



Solidarity

For social ownership of the banks and industry

No 408 8 June 2016 50p/£1

FRANCE: MASS STRIKES DEFEND WORKERS' RIGHTS

The strike in France for the withdrawal of the "labour law" is continuing to spread slowly.

This week alone it has won over the waste treatment centres; it is continuing in the refineries; it is supported by thousands of local groups of activists, in particular CGT members, who are active in logistics and transport centres.

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Anti-semitism, world-wide

By Gerry Bates

One of the activities of the US-based Anti-Defamation League (ADL) is to conduct global surveys to gauge levels of anti-semitism.

Their 2015 survey was conducted in the US, Argentina, Iran, Turkey and fifteen Western and Eastern European countries, including the UK, and concluded that 220 million people in the 19 countries surveyed held anti-semitic views.

They asked their respondents if the following statements were “probably true”, or “probably false.” Placing the bar high, the ADL concluded that answering six out of eleven questions meant the respondent held anti-semitic attitudes. The questions were:

1. Jews are more loyal to Israel than to [this country/the countries they live in].
2. Jews have too much power in the business world.
3. Jews have too much power in international financial markets.
4. Jews don't care about what happens to anyone but their own kind.
5. Jews have too much control over global affairs.
6. People hate Jews because of the way Jews behave.
7. Jews think they are better than other people.
8. Jews have too much control over the United States government.
9. Jews have too much control over the global media.
10. Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust.
11. Jews are responsible for most of the world's wars.

Bottom of the list are Denmark (8% with anti-semitic attitudes), Netherlands (11), US (10) and the UK (12). Top of the list are Iran (60%), Greece (67) and Turkey (71).

The ADL states, “The most commonly held stereotype about Jews is that they are more loyal to Israel than to the countries they live in. The next... are that Jews have too much power in business and still talk too much about the Holocaust.

“In the wake of anti-semitic violence in Europe, there has been a significant drop in Index Scores in France, Germany, and Belgium. People in those countries are more concerned about violence against Jews than they were in 2014.”

The score for British Muslims is significantly higher than the general population, at 54%. But as an interesting letter in a recent *Economist* magazine points out, views can change rapidly and dramatically.

For example in 1983 68% of British Catholics said homosexuality was wrong; by 2013 that figure had dropped to 2%.

The story of banning legal highs

By Les Hearn

“Against stupidity, the gods themselves struggle in vain”, Goethe.

Towards the end of January, “mostly supine” MPs passed a bill after a “clueless debate.”

The Psychoactive Substances Act which is intended to ban “legal highs” (novel psychoactive substances — NPSs) is “one of the stupidest, most dangerous and unscientific pieces of drugs legislation ever conceived.

“Watching MPs debate...it was clear most didn't have a clue. They misunderstood medical evidence, mispronounced drug names, and generally floundered. It would have been funny except lives and liberty were on the line.”

Not my words but those of an editorial in *New Scientist* (30 January 2016) and a report by Clare Wilson. The act came into force on 26 May, meaning that previously legal “head shops” must cease selling NPSs. The banned drugs will only be available from illegal drug dealers.

The story starts with the panic about “legal highs,” chemicals with similar effects on mood to banned drugs such as ecstasy, cocaine or speed, hence the term “psychoactive.” Legal highs were not covered by drug laws that banned named compounds but not new ones with similar effects.

If history tells us anything, it is that humans take drugs. Sometimes, these drugs cause harm to those who take them or to society in general. Banning specific drugs makes their use more dangerous.

A logical approach would be to reduce the harm by controlling purity, taxing their sale, and educating users instead of criminalising them.

Drug users would prefer not to break the law, providing a considerable incentive to synthesise new drugs that mimic banned drugs but aren't on the banned list. But these new drugs will have unknown side effects and there is no control on dose and purity. In contrast, the effects of many “traditional” drugs are known.

The rationale for banning NPSs was that they were dangerous. Legal highs were mentioned in coroners' reports for only 76 deaths from 2004 to 2013 (Office for National Statistics). Despite the government's banning of NPSs as fast as it could, the number of mentions was increasing (23 in 2013). Reliable data are extremely difficult to obtain and mere mention of a drug in a coroner's report is not evidence that the drug caused the death.

As each NPS was banned, more were synthesised. There were 24 NPSs in 2009 and 81 in 2013, making the government's actions futile, so some bright spark came up with the idea of banning the production and supply of all substances which produce “a psychoactive effect in a person... by stimulating or depressing the person's central nervous



Nitrous oxide (laughing gas) has been banned by the government

system [thus affecting] the person's mental functioning or emotional state.” A bill was proposed by the new Conservative government and specified that anyone producing or supplying (but not merely possessing for personal use) the previously legal NPSs could be sent to prison for up to seven years.

The proposal soon ran into problems.

Firstly, what is meant by stimulating or depressing the central nervous system?

Secondly, what constitutes an effect on a person's mental function or emotional state?

Thirdly, how could it be proved that any suspected substance was psychoactive? After all, placebos can be psychoactive.

Fourthly, what about alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, many medicines, and foodstuffs such as nutmeg and betel nut (or, in my case, cake)?

Finally, would bona fide scientific research on psychoactive substances be outlawed?

Criticism poured in from scientists. Respected medical researchers said the bill was “poorly drafted, unethical in principle, unenforceable in practice, and likely to constitute a real danger to the freedom and well-being of the nation” (letter to *The Times*).

The Royal Society, the Academy

of Medical Sciences, the Wellcome Trust, and others wrote to Home Secretary Theresa May that “Many types of important research could potentially be affected by the Bill, particularly in the field of neuroscience, where substances with psychoactive properties are important tools in helping scientists to understand a variety of phenomena, including consciousness, memory, addiction and mental illness.”

Even the government's Advisory Council of the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD), more in line with politicians' wishes since the shameful “firing” of Professor David Nutt (see below), produced a list of objections. The government's omission of the word “novel” made the bill apply to a vast number of other substances in addition to legal highs. It would be impossible to list all exemptions so benign substances, such as some herbal remedies, might be inadvertently included. Also, proving that a substance was psychoactive would require unethical human testing, since laboratory tests might not stand up in court.

The government changed the bill to exempt scientific research but otherwise remained obdurate. An example of the inevitable confusion concerns alkyl nitrites (poppers).

Labour's problems with scientific evidence

Tories don't have a monopoly on cluelessness.

Expert neuroscientist Professor David Nutt was “sacked” from his position as chair of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs by the right-wing press's favourite Labour politician, former Home Secretary Alan Johnson. This was after Nutt showed that cannabis, then being upgraded to Category B (the same as codeine, ketamine, mephedrone or speed) was less harmful than alcohol or tobacco.

This wasn't an ordinary sacking since Prof Nutt gave his time and expertise freely, believing that it was important to present the evidence to improve the quality of the debate. Three members of the ACMD resigned in protest.

Nutt stated in a lecture to fellow

academics that the evidence showed that cannabis was less harmful than alcohol and tobacco. Johnson called this “campaigning against government policy” and “starting a debate in the national media without prior notification to my department.”

Johnson was then accused of misleading MPs since Prof Nutt had given prior notice of the content of his lecture and no journalists were invited. Further, as an unpaid advisor, Nutt was not subject to the same rules as civil servants. Other ACMD members who resigned said that they “did not have trust” in the way the government would use the ACMD's advice and that Johnson's decision was “unduly based on media and political pressure.”

Shamefully, PM Gordon Brown

Known since 1844 and used to treat heart problems, they have a short-acting psychoactive effect and are generally safe.

However, the government referred to several non-specific risks and claimed that poppers had been “mentioned” in 20 death certificates since 1993 (far fewer than for lightning). After a Conservative MP appealed for poppers, which he used, not to be included, the government said they would consider the arguments later.

Another example concerns nitrous oxide (laughing gas), included in the ban despite its long history of use in medicine and recreationally. Discovered in 1772, laughing gas was greatly enjoyed by Sir Humphry Davy and friends, including the poet Shelley. It has an impressive safety record and has been used in dental and childbirth anaesthesia and sedation since 1844.* Nevertheless, the government referred to “the harms” of recreational laughing gas and included it in the bill. In fact, the deaths “caused” by nitrous oxide result from incorrect methods of inhalation which could be eliminated by education.

The Act was finally implemented on 26 May. Independent expert David Nutt described the government's policy as “pathologically negative and thoughtless.” He predicts that deaths from drugs will increase as people turn to illegal drug dealers in the absence of legal “head shops.”

Einstein defined insanity as “doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.” This just about sums up successive governments' policies towards drugs.**

* www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2614651/

**But not all drugs. Nicotine and alcohol are legal, despite their addiction potential, toxicity, and role in causing accidents. See, for example, bit.ly/smok-inj

backed Nutt's removal, saying that the government could not afford to send “mixed messages” on drugs. Both Brown and Johnson (some people's favourite to replace Jeremy Corbyn) were quite happy to send the wrong message.

Supported by other scientists, Nutt was awarded the John Maddox Prize for standing up for science by the pro-evidence charity Sense About Science.

The government subsequently accepted a new ministerial code allowing for academic freedom and independence for advisers, with proper consideration of their advice. Under this, Nutt would not have been dismissed.

• Nutt now works with Drug-Science. www.drugscience.org.uk

Mass strikes defend workers' rights

By Olivier Delbeke*

The strike in France for the withdrawal of the “labour law” is continuing to spread slowly, and this week alone it has won over the waste treatment centres; it is continuing in the refineries; it is supported by thousands of local groups of activists, in particular CGT members, who are active in logistics and transport centres.

Meanwhile, on 2 June we saw 30,000 demonstrating in Le Havre, and 45,000 in Marseilles. There is also a strike at Amazon, and in the Bio Habitat firm.

No-one is still keeping count of incidents of police brutality in the strike movement, but a threshold was crossed in the last few days.

Romain Dussaux, attacked with a tear-gas grenade on 26 May in Paris, without any provocation, has been fighting for his life in hospital.

Christophe Mirmand, police prefect in Ile-et-Vilaine, has justified ramming automobiles into protestors, the use of tear gas and the beating of demonstrators and journalists in Rennes on 2 June. He also justified the storming of a St Malo college being occupied by parents, teachers and students to prevent its

closure by the state (planned for September). Eleven children took refuge with the fire brigade, of whom three were wounded.

It is worth noting that this last incident was not a demonstration against the El Khomri law, but it shows that the issues are being generalised and drawn together, on both sides. From below, there is a desire for unity, to press all the social demands. From above, there is indignation, which is turning the French police into the major enemy of public order in France.

It's now clear to everyone what's going on. In the middle of May, we were deluged with articles about “hooligans” and “anti-cop hate”, with rolling media coverage of an inadmissible attack against a Paris police car on the fringe of an Alliance and Front National demonstration. The storm was generated by Hollande and Manuel Valls.

It now appears that there is no proof that the “suspects” who were arrested were there... apart from the testimony of a plainclothes police officer, who seems to have been a part of the group of attackers.

The lesson is clear: it is the Executive branch of the state, it is the government, who is guilty of fostering disorder and hooliganism.



Beating up children — this is the reality of the passage of the labour law by executive order. This is the regime of the 5th Republic, with its back to the wall.

The movement of strikes and demonstrations against the El Khomri labour law is continuing in spite of it all, precisely because it has put its political character firmly on the agenda. The movement is confronting the government, the president and the regime, to get rid of them, to impose democracy, and to bring to account those who are

responsible, at the highest level, for the violence, and the breaches of human rights, both social and democratic.

The movement is the real defender of civil liberties.

The media is spreading the rumour that the FO trade union is ready to give up on fighting the withdrawal of the law in return for amendments to the law's Article 2 — and now we hear that the CGT is making similar noises. But Article 2 is the “inversion of the hierarchy of norms” [i.e. the provision

which permits local agreements taking precedence over national agreements], it's the heart of the law.

The only possible “amendment” to it would be to “invert the inversion”: to re-establish the primacy of the law, of the labour code and national agreements over local agreements. In other words: the only possible amendment is the withdrawal of the law.

The CGC (a white-collar, managers' union) is now calling for the withdrawal of the El Khomri law. The CFDT's steelworkers' section likewise. It is clear that supporters of the movement mean to descend on Paris in massive numbers on 14 June.

In part, there is a will to march in the capital in order to silence, and threaten, police provocateurs. People are getting fed up of exhortations to stop the movement for the sake of Euro 2016.

The movement is on the march: and although there will be fluctuations, it will not stop. It is a political movement, and it is taking aim at the regime.

*Olivier Delbeke is an editor of the French socialist newsletter *Arguments pour la lutte sociale*.

Strike facts

The strike has taken root across several sectors, and in particular

- The refineries, where six out of eight are now entering their third week of strike action.

- The transport sector, with the mobilisation of road freight drivers and public transport. Following negotiations on Monday 6 June the rail workers' strike is continuing.
- The energy sector, with several actions having taken at off-peak times, strikes at EDF and RTE, at the

Noisy-Le-Sec and Villeneuve-La-Garenne.

- Eight waste and refuse treatment sites, including the TIRU site (Paris, 13th district), which has been on strike for eight days.

- Amazon, where, despite repression, three or four sites are on strike;

- Dockers will hold a 24-hour strike action on 9 June and observe a ban on overtime and extraordinary shifts from 6 June;

- A mobilisation is spreading in the private sector, with various forms of action: open-ended

(“reconductible”) strikes in several agri-food businesses (Nestlé in Morbihan, Haribo Perrier in Gard, Jacquet in Puy-de-Dôme, Tabac in Le Havre); metallurgy (LME in Nord, Iveco Annonay in Ardèche, Peugeot Mulhouse); and retail (Intermarché, Leclerc in Haute-Garonne), glassmaking (Verralia), etc.

- On 7 June, a strike will take place at Roissy airport, which will bring together hundreds of strikers and all the sub-contracted firms. Information from the CGT trade union federation.

Australia goes to polls in July

By Colin Foster

“I've got a disability and a low education, that means I've spent my whole life working for minimum wage. You're going to lift the tax-free threshold for rich people,” said truck-driver Duncan Storrar, in a question to a Liberal government minister on Australian TV on 9 May.

“If you lift my tax-free threshold, that changes my life. That means that I get to say to my little girls, ‘Daddy's not broke this weekend, we can go to the pictures’.

“Rich people don't even notice their tax-free threshold lift. Why don't I get it? Why do they get it?”

Government minister Kelly O'Dwyer replied, ineptly, that the tax break for the well-off would help people like a cafe owner with a turnover of just over \$2 million who, with the tax break, would be able to buy a \$6,000 toaster.

Storrar's question brought him a wave of applause; a successful crowdfunding effort to “Buy Duncan a Toaster”; a pillory as right-wing media slammed his history of mental illness (which Storrar had hardly hidden) and criminal convictions; and then protests against the unfairness of the pillorying.

The row set the tone for Australia's federal election on 2 July. Untypically, the election is a “double dissolution”, electing a whole new House of Representatives and a whole new Senate, rather than, as usual, only half the Senate.

It was called by outgoing Liberal

prime minister Malcolm Turnbull on 9 May, after the Liberals had repeatedly failed to get reinstatement of the Australian Building and Construction Commission through the Senate.

The ABCC is a special policing agency for the construction industry, set up by the previous Liberal government in 2005, and abolished by Labor in 2012. In its time it led to construction workers facing heavy fines just for refusing to answer questions about industrial relations, though some high-profile cases, like Ark Tribe's, ended in acquittals.

Turnbull replaced Tony Abbott as prime minister and Liberal leader on 15 September 2015. At first, more suave and aristocratic than the brash Abbott, he improved the Liberals' poll ratings a lot. The polls now show the two main parties neck-and-neck on the “two-party preferred vote” after redistribution of votes under Australia's Alternative Vote system.

The Melbourne socialist paper *Red Flag* reports that Labor has gone in for some “rhetoric against the banks and the super-wealthy”. However, Labor leader Bill Shorten has a solidly right-wing background as a former union leader.

As Red Flag says, after “several decades of Labor pursuing policies that have profoundly disillusioned its working-class and left wing base”, the “mild left turn” falls far short of the sort of resurgence seen in the British Labour Party with Corbyn.

Belgium: striking against austerity

A growing wave of opposition to austerity and changes to labour laws saw Belgium train drivers and public sector workers strike on Tuesday 31 May.

On the same day a march in Brussels highlighted cuts in public services. The current mobilisations are in many ways a continuation of the trade union struggles of autumn 2014.

International Viewpoint magazine comments: “As with Valls and Hollande in France, the Christian Democrat Kris Peeters [Minister of Employment and Labour] wants ... annualisation of working time (up to 45 hours per week), temporary contracts for an unlimited period of time, re-employment of the long-term sick ... But the discontent in the population is general: it is also about extending the time taken to reach pension age, exclusions from the right to claim unemployment benefit, and other

regressive measures that contrast with gifts to the rich and the bosses..

“Air traffic controllers spontaneously withdrew their labour for several days after the [bomb] attacks, denouncing their working conditions. French speaking prison guards have been on strike for five weeks already to protest against the lack of staff. French speaking train drivers have joined them since May 25 against a management diktat that wants to extend their working hours with loss of pay.

“Spontaneous actions have formed a common front which has led the Walloon CGSP (FGTB section in the public sector) to adopt a resolution that gives official support to all actions beyond 31 May 31]....

“For now, this dynamic is unfolding almost exclusively in the public sector in the south of the

country, where there is an atmosphere of an impending general strike to drive the [right wing coalition] Michel government from office. As a result the polarisation between left and right in unions is sharpening and is developing a communitarian twist. If the more right wing trade union apparatus in Flanders is not dragged along in turn, there is a fear that some union sectors might be torn apart on communitarian lines. This would have serious consequences for all workers...”

Both the FGTB union (1.5 million members) and the National Confederation of Employees (the main organisation of the Christian union in the Francophone areas) have called a general strike for 24 June.

- Full article www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article4542

Why so weak?

Why is Solidarity making the weak social democratic argument that migrants are an “economic and cultural boon” (Solidarity 407)?

Socialists oppose immigration controls because they mean more prison camps, barbed wire and people drowning at sea — not because migrants bring “us” boons.

The advocates of immigration controls want a world where movement is micro-managed in the interests of capital — a fine balance of achieving just right level of unemployment, racist tension and super-exploited “illegal” labour.

Around the world people are on the move. We either respond by trying to halt that movement with ever-escalating state violence or we fight for freedom of movement and a redistribution of wealth that ensures adequate housing, jobs and public services for all regardless of where we were born.

Stuart Jordan, Cornwall



Refugees walking across Europe last summer.

A world class

The working class must become a world class, and is weakened whenever one national section sets up barriers against another. That is our baseline “abstract” stance against immigration bans.

To explain that migrants are an economic and cultural boon is surely part of explaining that they are (everywhere) part of the same productive, creative class as local-born workers, not an extraneous burden. It is also part of countering media lies.

I don't see how it is more “weak social-democratic” than the argument that immigration bans can be implemented only with “barbed wire and people drowning”. On the contrary, the latter argument implies that we might support the bans if only they could be implemented gently, or that immigration bans are otherwise desirable but the overhead costs of implementation outweigh the benefits.

Nor is it particularly revolutionary to oppose immigration bans on the grounds that they are a capitalist plot to micromanage labour supply. The “White Australia” bans, from 1901, were imposed by a strong (but chauvinist) labour movement against the wishes of the majority of Australian capitalists.

That didn't make them right.

Martin Thomas, north London

Anti-racism: combine the tactics

THE LEFT

By Riki Lane

Amid media storm and police overkill, anti-racists and anti-fascists held successful parallel rallies in Melbourne's multicultural Coburg on Saturday 28 May.

The Moreland Says No to Racism Rally was initiated by Socialist Alliance Moreland councillor Sue Bolton, with organisers including independent left activists. Months in preparation, and endorsed by over 60 groups including Moreland council, it aimed at opposing government racism, solidarity with refugees, for a treaty with indigenous people and against Islamophobia.

However fascist groups (United Patriots Front and True Blue Crew) decided to call a counter rally at the end point of the anti-racist rally.

Other leftists — anarchists, Socialist Alternative, Campaign Against Racism and Fascism (CARF) and others — organised an “anti-fascist” counter-counter rally, gathering an hour earlier, 100 metres from the anti-racist rally. Meanwhile Sue Bolton resisted enormous pressure to cancel the rally from police, media and Moreland Council.

The two rallies reflected different tactical approaches: build a broad anti-racist movement; or directly confront fascists. Communication between the two groups of left rally organisers was poor before and during the rallies.

After anarchists left to confront the 50-100 fascists, police blocked the direct route for others. Those blocked responded by marching straight through the anti-racist rally as speeches were starting — Socialist Alternative banner at the front, pushing people away, chanting — despite it being possible to march behind the speakers. Like many, I was astonished and angered by this.

Both rallies had 3-400 people; decent numbers given the police and media scare campaign. Both achieved their aims — the anti-racist rally drew in unions and migrant communities, had impressive speakers, marched, and was peaceful, a precondition

for many speakers and attendees. The anti-fascist rally prevented the fascists from marching, attracting support from local Muslim youth.

Minor skirmishes between anarchists and fascists were apparently facilitated by the police to allow a “shock and horror race riot” media report.

I think the left needs to find agreement on how to both build a broad anti-racist movement *and* to directly confront fascists. Why?

1. We face a serious outbreak of fascist organising centred on anti-Muslim racism.

2. Our central strategic problem is that tactics in countering fascists have been developed in isolation from mainstream labour movement and other organisations. Unlike in the 1990s, unions and ALP left figures have not endorsed or attended anti-fascist counter-rallies.

3. The left has two overall responses:

a. Direct confrontations with the fascists whenever they appear. That of Campaign Against Racism and Fascism (CARF), Socialist Alternative, and many anarchists.

b. Build broad anti-racist coalitions. This has been a significant approach for Socialist Alliance and others.

4. These approaches are not necessarily counterposed in theory or practice. CARF established a union working group that held a successful workshop. Socialist Alliance actively supported some CARF led counter-rallies.

5. The anti-racist rally gained union support, endorsed by Victorian Trades Hall, CFMEU, AMWU, ETU, NUW, NTEU, with marshals on the day from more. This is much more than CARF has achieved, and led me to be a marshal alongside fellow union activists.

6. The union leaderships supported the rally's broad and diverse community focus. They have not supported direct confrontation with fascists. They are reluctant to endorse a “far left versus far right” street fight.

7. Once the UPF announced their aim to smash the rally with “force and terror”, more structured defence was needed: both marshalling, and a “forward defence” contingent to stop a fascist march on the anti-racist rally. Focussing on defending the community rally



against attack encompasses anti-racist and confrontational tactics, and positions any violence as clearly defensive for union and community members.

In a sense this is what happened, but in an incoherent way that allowed media and local traders to equate the fascists and anti-fascists as both being outside troublemakers

7. I see mistakes on all sides. Many anti-fascist organisers did not come to the anti-racist rally organisers saying “how can we help”, but demanding they should confront the fascists. The anti-racist organisers ruled out involvement in direct confrontation.

8. These hostilities and different tactical approaches on the left stopped development of a coherent plan to coordinate direct and forward defence of the rally.

Given that anti-racist and anti-fascist rallies were both gathering at Coburg Mall, the messy split was always likely. An agreed division of labour could have avoided this — the anti-racist organisers accepting that the anti-fascists would leave and could help keep the main rally peaceful. In turn, the anti-fascists could have recognised the significance of the forces represented at the main rally — including many people who would not attend a direct confrontation.

The true blue crew have already announced their next rally, in defence of the Australian flag, and we can expect further counter rallies against left events.

We need to get better coordination between left forces that support different tactics, so our events can pursue their original agendas, while mobilising community and union supporters to defence against fascist attacks.

Compass loses its bearings in Scotland

SCOTLAND

By Dale Street

On 31 May Neal Lawson – chair of the “influential left-wing think tank” Compass – penned an open letter to the Scottish National Party (SNP) calling for a “progressive alliance” with the Labour Party.

The letter's tone evokes that of someone fallen on hard times trying to tap a loan:

“Most esteemed Sirs! Mindful of your legendary munificence, I turn to you in my hour of need. Struck down by the vagaries of fate, I would humbly request a modest contribution from your financial largesse, to see me through until payday. I remain, your obedient servant, Neal.”

Lawson writes “as a Londoner”. (You can smell the sackcloth and ashes as he typed that phrase.) Adopting the language of the SNP, he denounces the unholy trinity of “English Tory rule, the Daily Mail and the City of London”.

Lawson professes to be “jealous of the political conversation you had as a nation over

independence” and the consequent “rise in political consciousness”. But, Lawson continues, it's time to move on. It cannot be a matter of independence or nothing.

“We have a duty to go around and beyond tribalism,” he writes. Another referendum is off the agenda for at least a decade. In Scotland and the rest of the UK “Labour knows they can't win outright.” And trade unions are “shifting to embrace pluralism”.

The solution to all this is a “progressive alliance” between the Labour Party and the SNP. “As ever,” concludes Lawson, “you must be bold and take the lead in forging a new politics. Compass is here to help.”

The SNP is a nationalist party for which independence has always been an end in itself. To achieve that goal it wants to destroy the Scottish Labour Party and deprive trade unions of an organised political voice by securing their disaffiliation from the Labour Party.

This is something very different from trade unions “shifting to embrace pluralism”.

The SNP is intolerant of dissent. Its MPs and MSPs are banned from making public criticism of SNP policies. Critical motions submitted to party conferences have been

ruled out of order. And criticism from out-with the ranks of the SNP is denounced as “talking Scotland down”.

In power at Holyrood for nine years, the SNP's policies have seen a slump in levels of educational achievement, increased class inequalities in education, cuts in NHS standards and increased waiting times, massive cuts in funding for local authorities, and subsidies for the middle classes at the price of cuts in jobs and services.

In its referendum White Paper the only tax change promised by the SNP was a cut in corporation tax. In recent months the SNP has repeatedly voted with the Tories against a 50p tax rate for the richest.

And these were the responses Lawson got on the web. “For us, it is independence or nothing. ... Why would the SNP form an alliance with a party that despises Scots? ... Labour doesn't only despise Scots. It despises everyone that is not Labour.”

“(Lawson wrote): It can't just be about independence ... Yes it can, if we decide that... Like most unionists, Lawson's reaction can be reduced to a mixture of pique, resentment, confusion, loss, sadness and rejection.”

Stand up for socialism!



Rosa Luxemburg giving a speech

Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell and their close associates probably never expected to get where they've got now, where their words get the weight and attention due to the alternative government.

Many rank and file left-wing activists, too, have been surprised suddenly to find themselves in the centre of large left-wing meetings where ideas are discussed about changing the economy and society wholesale.

The whole view on life of socialists in the Marxist tradition is based on the conviction that recurrent socialistic upsurges are built in to the structure of capitalism, but that they will be defeated, deflected, or dissipated unless they can gain clarity and organisation. For us, the task of the hour is clearly indicated.

It is to stand up for socialism. To speak out for the idea that productive wealth should be owned and controlled by the community, to create a society of solidarity, equality, and creative freedom.

Socialist ideas have been marginalised for a quarter of a century. The tainting of those ideas by the Stalinist counterfeit gradually undermined them. Then the fact that the collapse of Stalinism in the USSR led to a garish triumph of capitalism demoralised many. Since then rapid capitalist restructurings of industry on a global scale have kept the labour movement off balance. And kept many socialists off balance, too: it has become common for socialists, day to day, to limit themselves to agitating only defensively.

The crash of 2008, and its gloomy sequels, have battered capitalist triumphalism. "Socialism" was the most-consulted word in 2015 on the USA's biggest dictionary website, Merriam Webster. Thomas Piketty's 700-page book *Capital in the 21st Century* described by its author as "soft Marxism", became a best-seller when published in 2013, and is still no.3 in Amazon's Economics: Theory and Philosophy category. (No.2 is Woodfin's *Introducing Marxism*). Marx's *Capital* sells many more than before 2008: when first published in 1867, it took five years to sell a thousand

copies in Germany, and 20 years to get translated into English.

Milton Friedman, one of the main theorists of neoliberalism, was an isolated figure for decades. He kept plugging away. And then, suddenly, at the end of the 1970s, he had governments listening. Friedman commented: "Only a crisis — actual or perceived — produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas

that are lying around... Our basic function [is] to develop alternatives to existing policies, to keep them alive and available until the politically impossible becomes the politically inevitable".

There's something of the same with socialists. The difference is that neoliberal ideas were imposed by rapacious elites on populations demoralised and atomised by military coups (as in Chile), union-busting, and so on.

Socialist ideas can be made reality only by the bulk of the working class coming to understand them, develop them as their own, and to fight for them. That process starts with the opinion-formers, the activists, becoming convinced and keen to speak out.

That is why Workers' Liberty has published our new book, *Can Socialism Make Sense?*, and why we are launching a campaign round it under the banner "Stand up for socialism". The campaign has three planks.

First, to mobilise ourselves and our friends and close comrades to study the book, discuss it, and become fluent and confident, not just in disputing cuts or arguing trade-union issues, but in advocating a different society and answering the objections. ("What about Russia? What went wrong there? Doesn't human nature make socialism impossible?")

Second, taking the book out to others, interested in socialism but not yet convinced or confident — convincing them to study it and discuss with us — mobilising as many as possible of them in turn to take the book and its ideas out to yet others.

And, third, convincing as many as possible to become organised activists with us. Precisely because socialism must be made from "below", the struggle for socialism calls for an open, active, democratic, coherent, disciplined organisation of socialists. The struggle cannot be won by diffuse ideological influence, or by string-pulling, or by "winning positions", with the rank and file left unorganised, or organised only on limited-issue or short-term bases.

We can no more win socialism by individuals being active, each one on her or his own, than a workforce can win better wages and conditions by each worker complaining one by one.

Books by Workers' Liberty



Can socialism make sense?

A new book from Workers' Liberty which makes the case for socialism. In a time when socialism is the most searched word on the Merriam-Webster dictionary website, more and more people call

themselves socialists, and a self-confessed socialist is leader of the Labour Party, this book explores what socialism means, whether it can rise again, how, and why.

It answers questions such as: What about Stalin? Are revolutions democratic? How can we have a planned economy? and is socialism still relevant?

£12 (£14.80 including postage)

www.workersliberty.org/socialism

Why socialist feminism?

Workers' Liberty makes class struggle and radical social change central to our feminism. We are socialist feminists. This pamphlet explores what "socialist feminism" might mean in the context of the latest "wave", and global conditions.

£6.20 (inc postage) from www.workersliberty.org/why-soc-fem

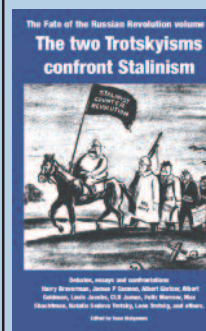


The two Trotskyisms confront Stalinism

For the revolutionary socialists, the Trotskyists, it has been a very long march through the 20th century and beyond, and over sometimes

uncharted, unexpected, terrain. Central to it has been the fight against Stalinism, to understand it, to wipe the labour movement clean of it. This book surveys and documents for the first time the formative debates in the 1940s between the two main strands into which Trotskyism divided.

£23 (inc postage) from bit.ly/twotrotskyisms



Bogdan Denitch: “a tireless organiser”

Ed Strauss remembers the veteran Yugoslav-American socialist Bogdan Denitch, who died on 28 March.

Bogdan Denitch was born in Sofia, Bulgaria, in 1929. His father was a Serbian diplomat.

In 1940 Bogdan went to London when his father moved to the Yugoslav embassy there. Eventually Bogdan came to New York in 1946. He enrolled at City College New York and soon joined the Young People's Socialist League, YPSL, the youth group of the Socialist Party.

Maurice Isserman, in his biography of Michael Harrington, who by the 1960s and 70s would become the USA's best-known socialist, describes how Bogdan Denitch recruited Harrington to the YPSL. He met Harrington, then a devout Catholic, a member of the Catholic Worker group, in March 1952, by going to a small protest for trade unionists jailed by the Franco dictatorship in Spain.

“Bogdan... was a tireless organiser with a bluff, enthusiastic style... On the picket line... he ‘immediately noticed this smart guy who didn't look as flaky as the rest of the Catholic Workers or as nutty as the anarchists’.

“Bogdan, in his own words, attached himself ‘like a limpet mine’ to Michael... bombarded him with books, magazines, and the works of anti-Stalinist novelists like Victor Serge... Within a few weeks [Harrington] had signed up with the YPSL”. And by the end of 1952 Harrington had broken from the Catholic Church.

A couple of years later, in 1954, Denitch, Harrington, and others managed to merge the YPSL into the Young Socialist League, the youth group linked to the Independent Socialist League of Max Shachtman.

VITALITY

Bogdan Denitch would write later: “I was won to socialism by the Shachtmanites, a group which made up in intellectual vitality what it unfortunately lacked in numbers”.

I was in the YSL at that time, and I met Bogdan Denitch a couple of times when I visited New York. He was one of the leading people in the YSL, and an exceptionally good speaker. Under the leadership of Denitch, Harrington, and others like Debbie Meier, the YSL was much more dynamic than the ISL. When I asked about joining the ISL at that time, the reply I'd get was: why do you want to bother with that? The ISL is a bunch of old men just sitting around. The YSL is the cutting edge. As happens in some youth movements in Europe, the YSL included people in their early 30s.

Denitch had no sympathy for Titoism, but he did see Yugoslavia as “the best of a bad lot”: it was a police state, but there was some latitude in the press.

Denitch went to night school, trained as a machinist, and then got apprenticed to Herman Benson and Julius Jacobson, older ISLers who owned a small machine shop. He became active in the machinists' union.

In 1958 Denitch wasn't happy with



Shachtman's successful proposal for the ISL to dissolve into the Socialist Party, but only Hal Draper and a few others spoke out against the move. Denitch moved to San Francisco and became a union activist there, as well as being very active in the civil rights movement on the West Coast.

He went to Yugoslavia to work on a research project for a US academic in 1964-8, and then came back to New York and studied at Columbia University. He taught at Queen's College in New York and got other academic posts. He also bought a cottage on the Croatian coast, in Dalmatia.

Meanwhile the Socialist Party in the USA had more or less collapsed. In 1973 Denitch joined with Michael Harrington to found the Democratic Socialist Organising Committee, which after a merger with a smaller group became the Democratic Socialists of America in 1982. In the early 1980s he also initiated the Socialist Scholars' Conferences, which brought together people around Julius Jacobson's magazine *New Politics* and some around the magazine *Dissent*, which was more DSA-oriented.

He published a whole series of books, several on Yugoslavia, more or less predicting what would happen in the early 1990s, when the collapse of the Titoist regime brought wars between Yugoslavia's component nationalities. He retired from academic work in 1994, and in that year he published his book *The Tragic Death of Yugoslavia*, an excellent description, analysis and attack on the theories and practices of ethnic nationalism. He started living in Croatia part of the year, and then all the time.

He founded an NGO called Transition to

Democracy, which had groups functioning across all the fragments of ex-Yugoslavia. The Croatian branch of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia mutated into the Croatian Social Democratic Party, which really was a left social-democratic party; but Denitch was suspicious of it, and founded some rival social-democratic groups. He was hostile to Croatian nationalism as well as to Serbian nationalism, and always defined himself as “Yugoslav”, not Serbian or Croatian.

How did he become all that? His family was still well-placed in Yugoslavia's ruling circle, and Denitch could, if he wished, have become an important figure in Titoist politics. In Yugoslavia, family trumps everything. But he had discovered socialism with the Shachtmanites, and that defined everything. His ISL background clearly nurtured the rich contribution to socialism he made, not just politically, but also organisationally.

Last year I contacted him again, writing to him in Croatia. He remembered me and responded positively. He was pleased that I had retained “our Third Camp neo-Draperite politics”, and wrote that he'd love to see some publications of the AWL, which I sent him. He invited me to go to visit him in the summer.

But he also told me that he was in bad health, not really able to walk, and not likely to return to the USA again. And then his replies to my emails stopped; and then I heard that he had died.

He had been working on a book called *Changing Identities: a Story of Democratic Leftism*, a sort of autobiography, and I hope it will be possible for it to be published.

Vote rema

By Martin Thomas

Q: Is it really worth voting on 23 June?

A: Yes. All polls suggest that, if “leave” wins, it will win because the embittered “why isn't Britain the same as it was in the 1950s” types turn out in greater numbers than the more cosmopolitan-minded young.

Let “leave” win, and you lose your EU citizenship, which entitles you to travel, and to move for work, freely in Europe. You (and two million British citizens living in EU countries) may well lose arrangements like the European Health Insurance Card, which entitles you to free or heavily-discounted public health care across Europe.

Your friends and workmates and union colleagues who have come from other EU countries will find themselves stigmatised and in danger of expulsion. Workers will be divided. Ninety per cent of the workers from the EU already in Britain would lose their status here and have to apply for visas to remain, under what conditions no-one knows.

The people in Greece, Rumania, Poland, Spain, Portugal, who could bring cultural enrichment and talent to Britain and flair to the British labour movement, as many of their country-people already have, will be excluded. Britain will become a meaner, more narrow-minded, country, maybe for decades into the future. All political debate will centre round just how malicious the new rules to block European migrants should be.

The still-very-limited conciliation in Ireland will be reversed when the border between North and South there, currently crossed every day by people to work or to shop or to visit, has to have Britain-EU frontier checks. A second Scottish separation referendum, and yet another border erected between Scotland and England, will be very likely.

Q: There's nothing wrong about people wanting to come to Britain. But resources are stretched here. Too many migrants will overburden public services and force down pay rates, especially for the lower-paid.

A: Blocking migrants will overburden public services even more, since many services, like the NHS, depend heavily on migrant labour.

If new provision is not created in areas where population grows, it's because of the government's cuts, not because of migrants. It's not because of lack of resources, but because the government chooses to funnel the resources to the rich.

Migrants contribute £2.5 billion more in tax than they claim in benefits. Generally, countries with more immigration are economically more dynamic and prosperous. If the labour movement organises the migrants, the movement becomes stronger, culturally richer, broader-horizoned.

A study by Christian Dustmann and Tommaso Frattini found that in Britain between 1997 and 2005 middle earners gained 1.5p an hour and upper earners 2p from the effects of immigration. They estimated wages of the worst-paid 5% as 0.7p an hour worse than they would have been without immigration. That 0.7p is tiny compared to the positive ef-

in! Workers' unity can change Europe



fects which can be won when workers of all origins unite to win a living wage — and tiny compared to the negative effect of dividing workers by country of origin.

Q: Quitting Fortress EU would allow Britain to admit more migrants from Asia and Africa, instead of just from Europe.

A: The EU's response to the millions fleeing horrors in Syria, Eritrea, and other countries has been wretched. But Britain has been more mean-spirited than EU countries like Germany and Sweden, not less so. Britain's closed door to refugees and migrants from Asia and Africa is decided by the British government, not the EU. It would break no EU rule for Britain to open that door. The "leave" campaigners — right-wing Tories, Ukip, the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Express* — agitate against non-European migrants as well as European. One of their arguments has been that if Britain remains in the EU, then some of the

Syrian and other refugees admitted by less mean-spirited EU countries could use EU freedom of movement to come to Britain.

Q: So it's about migrant rights? And what else?

A: Nation-state borders formed in past centuries are too narrow for today's capitalism, let alone for socialism. Economic and cultural life spilled across those borders long ago. To try to re-raise those old borders, and cram life back within them, will impoverish us.

A cosmopolitan voluntary union of many nations and peoples, with the lowest possible internal borders, is a better starting point for a fight for democratic control over (inevitably international) economic life, and for a civilisation based on solidarity.

Q: But the EU is capitalist! Neoliberal! Look what it has done to Greece.

A: Of course it is capitalist! Put 28 capitalist

states together, and you get a capitalist union. That will be changed only by working-class struggle across the continent. The lower the borders, the better the conditions for that united working-class struggle.

The objection of the leading "leave" campaigners — of the people who will shape what "leave" means, if the vote goes their way on 23 June — is that the EU is too restrainedly capitalist and *not neoliberal enough*. As the EU has part-harmonised conditions across the continent, there has been some levelling-up. The EU leaders could not bust German and French workers down to the conditions of Poland or post-Franco Spain, but could afford some "levelling-up". The ratio of the poorest country's GDP per head to the EU-28 average has increased very slowly, but it has increased, from 0.35 in 1995 to 0.48 in 2011.

Although Britain has an income above the EU average, we have benefited from levelling-up in other areas. Measures like the Working Hours Directive and the Agency Workers Directive were implemented in Britain only thanks to EU pressure. "Vote Leave" leaders want to scrap them.

Q: All talk about changing the EU is empty. The fact is, labour movements exist country by country. For now, the way to win gains is for labour movements to be able to push their own governments, free of international constraints.

A: Leaving the EU will not free a government from the constraints of the multinational corporations and of the global financial markets. In fact, the size of the EU means that an effective concerted labour-movement push can sway governments to partial defi-

ance of world-market pressure more easily than could a push in a single small country.

In the EU or out of the EU, to win real changes the labour movement must unite across borders. Syriza's surge in Greece was never going to win radical demands unless it could evoke and then unite with a cross-Europe movement against austerity. The Syriza leaders made some efforts to do that in 2012.

They were far too weak. But if they had been stronger, they would have been helped, not hindered, by the fact of Greece being in the EU and the consequent logic of promoting a united movement on cross-EU demands.

Q: The EU is undemocratic. The unelected European Commission and the unelected European Central Bank impose their will on elected national governments.

A: They do. So do the unelected Bank of England and the unelected bosses of big business. The answer is to win democratic accountability, something along the lines sketched by Yanis Varoufakis for his Democracy in Europe Movement (DiEM), not to raise borders.

Q: If Britain stopped paying EU budget contributions, it could spend more on the NHS.

A: Former Tory prime minister John Major was pushed into increasing NHS spending, after Thatcher was ousted in 1990, by accumulated agitation against the NHS cuts which Thatcher had made in the 1980s. Probably he had a hard time with some of the right-wing, anti-EU Tories about that, and the resentment rangles.

But what he said on 5 June about the Brexit leaders was right: "Michael Gove wanted to privatise [the NHS], Boris [Johnson] wanted to charge people for using it and Iain Duncan Smith wanted a social insurance system. The NHS is about as safe with them as a pet hamster would be with a hungry python".

Q: It's difficult to see exactly what difference Brexit would make. But for sure a "leave" majority on 23 June would discredit David Cameron and sharpen the Tories' divisions. We should vote "leave" to get rid of the Tories.

A: A "leave" vote might well topple Cameron, to replace him with Gove or Johnson at the head of a Tory government, maybe with an explicit alliance with Ukip. There is no way that it would lead directly to the victory of the pro-"remain" Labour Party.

Deciding our tactics by what is bad for Cameron is short-sighted. Chaos, rancour, confusion, in a situation where right-wing forces dominate the stage, as they do, brings demoralisation, atomisation, sectionalism, chauvinism, regression, not socialist advance.

Q: What should the left do if the majority on 23 June is for Brexit?

A: We'll be on the back foot. But we should and can campaign to reduce the loss of workers' rights and migrant rights to a minimum, and to maintain and increase labour-movement links across the new borders our exploiters will put up.

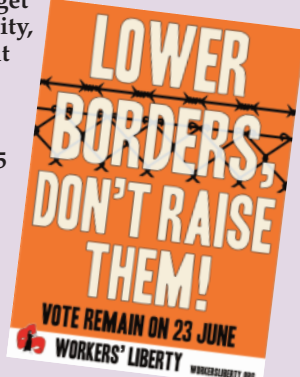
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Workers' Liberty has produced a set of two special edition stickers for use during the EU referendum. As the campaign continues, the scaremongering about migrants will only get worse. Use our stickers to get some much-needed migrant-solidarity, internationalist, socialist ideas out there.

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Connolly, the USA, and the Wobblies

Part six of Michael Johnson's series on the life and politics of James Connolly.

In June 1905, the American workers' movement took a huge leap forward, with the establishment of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in Chicago.

Its roots lay in the militancy of mine workers in the mid-western states, where for a decade the Western Federation of Miners had been fighting intense class battles with the employers, uniting skilled and unskilled workers and relying on workers' own strength and solidarity to defeat the bosses.

The need for an organisation like the IWW (known commonly as the "Wobblies"), emphasising class struggle and solidarity, and organising the unorganised, black workers, immigrants and women, was provided by the severe shortcomings of the existing American Federation of Labour (AFL).

The AFL's high dues and initiation fees put membership out of reach for many workers. Dubbed the "American Separation of Labour" by the Wobblies, it was a craft union, concerned with protecting the narrow interests of particular skilled workers in a given industry, even if it was to the detriment to workers in the industry as a whole. In taking a reactionary approach to immigration, scaremongering about the "yellow peril" and calling for immigration controls, the AFL put the interests of settled white workers ahead of the unity of the working-class. This approach excluded huge swathes of the American working-class. Between 1860 and 1900, the population of the USA grew from around 31 million to 76 million, including 14 million immigrants. Irish were the largest group, and their families constituted the majority of the population in many northern industrial cities.

The IWW, by contrast, organised immigrant workers and set about creating "an organisation formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or in all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lock-out is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all."

The AFL prided itself more on its benefit funds than its capacity to fight the bosses, and its president Samuel Gompers and its officials co-operated with the National Civic Federation, bringing trade unions and industrialists such as J P Morgan together "to settle disputes between capital and labour."

In response, the socialist Daniel De Leon had exposed AFL class collaboration and involvement in strike-breaking, denouncing union officials of this type as "labour lieutenants of the capitalist class." This view was shared by the IWW, which stated in its Preamble that: "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of the working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

"Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the Earth..."

"...Instead of the conservative motto, 'A fair day's wage for a fair day's work,' we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, 'Abolition of the wage system'."

As the delegates met in Chicago at the founding convention of the IWW, the revolutionary strike wave in Russia was growing, and reverberated in the hall. The revolutionary labour organiser Lucy Parsons told the delegates that: "You men and women should



Connolly speaking at an IWW rally

be imbued with the spirit that is now displayed in far-off Russia and far-off Siberia where we thought the spark of manhood and womanhood had been crushed.... Let us take example from them."

Due to the politically raw nature of many IWW members, existing political organisations such as the SLP and the left-wing of the Socialist Party of America (SPA) around Eugene V Debs did much to set the political character of the union. De Leon was elected to its executive at the first conference and was a dominant figure for the next three years.

De Leon now envisaged workers gradually building up their strength inside capitalism, as the bourgeoisie had done under feudalism. As the IWW Preamble stated, by "organising industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old."

This social power would be measured by the workers "raising the political temperature" at the ballot box, backed up by industrial union. In response to capitalist resistance, the workers would, "in possession of the might conferred and implied by the industrial organisation of their class... forthwith lock out the capitalist class."

For Connolly, De Leon's ideas on industrial unionism, as W K Anderson writes, "offered both a concrete structure and an ideology which provided a logical extension of his own, much more tentative thoughts on organised labour and revolution." and helped Connolly "focus his own radical but somewhat unconnected ideas on craft unionism, workers' control of industry and the shape of socialist society."

LOVED

Moreover, the IWW offered Connolly scope for the sort of work he loved the most, organising with workers and devising strategies to overcome the employers.

Connolly's politics in this period can accurately be described as semi-syndicalist, and as W K Anderson noted, his syndicalism "is best understood within the context of his aggressive, class-based hatred of capitalist society."

In the early part of the twentieth century, syndicalism was in part a reaction to the failure of both conservative craft unions and the Second International combination of Marxist propaganda and gradualist electoral methods to resist workers' falling living standards.

For many workers, a more radical and combative stand was what was required, stressing class struggle in the very engine room of capitalist production — the work-place. On the positive side, this emphasis on work-place class struggle was lively and democratic, resting on workers' self-organisation from below to produce the future socialist society.

Yet the syndicalist rejection of the existing socialist parties could be one-sided. In France, for instance, the syndicalist trend was embodied formation of the CGT in 1902. It took a dis-

tinctly anti-political line, accepting the Marxian class critique of capitalism but rejecting not only the orthodox state socialism of the French socialist parties but what syndicalist leader Emile Pouget called the "virus of politics" in general.

The IWW was divided on the question of "political action". The original IWW constitution contained a political clause, pledging the union to fight for workers' interests economically but also at the ballot box.

Connolly became an IWW organiser in New York, drawing him into activity with left-winger members of the SPA, and hoped that the IWW would launch "its own political party [that will] put an end to all excuse for two Socialist parties and open the way for a real and effective unification of the revolutionary forces." However, the political clause would be a casualty of a growing "anti-political" mood in the IWW, in no small part a reaction to De Leon's increasingly sectarian behavior in the union.

De Leon seized upon an article by Connolly in the IWW's Industrial Bulletin about the necessity of counter-acting the wage cuts hitting the IWW's base in the wake of the October 1907 stock market crash, accusing him of bringing party disputes into the IWW. Connolly had written that "few economic questions are of such great practical importance to the labour movement" as fighting for wages increases under capitalism, and briefly mentioned his 1904 dispute with De Leon.

At the General Executive Board of the IWW, De Leon accused Connolly of having a "destructive effect", intimating that he might be a policy spy, and accusing him of being a Jesuit, who had "ruined the SLP in Ireland."

Connolly left the SLP in April 1908. Not long after, at the 4th Convention of the IWW in September 1908, the political clause was dropped, severing the IWW's formal connection with the socialist parties, and declaring itself against fighting on the political front.

De Leon was unseated from the unions' leading bodies. Some opposed De Leon's policy on wages, others were syndicalists determined to cut ties to the political parties, and still others were opposed to De Leon's contention that in America the socialist revolution would be peaceful affair crowned by a victory at the ballot box — a view which had the SLP conflating mass revolutionary action with individual acts of terrorism. When the De Leonites split and formed their own "IWW" in Detroit, they condemned the Chicago organisation as "physical forceists" and "anarchists".

Connolly opposed the removal of the political clause but remained in the IWW. He felt that it would be "impossible to prevent the workers taking [political action]" if it came to it, and continued to insist that it was "incumbent upon organised labour to meet the capitalist class on every field where the latter can operate to our disadvantage."

Connolly's 1909 pamphlet *Socialism Made Easy* shows the strong influence of De Leon. It advocates industrial unionism, which he argues "prepares within the framework of the capitalist society, the working form of the Socialist Republic." However, the real battle was the industrial one, fought by the primary revolutionary instrument of the industrial union. For Connolly, "the fight for the conquest of the political state is not the battle; it is only the echo of the battle."

Yet Connolly was by no means anti-political. He stressed the need to "bring workers as a class into direct conflict with the possessing class as a class — and keeping them there... Nothing can do this so readily as a action at

the ballot box." But Connolly's conception of the socialist political party had changed from the propagandist-electoral routines he had first learned in the SDF.

Whereas for De Leon, the party was envisaged an elite of highly-trained socialists, Connolly's battle with the SLP seems to have pushed him too far in the other direction, rejecting De Leon's sectarian version of party-building only to downgrade completely the importance of organising together the most class-conscious workers into a coherent socialist tendency. The party is seen in the broadest terms: "The attempt of craft organised unions to create political unity before they had laid the foundation of industrial union is premature. But when that foundation of industrial union is finally secured, then nothing can prevent the union of the economic and political forces of labour." In other words, industrial unionism makes sharp political arguments unnecessary; the correct industrial organisation will itself guarantee adequate socialist politics.

This argument, paradoxically, manages to combine the active class-struggle instincts of the syndicalists with the deterministic materialism of some elements of the Second International, for whom socialist progress at the ballot box was a reflex of economic development. Ironically, too, if revolutionary industrial unionism was in part a response to the staidness of orthodox Social Democracy, it was the trades unions which exacerbated the conservative drag on these officially Marxist political parties.

BRAKES

When the Polish revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg defended the idea of the mass strike as the main lesson of the 1905 Russian Revolution, she was attacked by the German trade union leaders, with Karl Liegen dismissing the notion as "general nonsense".

At the SPD's Mannheim Congress in September 1906, Karl Kautsky worried that if "the trade unions want peace and quiet, what perspectives open up for us if they are fastened to the already cumbersome party body as brakes?" The congress produced a compromise which gave the union leaders a de facto veto over the use of a mass political strike by German Social Democracy. One radical SPD journal, the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, concluded glumly that after struggling against revisionism in the party for a decade, "the revisionism we have killed in the party rises against with greater strength in the trade unions."

This is because trade unions are, by their very nature in capitalist society, workers' basic self-defence organisations to fight for higher wages, within the framework of wage-labour and of capitalism. To do this effectively, trades unions need, in ordinary times, to organise as widely as possible from within the working-class — not just the radical workers who might be attracted by revolutionary syndicalism.

Yet this bargaining function within capitalism, and the full-time union bureaucracy which sees its role as an intermediary between workers and capitalists, at a certain pitch of struggle can find itself in opposition to the wider socialist goal of abolishing the wage system altogether. It is the latter that the revolutionary socialist party exists independently to argue for within the working class.

Notwithstanding these political failings, *Socialism Made Easy* was a vivid work expounding the importance of industrial unionism in a clear form. It was Connolly's first widely read work.

The most homophobic election ever

At Ideas for Freedom, 7-10 July, Peter Tatchell will speak on the struggle for LGBT rights in the labour movement. Peter Tatchell was the Labour Party Parliamentary candidate for the Bermondsey by-election in 1983.

I was the left-wing pro-LGBT rights Labour candidate.

Described by many commentators as the dirtiest, most violent and homophobic by-election in modern British history, I went down to a crushing defeat at the hands of the Liberal candidate, Simon Hughes.

The Liberals (since renamed the Liberal Democrats) pitched for the homophobic vote. They published leaflets which stated there was a "straight choice" between myself and Simon Hughes.

Less well known was the tactic of some male Liberal canvassers to knock on doors wearing lapel stickers emblazoned with the words "I've been kissed by Peter Tatchell". They constantly reminded voters that I was gay and supported gay rights, in an apparent appeal to homophobic electors.

There was also an infamous leaflet, distributed during the election campaign, headed: "Which queen will you vote for?" Some ashamed Liberal insiders have since claimed that it was produced by a Liberal undercover dirty tricks unit.

The leaflet featured an image of the Queen and myself and denounced me as a left-wing traitor. Assumed at the time to have been circulated by the far-right National Front, it listed my home address and phone number and invited local people to have a go at me.

The result was a deluge of threats and attacks on my flat. I had to board up my home and sleep with a fire extinguisher and rope ladder beside my bed; plus an assortment of

carving knives and sticks for self-defence.

I'm not one to hold grudges. I forgave Simon and the Liberals — and moved on. Within a few years I was working with Simon to defend the human rights of people with HIV and on many subsequent campaigns.

Eventually, Simon publicly apologised and I accepted his apology. He also came out as bisexual, which was ironic given the Liberals' anti-gay campaign against me.

The general consensus is that the Bermondsey by-election was the lowest point in post-1945 British election campaigning; perhaps the most scurrilous election in Britain in the 20th century and certainly the most homophobic election in British history.

I was subjected to the most sustained press and public vilification experienced by any parliamentary candidate for 100 years.

It was a pivotal moment in Labour Party history. I was a left-wing Labour candidate, condemned for policies that are now mainstream: a national minimum wage, comprehensive anti-discrimination laws, LGBT equality, a negotiated political settlement in Northern Ireland and much more.

I was pilloried for my defence of the local working class communities, in particular my opposition to the carve up by property developers of the North Southwark, Bermondsey and Rotherhithe riversides, to make way for office blocks and luxury flats for the rich.

When I warned about the rip-off redevelopment of the riverside back in 1983 I was called a scaremonger and liar, but all of my predictions later came true — most local working class people lost out. Many were priced out of their own community.

This gentrification at the expense of local people is still continuing with the plans to redevelop the mega Heygate Estate site at the Elephant and Castle, adjacent to where I still live in the same one bedroom council flat as in 1983.

At the time of the by-election, I became a symbol of struggle between the left and the right in the battle for Labour's soul. My defeat was a symbolic defeat for the whole left.

I told the inside story in my book, *The Battle for Bermondsey* (Heretic Books, 1983).

The public revulsion against the homophobic abuse that I suffered ensured that when Chris Smith MP came out the following year few people dared attack him. He received a mostly sympathetic public response.

After Bermondsey, mainstream parties dared not use homophobia as a campaign weapon.

Likewise, the backlash against the tabloid smears, intrusions and outright fabrications resulted in a diminution in the use of such tactics against later parliamentary candidates, at least by some journalists and editors.

For me, the run-up to the by-election was like living through a low-level civil war.

I was assaulted over 100 times in the street and while canvassing.

There were 30 attacks on my flat, two attempts by car drivers to run me down and a bullet was posted through my letterbox in the middle of the night.

I received hundreds of hate letters, including 30 threats to kill me or petrol bomb my flat.

There were many moments when I feared for my life.

Anti-Tatchell slogans were painted throughout the constituency, on dozens of walls, hoardings and bridges, including:

"Tatchell is queer", "Tatchell is a communist poof" and "Tatchell is a n*gger-lover".

Tabloid reporters rifled through my rubbish bins, put my flat under 24-hour long lens surveillance, sent young boys to my door and posed as a cousin of mine to win the confidence of neighbours and pry information from them.

The Sun published a fabricated story that I



One of Peter Tatchell's election posters

had deserted local constituents to attend the Gay Olympics in San Francisco.

A photo of me was published by the *News of the World* which made me look like I had plucked eyebrows and was wearing lipstick.

The Press Complaints Council was useless. They sat on my complaints for weeks and months. I never got one iota of redress.

Proof that victims of press misrepresentation and smears need some kind of statutory legal remedy, along the lines proposed in the Leveson report.

• Peter Tatchell is a human rights activist who campaigns with OutRage! He is a regular contributor to pinknews.co.uk and the *Guardian*. To help the work of his foundation please visit peteratchellfoundation.org
• First published in *Pink News* 24 February 2015

Changing Labour, changing politics

Thursday 7 July

Walking with Minnie

A radical walking tour around London's East End, following the footsteps of Minnie Lansbury, socialist suffragette, teacher trade unionist, and leader of the Poplar Rates Rebellion.

Separate tickets are available for £5.



Friday 8 July

What is the future of the Labour Party? The left debates John McTernan

Tony Blair's former special adviser debates Jill Mountford of the Momentum Steering Committee on the future of Labour.

Chaired by Jon Lansman of Momentum. Separate tickets are available for £5



IDEAS FOR FREEDOM 2016 : 7-10 JULY: STUDENT CENTRAL, LONDON, WC1E 7HX

• How do we change the Labour Party? with Ian Hodson, President of the Bakers, Food, and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU); Jon Lansman, Momentum; and Pete Radcliff, Broxtowe CLP • Changing labour: Work in global capitalism with Ursula Huws • How the Labour left organised in the past: the story of The Rank-and-File Mobilising Committee with John Bloxam • The struggle for LGBT rights in the labour movement with Peter Tatchell and Maria Exall • Did the Grunwick strike change the labour movement for black and and migrant workers? • New unionism: organising the unorganised • Should we renew Trident? Workers' Liberty debates Luke Akehurst, Labour First • The story behind the junior doctors strike, with Dr Yannis Gourtsoyannis, BMA Junior Doctors' Committee; and Dr Youssef El-Gingihy, GP and author of 'How to dismantle the NHS in 10 easy steps' • Fighting for reproductive rights, with Feminist Fightback and Ana Oppenheim, National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts and NUS national executive • Social reproduction and women's liberation, with Cathy Nugent • Introduction to the Iranian Revolution with Morad Shirin of the Iranian Revolutionary Marxist Tendency • 100 years since the Easter Rising with Liam McNulty and James Heartfield • 1926 general strike with Professor Keith Laybourn • 50 years since the foundation of the AWL with Sean Matgamna • Hungary 1956 with Matt Cooper • From Chartism to the Labour Representation Committee with Sam Greenwood, Workers' Liberty; and Colin Waugh of the Independent Working-Class Education Network • Marxism and Autism with Janine Booth, Chair, TUC Disabled Workers' Committee and author of 'Autism Equality in the Workplace'; and Dr Dinah Murray • History PLC: The Commodification of the Past with Cath Fletcher, author of 'The Black Prince' • The fight for free speech around the world with Gita Sahgal, Centre for Secular Space; and Melanie Gingell, lawyer involved in the Free Ralf Badawi campaign • The fight for disability rights, with Paula Peters, Disabled People Against Cuts; Mandy Hudson, National Union of Teachers Executive disability rep • Can religion play a progressive role in politics? With Maryam Namazie, Worker-Communist Party of Iran; Kate Harris, Workers' Liberty; and Lev Taylor, Jewdas collective • Anti-semitism, anti-Zionism and the left with David Rosenberg, Jewish Socialists Group; Daniel Randall, Workers' Liberty; and Hannah Weisfeld, Yachad • How inequality is killing us with Professor Danny Dorling and Ellie Clarke • The politics of crime dramas, with Clive Bradley, writer of the BBC's *Trapped*.

Saturday night social: Our memories of the Grunwick strike

BOOK AT WWW.WORKERSLIBERTY.ORG/IDEAS

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

10-12 June

NCAFC summer conference
Edinburgh University student association, EH8 9AL
bit.ly/1X8vS4v

Saturday 11 June

Leeds Momentum EU debate
12 noon, The Adelphi Pub, 1-3 Hunslet Road, Leeds, LS10 1JQ
bit.ly/leedsEUdebate

Saturday 11 June

Anti-TTIP and CETA demonstration
1pm, 10 Downing Street, London
bit.ly/anti-ttip

Monday 13 June

Southwark Momentum meeting
7pm, Salvation Army, 1 Princes St, London, SE1 6HH
bit.ly/1VJQeQC

Saturday 18 June

National Demonstration against the Housing Act
12 noon, London, meeting point TBC
bit.ly/1YcAMgo

Saturday 18 June

Convoy to Calais
Central London, various
bit.ly/calaisconvoy

Saturday 18 June

Orgreave Anniversary Rally
5pm, Orgreave Lane, Sheffield, S13 9NE
bit.ly/orgreaverally

Got an event you want listing?

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Workers' Liberty



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For a democratic youth movement

LABOUR

By Micheál MacEoin

Momentum Youth and Students founding conference in Manchester on 5 June was a big step forward towards creating a radical democratic youth movement. 200 young Labour Party and socialist activists attended.

The conference opened strongly with an all-women plenary. Hannah McCarthy, the Campaigns and Citizenship Officer at the University of Manchester Student Union, set the tone with news of an inspiring victory for low-paid catering workers at the university, and the importance of fighting explicitly for socialist ideas. We also heard from left-wing Labour MP Rebecca Long-Bailey, the new chair of Young Labour Caroline Hill, and left-wing candidate for Labour National Executive Committee Rhea Wolfson, who struck a defiant note against the Blairite attempts to prevent her standing in the NEC elections.

One of the other highlights of the day was a series of workshops on young workers and trade unions, the threats to higher education, and the junior doctors' struggle in the NHS. In the NHS session, we discussed campaigning in communities and on campuses around local



NHS struggles, but also how Momentum must play a role in pushing big-picture demands through the Labour Party in order to rebuild the NHS as a comprehensive public service.

With the exception of the liberation and regional caucuses, the rest of the day was given over to constitutional discussions and the elections for a committee block of 15. The lack of any real time for discussions of strategy for the young left in Labour or for any discussion of big political issues, was disappointing. To inspire activists and really cohere a movement, we need to talk about what we think, what we believe, what we are fighting for. Not just talk about the remit of a committee!

After an attempt to scrap all committee elections was averted, a degree of unnecessary confusion on the day was caused by some delegates attempting to force unwritten

amendments from the floor to the effect that the committee would only be interim.

In the end, conference voted that the committee would carry out a review into the organisation's structures as it develops over the next six months, and produce a recommendation to be put to a future conference. Regional reps will be added later as regional structures get off the ground.

As well as arguing for a democratic Momentum Youth and Students, Workers' Liberty activists took the opportunity of the conference to discuss with young activists about socialism.

We argued that Momentum should campaign for a Workers' Government, a government which fights for the working-class as hard as the current government fights for the bosses, and which is accountable to the labour movement.

Reinstate Rhea Wolfson's candidacy for NEC!

The right of the Labour Party is seeking to block left candidate Rhea Wolfson (who replaced Ken Livingstone on the Centre Left Grassroots Alliance slate following his suspension on charges of anti-semitism) from standing for Labour's National Executive Committee.

Party rules say that candidates must receive nominations from three different regions — no problem, Rhea has dozens of nomina-

tions — and from their own CLP. But Eastwood CLP voted not to nominate Rhea.

Former Scottish Labour leader Jim Murphy, who led the party to disaster in Scotland in the 2015 Westminster election, turned up with the specific mission of blocking Rhea's nomination. Instead of the normal procedure of voting for candidates for the six places, there was a majority vote specifically on Rhea; she was asked to leave the room; and Murphy successfully op-

posed her nomination by arguing that Momentum is anti-semitic.

The rule requiring a nomination from your own CLP is not reasonable — and the Labour right, led by Murphy, squeezed every last drop of factional chicanery out of it. Contrast left-leaning CLP Oxford East, where prominent right-wing candidate Luke Akehurst was nominated on the grounds that it was only fair to let him run. That, in fact, is the normal practice in the Labour Party.

A lot has been made of Rhea being the only Jewish candidate in the election — which is true. It's also true that she has a good position on the issues in dispute — pro-Palestinian on a democratic, rational, internationalist basis, for two states, and serious about challenging anti-semitism. Hacks like Jim Murphy know that, but — in so far as they are not simply anti-Palestinian — they don't care. Their interest in anti-semitism is mainly instrumental.

We should fight for Rhea to be included in the election. As part of that, CLPs should continue to nominate her.

- For more information see Facebook: Reinstate Rhea Wolfson — Let's have a fair debate
- Change.org petition to support Rhea: chn.ge/22IY8L1
- The deadline for CLPs to nominate for the NEC is 24 June.

Stop the expulsions of Socialist Appeal supporters!

A number of Workers' Liberty supporters have been expelled from the Labour Party, by an unaccountable factional hit squad — the "Compliance Unit".

Some have been reinstated after a fight, some told there is nothing doing and they must wait five years, and some are yet to hear back on their appeals. We are fighting for all of them to be readmitted.

Now the Compliance Unit has expelled some supporters of another socialist group, Socialist Appeal.

The Compliance Unit is always coming with new justifications. Whereas they told our most recent

expellees that the "program and principles" of the AWL are not compatible with membership of the Labour Party, the Socialist Appeal comrades have been told that their organisation is "ineligible for affiliation to the Labour Party" — without saying who decided this or explaining why this means SA members must be kicked out.

We have major differences with Socialist Appeal, but that it not relevant here.

We demand their comrades' reinstatement, and hope to work with them to fight against and end all exclusion of socialists, organised or not, from the party.

Not just any strike



By Mark Mills

Bakers', Food and Allied Workers' Union (BFAWU) members are in the middle of a fierce battle against massive pay cuts in a food factory in Sheffield.

Pennine Foods is part of 2 Sisters Group, which has revenue of over £3 billion; its owner Ranjit Singh Boparan has a personal wealth of £190 million. Boparan's "salami-slicing" of conditions has been going on now for 8 years.

The attempt at imposing a new contract that includes Sunday and Bank-Holiday pay reduced by 33%, overtime pay reduced by 25%, and losing half hour paid breaks on 12 hour shifts, is the last straw for many of these workers.

The Pennine Foods workers' response has been inspiring. Their first two-day strike saw 100-150 people on the picket line. Their second saw similar numbers and lorries bringing in ingredients and taking out meals turned away.

At times, supporting a picket line can entail a short chat to a couple of strikers. Here, with both pave-

ments outside the factory lined with people, we have blocked the entrance and persuaded drivers to turn around.

On Sunday, Polish workers at the factory managed to persuaded a Polish, agency-employed and non-union driver to not cross the picket line, and in fact to join them there! And on Monday, despite threats of arrest by police and attempts by them to escort lorries off the site, the pickets held firm with no arrests and no lorries moving.

Pennine Foods supplies all its food to Marks & Spencer. Alongside the Bakers Union, Momentum Sheffield has been organising leafletting of local M&S stores to get customers and workers there to pressure that company to force Pennine's hand. No one should expect M&S's hands to be clean in this; they will want their supplier to be cheaper, so they won't act through altruism, but by pressure.

Workers at Pennine Foods stand to lose up to £6000 in this new contract as so much of their wage relies on enhanced pay for unsocial hours, and with the factory seeing a £38 million upgrade some fear

long term changes with increasing automation and job losses.

On Monday's picket line, union members voted to escalate the action to seven days, beginning on Thursday 16 June at 6am. They need maximum support, including money for a hardship fund which will be vital as they ramp up their action. We need trade unionists and Labour members to mobilise people to the picket lines and political pressure from unions, councillors and MPs.

- **Keep updated on Facebook: Support the Pennine Strike – Sheffield**
- **Donate to the hardship fund**
- **Write to M&S chief executive Steve Rowe: steve.rowe@marks-and-spencer.com**
- **Tell local MP Clive Betts and Mosborough councillors (and those of the workers living across the city) to act via www.writetothem.com**
- **Visit the workers when they are on strike at Pennine Foods, Drakehouse Crescent, Watherthorpe, Sheffield S20 7J G.**

GTR uses courts to stop strikes

By Ollie Hill

Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) has secured High Court injunctions to prevent drivers in the Aslef union striking on its Gatwick Express and Southern franchises.

Aslef had balloted its members

for strikes against the extension of "Driver Only Operation", with the ballots returning majorities of over 80% for strikes.

GTR claimed that as Aslef had previously "induced" its members not to drive new Driver-Only-Operated trains, they could not now take official industrial action against their introduction.

In granting the injunction, Judge Supperstone said: "The potential disruption and inconvenience to the general public and damage likely to be caused by the industrial action significantly outweighs the suggested harm to the union."

Aslef described the ruling as "oppressive".

Tube bosses celebrate job cuts

By Ollie Moore

Senior London Underground bosses treated themselves to a celebratory dinner at the Royal Air Force Club in London's Mayfair recently, to mark the implementation of the "Fit for the Future: Stations" programme.

The scheme has involved the closure of all but a tiny handful of ticket offices at Tube stations and the axing of nearly 1,000 jobs, as well as forced regrading and mass displacements.

The RMT union described the dinner as "obscene", and demanded to know whether public

money had been spent on it.

Meanwhile, three RMT branches on London Underground have called for renewed industrial action against the consequences of "Fit for the Future", while LU has announced its plans for a similar restructure affecting trains.

Train drivers: reject means reject!

By Tony Byrne

In April 2016, after seven months of talks, East Midlands Trains proposed a deal to its train drivers that would guarantee a Sunday service going forward.

Presently, and for many years previous, drivers have not had to work on Sundays but a lot of them are induced in to work, in the main, through individual bargaining with roster clerks; this usually results in enhanced pay above the normal rate for the job.

The company and the Department for Transport (DfT) don't like this method of covering Sunday work. Unsurprisingly. It is haphazard and if there is a particular event on a particular Sunday that lots of drivers want to attend then the service suffers. They have proposed that in two and a half years time Sundays will become like any other day for working; this will require a lot more drivers. And to achieve that the DfT will be paying to train those extra drivers, whilst extracting a promise from EMT that in the interim the Sunday service is guaranteed to be staffed. This deal is EMT's attempt to buy that guarantee from drivers. Initially it was put to us by ASLEF but was rejected by 72% in a straw poll. Or, should I say, that was what most drivers thought had happened by dint of the 72% reject vote. In fact after a very slight improvement ASLEF accepted the deal on behalf of EMT drivers but "kindly" gave us the right to opt-in/out of the new Sunday working arrangements. They were called to account on this by motions from branches at the two biggest EMT depots, Nottingham and Derby, demanding a 50%+1 ballot rather than the unprecedented opt-in/out process. Unsure if it could tough out the

uproar about its new decision-making process, the union leadership then got an emergency motion through its AAD (AGM) that retrospectively legitimised its power grab against its own members. The motion basically says that no ballot of members is required to accept this kind of deal because drivers are given the choice of whether to opt-in or out of it.

PROCESS

So, that bad process is continuing now and it looks probable that EMT will convince enough drivers to opt in to make the deal viable, helped by the extreme flexibility with which the number of drivers required is calculated.

If it does come in the drivers' grade will have been significantly weakened, because it will have created a large group of drivers who will not be on the same terms and conditions as the majority. The leadership seems to have forgotten that basic trade union rule, unity is strength. It is harder to maintain unity and thus strength against the employer among a group of workers when one part of them are on different terms and conditions to the other.

The emergency motion at AAD has also set a dangerous precedent for union democracy, in that the leadership may seek further powers to take decision making out of our hands. ASLEF rank and file members should get together to discuss how this terrible decision can be reversed.

EMT drivers have until 10 June to return their papers, and a decision on whether the deal can go ahead will be taken by the DfT on 15 June.

• **More info: <http://www.worker-sliberty.org/node/26672>**

Library workers to strike

By Gemma Short

Library workers in Barnet, north London, will strike for three days on 13, 14 and 15 June.

Workers are striking as part of a long running dispute against library closures, as part of wider cuts at Barnet council. Workers last struck in February.

The council wants to cut 52 full-time equivalent posts in libraries, reducing hours that libraries are staffed by 70%, as well as hand four libraries over to "community groups" and reduce the total library space in those remaining.

John McDonnell, Labour Shadow Chancellor, said:

"I want to pay tribute and send solidarity greetings to Barnet Uni-

son Library workers who are taking three days strike action starting Monday 13 June. They have been fighting an inspirational work place and community campaign with the Save Barnet Libraries campaign. I would like to thank them for their sterling efforts to expose and prevent the proposed widespread decimation of their Library service which will see half the workforce dumped onto the dole queue.

"Barnet Unison has been a fine example of how trade unions and their community can work together in fighting austerity policies which are destroying local public services up and down the country, they have my 100% support."



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JUNIOR DOCTORS CALL TO REJECT CONTRACT

On Friday 3 June the British Medical Association's junior doctors' committee met to discuss the proposed new contract. The committee agreed not to make a recommendation for the referendum which runs from 17 June to 1 July. Some members will be campaigning to reject. JDC members Pete Campbell and Yannis Gourtsoyannis set out their reasons in this article.

Whilst gains have been made by junior doctors over the last eight months it is clear that we do not yet have a contract offer as good as the one we are presently working under.

Voting No is therefore a positive decision on our part. We know that the medical profession deserves better than the offer currently on the table.

We arrived at this decision after much deliberation, recognising that we have an obligation to reject a contract which will be harmful to the future of our profession as well as the NHS.

By voting No we affirm that there is room for significant improvement to the present offer. We are absolutely confident that the BMA, backed by its members, will be able to extract those improvements from Government over the coming months.

The BMA's demands prior to the ballot for industrial action were:

- **Proper recognition of unsocial hours as premium time.**

While the new "weekend banding" has received much attention, it is the loss of our evenings as premium time that will cause the most disadvantage to trainees.

Particularly in Accident and Emergency and other specialties with high intensities of evening work.

As evenings are now plain time, this puts trainees that work these shifts at significant disadvantage. Flexible Pay Premia, initially designed to attract trainees into hard-to-fill specialties, are now simply being used to fix structural flaws in the new contract.

The weekend banding compromise is a partial solution to the problems of the government's "plain vs premium" time rhetoric with regards to Saturdays. But the problem is still only insufficiently addressed. Those who work the most weekends actually end up being paid less per hour for that work compared to those who work fewer weekends. The ostensible disincentive for Trusts to roster routine weekend working does not appear strong enough and does not reward those who do the most unsocial work.

- **No disadvantage to those working unsocial hours compared to the current system.**

Less than full time trainees lose out significantly under this new contract, due to the loss of annual pay progression. Those who move to less than full time earliest in training are affected even more severely.

This will impact hardest on those with caring responsibilities (the majority of whom are women) and those who practise with a disability.

It is unacceptable for us to leave this group behind. At a time of increasing rota gaps we cannot afford to allow this group of doctors to be portrayed as a burden. We must view our Less Than Full Time Colleagues as a strength, to be encouraged and nurtured and treated with equity. A diverse, in-

clusive workforce should be the minimum standard.

- **Pay for all work done.**

The contract has moved forward significantly in this regard, but concerns remain around the practicality and implementation of the concept of pay for all work done. The role of the Educational Supervisor and fines at the Departmental level raise the possibility of conflicts of interest. Many trainees have little faith in the Guardian role. This role needs to be strengthened further if trainees are to have any faith that "pay for all work done" becomes a reality rather simply a slogan.

- **Proper hours safeguards, protecting patients and their doctors.**

Safeguards around the number of shifts and appropriate rest time are to be welcomed. However, individual fines do not penalise Trusts who overwork their doctors as robustly as the current monitoring rules. We must work to strengthen this area further in order to properly disincentivise Trusts from overworking their doctors. This should include Trusts who routinely run with rota gaps,

putting increased strain on the existing workforce.

All the above areas were not designed to be high water marks for negotiations. They were to be the minimum standards we were willing to accept. Junior doctors have taken eight days of industrial action, including an unprecedented full walkout. This has clearly moved the government, and this contract is an improvement on the March offer. But it is not an equitable contract, it is not a contract that rewards those who do the hardest work, and we do not yet have faith in the mechanisms to

protect against overworking.

We encourage junior doctors to reject this contract offer, and empower the Junior Doctors' Committee to fight for the contract you deserve.

- To find out more about the campaign visit Pete Campbell's blog: <https://ahealthyblog.svbtle.com>
- Originally posted at www.bma.org.uk/connecting-doctors/bmaspace/b/weblog/post/s/why-junior-doctors-should-reject-the-new-contract-and-fight-for-a-better-one



On Saturday 4 June hundreds of student nurses and their supporters marched through central London to protest against the removal of the NHS training bursary for nurses and allied health workers. The march got a lot of public support, with shoppers and tourists around Westminster and Trafalgar Square stopping to watch and to clap as the march passed.

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Printed by Trinity Mirror