class interests.

In workplaces, trade unions, and Labour organisations; among students; in local campaigns; on the left and in wider political 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 domestic labour. For reproductive justice: free abortion on demand; the right to choose when and whether to have children. 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.
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Events

Saturday 5 March

March against Lambeth library cuts
10.30, Brixton Library, London, SW2 1JQ
bit.ly/LambethLibrariesMarch

Sunday 6 March

Stop Turkey's war on the Kurds!
Break the silence! National demonstration
1pm, Trafalgar Square, London
bit.ly/kurdishdemo

Tuesday 8 March

Set her free! International Women's Day protest in solidarity with migrant women.
1pm, Home Office, London, SW1P 4DF
bit.ly/setherfree

Got an event you want listing?
solidarity@workersliberty.org

9-11 March

Junior doctors' strike
Across the country

Saturday 12 March

Workers' Liberty day school — Revolutionary socialism: its roots and its future
10-2, New Cross Gate, London
bit.ly/WLdayschool

Saturday 12 March

Taking back our NHS: Sheffield Save our NHS dayschool
10-2, Roco Creative co-op, S10 2HW
bit.ly/SSONHS

Sunday 13 March

National housing demonstration
12, Lincoln's Inn, London, WC2A 3TL
bit.ly/HousingDemo

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Young Labour: gains for the left

LABOUR

By Brendan Menezes

After three hectic days in Scarborough (26-28 February), the dust is yet to settle from the events of the annual Labour Students and Young Labour conference.

The Momentum slate was initially a resounding success in every region, getting an enormous number of Corbyn-supporting delegates elected. However the left ran into early difficulties with finances, as there was no assistance available from Labour with the costs of transport or accommodation. There was a compulsory £30/40 registration fee, and the conference was held in a part of the country hard to get to for the majority of members.

Momentum candidate for chair of Labour Students Ollie Hill lost narrowly to Kate Dearden on day one. That represents a major step forward, however, as Ollie got the highest vote for a left-wing challenger in many years.

Leftwinger Caroline Hill won a 60% majority in the election for Young Labour Chair, and the left took an overall majority on the National Committee of Young Labour.

Momentum supporter James Elliott lost to Jasmin Beckett in the race for National Executive Committee Youth Rep by 49.41% to 49.55%. It was a tense race which saw an orchestrated smear campaign and documented instances of delegates disenfranchised, widespread bullying and harassment, and more: all evidence that the long-honed stitch-up skills of the Blairite Labour Students faction were deployed to the full, as they



Young Labour members with Jeremy Corbyn on the Saturday of conference.

fought their rearguard action in Scarborough.

Unite has already called for an inquiry into the disputed NEC rep election.

The conference passed motions in support of free education and of staying in the EU, and for migrants' rights.

Scottish Labour Young Socialists evoked memories of conferences gone by in their public statement:

ICEPICK

"40 years ago the 'Icepick Express' left Scotland to scalp Militant control of the Labour Party's youth wing.

"On board was Bill Speirs, a key figure in the founding of the Campaign for Socialism. This weekend, after SLYS delegates had swept the board in the Scottish ballot, the 'Eric Heffer Express' returned to Youth Conference. The left won a resounding victory — 27/33 places on the Young Labour executive committee, including the brilliant Caroline Hill — Chair of Young

Labour. How the wheels of history turn. The result of the NEC election remains up in the air, surrounded by smear campaigns, union delegates breaking their democratic mandate, and the party's refusal to carry out a manual recount. We await the NEC's investigation.

"We unequivocally stand in solidarity with our comrades in Unite. Every attack on them is an attack on the entire labour movement."

The election of Jeremy Corbyn has sent a left-wing surge through the youth structures of the Labour Party, and the wins for the left — in the face of bitter resistance and shameful tactics from the right — have consolidated the new, left-wing mood of the party.

But in order to build a real youth movement that can be a "seedbed of the left" and make a lasting and major change in UK society, local, constituency and branch-level Labour youth groups need to be built, as organisations for activism, political education and debate, and cultural life.

Disorganisation at Labour Students conference

By Tim Jones

On the weekend of 26-28 February, I joined three other delegates from Goldsmiths for the Labour Students National Conference in Scarborough.

The conference ran late, and a lot of fluff in the timetable squeezed the time for motions debate. For example, there was a "consultation" about bringing in a One Member One Vote system with no democratic elements that easily could have been scrapped, but it was kept at the expense of motion debate.

General disorganisation was hugely evident throughout. There generally always seemed to be a lack of ballot papers. The communication before the conference on matters like motions and agendas was extremely poor. I had to do a lot of chasing to get information. This lack of planning contributed to conference running late, with elections taking longer than planned.

In the end, we mustered less than half an hour to discuss very few

motions. A motion from Goldsmiths Labour was passed about cutting the cost of conference; and important motions on tackling Prevent and supporting a full-time Trans Officer in NUS were passed too. However, I think it is important that Labour Students discusses issues like education funding, cuts to student bursaries, cuts to nursing bursaries, and mental health on campuses as well as the direction we'd like to see the party go in.

DISORGANISATION

I believe there aren't good reasons for this level of disorganisation. The late running meant we could not ask for good reasons either.

Labour Students has three full-time elected officers running it, as well as access to party staff and other resources. This is not a volunteer effort.

University Labour Clubs up and down the country play a massive role in the party. We're at the forefront at bringing in members, giv-

ing them a political education and getting them to campaign for Labour. Yet this weekend we were made to pay over £200 (including a £40 registration fee) for a poorly organised conference, with little discussion on the future of our country or our party.

On a few positive notes, I am extremely proud that Goldsmiths Labour is playing a role on the national stage after being dormant for so long. All our delegates got stuck into the life of the conference in different ways and had an impact. On Saturday and Sunday, we were also delegates to Young Labour National conference. That was better organised. Good policy around free education and the EU was passed, and good officers elected to its national committee.

We also heard from Jeremy Corbyn, the first Labour leader to address the conference since 2008. He offered great support to young people and the youth wing of the party.

Fair funding for FE

By Peggy Carter

National Union of Teachers members in sixth form colleges will be striking on Tuesday 15 March after a ballot over funding which returned 86% in favour of strikes on a 44% turnout.

NUT deputy general secretary Kevin Courtney said: "This strong ballot result shows the strength of feeling amongst sixth-form college teachers. Sixth-form colleges provide a vital service to over 150,000 young people, many of whom are from disadvantaged backgrounds.

"Funding has already been cut in real terms by 14 per cent and further real-terms cuts of 8 per cent are now planned. Colleges are dropping courses and increasing class sizes. If this situation is not reversed, many colleges will face closure. This clearly has a direct impact on the terms and conditions of our members as well as the education of many young people. The situation is untenable. It is simply wrong that government has put NUT members in the position that the only way to defend their terms and conditions is by taking strike action."

The huge deficit in funding affects Further Education (FE) colleges too. On Wednesday 24 February thousands of UCU and Unison members in FE colleges struck over a pay freeze imposed



UCU members on strike at Lewisham Southwark College on Wednesday

by employers, a further symptom of the funding crisis.

However previous attempts to fight the chronic underfunding by FE college workers have been left hanging by UCU. Workers were left hanging when strikes in 2014 over pay were called off and no improved deal was reached. Groups of workers in colleges who have fought job cuts and course closures have been left isolated.

There are as yet no public plans to coordinate strikes between NUT members in Sixth Form Colleges and UCU and Unison members in FE colleges, but it would be stupid not to coordinate.

The issues of pay and funding are linked, and union members from all unions need to know their union is going to back them up in a fight to save Further Education.

Small Heath starts new strikes

By Patrick Murphy, NUT executive, personal capacity

Members of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) at Small Heath School in Birmingham began a new programme of strikes on Tuesday 9 February to defend their workplace rep, Simon O'Hara, who has been suspended from work since 7 January.

The ostensible justification for the suspension appears to be what Birmingham NUT describes as "very flimsy allegations". There is little doubt that the real reason is that he has been a vocal critic of proposals to turn the school into an academy and an effective defender of teachers facing unreasonable workload demands. The allegations date back to November last year. Simon was suspended in January only two days after his members voted for escalating action against academy status. Simon O'Hara has been victimised for carrying out his role as union rep.

The main campaign to oppose academy status has been hugely successful. Campaigning by parents, staff and pupils, together with strike action by teachers, led to the withdrawal of the academy threat and the replacement of the old In-



terim Executive Board with a new body without the proposed academy sponsors.

The NUT have announced a rolling programme of nine strikes to defend Simon. To date that action has been extremely well-supported and always included lively and large picket lines.

The need for support and solidarity is greater now than ever given that local Labour politicians (Shabana Mahmood MP and the Council Cabinet member for Education Brigid Jones) have decided to launch public attacks on the teachers and the NUT. They call on them to rely on the normal disciplinary procedures within the school.

As Birmingham NUT put it, however, "those hearings and ap-

peals will be presided over by an employer which has already, we believe, misused the school's disciplinary procedure resulting in Simon's unjustified suspension."

Simon O'Hara and NUT members at Small Heath need all the support our movement can muster.

- Email the school to insist that the suspension is lifted: mail@smallheathschool.org.uk
- Send messages of support via banut@btclick.com
- Sign and share the online petition by going to chn.ge/1Q12Jm4
- If near Birmingham, demonstrate support by joining staff on their picket lines.



More than 5000 people marched against the closure of Huddersfield A&E department on Saturday 27 February. More than 60,000 people have signed a petition against the closure, and the campaign has received several celebrity endorsements. Sign the petition: bit.ly/1Uw3t6m

Firefighters fight cuts

By Charlotte Zalens

Firefighters in the West Midlands and in South Yorkshire are planning industrial action against job cuts and chronic staff shortages.

Fire Brigades Union (FBU) members in West Midlands are fighting a local cut to nationally agreed overtime pay rates which may mean less firefighters opting to do overtime shifts, and increasing the likelihood of staff shortages.

Firefighters in the area will start an overtime ban from Thursday 3 March.

FBU members in South York-

shire are balloting for strikes over job cuts which will include cutting a quarter of all emergency control operators.

Pete Smith, regional secretary of the FBU said: "Emergency control staff are the very first people you'll speak to when you're in an emergency. Firefighters rely on them to get all the vital information to perform a rescue as fast and efficiently as possible. They are an invaluable component of the lifesaving service firefighters provide.

"The public in South Yorkshire will be put at greater risk if these posts are cut."



Disability campaigners held a vigil outside the Supreme Court on 29 February and 1 March as judges considered government appeals against lower courts' findings that the bedroom tax is discriminatory. The outcome of the case could have an impact for thousands of disabled children and adults, as well as victims of domestic violence.

Union campaign saves ticket offices

By Ollie Moore

London Underground has been forced to back off from plans to close ticket offices at stations on the north end of the Bakerloo Line, following a campaign by the RMT union.

The stations were transferred into the Tube network from now-defunct train company Silverlink, and as such are subject to more stringent regulations. LU was obliged to conduct a public consultation on the planned closures, which the RMT used to mobilise a high-profile campaign, including a large demonstration outside

Queen's Park station in January.

Following the consultation, London TravelWatch, the statutory body for public transport in London, blocked the closure. LU has agreed to keep ticket offices open at least until new machines are installed at the end of 2016, and possibly beyond.

This is the first time London Underground has been forced to back down from a planned ticket office closure once it had been announced. It is a significant win for workers and passengers.

It creates a precedent that other stations should have ticket offices!



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JUNIOR DOCTORS READY FOR BATTLE

Yannis Gourtsoyannis is a junior doctor at the Hospital for Tropical Diseases in London who is a member of the BMA Junior Doctors' Committee and active in Momentum NHS and the People's Assembly. He spoke to Solidarity on 23 February



There's one thing I should flag up which sounds obscure, but it's actually very significant. During the course of the Junior Doctors Committee meeting at the weekend [20 February], the committee made the decision to repudiate the concept of "cost neutrality".

The BMA will not accept any contract which does not provide adequate funds to fund a decent seven day NHS. And that's important for the BMA's political development, in terms of the union and its members developing an understanding of austerity.

The attack on junior doctors is occurring in a much wider context, the context of an attack on all NHS

staff, nurses, midwives, occupation therapists and many others, in terms of stagnating real wages but also attacks on terms and conditions. So it's the same struggle.

The government talks of a seven day service on current five day funding; that funding is already overstretched, but it will now be stretched over seven days, unless we stop them. This is the government deliberately setting out to harm the NHS. Hence the significance of the cost neutrality issue.

How do you assess these new strikes planned?

Today we proposed a further raft of six days of action, each chunk composed of 48 hours of emergency care only. So it's the same model as before, but extending it over 48 hours each time will make a major difference for trusts, not just double the inconvenience, because it will make it much harder to rejig elective plans and thus have a very big impact.

The new dates extend to the end of April, and we'll still have a mandate for legal action after that, including the possibility of a full walk out. Of course we don't want that, we want serious negotiations, but my suspicion is that the government will dig in and we'll need to escalate into the summer.

I'm *satisfied* with the course the BMA is charting, for now, let's put it that way.

What kind of wider support and solidarity would you like to see?

First of all I'd like to say that junior doctors are immensely grateful for the huge support we've already received, verbally from every national union and also from the many, many trade unionists who've shaken our hands on the

picket lines up and down the country. We've welcomed support from the Labour Party too, including some good stuff in the specifics of our contracts in Parliament.

We're seeing a new social movement emerging around the NHS, in terms of defending NHS funding and opposing privatisation and also health inequalities. We've seen many thousands of junior doctors take to the streets, we're seeing a significant march planned by People's Assembly for 16 April, and of course there's also the emergency of Momentum and within it the excellent work of Momentum NHS, which is very new but has done great work already. It would be great to see the whole Labour Party taking up that agenda.

You mentioned about doctors' ideas changing?

Initially when this contract dispute blew into the open last summer, a lot of junior doctors were quite puzzled why the government would choose to pick a battle with such a respected profession doing such an important job.

Now people have started to see the way the government has attacked the BMA and the way it attacks all unions, for instance with the Trade Union Bill. And they've linked the cost-cutting agenda to the wider context of austerity. So I feel optimistic about the fact that doctors are capable, despite a lack of free time and unsocial hours, of learning politically. This dispute has been a huge education for junior doctors.

I've seen junior doctors who were previously disparaging of the Labour Party but have come round, and been very impressed with Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell, because of support



Junior doctors marched through London on Saturday 6 February.

they've seen nationally but also from local Labour Party members. That grew after Corbyn challenged Cameron in Parliament [on 24 February]. Many of them voted Tory before but it would be very different now.

What impact is all this having on the BMA?

It is transforming our union, bit by bit. We have taken strike action for the first time in 40 years. 40 years ago it was mainly a work to rule and forms of soft industrial action, so this is different. At the same time the BMA has seen a huge influx of new members, it's gone from about 50 percent of junior doctors in England, and it's now probably more like 90 percent.

You would expect there would be conflict with some of the older guard of the BMA, but the fact that so many junior doctors are getting involved and that they're so passionate means that it's hard to ignore them. At the moment the BMA is compelled to follow its

members and even to take bold steps and organise robust action.

Could it be a model for building up other trade unions among young workers?

Yes, of course. As a Labour member, I also see many parallels between what's happened in the BMA and in the Labour Party with Jeremy Corbyn. If you fight, if you are sincere, if you make bold arguments, then people will come to you. When the BMA took a courageous stance junior doctors recognise that as such and came and engaged, and that pushed things forward. There's a lesson there for other trade unions.

When a union chooses to really stand up for the workers it represents, when it gets away from jargon and micro-managing and management discourse, and takes difficult steps, then people will engage and commit their time and passion to that union.

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Printed by Trinity Mirror