



Solidarity

For social ownership of the banks and industry

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HOMES FOR ALL!



- **AFFORDABLE**
- **AVAILABLE**
- **ASSURED**

The Tories' Housing and Planning Bill, now in the House of Lords after completing all its stages in the Commons, and due to come into force from April 2017, will push forward the polarisation of housing in England, especially in London, into secure luxury for a few and insecure squalor for many.

Already, on average, in England, rent takes 43% of the income of households renting privately. (That's 43% of average gross income of the main householder and partner including housing benefit. It's 52% of income excluding HB).

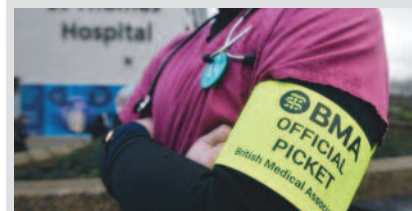
Tenants in London pay 60% of income (including HB: 72% without).

And on current trends, in nine years' time there will be more households renting privately than households in their own home with a mortgage.

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this is about the
whole NHS**



Junior doctor and BMA rep Aislinn Macklin-Doherty spoke to *Solidarity*.

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**Are you now or
have you
ever
been?**



Eric Lee reviews 'Trumbo', in cinemas now.

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The Kurdish struggle



Simon Nelson discusses reports that Kurdish forces are siding with Assad.

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Join Labour!

**Stop the Labour
Party's purge of
socialists!**

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Students occupy Sheffield University to fight HE reforms

Tanju Çakar, an activist taking part in a student occupation of Sheffield University, spoke to *Solidarity*.

We wanted to put some demands on the university: for the university to not comply with Prevent; non-compliance with the Teaching Excellence Framework and the other reforms in the HE green paper; secure contracts and an end to low pay for casual staff.

The HE Green Paper that the government has issued means potential tuition fee rises, allowing private firms to cut into higher education, and the TEF will force teachers to compete with each other. We have a similar framework

in place around research which has made universities more neoliberal, competing with each other. This is an attempt by the government to impose marketisation on universities. These are things which the university and our Vice Chancellor have spoken out against. But we want them to go further — it is unfortunate that they are fighting against our occupation as hard as they are.

Staff have been quite receptive. We initially took over the auditorium in the Richard Roberts Building... and Richard Roberts himself sent us a message of solidarity! Some academics have put out a list of staff members who are supporting the occupation, and that has been sent to the press.

Rather than shutting down the spaces that we have taken, we have tried to keep them open for teaching and study. But the management have shut these spaces down. So we are worried that staff who try to use the space to teach will be disciplined. Management have also closed down adjacent seminar rooms on the spurious grounds that there might be violence.

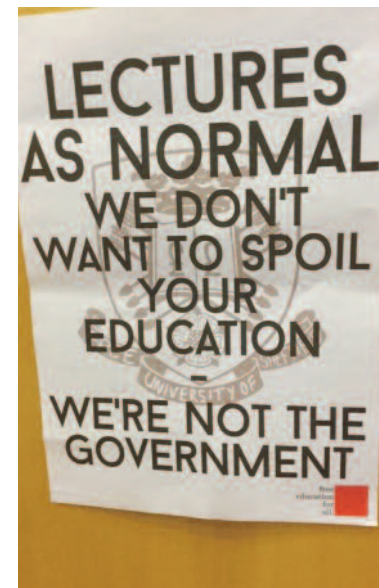
Management have done things like shut down the power and heating in the occupied rooms, so it's absolutely freezing. We've had some snow over the weekend. And during the snowfall they wouldn't let people in. So much for all their talk of how important health and safety is.

Students have been coming

down to support the occupation. We've had dozens of people coming in to participate. Grace Petrie came to play at the occupation, and Natalie Bennett is going to come and do a Q&A on sustainability soon.

We've been planning to have an occupation for some time. It has been useful to get lots of new people coming in who haven't necessarily been involved in an occupation before. It has been useful to train student activists in how to occupy a space, and to use it as an effective way to make a point, turn it into an educational space.

Throughout the protest we have been holding workshops, rallies, banner-making and so on. It has been useful from that point of view as well.



SNP goes back on promise to scrap Council Tax

SCOTLAND

By Dale Street

The SNP ditched another of its previous manifesto commitments — big time — when it announced plans to reform the Council Tax system in Scotland last week.

For well over a decade the SNP has promised to scrap Council Tax.

In 2003 the current SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon said: "There is no doubt that the SNP's proposal to scrap the Council Tax in favour of a fair local income tax is hugely popular with voters."

In 2004 the current SNP Finance Secretary John Swinney said: "Every vote for the SNP in the European election will be a vote to axe the Council Tax."

The SNP manifesto for the 2007 Holyrood elections promised: "We will scrap the unfair Council Tax and introduce a Local Income Tax set at 3p."

After the SNP's election victory Sturgeon attacked the Scottish Labour Party for the timidity of its approach to the Council Tax: "The fact of the matter is that the Council Tax is unfair and cannot be improved by tinkering around the edges."

At the same time the SNP government overrode local democracy by enforcing a Council Tax freeze pending the implementation of its promised replacement for the

Council Tax.

In its manifesto for the 2011 Holyrood elections — having done nothing to implement its 2007 manifesto commitment — the SNP promised: "We will consult with others to produce a fairer system based on ability to pay to replace the Council Tax and ... put this to the people at the next election."

Three years later, in November of 2014, the SNP government set up a Commission for Local Tax Reform, to report back on alternatives to the Council Tax. Thirteen months later (December 2015) it produced its findings.

Presented by SNP local government minister and Commission co-chair Marco Biagi ("From the outset we have agreed that the present system is unfair"), the findings concluded that the Council Tax should be replaced by a hybrid tax based on property value and income.

Last week SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon finally announced the SNP's proposals, directly contradicting her previous statements and misrepresenting the Commission's findings: "The Commission on Local Tax Reform made clear that the present system could be made fairer."

The SNP has abandoned its promise to scrap the Council Tax and introduce a local income tax. Instead it proposes no more than a modest increase in Council Tax rates for properties in the highest bands in 2017, and an end to the Council Tax freeze in 2017 as well.

The SNP's proposals do not even include a property revaluation. Properties will continue to be allocated a Council Tax band on the basis of a valuation carried out in 1991.

Adhering loyally to the Tory doctrine that low taxation is good taxation, Sturgeon emphasised that Council Tax rates would still be

lower after 2017 than they would have been without the Council Tax freeze.

(The decade-long Council Tax freeze has been a £300 million giveaway to owners of properties in the two most expensive Council Tax bands.)

In the meantime, the SNP is pressing ahead with another Tory

policy: austerity.

The combined impact of a £500 millions cut in local authority funding by Holyrood and the financial straitjacket imposed on local authorities by the Council Tax freeze could see 15,000 local authority jobs axed and the decimation of council and voluntary sector services.

Scottish left still pushing independence

Meanwhile, the nationalist ex-Left gears up for the Holyrood elections — by promising to be more Catholic than the Pope.

While the SNP has been politically sensible enough to backpedal on the demand for Scottish independence — tax revenue from oil being a mere 95% less than that promised by the SNP in the referendum campaign — their bag-carriers are showing no such restraint.

"Solidarity" (no relation), which has long ceased to be anything other than a personality cult around Tommy Sheridan, is calling for a constituency vote for the SNP because of the SNP's support for independence.

For "Solidarity", the SNP's support for independence outweighs its lack of any relationship with the trade unions and its record in power of implementing Tory austerity, with an additional dose of SNP austerity.

Sheridan's own sales pitch is that

if he is elected as a list MSP, he will introduce an IndyRef2 Bill within three months of taking his seat in Holyrood. Sheridan's election message might best be summed up as: "It's all about the referendum, stupid!"

RISE (Respect, Independence, Socialism, Environmentalism — an opportunist lash-up between the Radical Independence Campaign and the Scottish Socialist Party) can only be described as "Solidarity" for the faint-hearted.

Whereas "Solidarity" explicitly calls for a constituency vote for the SNP, RISE has taken no position on how voters should cast their constituency vote. Nor is RISE taking a position on the EU referendum.

RISE's "big idea" for the Holyrood elections — you guessed it! — is to demand another referendum:

"RISE MSPs will table a motion to the Scottish Parliament that asserts Holyrood's right to stage another referendum at the time of its

choosing. They will then invite other pro-independence MSPs to back the motion."

While "Solidarity" and RISE have set up shop, the Socialist Party (SP) and its "Trade Union and Socialist Coalition" (TUSC) are still keeping everyone guessing about their plans for May.

A TUSC conference held in Glasgow in January laid the groundwork for standing candidates in May. Last month the Socialist Party issued a statement saying that TUSC would "need to stand candidates" in May if Labour and the SNP did not stand up to Tory austerity.

But with only eight weeks to go, the SP has yet to declare whether it will actually be standing candidates or whether — as effectively acknowledged by the SWP — standing candidates would be the emptiest of gesture politics.

Israeli teenager refuses military service

Israeli teenager Tair Kaminer has spent 45 days in prison for refusing compulsory military service in Israel.

Tair is the latest young person to refuse to serve due to Israel's continued occupation and oppression of the Palestinian people. Tair is 19 years old and has now refused to join the army before three separate tribunals. She is about to start her

third term in jail.

There is a small but consistent movement of army refusers in Israel who work with other peace and left-wing organisations.

Tair says "My refusal comes from my will to make my contribution to society, and make this a better place, and is part of an ongoing struggle for peace and equality."



• Sign the petition: chn.ge/1Ryy1iD

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Order at campaign.workerseurope.net



Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell has given his support to Another Europe is Possible. See: www.anothereurope.org

The Kurds, Aleppo, Russia, and the USA

By Simon Nelson

Michael Karadjis of the Australian Socialist Alliance has written a long and informative analysis of what he reckons to have been a U-turn by the Kurdish nationalist movement in Syria, the PYD, under the title "The Kurdish PYD's alliance with Russia against Free Aleppo: Evidence and analysis of a disaster" (bit.ly/mkaradj).

He criticises PYD clashes with other rebel groups in Syria, and the PYD's project of a reunification of Rojava (the Kurdish-claimed area of northern Syria) against the wishes of Arabs and Turkmen and other minorities within its declared borders.

Several reports indicate that the PYD, and its US-backed alliance with some small non-Kurdish groups, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), have moved well beyond defensive measures against Daesh and have directly attacked other anti-Assad rebels. They have begun cooperation with Assad's military and pro-Assad militias, and benefited from targeted Russian bombing campaigns.

"It is difficult to call this turn of events anything other than an outright betrayal of the revolution by the YPG leadership... Right now, the YPG is a direct participant in the catastrophe of the Arabic peoples of the Aleppo region and their revolution, in direct partnership with the Russian Blitzkrieg and therefore indirect (to be charitable) partnership with the fascist regime and its Iranian-led global sectarian invaders."

"Tomorrow, this betrayal may also be catastrophic for the Kurdish civilians and their own revolution as well."

Karadjis writes that a nationalist movement is always likely to make

concessions based on its own perceived narrow national interests, but the move by the PYD not to challenge Assad, or indirectly even to collaborate with Assad, will eventually see the Kurds lose out as well. That is true.

What skews Karadjis's argument, I think, is his exaggerated belief that "the Syrian revolution" was still alive and relatively healthy before "the Russian blitzkrieg"; an underestimate of the hostility of some of the Syrian rebel forces to Kurdish rights; and maybe a failure to see that the PYD has done before essentially the same sort of thing as it has done around Aleppo.

Other writers go so far as to say that the PYD is now a firm ally of Assad and a main beneficiary of Russian bombing.

This argument clashes head-on with the idea, also widespread on the left, that the PYD, the PKK, and their affiliates had abandoned Kurdish nationalism and guerrilla Stalinism and embraced "democratic confederalism", a theory of autonomous governance gleaned from the late anarchist theorist Murray Bookchin.

A social contract has been drawn up in Rojava, three cantons of Syria that the PYD has been attempting to unite. Formally the social contract guarantees trade union freedom, political rights, and equalities.

The contract does not, however, defend the right to set up alternative parties to the PYD. Local councils exist, and there are ministers and elected officials in these areas; but the PYD continues to control all military resources in Rojava and to maintain political hegemony. PYD rule in the areas it controls may be popular, but there is no solid evidence that it is radically different from the regime militant Stalinist



Around 10,000 people marched in London on 6 March in solidarity with Kurds.

movements have sometimes run in areas where they have mass support.

Criticism of the PYD on grounds of narrow nationalism and excessive readiness to deals with Assad is not new. In the immediate aftermath of the democratic mass protests against Assad in 2011 which then mutated into the Syrian civil war, the YPG were bolstered by an influx of PKK fighters from Turkey.

The PYD and PKK have both made statements suggesting that Assad could be a reformer with whom the PYD could do business in a newly-governed Syria, and made overtures to rebel groups and highlighted the historic Kurdish struggle against Assad. Assad had both given protection to PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan and, later, expelled him so that he ended up in a Turkish prison.

Turkey has continued to portray

the PYD as no better than Daesh; benefited from supply chains established by the anti-Assad rebels it funds; and attacked Kurds in Syria as well as in Turkey.

Turkey has been a longstanding ally of the increasingly fractured Free Syrian Army (FSA). At its inception the FSA largely took a largely Arab chauvinist line which excluded the PYD and some other Kurdish groups. On the one hand, there are reports of anti-Arab actions by the PYD, and statements from Salih Muslim and other PYD leaders which implied anti-Arab chauvinism; on the other, many of the Syrian Arab rebel groups have no interest in making any alliances with any Kurds. Islamists see the Kurdish forces as unacceptably secular. The PYD cannot be condemned out of hand for clashing with rebel groups which are as hostile to legitimate Kurdish demands as Assad is, or more so. It is not a socialistic liberation force. It is a nationalist movement of an oppressed people, deserving solidarity so far as it fights for national rights, but always likely to make alliances and deals which internationalists will condemn.

Karadjis also writes: "The PYD appears to be relying on the idea that its current US and Russian sponsors will save it some autonomy due to their own interests, even if it means Assad, or an 'Assad regime without Assad' won't be able to fully carry out the threat to 'unify' the country." Karadjis believes this would lead to a "US-Russia-backed police force guarding a brutal occupation of land seen as occupied by the Sunni Arab majority there".

The PYD would indeed be foolish to rely on this option, or to seek to include Arab-majority territory in its "Kurdish" region. Assad's main backer, the Iranian regime, is

hostile to Kurdish self-determination and is responsible for sectarian massacres and suppression of the Kurdish minority in Iran. The Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq is deeply hostile to the PYD and the political influence of the PKK. The PYD has now banned the KRG-based Rudaw media network from the territory.

Turkey, too, would be highly likely to destabilise a Kurdish region in Syria.

Karadjis argues that the Kurds' "initial cooperation with the US, when the US airforce came in to bomb ISIS away from Kobani in late 2014, was undoubtedly necessary, when defence against the threat of ISIS subjugation and terror in Kobani was a question of survival."

"However, the US-YPG arrangement then turned into a long-term alliance... Much as the Islamic State is a monstrously reactionary state that needs to be overthrown, it is questionable that this can be achieved via the military actions of a nationalist Kurdish militia on the ground, completely reliant on US air strikes, where the Islamic State is based among Arabs."

It is true that the US has now established an airbase in Kurdish controlled territory, but I doubt that the US really thinks that the Kurdish forces plus airstrikes can clear Daesh from the large stretches of Arab-majority territory which it controls.

The PYD itself has been fairly single minded in its aim: to fight for Kurdish self-determination and to unify the three Rojavan cantons.

We should have no illusions about the PYD/PKK or its tactics, but neither should we see the struggle for Kurdish self-determination as being a capitulation to US or Russian imperialism.

The sham elections and opening Iran for big business

By Morad Shirin

Commentary in some British newspapers argues that the new diplomatic rapprochement and lucrative business deals in Iran might be threatened by the hardline faction of the Iranian regime.

This is, however, a general picture that both wings of the regime are creating to keep the whole system in power.

On the one hand, "reformists" and "moderates" want to perpetuate the myth that the regime, after nearly four decades of big rhetoric and broken promises, can one day in the future provide workers, the poor and the lower layers of the petty bourgeoisie with a decent standard of living. They ask for votes yet again to ensure that the hardliners are kept in check (or even undermined). They make out that there is something really crucial and fragile at stake.

But in fact there is no important decision on the regime's future that was hanging on the vote in this sham election! On top of the glaring fact that the whole process is open only to the supporters of the regime whose Islamic credentials must be impeccable, there is no independent supervision as to what really happens to the ballot papers. What is announced depends on what is expedient to the regime's survival.

On the other hand, the various ultra-conservative politicians and officials, mainly the "principalists", not only want to keep their multi-billion dollar businesses, secret imports, and control of the huge foundations. They also feel they must address the concerns of what is left of the regime's base: the poorest layers of the petty bourgeoisie who supported the regime through war with Iraq, the "families of the martyrs", the Pasdaran, the Basij and the Hezbollahi. Many of them

have been hit by the inflation, unemployment and other social and economic problems that are the result of incompetence, corruption and sanctions.

CAPITULATION

The important thing to remember is that for some time, especially once financial sanctions were imposed, all factions adopted the same policy: capitulating to the demands and terms of US imperialism, while still talking up "heroic resistance" and mutual respect.

Rouhani's "election" represented this development. For the first time there has been unanimity between all factions on the crucial and central issue of its relationship with American imperialism. The regime has surrendered and now wants to be allowed to be America's main partner in the region.

The nuclear deal represented the

final capitulation of the whole regime (i.e., all factions) to imperialism. And the imperialists knew exactly what was on offer to them. So just five days after the deal was signed, and months before it was ratified by any parliament, Sigmar Gabriel, Angela Merkel's deputy and Economy Minister, headed a delegation of German capitalists to Iran. Many delegations from other European and Asian countries have followed. These were followed by Hassan Rouhani's European tour in January which resulted in many more deals, including one for 118 Airbus (worth €2.5 billion).

American firms like General Motors have also been visiting Iran for months and are set to expand ties in the coming months. In Britain, the Tory government has appointed the infamous pro-Pinochet Norman Lamont as its trade envoy to Iran. As part of the plan they will hold a trade and investment sum-

mit on 9 March in London.

The solidarity of European and British capitalists with their Iranians counterparts is already clear to see. Multi-billion pound deals are being signed while completely ignoring the rights of workers, women, national minorities or refugees, as well as the plight of the hundreds of political prisoners languishing in jail.

The inclusion and integration of the Iranian regime includes contacts with the AFL-CIO's Solidarity Center and the International Labour Organisation. In the past both have offered help and advice to the regime to set up compliant trade unions.

It is the task of revolutionary Marxists to fight within these unions to point out their shortcomings and limits and to provide a revolutionary perspective to workers who have joined them.

Spanish radical left follow Dieudonné

Yves Coleman of *Ni patrie ni frontières* discusses how Podemos, Izquierda Unida and the Candidatura d'Unitat Popular (CUP)¹ as well as representatives of the Spanish “cultural world”, defend the “freedom of expression” of the anti-Semitic magazine *El Jueves*.

***El Jueves* has no inhibition in proclaiming its hatred of Jews as the magazine stated in 2009²:**

“So says *El Jueves*, a coarse and anti-Semitic publication...”. With such a motto, so proudly sported, its readers can indulge in vile jokes about the “gazpacho”³ or “judias”⁴ (meaning white beans, but also Jewish women in Spanish, that provoke gas (i.e. flatulences, but also an allusion to the gas chambers).

Not only does *El Jueves* not censor these kind of lousy “jokes” on its website, but it wants to be congratulated for publishing them (see box below).

Therefore it’s not surprising that *El Jueves*, in 2011, found it “funny” to say about John Galiano’s pro-Hitler declarations: “The revolutionary ideas of a misunderstood genius⁵.” Or to be ironic about a “ghost writer” who supposedly helps Woody Allen to write his scenarios, in an article entitled “Here is the nigger who wrote Woody Allen’s films” (“negro” is the Spanish word for “ghost writer”), “not only are you are not a nigger but you ain’t even Jewish!” *El Jueves* likes to play with the stereotypes of the Jew as a schemer, swindler and liar.

These disgusting “jokes” are apparently appreciated by the Spanish left. Following the publication of anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic cartoons in *El Jueves* on 10 February 2016, Pablo Iglesias (general secretary of Podemos) and David Fernandez, former member of the CUP in the Catalan Parliament, have, along with other personalities of the “political and cultural world”⁶, signed a petition protesting against any possible complaint which could be filed against the antisemitic drawings⁷

published by *El Jueves*. These distinguished members of the Spanish left have signed a petition against any attempt to “criminalize the freedom of expression” of *El Jueves*!

Yet these kitsch left intellectuals-and-politicians know very well that this “satirical” magazine regularly denounces what it calls the “Jewish lobbies”⁸. Indeed under the title “Eating white beans”⁹ is considered an anti-Semitic attitude”, we read that “Jewish lobbies” are “small but well positioned.” Anti-Semitic comments from readers figure prominently under this article and have not been erased since they were written... in 2009.

The drawings which *El Jueves* published in February 2016 (but my criticism applies also to the previous years¹⁰) on the question of Israel and Palestine represent all Jews with a hooked nose, which is a century-old anti-Semitic stereotype. Jews represented in the magazine wear either payots, long beards, a wide-brimmed hat and a black coat or an IDF military uniform. This image is exactly the one presented by the French anti-Semitic press and media since the nineteenth century¹¹. Of course the designers of *El Jueves* don’t forget to draw a Palestinian in the guise of a Christ who is beaten up by Israeli soldiers, etc. The leftist *El Jueves* does not hesitate to perpetuate the myth of the Jewish deicide, a dogma officially abandoned by the Catholic Church since... 1965.

RAG

If you type entries like “Jews” or “Israel” on the website of this anti-Semitic rag appreciated by part of the Spanish left and intelligentsia, you will come across a plethora of anti-Semitic materials as a drawing¹² below which the magazine says hypocritically:

“This content is the work of one of our readers. If it offends you, criticise its author, not us; and, if it pleases you, all the credit should go to us who have published it.”

It’s difficult to reveal more clearly the role *El Jueves* intends to play: it wants to enable its



Podemos leader Pablo Iglesias

readers to freely express their anti-Semitism, while it refuses to accept any financial consequences (it does not want to lose any shocked readers) but it accepts all the compliments which it can gain through such antisemitic drawings and comments.

In short, *El Jueves* uses the same marketing recipe as all the scavengers who officiate in the press and media today.

But the “journalists” of this magazine do not always hide cowardly behind their readers’ letters or drawings. They also know how to attack the “chosen people”¹³ by supporting the initiative of a soccer player from the Seville team (the Muslim Franco-Malian Frederic Kanoute) who wears a T-shirt: “Pueblo elegido? Tu puta madre” (The chosen people? Fuck yourselves).

If you still have doubts, you can finally read that other text¹⁴ which combines vulgarity of expression and emptiness of thought with phrases like “we have been fucked by Israel” for sixty years, because they want to force us to “lick the kosher asses of its fascist leaders”, etc.

People sometimes ask naively why Spain is one of the European countries where anti-Semitic views are most widespread, although very few Jews live in this beautiful country.

However, just as in France, it should not be too surprising since the so-called “radical left” considers that the anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic propaganda is part of the “freedom of expression” and that it must defend anti-Semites’ rights to pollute the media and social networks with their racist propaganda.

References

• **The links to the website of “El Jueves”, contained in the notes of this article, are for information only. We do not condone their content.**

1. Izquierda Unida (United Left) is an electoral front mainly based on the Spanish Communist Party. Candidatura d’Unitat Popular is a so-called Left Catalanist independentist formation.
2. www.eljueves.es/2009/01/12/gaza_conflicto_una_reunion_vecinos.html
3. www.eljueves.es/2010/06/07/israel_pasa_tres_pueblos.html; “gazpacho” is a typical Spanish cold soup.
4. In this article of 2009 “A white Jewish woman (a white bean) infiltrated Schindler’s list”, *El Jueves* tries to make jokes about “judias blancas” and “judias verdes”, White Jewish women (white beans) and green beans (green Jewish women).
5. www.eljueves.es/2011/03/03/john_galliano_yo_soy_nazi_que_hago_revivals.html
6. Izquierda Unida’s MP Alberto Garzón, Podemos’ EMP Miguel Urbán, Izquierda Unida’s EMPs Javier Couso and Marina Albiol, and ex-CUP MP David Fernández ; Maruja Torres and

Rosa Regás (novelists), Alberto San Juan (actor), Silvio Rodríguez (Cuban songwriter and playwright), Fermín Muguruza (singer), Santiago Alba Rico (philosopher) and dozens of cartoonists like Albert Montey, Pedro Vera, Miguel Brieva and Carlos Latuff, second prize in 2006 of the International Holocaust Cartoon Competition, organised by Iran. Most signators support BDS campaigns on a regular or occasional basis. The Spanish CGT (anarcho-syndicalist trade union with 80,000 members) has recently added its signature to this “Manifiesto”, denouncing the “Jewish lobby” (note, the article does not refer to the “Zionist lobby”) <http://rojoynegro.info/articulo/sin-fronteras/manifiesto-denunciando-el-lobby-jud%C3%ADo-amenaza-el-jueves-criticar-el-abuso-del>.

7. www.cuartopoder.es/deidayvuelta/2016/02/14/el-mundo-de-la-cultura-firma-un-manifiesto-de-apoyo-a-el-jueves-ante-las-presiones-del-lobby-judio/6550 One can read the 50 tweets written by Xavier Torrens to answer to *El Jueves* lies and fantasies : twitter.com/xavier_torrens/status/699319201123717122

8. www.eljueves.es/2009/01/29/comer_judias_considera_actitud_antisemita.html

9. In Spanish “judias” means both “Jewish women” and “white beans”.

10. For example, one can look at this cartoon of Sharon represented as a pig with a swastika (at the end of this article www.libertaddigital.com/espana/2016-02-11/el-jueves-publica-un-escandaloso-libelo-antisemita-sobre-israel-1276567581/). Let’s recall first that, in the Muslim tradition, Jews are considered as descendants of “pigs, apes and other animals”, and that *El Jueves* admitted it did not to publish any caricature of Muhammad because it “scared the shit out of them” www.escolar.net/MT/archives/2006/02/mahoma_y_el_jue.html to do it. A way of admitting that Jew-bashing is a profitable and non risky business.

11. In his sketch, Dieudonné, the French antisemitic standup comedian, wore both payot and a battle dress, combining both of the stereotypes used by his disciples of *El Jueves* in 2016.

12. www.eljueves.es/2010/06/02/israel.html

13. www.eljueves.es/2009/01/08/ponen_moda_las_camisetas_contra_israel.html which could be translated by “Chosen people, all sons of a bitch”. Such a slogan is in fact an “Islamophobic” blasphemy because Abraham (Ibrahim, according to the Quran, “one of our believing servants” “who do good”), Mary (Maryam, whom “God has chosen above all the women of the world”), and her son Jesus (Issa, “a servant of God who appointed me as a Prophet”), all Jews, are mentioned with great respect in the Qur’an, a book supposedly dictated by Allah to the founder of Islam. But Frédéric Kanouté — who brags about his religion (he saved a mosque in Seville from closing by sending a big check) — and the journalists of *El Jueves* are unaware of the spiritual foundations of Islam — which is not really a surprise. The same ignorance explains why *El Jueves* shows IDF soldiers checking if Palestinians are circumcised to discover if they are Jewish, ignoring the fact that most Muslims are also circumcised!

14. www.eljueves.es/2010/06/02/bienvenidos_israel_anos_dando_por_culo_de-fensa_propia.html

Downplaying accusations of anti-semitism

By Marie Berger, No Gods no Masters, Barcelona

Julio Serrano’s¹ antisemitic cartoons benefit from the support of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, who rehabilitate them into the “world of politics, journalism and culture”², a more presentable label for those who promote the cultural and academic boycott of anything which can be linked, in one way or another, to “Zionism” — which may in turn be a Jew (religious or not) or an Israeli.

[Unadikum, a so-called “pro-Palestinian” association which actively supports BDS campaigns in Spain has downplayed the criticisms of the cartoons as anti-Semitic in an article entitled “Israel attacks *El Jueves*”.]

They condemn the indignation expressed by the Jewish community of Madrid, which they also call the “Jewish lobby” or “Israel”. This confusion of terms is perhaps what gives them so little credibility, especially when some of them deny being anti-Semitic, and makes them so effective for others because they only have to denounce the “instrumentalisation of the Holocaust” so they don’t need to debate.

It is a shame that the Spanish people who have so much to do in recognition of their rich revolutionary past and the condemnation of the crimes of Francoism are not more interested in the work of memory by Jews (religious or not) in the world. Their thoughts and self-criticism, their feedback, would probably be useful, to start with on questions of method of work and education.

All anti-Zionists are not anti-Semites, they say. We could start to believe them, if only they refrained from digging in this antisemitic substrate, so abundant in their ranks: “The expulsion of the Jews is what Spain did best in its history”, tweeted Ana María C., supporter of Unadikum. A comment among many of the same kind emanating from those circles.

We can’t imagine what these people would write if they did not belong to these leftish milieus!

1. Cartoonist working for *El Jueves* and author of the antisemitic cartoons published in February 2016.
2. www.cuartopoder.es/deidayvuelta/2016/02/14/el-mundo-de-la-cultura-firma-un-manifiesto-de-apoyo-a-el-jueves-ante-las-presiones-del-lobby-judio/6550



Campaigners from the West Hendon estate in Barnet who have been fighting eviction due to redevelopment for several years.

Affordable, available, assured: Homes for all!

Already, on average, in England, rent takes 43% of the income of households renting privately. (That's 43% of average gross income of the main householder and partner including housing benefit, it's 52% of income excluding HB).

Tenants in London pay 60% of income (including HB: 72% without).

And on current trends, in nine years' time there will be more households renting privately than households in their own home with a mortgage. (Figures from PriceWaterhouse Cooper).

Private tenants have no security, and small and difficult redress if their landlord neglects repairs or offers only poor conditions.

Andrew Panayi, a North London landlord, was in October 2015 eventually fined £2,000 and ordered to pay £15,900 costs and repay £70,000 rent after being chased by the local council and exposed by the BBC and the *Guardian*.

One of his less dissatisfied tenants reported: "The electricity gets cut off, and we sometimes don't have hot water... It is really small, there's mould on the walls and it smells".

But Panayi is reckoned to have over 200 properties he is renting out, and the fines and repayments will have been a small dent in his income.

The Tories' Housing and Planning Bill, now in the House of Lords after completing all its stages in the Commons, and due to come into force from April 2017, will push forward the polarisation of housing in England, especially in London, into secure luxury for a few and insecure squalor for many.

The bill will:

- Cut off government funding for social housing. Government money will go instead into building homes for sale.
- Impose higher, often much higher, "market rents" on all council tenant households earning more than £30,000 a year, or £40,000 in London.
- Limit tenancies for new council tenants to two to five years.
- Force councils to sell off their "higher-

value" properties, which in some central London boroughs could be almost half their stock.

The "market rent" rule is an attempt to wreck social housing, not a corrective to a subsidy for the well-off. Council housing is not subsidised. Councils are legally obliged to balance their housing budgets separately from other budgets. It is cheaper only because councils do not make a profit from housing.

Median gross weekly earnings in the UK for full-time workers (the earnings level for people halfway up the pay chart, with 50% worse off and 50% better off) are now about £27,500 a year. Average (mean) household income in London is over £52,000. Many low-paid households with two earners will be hit by the "market rent" rule.

All this started in the Thatcher years, when the Tories abolished most of the protections for private tenants introduced in the 1960s, forced councils to sell off properties cheap to all tenants who wanted to buy, and made it

financially impossible for councils to build any real quantity of new housing.

The first result of Thatcher's changes was not an immediate rise in private renting, but an expansion in people buying homes on mortgages. Many of those then suffering in the house-price crash of 1989-92, in which a total of 188,000 homes were repossessed.

By the early 1990s, the proportion of households owing homes on mortgages was sliding down from its peak of 42%. It is now below 30% and still decreasing.

The average deposit demanded for a first-time buyer had risen to £55,000 by 2009 — five or six times what it was in 1988 — and has declined only slightly since then. As of April 2015, only 17% of dwellings in England were affordable at median household income, and only 0.1% in London.

The Tories are promoting a more unrestrained market in housing. As such markets generally do, it is producing polarisation.

At one end of the scale: a relentless run-down of council housing, a bit-by-bit shift by

housing associations into being more like private landlords, and an explosion since about 2002 in private renting (now over 20% of households).

At the other end: a steady rise in the proportion of houses and flats owned outright by better-off middle-aged and elderly people who have paid off their mortgages; and an explosion in luxury housing, especially in London.

The writer Danny Dorling has argued that in general there is no housing shortage (though more social housing needs to be built in some areas). There is "overconsumption" of housing by the rich. Nearly 2000 properties are lying empty in posh Kensington and Chelsea; about a third of the houses on "Billionaires' Row", The Bishops Avenue in Hampstead, were empty in 2014. Overall, about 600,000 dwellings are empty, a figure which has gone down a bit in recent years but is still high.

And the suction on the housing market of the luxury demand pulls up the prices of more modest dwellings.

It inflates urban land prices. In Southwark, the mostly low-income borough where Solidarity has its office, a hectare of building land is valued at £41 million, which at a high building density of 150 dwellings per hectare is £270,000 per dwelling. There is not much buying or selling of the land, and ground-rents are usually fixed for long periods, so the landlords' actual take is more limited than those figures would suggest; but comprehensive public ownership of the land, a policy proposed by bourgeois radicals even early in the 19th century, would ease the housing crisis.

The housing demonstration in London on 13 March calls for opposition to the Housing and Planning Bill; secure homes for all; and rent controls.

It also wants a halt to the demolition of sound council estates (often done in order to clear land for profitable high-income development); a big council housing programme; and regulations to give security to private tenants.



Activists on the protest about the Housing Bill on Saturday 30 January.

Junior doctors set for a long battle

By Pete Campbell

On 9-11 March thousands of junior doctors will take to the picket lines again. The first of three 48 hour periods of "emergency care only" provision marks a serious turning point in the dispute.

The stakes are high. The government has been clear it plans to impose this contract regardless of complaints from doctors, dismay from hospital trusts, and objections from general public opinion.

This is no longer just about junior doctors. In truth it never has been. From the beginning the government has failed to distinguish between this contractual dispute and wider NHS issues. Using false statistics, deliberate misinterpretation and unfounded claims, its agenda has always been to discredit the current system, demoralise its workforce and prepare our National Health Service for further privatisation.

On 11 March, the NHS Reinstatement Bill will come before Parliament. Since it comes as a "private member's bill", from Green MP Caroline Lucas, the debate will be short and probably filibustered by the Tories. The Bill is unlikely to pass.

But it is important because it states our own positive image of how we see our Na-

tional Health Service. Unashamedly publicly funded, publicly run, without any form of market within it. The growing support within Labour circles for the Bill is a positive move.

These next few months present a potential watershed moment for our NHS. Rocked by austerity and funding cuts it stands on the brink.

As social care is decimated, more burdens fall upon the NHS. Jeremy Hunt's blustering statement (6 March) that he "wants Britain to be the best place in the world to live well with dementia" only highlights how privatised social care is failing our elderly and infirm.

The junior doctors' contract dispute, the health students' bursaries campaign, and other battles should be pulled together into a sustainable long running campaign in support of our National Health Service. It will require the support and commitment of our trade unions, the Labour Party and the TUC.

To reverse the current trajectory on the NHS will require a huge effort. For a generation the levers of power have pushed us further and further towards the edge.

To counter this, we must all to defend the NHS, argue against austerity and fight for the society we want to see.

Support the juni

Aislinn Macklin-Doherty, an NHS doctor and BMA rep, spoke to *Solidarity*.

It would be fair to say that before this past year I was essentially a campaigning novice.

I had strong political opinions. I remember being on my father's shoulders at marches against Maggie Thatcher's public sector cuts. I marched against the Iraq war. I signed petitions and attended occasional protests about NHS privatisation. But, like many in the UK, I didn't feel really connected to a wider voice or a movement.

I certainly did not feel represented by any of the mainstream political parties. Over the last year three things happened.

A staunch socialist, Jeremy Corbyn, was elected leader of the Labour Party with an overwhelming majority. That happened just a few months after the Conservative Party gained the power to lead Britain with a historically and depressingly small majority, representing only 24% of the electorate.

Bernie Sanders, another staunch socialist, emerged out of the noise created by the political and intellectual equivalent of a foghorn that is Donald Trump. And started to really worry the right of centre.

Then 50,000 junior doctors got a total kick in the teeth by the Conservative Government by being told that a contract which 98% of us objected to would be imposed on us.

The government claimed that we didn't really understand what we were objecting to and that we were being "misled by the BMA".

In November 2015 I came to a Momentum meeting and heard an excellent colleague, Dr Yannis Gourtsoyannis, a member of the central BMA junior doctor committee, and Dr Jacky Davis of Keep Our NHS Public. A fire was ignited in me.

I went back to my hospital. I stood and was elected as a union rep for the BMA. I organised picket lines at my hospital.

I've met other trade unionists from Unite, Unison and NUT and attended multiple Momentum regional evenings, and have seen first hand what can be achieved by getting up and taking action as part of my union and within a wider trade union movement.

A great turning point came about in this dispute when Jeremy Hunt and his party decided, arrogantly and perhaps very foolishly, to take the "nuclear option" and impose the contract on doctors not once but twice, and finally with no further discussion in January 2016.

He did that despite the fact that 98% of the profession, every major Royal College for training doctors, and the leaders of the Labour and Green Parties were in complete opposition to the decision, and despite the fact that 66% of the public have been overwhelmingly in support of the junior doctors, not the Government.

If there was any doubt about the government's agenda, it is now quite clear for all to see, including many junior doctors who voted for them and who have had a rude awakening.

The BMA has woken up to the fact that



there will not be a reasonable discourse with this Government on this issue. This is a government which totally changed the terms of negotiation for a junior doctor contract with a manifesto pledge of seven-day services with no extra funding. A government now exposed as having given absolutely no thought to the costing and staffing implications of stretching the entire workforce across the week.

A government that repeatedly misquotes, spins and frankly lies about statistics to create fear in the general public and falsely assign blame to the workforce for deaths at the weekend.

The BMA has now categorically rejected imposition of this contract. It democratically surveyed members up and down the country, who voted to take escalating emergency-only industrial action (i.e. not a full walk out, emergency care to be covered in all hospitals).

There will be three sets of 48 hour strikes over the coming months with the potential to escalate to full walkout strikes still in place.

The BMA has also arranged a series of "meet the doctor" public engagement events to counteract the spin of the government and the mainstream press.

JUDICIAL REVIEW

A judicial review is being sought against the Government on the basis that they have not considered the detrimental effect of the contract under the Equality Assessment Act.

Action will be ongoing over the next few months, likely into the summer or even autumn if the government continues with its belligerent rhetoric.

The NHS as we knew it has gone. In 2012 it was broken up into CCGs by the Health & Social Care Act. That effectively fractured the NHS into funding pools which encourage the market to enter and crowbar profits into healthcare where profits have no role. The Secretary of State for health no longer has the responsibility of providing healthcare for the

NHS students in new walkout

By Joe Cullen, student nurse

In a show of solidarity with the junior doctors' 48-hour strike, student nurses have pledged a second walkout on 9 March.

This is a reaction to the government's announced changes to the student nurse university funding program. Instead of receiving a bursary ranging from £1000 to £4000 and an exemption from tuition fees, future student nurses will have their bursary replaced with a loan, and will have to pay tuition fees.

Many aspiring nurses will now be unable to enrol on the course. The resulting short-

ages will spell disaster for the future of an already understaffed, under-appreciated profession.

Despite their supernumerary status, student nurses know the reality of the NHS means that they must become a full member of the nursing staff when we are on placement, the only difference being that our salary is many times less of a registered nurse. Future student nurses will have to fulfil the same duties as before, and pay for the privilege of doing so!

The walkout will take place between 10am and noon on Wednesday 9 March. The RCN does not support the walkout.



Junior doctors, save the NHS!



British population.

The NHS has been reduced to a logo which even Richard Branson can stamp all over the Virgin services which have been introduced by stealth to run large and increasing parts of the NHS.

I wanted to be a doctor for as long as I can remember. I thought it would be the single most important thing I could do to be able to listen to someone's story, pick out the clues from what they say and what their body tells me and then come up with a plan to help them. And I wanted to do that in the NHS — the NHS which gives me the freedom to make decisions to help people not based on cost but based on need, and which gives patients the freedom to be cared for in their darkest moments without fear that they can't afford it.

That is why junior doctors should strike: to get our NHS back.

Many will say that there is no link between the restructuring of the junior doctors contracts to make us work more weekends with no extra staffing or resources and the degradation of the NHS as we know it. But I urge these people to look at the wider context and implications of this contract.

If we are all expected to work infinitely more Saturdays with no extra staff or support, who will be looking after our patients

for the rest of the week? Who is covering the thousands of unfilled gaps across the country that already exist and which we have been made to fill to the detriment of patients? Who is it that suffers when on a night shift when there is no colleague to support you because the position is unfilled, and you now take on seeing 50 patients instead of 25.

Not a single doctor has asked for a pay rise. No amount of money could tempt me risk patient care in the way that this contract will.

That is the crux of it all; once the workforce is undermined and the staff demoralised and stretched and exhausted even more than they already are, then the real "reforms" march on in.

When this government has succeeded in bringing the workforce to its knees and cut spending on the NHS on the lines Simon Stevens' five-year plan to reduce spending from the current 8% to 6% of GDP by 2020 — already half the percentage spent in the United States — then the NHS will be sold off fully as an "inefficient" service, deliberately crippled for corporate interests.

Tony Benn once predicted that "there would be a revolution in the streets if the NHS were to be privatised". So they didn't tell us. They just did it in the background and called it reform.

But now we have finally woken up. 50,000

of us are blowing the whistle on these "reforms" and telling this Government that we know what their plans are.

Next up are the consultants and then the nurses. Their contract reform plans have already been tabled. This is an intentional act to cripple us as a workforce and continue the manufactured crisis in the NHS.

And we won't have it.

DISHONEST

This Government is not interested in meaningful negotiations or even honest debate. They have proven that time and time again with their spin, misguided use of statistics and shameful belittling of the NHS workforce and their union.

Doctors will not stoop to that level. We have demonstrated our determination to uphold the truth at all costs, and above all continue to fight for the right to care for our patients which is what we get up for every morning and stay late for every night. The government cannot counteract such strength and resolve in some of the most dedicated hardworking, educated and united professionals in this country.

I grew up under New Labour as an 1980s child with vague memories of the havoc wreaked on public services during the

Thatcher era. But at least everybody knew what was happening. What strikes me now as a politicised junior doctor in my 30s is how effortlessly and seamlessly the destruction of the Thatcher era merged with the most mind-boggling era of double-speak and empty politics that has ever been known in British history with the Labour Party under New Labour.

Even though I fundamentally and morally disagree with the ideology of a right wing Conservative Party, one which bases the value of humanity on how much we can exploit others (to gain profit) rather than what we can collectively achieve by collaboration with each other and by investment in basic human rights and need, I could never vote Labour — until now. Now a man called Jeremy Corbyn has brought integrity, honesty, equality and justice back into mainstream politics. And his entire lifetime proves that he means what he says and he says what he means.

The Tory Party have found themselves leading the country more because of a lack of any substantial opposition than because anyone believes in a single thing that they stand for.

I believe that Jeremy Corbyn and his supporters will change this, and that is why I have become a Momentum member, and most recently Secretary for my local Momentum group.

I'll finish with an anecdote which I think sums up the feeling behind the grassroots socialist movement I find myself in and which I think Momentum epitomises. I met Margaret Thatcher as a junior house officer working in the NHS in my first year of training. I had to insert a needle to give her life-saving medicine and was terrified of the prospect of causing unnecessary harm to her: she was at that point a very frail and vulnerable elderly woman.

It struck me later with great force how much destruction this woman had caused to the healthcare service. She had introduced the market to the NHS which had started this avalanche of fracturing and crippling the care that we can provide. She had directly led an ideological attack during her lifetime on the poorest, the most vulnerable and the most needy in our society. I was floored by the irony of this paradox as I focussed on getting the needle in at first pass.

But none of that distracted me, or the nurses. or any other member of the NHS workforce, from doing our absolute best to give her the best care possible, like we do for everyone day in day out. And this highlights the absolute essence of our NHS. This is about a service that goes way beyond personal interest, private investment and profiteering. The NHS is about standing up for the most vulnerable, whoever you are, and treating you with the respect you deserve as a human being, regardless of wealth, status or wage.

Every single Labour Party MP must back the reinstatement of the NHS on 11 March 2016, and they must back the junior doctors in their struggle to get our NHS back.

Trotsky did not hesitate to name “totalitarianism”

Robert Fine, author of *Beyond Apartheid and Political investigations: Hegel, Marx and Arendt*, reviews *The two Trotskyisms confront Stalinism: The fate of the Russian Revolution volume 2*, edited by Sean Matgamna.

Faced with the slaughterhouse that Russia had become under Stalin's rule, faced with the Pact that Stalin forged with Hitler to divide up Poland between them (and hand the largest Jewish population in the world to the most deadly antisemite in the world), faced with the brutalities of the Soviet Union's own military expansionism in Poland and Finland, Leon Trotsky did not hesitate to use the word “totalitarianism” to refer to the regime of barbarism practiced in the USSR and by the USSR in the countries it occupied.

Nor did he hesitate to liken the rule of barbarism emerging in the USSR to that emerging in Nazi Germany.

Trotsky recognised that the system of property and power arising in the USSR was not the same as that arising in Nazi Germany, but this appeared to him as less significant compared with what they shared in common. In this regard, Trotsky was right.

True, Trotsky in his own imagination still clung to the remnants of social ownership, state property, rational bureaucracy and proletarian power that had once characterised the post-revolutionary social landscape. Social theory often lags behind social development and we should not be too surprised if in his ongoing attempts to understand the dizzying rise of totalitarianism in both Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany in the 1930s, Trotsky sometimes found himself a few paces behind. Famously he held on to his characterisation of Russia as a “degenerated workers' state”.

What is more remarkable is that Trotsky was wise both to the increasingly anachronistic formulations nearly all Marxists used to close their eyes to what was a terrifyingly new and incomprehensible reality and to the multiple excuses most Marxists used not put all their resources into resisting the triumph of this reality. This was not only true in relation to the Soviet Union but also in relation to Nazi Germany. If talk of a “degenerated workers state” was a way of evading reality in the one case, the image of antisemitism as a mere instrument for the repression of the proletariat, peripheral to class domination, destined to disappear as Nazi rule was consolidated, was no less the illusion of most Marxists in the other case.

Even looking back with the benefit of hindsight, it is difficult to date the evolution of Stalinism and Hitlerism into totalitarian forms of domination. Perhaps it was a bit earlier in the former than the latter, but in both cases it was some time around the mid to late 1930s. It is small wonder, then, if the concep-

tualisation of the world failed to keep up with the world itself – even in the case of a writer, activist and former front-runner of the Russian Revolution like Leon Trotsky, who never abandoned his efforts to face up to the present, to understand even that which was most immediately difficult to understand, to resist solace in the phantoms of the past.

One of the many strengths of Sean Matgamna's edited collection on *The two Trotskyisms confront Stalinism*, and in particular of the introduction he wrote to it — which in itself is an expression of a political life's work as the most original, critical and humane Trotskyist thinker of his age — is to read Trotsky's late writings in a developmental mode (i.e. in terms of Trotsky's direction of travel) and in a situated mode (i.e. in terms of what Trotsky was doing when he wrote what he wrote), rather than as a collection of fixed ideas and abstract formulae that had long since lost any human meaning (i.e. the Orthodox Trotskyist ways of reading Trotsky). There is a vast difference between using words like “degenerated workers' state” to signify apologetics for the brutal Stalinist regime and using these words to signify a determination to resist and overcome totalitarian rule. The words might be the same but the meaning of the words in their actual political use was quite different.

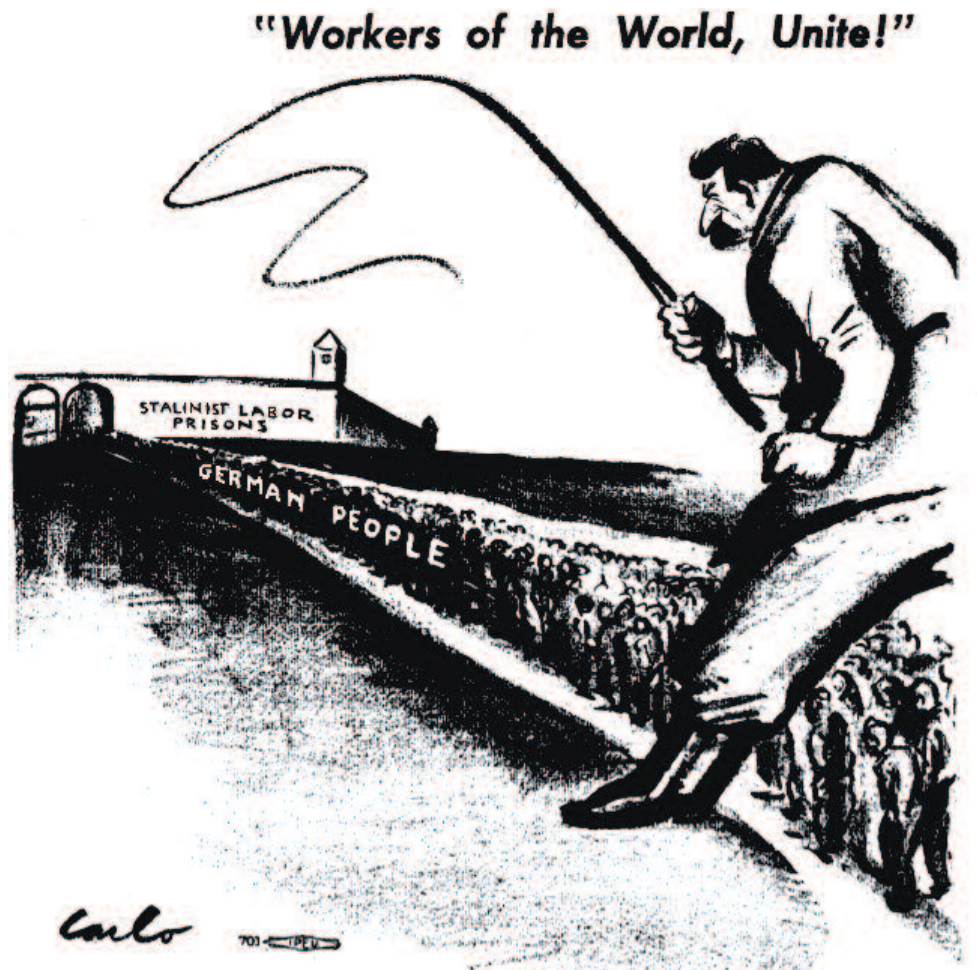
CAMPS

While Trotsky's cultivated instinct was to resist oppression from whatever source it came, the basic instinct of orthodox Trotskyism was to decide which “camp” to support and which to oppose and then subordinate all other moral and ethical considerations to the primacy of one camp over the other.

This method, the method of seeing the world in terms of camps and declaring one camp to be the “progressive” one and the other camp to be the camp of “reaction”, unfortunately continues to this day — for example, in the form of a dichotomy between “anti-imperialism” and “imperialism”.

Today it is a common political decision of inheritors of the orthodox Trotskyist mantle to support any movement or regime they place in the camp of “anti-imperialism”, notwithstanding their democratic deficiencies, racist and antisemitic proclivities, and oppressive practices toward the very people they purport to represent.

There is of course nothing wrong in making distinctions between power and resistance, imperialism and anti-imperialism, oppressor and oppressed, etc. but there is something politically disabling in fetishizing these categories, turning them into absolutes, and substituting them for thought. Worse still, representatives of orthodox Trotskyism like James Cannon, or Gerry Healy after him in the UK, imagined themselves as little totalitarian leaders, bossing around their small



A cartoon from the Workers Party publication *Labor Action*.

bands of followers, tailoring reality to their image of it.

By contrast, there is something very refreshing about Sean Matgamna's generous as well as critical spirit in the way he approaches Trotsky himself, the orthodox Trotskyists gathered around James Cannon, and the heterodox Trotskyists with whom he rightly identifies — the dissenting Trotskyists that gathered around Max Shachtman and the New International, brilliant men and women like C L R James, Raya Dunayevskaya, Dwight Macdonald, Irving Howe, Hal Draper, et al. Some remained Marxist, some chose the Western camp over the Soviet camp, and some made gargantuan exertions to revise and extend Marxism in the light of the experience of totalitarianism that no pre-existing body of political thought was equipped to confront.

Sean Matgamna himself is a child of this heterodox Trotskyism who has all his political life endeavoured to keep the tradition intellectually alive, politically active and ever responsive to a rapidly changing world today even when we find ourselves without any banister to hold on to. Perhaps no one of our generation has done more than him to scratch beneath formulae like “nationalism of the oppressed” and “nationalism of the oppressor” (in Ireland, Palestine, Latin America, the former Soviet Union, etc.), to uncover the human meaning hidden within these terms, to reach out for human solutions to the social, democratic and national questions they raise.

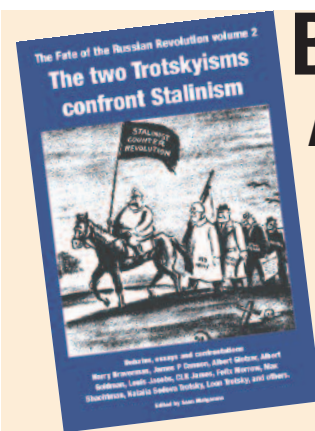
If the key question in the 1930s and 1940s was how to understand, respond to and overcome totalitarianism in power and the totalitarian tendencies of modern society, it is arguable whether Marxism was well equipped for this task. Perhaps we need to read Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism* alongside Trotsky. One problem was the allure of totalitarian movements for revolutionary intellectuals both of the left and the right — an allure that undoubtedly attracted

Cannon and the orthodox Trotskyists among others. Partly this was about the Siren songs of power. Sean Matgamna records their eulogies to the glorious “Red Army”, not to speak of its secret police, rising to the defence of the Soviet Union and then not only defeating the Germans in the East but also invading and occupying half of Europe after the war. In the eyes of orthodox Trotskyism the thin pretext of creating “deformed workers' states” simply sugared the pill of being in awe of Russian power.

The other problem was about the radical character of totalitarian movements, left and right. In their most self-confident moments, they were against “liberal” notions of private property, rule of law, punishment, personal morality, family loyalty, state bureaucracy, legal justice, national boundaries, world culture, the idea of humanity itself, etc. They were “against” not in the sense of being merely critical but of actively seeking to destroy all that they saw as rotten in the world. In this sense they were revolutionary. In actuality they ushered in the coming barbarism. Totalitarian movements devalued all values. The problem was not so much that Stalinism was counter-revolutionary, but that totalitarians were hyper-revolutionary — throwing out every bloodied baby they could find with the bathwater.

Trotsky and to some extent Trotskyism did their best to make sense of what must have seemed utterly senseless, like the prioritised mass murder of millions of quite innocent people, but they were somehow too close to the phenomenon to do it the justice they sought. Yet to see how hard they tried, how valiantly they struggled, how readily they sacrificed their own futures for the sake of some basic understanding, there is no better place to start than here.

I hope Sean Matgamna's “introduction” can be drawn together with other of his writings to speak to us directly in one volume.



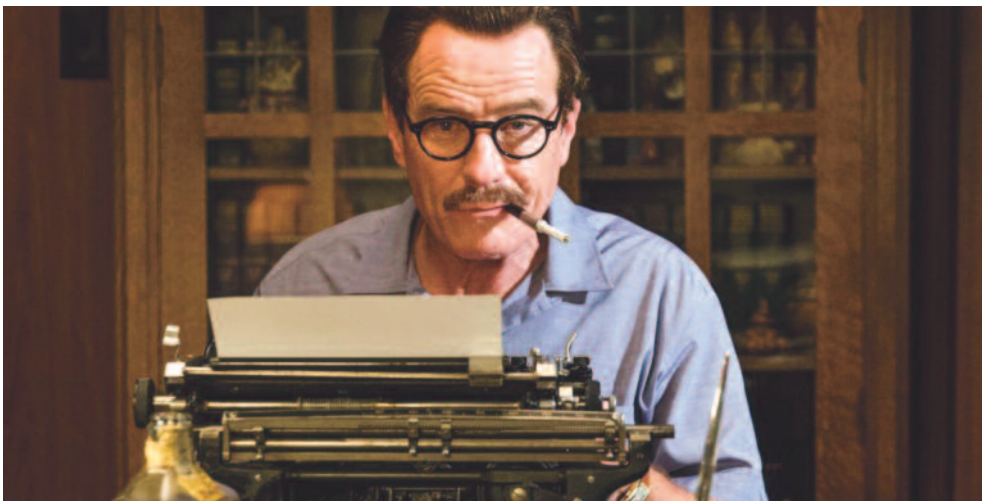
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“There are some who, for whatever reasons, do not think there is much (or any) importance to such history ... To deny that there is anything useful to learn from such excavations and explorations is inconsistent with a serious attitude toward the discipline of history, as well as toward political theory, not to mention Marxism. Sean Matgamna has performed a genuine service for scholars and activists.”

Paul Le Blanc

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Stalinists as victims

By Eric Lee

'Trumbo' is a the latest in a series of Hollywood films that looks back nostalgically at the McCarthy era.

This was, according to Hollywood, a time when the good guys were blacklisted writers accused of membership in the Communist Party, and the bad guys were the US government, studio bosses, and right-wing media.

The first of those films was probably 'The Way We Were' (1973) starring Barbra Streisand and Robert Redford. Made only a few years after blacklisting had ended, when the Cold War was still raging, it became a template for future films on the subject. The film takes place over several decades, as Streisand and Redford fall in and out of love. In the opening scenes, Streisand plays the very young Katie, a committed activist, and is initially shown as campus leader of the Young Communist League (YCL).

The writers could have chosen which years to use, as the film is deeply rooted in historical events. They could have chosen 1940, for example, when Katie would have been campaigning against US entry into the Second World War, denouncing British imperialism and supporting the Hitler-Stalin pact. But they did not — they set the first scene to the mid-1930s, so Katie is shown advocating for Republican Spain and against the fascists.

The next scene is during the war, but at a time when both the US and the Soviet Union are fighting on the same side, against the Nazis. Katie is no longer denouncing Roosevelt as a war-monger (as she would have done in 1940) and is instead working hard on the war effort, and an uncritical admirer of the beloved President. This was during a time when the Communist Party's leader, Earl Browder, infamously declared that "Communism is twentieth-century Americanism".

The remaining parts of the story are set in the late 1940s when the Communists faced the persecution of the Hollywood blacklist, and a final scene shows her crusading against nuclear weapons in the early 1960s.

In other words, the historical setting of every scene in 'The Way We Were' is carefully calculated to show off American Communists in the best possible light. They are not shown defending Stalin's show trials, harassing independent leftists (including Trotskyists), defending the pact with Hitler, and so on. Instead the lovely Katie is backing only the most noble causes.

Films like 'The Front' (1976) starring Woody Allen and Zero Mostel continued the tradition, highlighting just how awful the McCarthy era was for Hollywood, destroying the lives of innocent radicals who had done nothing wrong.

'Trumbo' is the latest version of the story. It stars the brilliant Bryan Cranston who was deservedly nominated for several Best Actor awards. But his acting aside, the film continues the portrayal of American Communists as decent people, innocent of any crime, who were victims of right-wing media and politicians.

An early scene shows Trumbo with his daughter, who asks her father if she too is a Communist.

In a cringe-worthy moment, Trumbo asks her what her favourite sandwich is. Ham and cheese, she replies. Well, he tells her, imagine if you came to school with your sandwich and one of your friends didn't have lunch and was hungry. What would you do? Would you sell him half of your sandwich? Would you ignore him?

The little girl replies, no, of course not, I would share the sandwich. Well then, Trumbo explains, you're pretty much a Communist.

The reality of Dalton Trumbo is a little bit more complex than that.

Trumbo, like a number of other successful Hollywood writers, was a member of the Communist Party and consistently supported the party line that was handed down from Moscow.

Trumbo admitted in an article that Stalinists in Hollywood succeeded in blocking some films from being made — films that had an anti-Soviet message. Among these was one based on Arthur Koestler's book, *Darkness at Noon*.

Trumbo's most famous book, *Johnny Got His Gun*, a masterpiece of anti-war writing, was allowed to go out of print following the invasion of the USSR in June 1941. Trumbo's view was that it was perfectly correct to write and publish an anti-war book when the Soviets were allied with the Nazis, but once Russia itself was under threat, such a book sent out the wrong message.

Some people encouraged Trumbo to keep the book in print during the war. But the author did more than suppress his own best work in the party interest. As he later admitted, he passed on the names of those who had encouraged him with the anti-war message ... to the FBI.

Films like 'Trumbo', 'The Front' or 'The Way We Were' make much of how wrong it is to name names and inform on people. In 'Trumbo' several characters are revealed as weak because they do so.

There's no question that Dalton Trumbo was a great writer, and that the Hollywood blacklist was a dark period in American history. But the Stalinist victims were in many cases no heroes, and whitewashing them and rewriting history does no one any good.

Verses from the First World War: Conscientious Objectors

By Janine Booth

Once the Military Service Act came into force in 1916, men aged 18-41 had to apply to a Military Tribunal if they believed that they had a reason not to be drafted.

The majority had health, work or family reasons, but 2% were Conscientious Objectors (COs): men who objected to military service because they objected to war. Around 16,000 men were recorded as conscientious objectors: some were ordered to do "work of national importance" (e.g. farming), some were given non-combatant duties, but 6,000 were forced into the army. Many then refused orders and were imprisoned, as were those who refused both military and alternative service.

The Grace Unforfeit

Conscientious Objector Alan McDougall edited *The Whisperer* in Winchester Prison.

Prisoners wrote poems, articles, comments or cartoons on sheets of toilet paper and passed them surreptitiously to McDougall, who bound them together with a piece of mailbag as a cover, and sent the single copy into circulation, passed hidden up sleeves from one inmate to another.

In this "ballade" poem, he describes daily life in prison, while deriding the failure of the authorities to take from him the thing he treasured most, "the grace unforfeit of a living soul".

"Three planks, the blankets, soap, a fork and spoon —
Knife? God forbid his fair young life should be

Thus in his keeping: but, a special boon
We lend him one to cut the bread for tea;
Boot polish, tooth paste, towel, and brushes three —

These and four walls: yea, these shall be the whole

Of his possession." But they left to me
The grace unforfeit of a living soul.

I must confess my neighbour's endless tune

Gets on my nerves, "The Red Flag" though it be:

I sometimes wish he'd spend the afternoon
In peaceful dozing till, at ten past three,
The voice and vision of the "R.M.P."
Calls us to quit this rather dismal hole
And take a walk — to cherish tenderly
The grace unforfeit of a living soul.

I'm rather glad it will be bedtime soon:
The days pass rather uneventfully.
They say 'tis Whitsun Monday, 12th of June:

It might as well be Christmas. Still, perhaps we

Will move tomorrow nearer to the goal:
Wandsworth, or wherever it may be —
The grace unforfeit of a living soul.

Architect artless, whoso'er you be,
That planned this guard-room, choose an other role.

You must confess you failed, in leaving me
The grace unforfeit of a living soul.

Conscientious Objectors (After a Military Tribunal)

Irish poet Eva Gore-Booth was a lifelong

campaigner for social change and organiser of women workers, and the younger sister of Irish republican Constance Markiewicz.

In this short poem, Eva expresses her disgust at the Military Tribunal, where the "six ignorant men and blind" (the Tribunal panel) accuse and vilify the Conscientious Objectors.

For the Hidden One in every heart,
Lost star of the world's night,
Fire that burns in the soul of art,
The Light within the light.

For the gentleness of Buddha's dream
And Christ's rejected truth,
The treasure under the world's stream
Pearl of pity and ruth.

Before six ignorant men and blind,
Reckless they rent aside
The Veil of Isis in the mind ...
Men say they shirked and lied.

The CO's wife

Like Eva Gore-Booth's poem, Monica Ewer's "The CO's Wife" also records the contempt dished out to COs by Tribunals.

Like Alan McDougall's verse, this describes conditions of life. Ewer — whose husband Norman did farm work as a CO — urges her husband not to give up his principled stand but to "see it through".

Monica joined the Communist Party after the war, and became the *Daily Herald's* drama and film critic.

Swilling teas in sewing bees,
Knittin' socks,
"Give a contribution, please,
To my box."
You can half forget the smart,
Rollin' lint with all your heart,
Feel that you can take your part
In landing "Kaiser" in the cart,
Knittin' socks.

But a parson and a mayor turned him down,
Lord, what cod!
With a colonel and a baker from the town,
Off to quod.
For the chairman, with a sneer,
Asked if he "affected beer,"
Said, "We want no conscience here;
What ails you is simply fear!"
Oh, my God!

Making shirts, you needn't mourn,
Needn't mope;
And you don't seem so forlorn,
You can hope
We can only sit and think.
Hear 'em: "Has your man a kink?
Or perhaps he's took to drink?"
While they shoves him into clink,
Pickin' rope.

We can only promise you,
Don't get blue,
That there's one thing we will do,
Straight and true;
Though we seem so helpless, quite,
Yet we won't give up the fight,
But we'll keep your faith alight,
And we'll teach your kiddies right,
So, see it through.

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.
 - 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!



Events

9-11 March

Junior doctors' strike
Across the country

Saturday 12 March

Workers' Liberty day school —
Revolutionary socialism: its roots
and its future
12-5, 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

Tuesday 15 March

Haringey radical readers:
Homage to Catalonia
7-9pm, Big Green Bookshop, London, N22 6BG
bit.ly/HRRmarch

Thursday 17 March

Workers' Liberty London forum:
Bernie Sanders — a socialist
president in the US?
7pm, Lucas Arms, WC1X 8QY
bit.ly/bernforum

Saturday 19 March

National Demonstration:
Refugees welcome here
12, Portland Place, London, W1A
1AA
bit.ly/19march

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

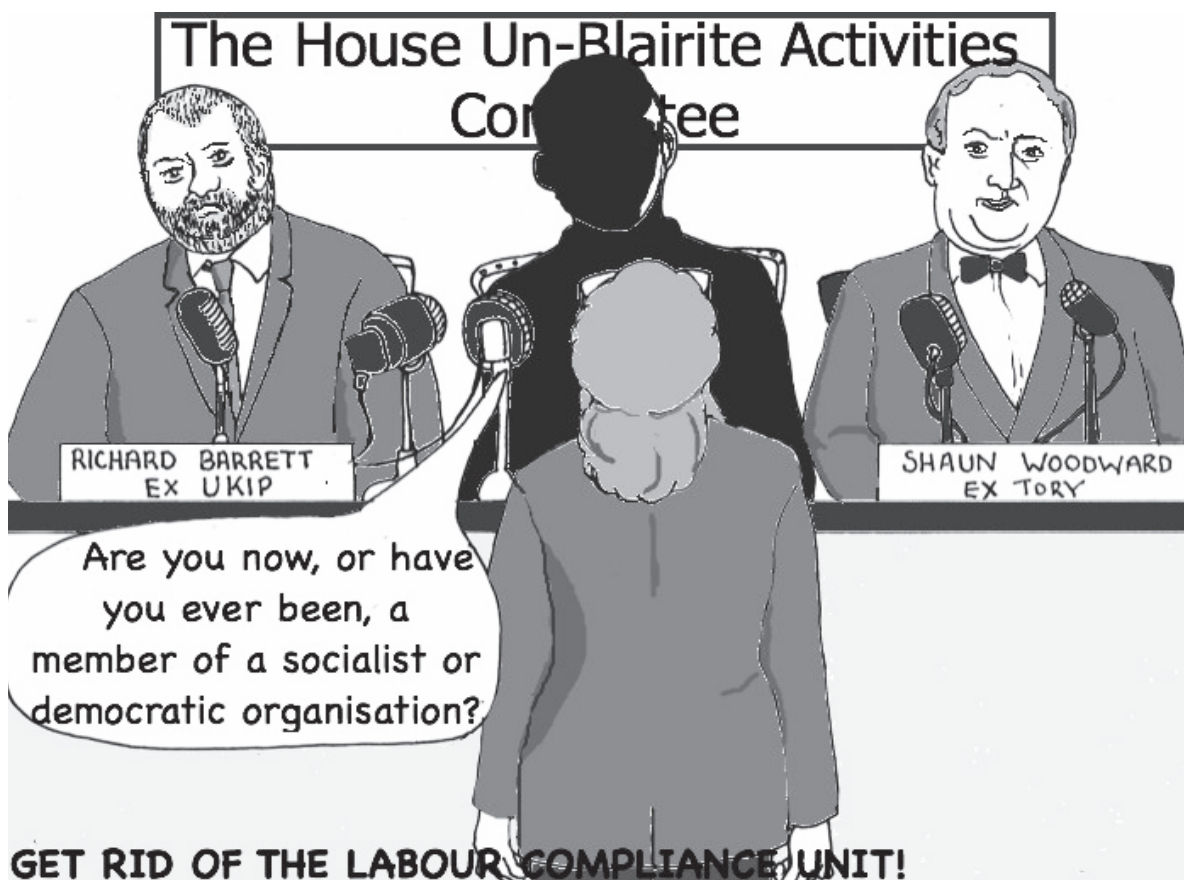
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Compliance Unit expels Wrack

LABOUR

By Gerry Bates

Following the recent expulsions of Jill Mountford and Cathy Nugent, members of the Lewisham Labour Parties, on grounds of association with Workers' Liberty, Nick Wrack has been expelled from Camberwell and Peckham Labour Party, also in

south London.

All these expulsions have been carried out by the shadowy "Compliance Unit", an (unelected) subsection of Labour Party head office given no authority by the Labour Party rulebook which nonetheless has declared itself to have powers to decree "automatic" expulsion.

The Compliance Unit wrote to Nick to say that the CLP had been given extended time to object to his membership, and then to say that

the CLP officers had in fact objected. No charges, no hearing.

Nick, brother of FBU leader Matt Wrack, is a longstanding left activist. It is a scandal that the Compliance Unit hunts him down yet welcomes people from Ukip and the Tory party with open arms.

• Information and model protest motions at: stopthelabourpurge.wordpress.com

Why Corbyn is right on decriminalisation

Speaking at a recent meeting at Goldsmiths University, Jeremy Corbyn was asked for his opinion on whether sex work should be decriminalised. His reply was: "I am in favour of decriminalising the sex industry. I don't want people to be criminalised. I want to be [in] a society where we don't automatically criminalise people. Let's do things a bit differently and in a bit more civilised way." That remark has brought him a lot of criticism from Labour MPs. The following statement (abridged) from anti-capitalist feminist group Feminist Fightback explains the why Corbyn was right.

As anti-capitalist feminists, we welcome Corbyn's comments on the decriminalisation of sex work.

The feminist case for the decriminalisation of sex work has never been stronger, demonstrating just how wrong Julie Bindel is in her latest attempt to discredit us by arguing that Corbyn's view is simply that of the patriarchal, male left.

The English Collective of Prostitutes, the x:talk project, and Sex Worker Open University insist on decriminalisation as seen in New Zealand. The reasons are simple.

Criminalisation of sex workers or clients pushes sex work further underground and creates or exacerbates hardship, violence, and exploitation of workers... But these sex worker led groups insist that decriminalisation is not enough; it must happen alongside worker organisation, an end to repressive border regimes, and redistribution of wealth.

...As anti-capitalist feminists we know that decriminalisation will not magically bring an end to capitalist or patriarchal interests or racism in the sex industry. But we also know that criminalisation not only fails to demolish these oppressions; it exacerbates them.

We want to be clear that supporting workers in their struggle, including decriminalisation, does not mean we support those who extort or exploit sex workers. It means that we support workers in the removal of laws that encourage violence and exploitation and limit their ability to self-organise.

But many who call themselves "feminists" in the Labour Party, and radical feminists such as Bindel, insist that "prostitution" is simply a result of male demand and have championed further criminalisation of sex work. These feminists say that

the criminal justice system is a benevolent source of protection for women. This position is in direct opposition to the strong consensus that now exists among grassroots activists and academics, demonstrating the need for decriminalisation to protect those who work in the sex industry by removing unnecessary police oversight and allowing workers to work together collectively.

"Feminists" in the Labour party have been silent about — or worse, instrumental in creating — the dire economic conditions in which sex work is the least bad option for many women.

... We hope Corbyn's comments will lead to a broader debate within the Labour Party about why decriminalisation is an essential part of improving conditions in the sex industry...

Feminist Fightback supports sex workers' rights to unionisation and self-organisation as the only way for sex workers to gain power and fight against all forms of compulsion, coercion, and exploitation.

This entails, at the very least, complete decriminalisation of sex work.

• Full statement: bit.ly/21ZI6wq

Save Lambeth libraries!

By Ruth Cashman, Lambeth Unison

Local writers Jay Rayner and Will Self joined library workers, local readers and residents marching on 5 March against Lambeth Council's plans to close half the Borough's Libraries.

Campaigners at the "Don't Steal Our Libraries" march, vowed to fight on with speakers mentioning plans for legal challenges, occupations of library buildings, and escalating strike action.

On the eve of the protest, Lambeth Council announced a partial U-turn, agreeing to save one of the five threatened libraries, South Lambeth Library. The Friends of Tate South Lambeth Library announced at a rally following the march that they were proud their campaign had forced the Council to step back, but promised to fight on alongside other Friends Groups to defend all of Lambeth's ten libraries.

Eleven year old Ella from Brixton and writer Will Self both spoke of the connection between the library closures and the broader social cleansing of Lambeth, an ethnically mixed working class community which has been at the center of London's gentrification with spiralling house prices and the demolition of housing estates.

The assembled crowd cheered as Self declared;

"[Libraries] are not a gift to well-toned banker wankers"

Two library buildings are to be leased to Greenwich Leisure Lim-



Author Will Self speaking at the Lambeth libraries demonstration on 5 March

ited for up to 25 years on peppercorn rents and will be replaced by pay-for gyms. Another will be sold and later relocated into a Christian School, and a fourth given away to a community trust with no expectation on them to run a library service.

A library worker and Unison activist said: "With only weeks left we don't plan to back down, and we cannot simply carry on the fight at the same level. We know we must step up what we're doing to

save the library service.

"Our strike action will escalate, the community campaigns will occupy, we will do all we can. We know it won't be easy and honestly we are scared because we know we might lose our libraries.

"But we also know that if communities and workforces like our don't stand up and fight then we are guaranteed to lose services like these up and down the country."

Tube unions accept night tube deal

By Janine Booth

RMT and ASLEF members on London Underground have voted by a big majority in referenda to accept a four-year pay deal and revised proposals for how Night Tube is to run.

TSSA members are likely to follow. While Unite has rejected the offer, it has few members on the Underground and is expected to accept the position once all the other unions do.

The company's offer is much better than its original, hamfisted attempt to impose Night Tube under arrangements that would have seriously damaged staff's work-life balance. These improvements were achieved by effective strike action last year by all four unions together.

However, the four-year pay offer is barely above official inflation figures and, in the context of National Insurance hikes, will leave Tube workers struggling to keep up with rising London living costs. It also prevents the union pursuing further battles over pay for the four-year term of the deal, thus clearing management's desks to devise re-



Tube workers on strike in July in the Night Tube dispute.

newed attacks on jobs and conditions.

With the unions' leaderships recommending a Yes vote in the referendum, the acceptance of the deal was expected. But the No vote of around 15% was around double the level of previous comparable votes, suggesting that a significant minority of members recognised the problems with the deal and voted to reject it.

Less than half of RMT's members voted in its referendum: if supporters of the Trade Union Bill were consistent, they would argue that the result is invalid and that the company must now make an im-

proved offer!

Meanwhile, RMT members employed by Tube Lines — the company owned by Transport for London which maintains one third of London Underground's infrastructure — are voting in a ballot for industrial action over pay and Night Tube. It is unfortunate that this ballot is only happening as the union concludes its dispute on the same issue with the London Underground staff who work alongside Tube Lines staff.

Had the union run the two disputes in parallel last year, it might have won a better outcome.

Academy struggle faces more attacks



By Gemma Short

Teachers at John Roan school in Greenwich, south London, have voted for strikes against threats of academisation.

National Union of Teachers (NUT) members voted 95% in favour of strikes against academisation. However since the first ballot the school has announced huge cuts, the NUT group at the school will pursue a further dispute over the cuts.

Teachers have declared that they will strike in coming weeks if management does not agree to three demands: that school management make an unequivocal statement that they do not intend to convert to academy status, that the school will conduct a parental ballot over any academy proposals, and that consultation over any academy proposals is given six months in order to be meaningful.

The school has proposed to cut 15 teacher posts, two assistant heads, and five support staff. Due to unfilled vacancies, this would amount to 11.2 posts being made redundant, including two Modern Foreign Languages posts, two PE posts, 1.2 Psychology posts, two Sociology posts, one Science post and one Technology post.

The restructure will also heavily attack teaching in certain subject areas, with Religious Education being cut to nine "focus days" rather than regular lessons, and Sociology and Psychology GCSE, Film Studies A-level, Government and Politics A-level and BTEC sport Level Three courses being cut. It is clear that management are sidelining arts and humanities

subjects. NUT members also fear that union activists are being targeted by the job cuts.

The attacks will also involve increasing teaching periods from five one hour lessons to six 50 minute lessons, increasing teachers' planning load. Teachers' teaching hours will also increase to 22.5 hours a week.

The school NUT group has repeatedly asked to see the full budget and accounts of the school and to be involved in planning a fair budget which does not involve job losses. Teachers argue that they don't believe that a school with a surplus of £308,000 in April 2015 could have developed what they are told is a projected overspend of £747,000.

Teachers at the school struck in November last year over draconian lesson observation and workload. The campaign left them in a strong position to fight the cuts that are now proposed. There is a vibrant parents' campaign. Parents, teachers and students held a lobby of Greenwich council on 24 February. A lobby of the board of governors will take place on the 21 March.

Teachers campaigning against the cuts have faced intimidation by school management. Those who have even discussed "academisation" generally with students have faced disciplinary action.

Teachers at the school deserve the support of the whole union, and the wider labour movement.

• **More information:**
www.thejohnroannut.org

March for health, homes, jobs and education

Saturday 16 April, 1pm
Gower Street/Euston Road, London
bit.ly/april16demo



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CALAIS: POLICE HAVE ATTACKED 73%

By Phil Grimm

Research by the charity Help Refugees and the Refugee Rights Data project has revealed the shocking extent of the police brutality, racist attacks and poor living conditions faced by migrants at a the Calais "Jungle" camp.

According to the research, three-quarters of refugees in the 'Jungle' camp near the French port have been the victim of violence at the hands of police.

The charity also says it believes nearly half of the Calais's refugees have also suffered violence directed at them by citizens, mostly carried out by far-right groups.

The survey, which interviewed 800 inhabitants of the camp, is published as the French police have continue to violently dismantle a large part of the southern section of the camp. It represents the largest independent data collection project carried out in Calais so far.

Perhaps unsurprisingly given the living standards at the camp, a majority of those interviewed were experiencing health problems, many of them related to the unsanitary conditions in which they are forced to live.

73% of inhabitants had suffered some sort of violence at the hands of the police, ranging from tear gassing to physical assault. There were also smaller but significant reports of sexual violence.

Around 40% had suffered physical violence at the hands of civilian French citizens. Much of this was connected to the mobilisation of far-right organisations near the vicinity of the camp. Nationalist anti-migrant rallies have repeatedly taken place in Calais, despite officially being banned by the local

authorities. Arrests at these rallies have revealed that some far-right demonstrators are carrying weapons. At one demonstration organised by the anti-Muslim organisation Pegida, the former head of the French Foreign Legion, Christian Piquemal, was arrested.

In the event that the camp is dismantled, a big majority of the refugees interviewed said they would stay in Calais.

The big majority of them are trying to get to Britain, citing their hopes of being re-united with family and friends, as well as the fact they have English language skills but not French. In a sign of desperation, 3% reported considering suicide if they were unable to get to Britain.

TRAUMA

Two organisers of the survey, Lliana Bird and Josephine Naughton, gave the following statement to the press:

"We remain deeply concerned for the physical and mental wellbeing of the refugees in Calais, in particular the 423 unaccompanied children, and believe that the French and British governments' continued failure to provide residents with any clear information regarding their rights and options only serves to add to their trauma."

Meanwhile in Britain, a small demonstration against the police demolition was organised at short notice outside the Institut Francais in London.

Socialists in Britain must agitate for the government to allow the people stranded in Calais into the UK, and more broadly, for a Europe of open borders and an end to the persecution of migrants.



Migrant children in the Calais "Jungle" camp offer white roses to French riot police.

EU leaders do deal to deport migrants to Turkey

By Gemma Short

EU leaders have made a deal with Turkey for the "large scale and rapid" deportation to Turkey of migrants currently in Greece.

Since the closing of the Greek-Macedonian border there has been a buildup of about 30,000 migrants in Greece, with a further 100,000 expected by the end of March. Macedonia is allowing only Iraqi and

Syrian refugees through its border, and then only if they are from a city "considered to be at war", meaning refugees from Aleppo may be let through but those from Damascus or Baghdad may not.

All this remains entirely at the discretion of Macedonian border police as many refugees are not carrying identification.

However instead of demanding that Mace-

donia reopens its border to avoid refugees being trapped in one of the poorest countries in Europe, EU leaders are doing a deal with Turkey for them to accept migrants deported from Greece in return for aid and maybe progress towards Turkey's entry into the EU.

There are fears that refugees sent to Turkey would be deported to Syria, and that particularly Kurdish refugees

would not be safe in Turkey.

The EU's already inadequate relocation scheme has relocated just a few hundred migrants to other areas of Europe, despite the 160,000 target.

The focus now seems to be shifting to "containing" the crisis in Greece, blocking new routes northwards, and deporting migrants to Turkey.

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