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This pamphlet was written by the Alliance for Workers' Liberty, a socialist organisation. We aim to build a movement which can replace capitalism, the current economic and social system based on class division and exploitation, with a new society – socialism – based on consistent democracy, collective ownership and solidarity.

We are involved in many movements, struggles and campaigns, and our central focus is the organised labour movement – including trade unions and the Labour Party. Our organisation exists to educate and organise socialists so we can transform the labour movement into a force capable both of changing society in the here and now, and of liberating the working class, and humanity, by overthrowing capitalism. We are revolutionary socialists, in that we believe socialism is impossible without a democratic mass movement that breaks up the state machine which exists to protect capitalism from democracy.

We invite you to work with us, discuss with us, and consider joining! Find out more, get in touch and get involved:

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INTRODUCTION

The 52% vote on 23 June 2016 for the UK to leave the European Union was a victory for the political hard right – for xenophobia, racism and nationalism.

Most immediately, Brexit poses a threat to the rights of over 3 million European migrants whose status in this country has been thrown into uncertainty. More broadly, it is a drive to tighten the UK's borders against future migrants and to make the lives of those who do come more difficult and more precarious.

For the Eurosceptic Tory right – the Jacob Rees Moggs and the Liam Foxes – it is about exiting Europe's institutions of economic integration and standardisation so that they can cast off regulations that constrain capitalists, freeing them to drive down wages, working conditions, and consumer and environmental protections. They dream of creating a low-cost, low-regulation platform for global capital and, over time, locking the UK into new TTIP-style trade deals.

And beneath all this are efforts, which are yielding fruit, to shift politics in this country decisively to the right – towards narrow-minded nationalism and exceptionalism, suffused with nostalgia for the days when Britain was an imperial superpower. Brexit is the UK franchise of an international phenomenon of right-wing populist nationalism, from Trump in the US to Bolsonaro in Brazil, and from Le Pen's Front National (now Rassemblement National) in France to Salvini's Lega in Italy.

Workers' Liberty opposed Brexit during the referendum campaign and we continue to oppose it now, with our own independent campaigning and as part of the wider left-remain campaigns, Another Europe Is Possible and Labour for a Socialist Europe. We oppose it not just because the vote was won by campaigners that lied and, it appears increasingly likely, cheated, and not just because we are sceptical of referendums as a way of making decisions, but far more importantly because any democracy worth the name must include the right for minority viewpoints to win over others and become majorities later on, and the right for all of us to engage continuously and change our minds as situations develop or as we are persuaded by different views.

We oppose Theresa May's December 2018 Withdrawal Deal. But we don't just oppose this Brexit, or the harder Brexit, which at the time of writing appears less likely but which is desired by the Ukippers and Tory hard-right, of a complete break with Europe enabling "TTIP on steroids" capitalist trade deals. And we don't just oppose a Brexit that is set to make workers' lives materially harder in the immediate term. We oppose any Brexit.

Against the "Lexiteers", supporters of a hoped-for "left-wing" Brexit, this pamphlet will argue that Brexit is inherently and irredeemably reactionary.

Against those who argue for "progressive immigration controls", we will argue that the left must be unapologetic and uncompromising in its defence of migrants and advocacy for free movement. Against those attempting to harness nationalism for the left, we will argue that this is an impossible and dangerous project. And against those who believe exit from the EU is necessary to remove the obstacles to socialism in the UK, we will argue that socialism cannot be won by attempting to wind back the clock on capitalism's work to integrate our countries, and cannot be established on one small island in isolation. Even in their bureaucratic and capitalist form, the incremental lowering of borders, economic integration, and social levelling-up across borders which have come with the EU have been steps forward. The erosion of the border partitioning Ireland has especially been an advance. Economically, socially, culturally and politically, a move back towards a Europe of walled-off states, each vying with the others for advantage and for the favour of global capital,

is regressive.

On the other hand, we do not want the UK to remain in the EU just to maintain the status quo. Our slogan is "Remain and Rebel". This pamphlet will put forward a political programme for the fight to transform Europe. We will explain why stopping Brexit and staying in the EU lays a better terrain for, and must be the first step in, the fight for socialism than a more walled-off UK. We will propose a platform of demands for Europe-wide political and social change that we think should be the basis of such a fight. And we will explain the kind of campaign that we believe will be necessary to win it.

CHAPTER 1

DEFEND & EXTEND FREE MOVEMENT

"Every industrial and commercial centre in England now possesses a working class divided into two hostile camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. [...] This antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short, by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes. This antagonism is the secret of the impotence of the English working class. [...] It is the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power."
Karl Marx, letter to Sigfrid Meyer and August Vogt, 1870

Free movement was the headline issue of the Brexit campaign. The right beat a drum to "take back control of the UK's borders" and close them to migrants. And not just to those arriving from within Europe: Nigel Farage's famous "Breaking Point" adverts portraying a tide of mostly Syrian refugees, and the wave of xenophobic, racist assaults against people of both European and non-European backgrounds that followed the vote, provide two bleak illustrations of that.

This was the culmination of decades of anti-migrant agitation, in which xenophobic politics were advanced by endless scaremongering about migrants supposedly undermining workers, committing violent crime and leeching off the public purse. All too often the centre and centre-left tried to head it off with more "moderate" anti-migrant rhetoric and policies of their own. But the effect was the opposite: to vindicate the worst agitation and let it advance ever further.

What do we mean by "the working class" and "socialism"?

When socialists talk about class, we mean fundamental economic relations more than cultural markers (e.g. accents) or social differences that arise from them (e.g. access to education). Class is about who controls the "means of production, distribution and exchange". That means the facilities and resources we use to work, to produce things, to provide services, to make society run: from factories, farms and cargo ships to medical facilities, shops and offices.

Under capitalism, these are mainly owned by one class of people, the capitalists. The working class make up most of the rest of the population. Since we don't possess any means of production, we can't make money on our own. So, to make a living we must work for the people that do. They decide what we do at work, they own what we produce, and they pay us a wage for our time. For them to turn a profit, our wages must necessarily be less than the amount they make selling what we produce. Thus, the relationship is exploitative, and built into it is a conflict between capitalists – who gain by maximising the labour they extract from us per unit of wages – and workers – who gain from the opposite.

This division is at the heart of capitalist society. Socialism means seizing democratic control of the means of production away from the capitalists, thus abolishing class and ensuring that our society's economic activity can be arranged to provide for everyone's needs and wants, rather than the profits of a few. The working class, if it organises itself, is the agent with the means to overthrow capitalism and build socialism, because it already has its hands on the levers that make society run.

The mainstream, conservative-and-liberal-led Remain campaign in 2016 continued this failed approach. Rather than offer an uncompromising defence of free movement, its leading figures tried to triangulate by highlighting the anti-migrant policies that remained possible within EU rules, or even proposing to push within the EU for yet harsher rules.

It is the lesson that – it seems – is never learned. Even after the referendum, many leftists and liberals on both sides of the Leave/Remain divide continue to champion anti-migrant stances.

Pro-EU centrists like Tony Blair, Nick Clegg, the Progress faction of Labour and the "Our Future Our Choice" campaign have all argued for Remainers to undercut Leave's appeal to xenophobia by highlighting the provisions in EU law, as-yet unused by the UK, that permit harsher treatment of working-class migrants within the EU. They do this because their interest in EU membership lies with the profits it can bring big business, and not the rights and benefits it can afford workers.

Meanwhile, many supporting Leave within the labour and trade union movements – from the Stalinists of the Morning Star, to Blue Labour arch-conservatives, to leading trade union bureaucrats in Unite, RMT and more – have wholesale adopted elements of their right-wing bedfellows' politics on migration. Parroting the racist tabloid fiction that migration threatens the wages of workers who are already here, they demand we acquiesce to the so-called "legitimate concerns" of the "white working class" and embrace curbs.

SOCIALISM MEANS FREEDOM!

As socialists, anti-racists, and internationalists, we stand against all these forces and uncompromisingly in favour of the maximum possible freedom for people to move across borders. It should be a basic obligation for the left to defend what free movement we have and fight to extend it – not just keeping the UK open to Europe but opening both to the rest of the world.

Border controls exist to separate us and to enforce different restrictions on the right to live in different places to people based on their origin. They are presented to us by our ruling classes as protecting us from outsiders. But as socialists we believe that each "national" group of workers has more in common with other workers than with its "own" ruling class, the capitalists.

Our vision for society is about human freedom and solidarity. The socialism for which we fight is one that liberates people to live how – including where and with whom – they choose. There is no place in our socialism for barbed wire, detention centres and 2am raids. No place for uniformed heavies checking papers and denying you the right to access healthcare or education or even just to walk down the street in peace.

THE FICTION OF "PROGRESSIVE" BORDER CONTROLS

Some leftist supporters of immigration controls like to imagine that these things – barbed wire, violent deportations and a hostile environment – are not a necessary part of restricting migration, and that these things can be replaced by a "kinder, gentler" enforcement of borders.

It is certainly true that reforms falling short of the full removal of migration controls can reduce these things to some degree. But it is simply not possible to effectively enforce any restriction on migration without them. The idea that migration in the modern world can be successfully controlled with nothing more than an official at an airport, port or road checkpoint, politely turning away those whose papers are not in order – that's a fantasy.

And more fundamentally, the very idea of progressive migration controls is a contradiction. Some proponents try to frame them as "democratic" control of the "supply of labour", by and for workers. But migrant workers are not inanimate raw material, a commodity simply picked up, moved around the world, dumped here or there – they are human beings. So these calls amount to nothing more than a request for the state to ramp up the machinery of border controls to discriminate against some workers for the supposed benefit of others.

Some migrants are fleeing poverty, war or environmental destruction. Many would prefer to stay where they grew up, and near family and friends. We support aid and solidarity which helps them do that. But that will not happen overnight, and it would be a criminal failure of solidarity to turn away the people trying to flee right now.)

This is not a new theme. Demands to discriminate between workers by nationality echo the male trade unionists who historically protested against women entering the workplace, or the white workers who defended "colour bars" blocking black workers entering their professions.

In those cases, those in those on the right side of history saw an alternative to clinging onto the old hierarchies and prejudices. They rejected the idea of begging capitalists or the capitalist state to inflict violence, discrimination or deprivation on other workers to "protect" us from them. Those who best served the movement and its future strove instead to organise workers on equal terms, across divides like race and gender, to win a better future for all of us. The solution is no different today.

THE LIE THAT MIGRATION UNDERCUTS WORKERS

In fact, it is not even true that immigration undermines wages, conditions, job security or public services for the workers already here.

Consider the claim that immigration stretches NHS waiting times. In fact, plenty of the NHS divisions with shorter A&E waiting times have high proportions of migrants (e.g. North-West London, Bedfordshire & Milton Keynes) while some of the worst-performing ones have very few (e.g. Shropshire, Staffordshire, Lancashire & South Cumbria). Overall there is no correlation[1]. Meanwhile,

[1] bit.ly/MigrantsNHS

foreign-born workers keep the NHS going.

Or take the claim that an increase in the supply of labour drives down the price, which has an intuitive appeal. But this assumes that there are a fixed number of jobs workers are competing to take – the "lump of labour" fallacy, debunked over a century ago. If this were true, then population growth from births in general would also depress wages, and population decline would raise them. But the populations of cities like Sunderland and Hull, both of which saw majorities for Leave, have shrunk substantially (6% and 7% respectively over 1981-2013[1]), yet both have high unemployment and low wages. Conversely, Swindon and Cambridge are some of the UK's fastest-growing cities and have substantially above-average wage growth and employment rates[2].

Extra workers don't just seek jobs; they need to eat, drink and live. So they increase demand for housing, food, and other goods and services, which in turn creates jobs (plus the government could, if it chose, spend their taxes on better public services and more jobs). And at least some of the profits derived by the rich from their labour further spur consumer demand and new investments.

A study just before the referendum demonstrated this. LSE researchers found no relationship between immigration from the EU and wage cuts, unemployment, or deterioration in public services - even when they narrowed their focus to the poorer-paid sectors which are often claimed to be more affected[3].

The scapegoating of migrants for the social ills facing working-class people was always a lie. Its function is to divide the working class and shield the real culprits – the rich and powerful, and the capitalist system that serves them.

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[1] bit.ly/ShrinkingCities
[2] bit.ly/FastGrowthCities
[3] bit.ly/WagesMigrationLSE

What about "posted workers"?

Some claims about undercutting focus on the "Posted Workers Directive" (PWD). This EU regulation allows an employer who sends an employee temporarily to another EU country to continue applying the labour laws and pay rates of the originating country during the posting. It does not allow undercutting of the host country's legal minimum wage, minimum time off or health and safety requirements. Nevertheless, in some instances it has indeed been used to give foreign workers worse terms than would be required when hiring directly in the host country.

Yet claims about "mass importation of cheap labour", posted workers account for less than 0.2% of the UK workforce. Within this, the two biggest "sender" countries were Germany and France, hardly low-wage economies compared to the UK[1].

So the PWD's real impact is already small. Moreover, recently-agreed EU reforms (opposed, of course, by our government) will soon limit its use and strengthen the right to equal pay for equal work. The left in Europe should fight to scrap it, but more importantly to level up pay and conditions continent-wide. Until that is won, we look to the example of the Fawley oil refinery workers in England, who in 2016 went on strike and won equal pay between posted and locally employed workers.

CREATING SECOND-CLASS WORKERS

Some left-wing opponents of free movement claim that it is a policy that serves capitalists against workers. Bernie Sanders memorably called open borders "a Koch brothers proposal", referring to the billionaire crusaders for hard-right free-market politics. But for all the rhetoric about protecting local workers, it is anti-migrant policies that really undermine us, by making migrants less than equals, making them into a sub-class of particularly vulnerable, easily exploitable workers lacking legal rights.

We are sold policies such as "no recourse to public funds", or tying visas to employment conditions or to particular employers, by conservative invective about the need to stop migrants "stealing" benefits and "leeching" off the welfare state. But if a migrant worker knows that losing their job will mean being left without the safety net of unemployment benefits, their child going hungry without school meals, or even deportation, then they will be less willing to stand up to an exploitative boss, and more willing to accept low-paid work with poor conditions.

This goes double for the hounding of undocumented migrants. In 2008, cleaners on London Underground unionised and went on strike for a living wage, sick pay, holiday pay and dignity at work. It was probably the largest industrial dispute of undocumented migrants in UK history and then-Mayor Boris Johnson was forced to concede the pay rise.

The reprisal was swift and merciless. Long-serving workers' papers were suddenly questioned and their bosses coordinated with the Home Office to have them seized and deported. Others were scared into staying away from work and away from the union. Every attempt to organise tube cleaners since has been disrupted by the same tactics.

In 2009 a similar fate befell cleaners campaigning for a living wage at the School of Oriental and African Studies, who. They arrived at an "emergency" meeting with their bosses only to find themselves locked in and confronted by immigration officers in riot gear. Nine were deported.

Recent research found little evidence that the Tories' "hostile environment" policies were reducing the number of

undocumented migrants in the UK[1] – but then, that was never their purpose. For the capitalist class and the right-wing politicians who serve them, the purpose of all these policies is discipline – to keep a set of workers precarious, non-unionised and exploitable

An amnesty for undocumented workers, citizenship for all residents, and equal access to decent employment rights and social security for all, would put the whole working class on a secure footing to fight back against exploitation.

IS FREE MOVEMENT FOR THE PRIVILEGED?

Another argument commonly found on the anti-free-movement left is that the right is an elitist concern: that working-class people don't have the opportunities to make use of free -movement rights, and the concerns boil down to privileged people fretting about how easily they'll get to swan about the continent.

But five minutes in a multi-ethnic, multi-national, working-class neighbourhood like London's Wood Green, where a myriad of languages from Bulgarian to Portuguese to Somali fill the high street and adverts for cheap international phonecards fill corner-shop windows with slogans about freedom from borders, will quickly dispel the myth that only the comfortable and privileged are bothered about the freedom to live and work in other countries.

Conversely, the very richest are always able to breeze around the world quite freely with or without free movement policies. Visa fees amount to the kind of money these people might lose behind their sofas. Over 20 countries – including several in the EU – offer fast-track citizenship or residency in exchange for large investments in local property or business.

If the most disadvantaged workers face bigger obstacles in the way of living, working, or studying abroad, then we want to reduce those obstacles. In any case, we won't help them by denying these opportunities to those workers who are a little better off – or to those poorer workers who do manage to access them despite the inequality.

NEITHER FORTRESS EUROPE NOR FORTRESS BRITAIN

Free movement in Europe is not a right enjoyed by everyone. It is a partial right, extended only to EU and Schengen area citizens, while those coming from outside the walls of Fortress Europe can expect a frostier reception – all too often, one characterised by barbed wire and brutality.

Non-European migrants are barred, or if allowed in, face onerous visa conditions including fees, denial of social security and public services, surveillance, legal discrimination, and precarity that could see them detained and deported on any number of grounds. EU member states collaborate to enforce a vicious regime at Europe's borders against those fleeing war, persecution, disaster, environmental destruction and poverty.

More than 10,000 refugees have drowned in the Mediterranean since 2014. While charities and NGOs attempt to run rescue missions, the response from European governments has been to turn them away from ports, bar them from operating in Italy's waters, criminalise them and impound their boats. Mainstream press commentators openly argue that refugees should be left to drown in order to deter others from making the trip. Those migrants pushed by this crisis into attempting the land route instead, report being beaten and abused for entertainment by police before being turned back

[1] bit.ly/HostileEnvStudy

from the Hungarian border – a border that is now being fortified with electrified fencing and heat sensors.

Rather than end this cruelty by opening their arms and accommodating those in need – which would be easy with a mere fraction of the wealth of our continent's capitalists – European governments collaborate via the EU to pay authoritarian states from Turkey to Sudan to fortify borders and capture and detain migrants before they even reach the edge of Europe. Italy has even struck deals with militias in divided Libya.

With far-right parties in government from Hungary to Italy, all these aspects of Fortress Europe are only becoming more vicious.

All this is certainly a good argument against romanticising the EU, wrapping ourselves in its flag, or allying in our campaign against Brexit with centrist and right-wing political forces that support and uphold Fortress Europe. But leaving the EU, or curtailing the rights of EU citizens, will not in any way improve the situation for non-EU migrants.

Many migrants currently living in the UK on EU passports came originally from non-European countries but got their papers via another European country (for instance, Latin Americans to whom Spain and Portugal have lowered the barriers to citizenship due to colonial history). Brexit will certainly not help them.

More generally, an "equality" achieved by building a Fortress Britain that inflicts those same crimes on EU citizens is no victory for the left. And anyone imagining that they can barter and trade with the forces of racism – that they can win the fight to ease restrictions on non-Europeans by conceding more restrictions on Europeans, despite the abject failure of all previous attempts at triangulation – is deluding themselves.

It is also a fantasy to imagine that leaving the EU will undermine Fortress Europe in any way. Indeed, Theresa May has proposed that UK financial contributions to these collaborative efforts would *increase* after Brexit.

The EU's anti-migrant regime is not imposed on reluctant member states from above – it is a joint project eagerly developed and pursued by those member states, one which must be brought down by the left and the workers' movement attacking it across those states. Left-wing pro-migrant governments within the EU could and should be a key part of that battle.

CHAPTER 2

THE IRISH BORDER

The question of raising borders is particularly acute in Ireland. An open border between the north and south of Ireland, brought about by the Good Friday Agreement and both the UK and Ireland being within the EU, has been key to the present period of relatively reduced tension and violence. Free trade across the border, under the auspices of the Single Market and Customs Union, is central to the north's economic life and is also part of cross-border integration. In Northern Ireland, the referendum saw a 56% majority for remain. But the UK's vote to leave the EU, and the drive to make that mean departing also from the Single Market and Customs Union, has placed the situation under threat.

At the time of writing, the situation is this. The Brexiteers want, and the Tories promise, to break from Europe's zone of freely moving people and goods. That requires a hard border between the UK and the EU – including the Irish Republic – across which the flow of people and things is controlled. The Unionists want, and the Tories also promise, no border or distinction between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK (except, of course, when it comes to abortion rights or same-gender marriage). But the Tories also recognise the threat posed by a hard border dividing Northern Ireland from the Republic and promise not to allow that, either.

So the Tories promise to make A equal B, and B equal C, but A different from C! They wave off this mathematical impossibility with vague words about some magical "technological solution".

Some Lexiteers shrug and say: "What's the problem? The Good Friday Agreement institutionalised sectarian politics to maintain British control over an exclave that should be part of Ireland. If the upheaval of Brexit shatters it and yields a united Ireland, then good!"

We too take issue with the GFA's entrenchment of sectarian politics, and we too oppose the partition of Ireland. But a deeply flawed status quo being chaotically undone by the mess of Brexit is very different from it being replaced with something better by the purposeful work of anti-sectarian working-class forces. A border erupting back into the lives of border communities will take us further from, not closer to, a united Ireland. Nor do we want a raised border in the Irish Sea, separating Britain and Ireland. Socialists cannot be flippant or complacent about the possible re-emergence of sectarian violence in the course of such events.

What we want to see (and help make happen) is re-unification achieved by a working-class movement that bridges the sectarian divide with a plan for a united, federal Ireland - assuring self-determination with regional autonomy for Protestant-majority areas. And we want Britain and Ireland to remain open and connected within the EU. Working toward this, integration and mixing across an open border will make it easier to replace sectarianism with working-class unity against both nations' capitalists.

CHAPTER 3

FIGHTING NATIONALISM: THE WORKING CLASS HAS NO COUNTRY

Alongside and intermeshed with xenophobia, a key component of the Brexit movement has been nationalism. It is part of a worldwide eruption over the past few years that has seen hard-right nationalist forces advance in many countries, including Donald Trump's Presidency in the US, the growth of AfD in Germany to become the largest opposition party, Viktor Orban's authoritarian government in Hungary, Narendra Modi's Presidency in India, and Jair Bolsonaro's election in Brazil.

These forces feed on the dispossession, disempowerment, insecurity and alienation that capitalist society inflicts on working-class people. They offer a sense of belonging, and they offer an explanation for these woes by identifying enemies who are said to stand outside the nation and against it: migrants, minorities and "the elite". They rail against "liberal" cosmopolitanism – against mixture and diversity in society. And they offer a solution: "take back control", a demagogic cry for sovereignty and the reassertion of the nation against these enemies. Their populism poses itself as standing up for "the people" of a nation against these outsiders, subversive elements, and "the elites", who are "globalists", foreign or foreign-linked (a trope that often shades into antisemitism).

This is not a new enemy. And each time it has reared its head, there have been those on

the left who say that we must respond by aping it – that the left must show its patriotism and appeal to the (white) working class by adopting a left-wing version of nationalism. This time is no exception.

We have the usual suspects from the right of the labour movement: from the Blairites like Stephen Kinnock, Martin Kettle or Tristram Hunt, for whom this is just the latest attempt to triangulate towards whatever they think the opinion polls say is popular, to the dyed-in-the-wool conservatives like Blue Labour, whose proto-fascistic "family, faith, and flag" slogan takes it almost to the level of parody.

And it is not confined to that established Labour right. The World Transformed - the festival of the Labour left that runs in parallel to Labour's annual conference - gave a rapturous welcome in 2018 to French left leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon. Many hail his jingoistic, left-populist "sovereigntism" as a model. A leading figure in Germany's Die Linke, Sahra Wagenknecht, has founded Aufstehen (Stand Up): a cross-party movement calling for the left to embrace border controls and conservative "law and order" stances.

We argue that a left-wing politics cannot be built on the intrinsically right-wing foundations of nation and patriotism. The only way we can defeat the right is to smash those foundations and win people round to a fundamentally different politics: class struggle socialist internationalism.

THERE IS NO "NATIONAL INTEREST"

At its base, nationalism is a frame through which to look at the world which proposes the nation as basic unit of common interest. Where socialists contend that every nation is divided between ruling classes and exploited classes, capitalists and workers, who have irreconcilably contradictory interests, nationalism says that the people of a nation are bound together by shared fortunes and misfortunes, and can improve their lot as a group by pursuing paths that are in the "national interest". Socialism says that workers have more in common with the workers of other countries than with the rulers and exploiters within our own country, and calls on us to unite the working-class internationally against the capitalists. Nationalism would have us relate to the rest of the world through our nation, as part of a team with our own capitalists.

This is a myth that socialists should have no business propping up. There is no such thing as "the national interest" – what that term is used to describe is always, in truth, the interest of the capitalist class or some section thereof.

The Brexiteers raise the cry to "take back control" from Brussels as a salve for the real disempowerment workers face in capitalist society. But power to Westminster is not power to workers. Power to our own national capitalist state is not power to workers. Big capital has long since spilled over the bounds of the nation-state, and so even if Brexiteers were serious about taking it on, attempting to do so at the national level only is doomed to fail.

Nationalist left-populism corrodes our ability to see, explain and combat this problem. Take Mélenchon's political project, for example. In order to construct a left nationalism and assert that he stands for "the national interest", he has to junk serious talk of a society divided by class interests. Instead, like the hard right, he wraps himself in the tricolour flag and claims to speak for "the people" as an undifferentiated, classless mass (or "multitude", a term beloved by some of the post-Marxist theorists backing this brand of politics). The enemy is identified not as a capitalist class, defined by its economic power, but an elite whose "globalism" places it outside the nation, and foreign powers. Mélenchon rages with particular vitriol against Germany as a supposed enemy of the French people.

This superficial, classless narrative obscures the real divides in society, embraces within

"the people" a layer of domestic (usually smaller) capitalists whose business interests the movement ends up committing to defend, and drags workers away from understanding themselves as part of a class with particular interests, defined by economic relations. It might make short-term, limited gains, but diverts us from socialist politics into a dead-end, and by helping to prop up the populist narratives and nationalist framing on which the right bases itself, ultimately feeds our enemies.

The centenary of World War One should remind us where capitulation to nationalism can lead. In a rush to prove their patriotic credentials, the once-internationalist social democrats of Europe rushed in 1914 to stand with their respective ruling classes and endorse the march to war. Workers were duped into joining the fight by the lie that they would serve the "national interest", when in truth the only interests they were fighting for were those of their ruling classes. The result? Tens of millions of workers were stuffed into uniforms and sent to butcher one another in an empire-building contest between their exploiters.

CORRUPTION AND CONSPIRACY

We have noted that populist left nationalism drags us away from understanding capitalism. Where does it drag us to? By abandoning an explanation for society's problems based on economic class relations, declassed left-populism leaves a vacuum which it attempts to fill with either blaming a foreign power, or moralism. At best, this moralism means talk of corruption and a "rigged" system. Moralistic condemnation of corruption is an issue that can be at least as easily used by the right as the left. Podemos in Spain found this to their cost when, after they shifted political discourse onto the populist terrain of anti-corruption, a big chunk of their political space was seized by the right-wing upstarts Ciudadanos who were able to sell themselves simply as the purer, more effective opponents of corruption.

At worst, if the system is said to be "rigged" or "fiddled", then many begin to ask, what subversive elements in society are doing this secretive rigging or fiddling? Populism thus becomes fertile ground for conspiracy theories. Rather than understanding capitalism as a system that enriches the ruling class by its own everyday workings, stories about secretive networks of bankers and politicians conspiring to pervert the system can gain traction. From there it can be a short leap to the antisemitic theories that have always waited at the margins of anti-capitalist movements, ready to identify those conspirators as Jewish.

THE SELECTIVENESS OF LEFT-NATIONALIST HISTORY

In 2017, the founders of the English Labour Network rationalised their "socialist" patriotism with reference to the freedom-fighting histories of the Chartists and the suffragettes. This, too, is a familiar argument. Episodes and people are plucked from a nation's history and used as foundations for left-nationalism.

But to base patriotism on these movements requires assuming there was something particularly British or English in what socialists celebrate about them. In truth, their heroic and positive aspects were about the struggle by the oppressed and exploited to fight back against their subjugators. This struggle is not something parochial and national. On the contrary, it is something that transcends nation, culture and all our arbitrary divides. And, of course, in each case, the subjugators were just as British as the freedom-fighters who confronted them.

We cannot cherry-pick history in this way. The colonial massacres in Kenya, Amritsar and the Irish Famine, not to mention the ruling classes' crimes at home, were just as British as the Chartists.

We absolutely should take lessons and inspiration from, and promote awareness of, examples like the Chartists in our own country's history. But we should also look to the Haitian Revolution, the Paris Commune and Poland's Solidarnosc.

A softer version of this approach tries to posit things like fairness and tolerance are quintessentially "British values". Again, it is absurd to imagine that the UK is special in these - indeed, past and present victims of British imperialism might suggest a different perspective on British "fairness" and "tolerance". Left-nationalist cherry-picking only helps to prop up the apologism and selective amnesia about the Empire underpinning right-wing imperialist nostalgia.

TRIANGULATION IS CONDESCENDING AND FUTILE

"You know what annoys me the most? It's the fucking contempt it [Labour's stance on immigration and Brexit] shows for us people on the estates - they think we're all a bunch of knuckle-dragging racists."
Anti-Brexit protester speaking to an Another Europe Is Possible organiser

Some justify a turn to nationalism and anti-migrant policy as being about relating to what they say is the perspective of the (white) working class – either out of a sense of duty, or cynical "pragmatism". Still others invert this logic – ventriloquising a caricature of the working class to give "authentic" cover for their own prejudices.

This patronising, bankrupt approach falsely homogenises and caricatures white working-class people as all conservative bigots. It even implies that they are so thoughtless that socialists cannot hope to persuade them of something better. It reduces the broad, universalising conception of class, which should be a tool for pointing out the common experiences and common interests shared by working class people of all sorts of backgrounds, to a divisive idea that prioritises a cartoonishly stereotyped, utterly misrepresented, narrow subsection of the class.

Thus it becomes possible for an multi-millionaire business owner, slum landlord or Tory politician to defend their bigotry using the "working-class" credentials granted by a regional accent or the fact their grandfather worked in a mine, while the barista serving them coffee for minimum wage on a zero-hour contract is a metropolitan elitist because she has dyed blue hair, lives in a diverse neighbourhood of London and voted Remain.

And for all this insulting absurdity, it doesn't even work. As we've discussed already, triangulation to conservative political ideas has only served to vindicate and reinforce them.

Nationalist and xenophobic sentiments are indeed rife now. But we should never accept these ideas as set in stone, to be either tiptoed around or appealed to with a political marketing strategy. We must confront them.

OUR ALTERNATIVE

Nationalism is not a neutral vessel, that can be drained of reactionary content and re filled with liberatory, socialist content. There is no such thing as left-wing nationalism – only the same old reactionary nationalism, dressed up in left-wing or pro-worker language.

We set ourselves instead to the task of winning hearts, minds and hands for a different politics: one that fights for our class and not our country; one that seeks to unite the global working class in a struggle against our common exploiters and oppressors.

CHAPTER 4

GLOBALISATION & INTEGRATION

"If [the protectionists] speak consciously and openly to the working class, then they summarise their philanthropy in the following words: It is better to be exploited by one's fellow-countrymen than by foreigners."
Karl Marx, 1847, 'The Protectionists, The Free Traders and the Working Class'

Socialism envisions a united, cooperative world. Our interconnected industrial civilisation and its unprecedented productive capacity, created by capitalism, are the only possible basis for a liberated and equal world which consigns both impoverishing deprivation and life-consuming, backbreaking toil to the dustbin of history. Thus, while socialism seeks to end capitalism itself, it aims to build on, not burn down, the world capitalism has created.

Yet in their various ways, Brexiteers left and right contend that the integration carried through by capitalism must be rolled back.

TRANSNATIONAL CHALLENGES AND DEMOCRACY

Our interconnected world faces regional and global questions, the most glaring of which is climate change. In the context of a world of nation-states, each too small to take on these challenges alone, these questions either go unanswered, or are answered undemocratically. Diplomacy and negotiations between even liberal capitalist democracies are notoriously opaque and unaccountable. Consider how the US-UK alliance has remained fundamentally similar through domestic governments of varying characters, and how much of its business goes on behind closed doors. Consider how disconnected the decisions at the WTO or IMF are from democratic debate or control.

In this light, the EU, with all its bureaucratic and neoliberal evils, looks positively radical. As socialists, our starting point should be to push for extending integration and democracy above the current nation-level as much as possible.

These transnational challenges include not just questions like climate change, but our very system of organising the economy and society. Capitalism spilled over the borders of our individual nations long ago. It was apparent even in the 19th century that – at least in the wealthier and more developed countries – we had passed the point where our economy could be considered primarily national in scope, spurring the call by many socialists and some of the more progressive bourgeois liberal thinkers for a "United States of Europe".

Today, the economy truly is global. Interconnection and advancements in technology mean that capital and industry can be incredibly mobile. Though the states of capitalist powers do retain a much greater concentration of power than individual corporations, all but the biggest states still have to compete hard in the global market to be attractive hosts for capital – by building the infrastructure it wants, by lowering taxes, by pushing down wages and pacifying trade union struggle, and by scrapping expensive regulations.

Thus even mild social democratic reform (let alone revolution) is far more feasible if a larger bloc of the world is coordinated to achieve it.

Indeed, in partial and insufficient ways, the EU already does this. "State aid" rules restrict government intervention in the economy. In the main, we oppose such restrictions, and we want to defy and repeal them. However, some aspects of these rules amount to a pact between member states to prevent a race to the bottom.

For instance, in recent years the EU ruled against tax break incentives given by the Irish government to attract Apple. The Irish government, desperate to roll out the welcome mat for big capital, supported the company's appeal against the ruling – even though the taxes owed were enough to fund the country's entire health service for a year!

Or for another example of how greater independence and "sovereignty" to smaller, more localised units of government can result in free rein for corporate giants, take the recent spectacle in the US, sparked by Amazon's competition to host its second headquarters. US state- and city-level governments have a relatively high degree of autonomous decision-making power and, unable to present a united front, they rushed to grovel at Amazon's feet, competing to offer bigger and bigger subsidies from the public purse.

We must remind ourselves of these harsh realities whenever we hear confident pronouncements from Lexiteers that "national sovereignty" will make it easier to enact measures against capital.

PUT THE GENIE BACK IN THE BOTTLE?

Some leftists think that we can turn back the clock on capital's growth in scale. This is impossible utopianism – and it's not even an attractive utopia!

At the most extreme end, a few die-hard Stalinists advocate that Britain attempt to turn itself into a walled-off, autarkic, militarised siege economy like North Korea (although even North Korea relies heavily on trade and investment from China). The UK does not have the range of natural and other resources to reproduce everything we get from participation in a global economy, and what it could produce on its own would require much more toil and expense. We obviously refuse to force the working class into abject deprivation simply for the "purity" of isolation from global capitalism.

More serious and mainstream Lexiteers talk, explicitly or implicitly, not about a total break but a return to the days when capital was at least somewhat smaller, more bound within the frontiers of individual nation-states, achieved through some greater level of walling-off the UK's capitalist economy from the global capitalist economy.

In the case of some like the Socialist Party, exit from the EU is posed as a precursor to socialist transformation of individual states, followed by their reintegration into a "United Socialist States of Europe".

In doing so, they require us to romanticise smaller capitalists, and capitalists of our own nation (or just of smaller units) as more benevolent – or at least easier to fight – than big, international or transnational capitalists. In this, Lexiteer ideology shows parallels with strains of the anti-globalisation movement.

In fact, there are also parallels with those ultra-conservative visions that promise a return to "simpler times" and aim their rhetoric against foreign capitalists and "globalists", not smaller or domestic capitalists. Donald Trump's promises that raising tariffs and breaking up trading blocs will help rebuild the fortunes of US businesses, and therefore US workers, are an obvious example. At the very least, leftists going in the "protectionist" direction must take care not to end up simply tailing this hard-right discourse.

Workers' Liberty and other parts of the socialist left have long said that economic localism and nationalism are dead-ends for the left. As we have written in the past, they mean "supporting the backward, more

crudely exploitative capitalist against the one whose large scale of operation at least creates a better basis for large-scale workers' organisation".

The vision offered by the likes of Blue Labour and assorted soft Stalinists and social democrats is a dismal, conservative one. Railing against "cosmopolitanism", it glorifies what in practice is a small-minded, provincial, isolationist life for workers, toiling away in the service of petty tyrant small businessmen. It betrays a condescending and narrow-minded view of the working class.

Working conditions in smaller businesses are often more grim and worse paid, and the products are often more expensive for workers to buy, than with big businesses. Big capital tends to find itself compelled to assemble, and more closely connect, larger groups of workers around the world. This offers us opportunities to unionise together and, if we strike or take other industrial action, to have greater leverage over more of the market and the production chain. Marx wrote positively of the immense potential continually unleashed by the development of capitalism, and how it formed the basis for socialism. Our task is to realise that potential by imposing democratic workers' control over the things that capitalism has built – not smashing them up.

Undoubtedly, a left-wing government elected under capitalism would need, for example, to control capital flows across its borders.

Arguably, in a limited stage of industrialisation "nursery tariffs" helped countries build up productive capacity. But already in the 19th century, socialists in already-industrialised countries opposed the economic nationalism of the protectionists and their proposals for tariff regimes. Then in the 1930s, a spiral of "beggar-my-neighbour" tariffs served to worsen the global Great Depression. After World War Two, there was a consensus among the big capitalist powers, arguably lasting all the way until now (and only threatened by Trump's presidency), that this sort of protectionism must be avoided.

Countries defying this consensus did not see better outcomes for workers. For instance, before it was pummelled by loss of its export markets in the Great Depression, Argentina was a wealthy capitalist country with the highest incomes in the world – including for workers, not just bosses. After World War Two populist politicians, who regarded themselves as genuine social radicals working to benefit "the people" and not just an elite, promoted protectionist policies. They believed this could build up domestic industry, but instead it caused stagnation.

Some Lexiteers mock the idea that socialists would care about economic downturns and catastrophes being "bad for business". But the point here is that something being bad for capitalists does not necessarily make it good for workers. Economic downturns hurt capitalists, but almost always hurt workers more and damage our organisation.

You simply cannot turn back the clock. It is not possible to dismantle modern capitalist industry and its interconnections in a way that benefits the working class or the fight for socialism. The answer to globalisation is not the impossible delusion of "socialism in one country". The answer is to fight capitalist globalisation with our own vision: of an interconnected, cooperative socialist world, building on the best of what capitalist advance has created.

THE GOVERNANCE OF INTERNATIONAL CAPITALISM

"The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie."
Marx & Engels, The Communist Manifesto, 1848

Capitalism is not the unfettered rule of the free market, and most capitalists do not actually want absolute free market-ism. On the contrary, a capitalist economy requires management and rule-enforcement to enable business to be conducted efficiently and reliably for the profit of the capitalist class, whose property and investments must be secured and protected by the rule of law.

Capitalist states manage and oversee the social and economic affairs of the world, serving the needs of the capitalist class. Because capital has long since spilled over national borders, these states – led by the most dominant powers – have developed collaborative instruments to manage their economic affairs.

In almost all instances, these instruments are relatively undemocratic. Agencies like the IMF, WTO, World Bank etc are not global parliamentary democracies, nor are they independent entities ruling over nation-states. Rather, they are diplomatic coordinations between capitalist states to ensure, with disciplinary measures on wayward members of the club if necessary, that an agreed economic and political order is maintained, at least within broad parameters.

The EU was conceived as one of these instruments. It is, as the Lexiteers say, a "bosses' club". It does not yet have its own life and agency as a supranational state, and essentially enacts the collective will of its member states (particularly its biggest and richest members). And yet for all its limitations it is already one of the most democratic – or at any rate, least undemocratic – of these instruments. It contains the most rights and benefits for our class – such as free movement and judicially-enforced social and political freedoms. It is a far better arena within which we can contest the international governance of capitalism than other bodies like the WTO or the IMF.

If you leave the EU without changing the balance of class power, or in fact while changing it for the worse – as Brexit in reality will, being primarily a nationalist-driven right-wing project – then those other, even less accessible, even less democratic instruments will be used to enforce capitalist discipline on the country.

INTEGRATION ON CAPITALIST TERMS

We have argued that putting the forces that determine our lives under democratic control, from environmental crises to economic production and distribution, requires democratic integration and coordination at higher levels. Our goal is a united, cooperative socialist world. Socialist regional federations are a plausible stepping stone to that future.

And we have made the case that in laying the ground for that transformation, in laying a path toward a socialist united Europe, integration even on capitalist terms is progressive – not something we should attempt to roll back. The struggle for socialism is strengthened by capitalist economic development providing the necessary material basis; free movement rights which are a tangible gain for workers; and perhaps most importantly, mixing. This last factor appears both in the sense of direct mixing between workers of different origins thanks to migration, and of the interconnection of workers in different countries who – as borders are eroded – increasingly find themselves brought together by working for the same employers and in the same supply chains. This mixing has the potential to foster a

cosmopolitan outlook that is a key component of building an internationalist class consciousness – an identification by workers with their class above their country, and thus against their bosses and not against other countries (their bosses' rivals). You need only look at the fact that the xenophobic UKIP vote is lowest (as was the 2016 Leave vote) in those areas of the UK with most migrants, because people living and working side-by-side tend to realise their commonalities and their shared enemies.

So we say: yes to remaining in the EU, yes to the further erosion of borders by a United States of Europe, even better a United States of Europe with an elected government of workers' parties committed to anti-capitalist policies (what socialists have historically called a "workers' government"), and from there, a post-capitalist, socialist United States of Europe.

CHAPTER 5

REMAIN IS NOT ENOUGH

"In ninety cases out of a hundred the workers actually place a minus sign where the bourgeoisie places a plus sign. In ten cases however they are forced to fix the same sign as the bourgeoisie but with their own seal, in which is expressed their mistrust of the bourgeoisie. The policy of the proletariat is not at all automatically derived from the policy of the bourgeoisie, bearing only the opposite sign – this would make every sectarian a master strategist."
Leon Trotsky, 'Learn to Think', 1938

The mainstream remain campaign that led, and lost, in the 2016 referendum was fundamentally conservative – in both senses of the word. Lacking any inspiring spirit, vision or promise for the future, it told voters that the status quo was about as good as it was going to get. It was motivated not by a commitment to building a better world for the majority, but mainly by a desire to protect the economic benefits of the existing arrangement for big business.

Even now, this approach persists. Clinging doggedly to a politics unable to offer any hope of a better life to the majority of people, centrist and conservative remain campaigners scrabble for a return to 2015. The call-out from Progress, Labour's Blairite faction, to attend the October 2017 People's Vote demonstration declared that "progressives" could not rest "until everything is back to normal".

But the pre-referendum "normal" was a society in which the richest 10% owned 44% of all household wealth while millions languished in jobs paying less than the living wage. One where 3 in 10 children lived in poverty and 3,000 people died every year simply because they couldn't afford to heat their homes properly. Unsurprisingly, over half of people told the British Social Attitudes Survey that the government does not much care "what people like me think".

It was this situation and the system behind it – capitalism – that created such fertile ground for the nationalist, racist, xenophobic Brexit campaign. As we battle Brexit, we must remain clear that we do so in order to fight for a better alternative.

REMAIN AND REFORM – FOR THE WORSE?

There is one point on which some of these campaigners offer change. Since the referendum, Nick Clegg, former New Labour Home Secretaries, the Labour Campaign for the Single Market pressure group and the supposedly liberal Our Future Our Choice group have all sought to steal Leave's appeal to xenophobia by highlighting the provisions in EU law, as-yet unused by the UK, that limit free movement permit harsher treatment of working-class EU migrants. Sadly even some on the left, such as commentator Paul Mason, have bought into this. Meanwhile, Tony Blair has led those going yet further, to argue that the UK, remaining in the EU, should fight for new curtailments on free movement.

They accept immigration only insofar as it benefits "the economy" (which always means, benefits big business), or sustains services they want, or provides workers for jobs they regard as beneath them. They show no interest in solidarity with migrants themselves and will happily throw them under the bus where they believe it useful to do so.

NO CROSS-CLASS ALLIANCES

Some on our side understandably ask: should we not put aside our differences with these forces for now, ally with them to stop or reverse Brexit, and leave the rest until that's done? But to build such alliances would be both unprincipled and ineffective. We cannot merge or lash up our campaign with the campaign by the less-reactionary part of the ruling class. We need to develop our own independent, left-wing, working class remain campaign that is visibly separate from them.

The very politics they are fighting to maintain *perpetuate* the conditions that feed the far right. It would be utterly wrong and self-defeating for any socialist to provide left-wing "cover" for them and their brutal system.

Moreover, their politics lost us the first referendum. They have failed to keep the hard-right tide of bigotry at bay. There's no reason to place confidence in them doing any better now.

It is for these same reasons that we are not "pro-EU" and do not simply substitute UK flag-waving with EU flag-waving. As socialists and internationalists, we give no endorsement to, and accept no responsibility for, an institution built by and for capitalist states – least of all one that is currently overseeing the mass murder of refugees and other migrants. We must be mindful of the difference between "supporting the EU" and saying, as we do, that remaining within it means a better terrain on which to fight for workers' rights and socialism.

Any alliances with bourgeois liberalism or capitalist institutions would undermine and discredit the political project for which we are meant to be fighting for.

Who will take our migrant solidarity seriously if we team up with those determined to throw migrants under the bus or wrap ourselves in the blood-drenched flag of Fortress Europe?

Who will believe that we stand for class struggle if we share a stage with our class enemies?

Who could trust a left-wing remain campaign promising to fight for socialist transformation, if it allied with neoliberals from the Labour right desperate for a return to Blair, with the Lib Dems who so recently propped up Tory austerity in coalition, or with Tories themselves like Anna Soubry who have consistently voted for cuts? Or with European leaders like Merkel and Macron, who are attacking workers' rights and livelihoods and forcing right-wing economic policies on Europe's less prosperous countries?

In December 2018, the first members' conference of Another Europe is Possible rightly voted against such alliances. The next day, the main bourgeois anti-Brexit groups, Best for Britain and People's Vote, teamed up for a 2500-strong rally at which the top-billed speaker was Michael Heseltine, the former Tory minister under Thatcher. Green MP Caroline Lucas and some Labour MPs joined the platform too. They were wrong to do so - any serious left-wing remain campaign must put clear water between itself and those forces.

CHAPTER 6

A MANIFESTO FOR EUROPE

The major left-wing left-remain campaign, which Workers' Liberty supports, is named Another Europe Is Possible. But in the campaign so far, most of us have been a little vague about what exactly that "other Europe" would look like. General ideas and themes have been expressed – a Europe that is more democratic, more welcoming to refugees and other migrants, more pro-worker, less "neoliberal" – but specifics have been lacking.

Our movement needs a manifesto, a clear political programme. This is a vital tool for showing, to the people who we are trying to win over, what we stand for – not just what we stand against. Concrete demands make the vision of a better Europe (and a better world) more tangible, something that people feel they can really fight for. And they would shape and direct our campaigning and indicate points on which we could build and exercise cross-border solidarity.

Importantly, the programme of demands which follows is not simply a utopian description of what a completely transformed, post-capitalist, socialist society would look like. Indeed, they fall short of socialism. Nor is it intended as a technocratic blueprint for a left government to implement from above. And they are not all things we expect to see secured today, tomorrow or next year.

Rather, they are intended as a transitional programme – demands that highlight the problems and antagonists facing us and point towards change, around which we can organise to win gains that would produce genuine and radical material improvements for the lives of the working-class majority, while making serious inroads into the power of the capitalist class and advancing the struggle for socialism.

TEAR DOWN FORTRESS EUROPE AND OPEN THE BORDERS

European governments, independently and in cooperation, currently oversee a vast and murderous anti-migrant regime.

Rather than attempting to lock them out, Europe must welcome and accommodate refugees fleeing persecution, violence and destruction. It should open not just its internal borders, but its external borders, to the free movement of people, and grant amnesty to all those already living here but lacking documentation. Those few limits on the freedom to move and stay that are still permitted under EU rules should be ended.

And migrants living in our societies should get the same rights as native-born residents – to vote, to work, to access public services and social security. We reject any second-class status, and we look to organise the whole working class together for our shared interests. As the Labour Campaign for Free Movement says, "Build unions not borders!".

A LIVING WAGE AND RIGHTS FOR WORKERS

We want to level up, not level down, wages across Europe, and to work toward a common mandatory living wage. For starters, we demand a living wage sufficient for the cost of living in each country or region. We fight also to level up social security.

Some significant workers' rights are now enshrined in EU law, such as the TUPE regulations that protect some of our contract terms when we are transferred between employers. We demand strengthening of these rights and new ones too. We demand safe, healthy workplaces free from discrimination and mistreatment, and a legally enforced shorter working week with no loss of pay.

When a business cannot survive while paying a living wage and providing decent hours and conditions, it should be taken into public ownership and placed under the management of its workers.

We want these rights enshrined in law at every level. But we know from all historical experience that such rights are won, and enforced, mainly by workers ourselves through collective organisation and action in trade unions. Therefore, we fight above all for trade union freedoms at work – a guaranteed right to unionise and strike, so that we can secure and enforce better pay and conditions ourselves.

And we set our own movement the tasks of building and democratising our trade unions; of extending their reach to organise the currently un-organised; and of winning them over to a militant orientation that goes beyond defensive campaigns. We want to build democratic coordinations across Europe (and beyond!) of grassroots workplace reps in every employer and every industry.

CIVIL LIBERTIES, SOCIAL RIGHTS AND PUBLIC SERVICES

As well as trade union rights, political freedoms are vital to any movement that hopes to radically and democratically transform society. We fight for the positive enshrinement, and strengthening where they already exist, of basic political rights including freedom of expression, freedom of belief, freedom of the press, freedom of association and the right to privacy.

We fight also for the extension and levelling up of social rights and equality. We want strong anti-discrimination laws to combat sexism, disablism, homophobia, transphobia, racism, xenophobia and religious discrimination across the EU.

And we consider freedom from want, freedom from ignorance, freedom from ill-

health, and reproductive freedom to be just as vital. We demand homes for all, with aggressive rent controls and strong tenants' rights, as well as investment to build publicly-owned housing. We demand free, comprehensive, democratically-controlled public education at every level. We demand high-quality, universal, publicly-owned, free-to-access healthcare. And within that healthcare system we demand free and easy access to safe abortion and contraception, everywhere.

START DEMOCRATISING THE ECONOMY

Europe is incredibly rich. Our society can afford these demands and more. The money, and moreover the control of our economy, is simply in the wrong hands – hoarded by an almost unthinkably wealthy capitalist class.

We demand serious taxes on the incomes, properties, businesses, profits and inheritances of the rich. Regressive taxes like VAT, which take a bigger proportionate slice from the poorest, should be scrapped in favour of progressive taxes for income redistribution.

We want the banking system and high finance taken into public ownership and placed under democratic control, in each of our countries and across the continent.

A banking system has immense power to shape the economy through where it decides to invest and lend – and, through short-termist profit-driven decisions, to plunge the rest of us into financial crises.

Merely to "break up" the banks, as for instance Bernie Sanders proposes, would merely create an array of small capitalist banks, which would not serve the majority of society any better than a few big capitalist banks. Labour's current policy, which would set up state-owned investment banks alongside the private sector but leaves the existing private banking sector untouched, is timid. Germany, which has a huge state-owned investment bank, is hardly a radically left-wing model.

With saving and lending services under democratic control, we could put an end to pay-day loan sharks, mortgage discrimination, unreasonable penalty charges and the like. Investment could be directed to constructing public works that create decent, secure jobs and benefit all of us, and in developing public services and building good homes for everyone. Democratic social control of investment is essential to convert the unequal, ecologically destructive economy we have now, into a society that sustainably serves the needs of the majority instead of the profits of a few.

SOCIALIST TRANSITION TO STOP ECOLOGICAL CATASTROPHE

Left-leaning campaigners against Brexit have all highlighted the importance of the EU's environmental regulations. We too want to defend these and strengthen them in many places. But the existential crises we face require that our demands go much further.

The climate crisis that has already begun, and which is set to get much worse, is a challenge that demands international organisation. We urgently need a transition: to break the death-grip of fossil fuel capital and retool the economy to run on a carbon-neutral or even carbon-negative basis.

As far as possible, that transition must be socially just: not a "green austerity" that protects the capitalists and makes the rest of us pay, not a collapse immiserating all of us when it's left too late, but a democratically-managed conversion based on putting an end to the capitalist rampage, which can win the support of the majority with green jobs

and sustainably decent living standards.

We also face other ecological crises created by capitalists. Industrial agriculture has smashed the balanced cycle of nitrogen in our environment, with run-off fertiliser and livestock excrement strangling ecosystems. Trawlers are annihilating our fish populations. Toxic chemicals leak – or are dumped – into our ecosystems and our food chains. The accumulating atmospheric carbon dioxide not only raises temperatures, it acidifies the seas.

These are not just moral crises, but crises of survival. We are smashing the ecosystems that we rely on to sustain us.

The socialist answer to these challenges is democratic control – together, we must plan our economic activity so that the relationship between humanity and nature is brought to a sustainable balance.

This is not just a lofty, distant ambition, but points to immediate demands. We must take key sectors of the economy under democratic control, coordinated as widely as

The Lucas Plan

The demand for worker-led transition plans for destructive industries can take inspiration from the Lucas Plan.

Lucas Aerospace was a UK manufacturing company mainly producing armaments. In the 1970s, facing job cuts, its workers proposed an alternative. Bringing workers' own expertise to bear, and in collaboration with scientists, environmentalists and others, the committee of trade union workplace reps produced an incredibly detailed plan demonstrating how the machinery and factory organisation building guns and bombs could be retooled to produce socially useful products like kidney dialysis machines, solar cells, wind turbines and hybrid motor engines.

Their campaign to implement the plan was ultimately defeated, but it stands as an inspiration for socialist environmentalism today. It shows how, with our hands on the wheels of production, workers' ingenuity and cooperation could build a better world.

possible. As a matter of urgency, we demand that Europe takes its energy industry into public ownership. It must put the workers in control, democratically, alongside the communities they serve.

The task of this democracy will be to create and implement comprehensive plans to retool the industry for a fossil-free sustainable future – employing renewables and, where necessary as an interim measure, nuclear. By putting the industry at the service of society and not shareholders, we can clean up energy generation while also putting an end to fuel poverty and the other injustices of energy distribution. Coordinating above the level of small nations would allow us to create a rational, integrated, efficient energy industry that secures our collective well-being for both the present and the future.

The same goes for Europe's transport and other key polluting industries. The future cannot be found in clinging to Silicon Valley tech capitalists' inefficient, congested, high-intensity dream of filling the roads with legions of marginally "greener" private cars, but in building and improving a clean public transport system that serves us all communally.

We could start by halting the reckless expansion of aviation and projects like the planned new Heathrow runway, reversing all privatisations and investing that resource and labour in developing free-to-use, clean public transport, and extending decent service to the many regions neglected by the existing profit-driven industry.

The EU's Common Agricultural and Fisheries Policies shape our food industry in the interests of capitalists, with destructive consequences not only for the environment, but for workers, for all of us paying inflated food prices to sustain big business profits, and for producers in poorer countries who are intermittently drowned by subsidised surplus (when it isn't wastefully destroyed to push up prices). Our movement should demand the replacement of the CAP and CFP with plans worked out by workers' and small farmers' and fishers' organisations, based on the public ownership and sustainable stewardship of land and sea, affordable food to all, and assistance to producers in poorer countries.

Technological advances like genetic modification, presently employed by capitalists to maximise profit regardless of human or environmental cost, must be opened up and applied democratically, to produce the food we need while minimising the impact on the environment.

In all these projects, the demand discussed above for public ownership of the banks will be key, granting the investment power that such ambitious industrial plans would require.

DEMOCRATISE KNOWLEDGE

Lexiteers have derided those remain campaigners concerned by Brexit's threat to Erasmus and similar study abroad schemes, asking: "When so many working-class kids never make it to university at all, why should we care if posh kids can spend a year of their degrees on exchange in Paris?". This superficially socialist line betrays a criminal lack of vision (not to mention simple ignorance of the number of working-class people already accessing higher levels of education thanks to hard-won reforms). We aim, not to level down opportunities and access to knowledge, but to smash open the gates: to liberate knowledge and education and democratise access to them.

Cradle-to-grave free, comprehensive education must be guaranteed across the continent, funded with the appropriated wealth of the rich. By further integrating EU countries' education systems and exchange programmes while opening them up further to working class people and breaking up elitist structures and systems, we can promote the kind of mixing and interaction that will both break down barriers of nationality between people and foster new thinking. Breaking the

hold of church authorities and their segregation of children, by secularising schools and other educational institutions, will also encourage mixing, provide more space for radical thought, and in particular improve conditions for LGBT+ children who, research shows, are far more likely to face hostile teachings, active discrimination, unchallenged bullying and a lack of sex education in religious schools[1].

Researchers have also highlighted the loss of EU research funding, which would indeed be deeply damaging. Again, however, we want to go further. Europe's universities and public research institutions, as well as its private companies, account for a huge slice of the world's research. The private sector also depends extensively on the work of publicly and third-sector funded researchers working in public institutions.

Yet a vast proportion of the knowledge produced is in private hands, applied to improving our lives – or making them worse – only insofar as it delivers a profit to shareholders.

Facing the challenges we do, we simply cannot afford for knowledge to be hoarded in this way. Our movement, in particular unionised education and research workers, must demand the liberation and democratisation of knowledge, placing it at the service of society not shareholders. Researchers need academic freedom overseen by peer review and community participation, not the diktats of capital and the state. The academic journals and the patent offices must be opened so that innovations can be shared, built on and applied by anyone around the world, especially in poorer countries confronting health and environmental challenges. And Europe's big pharmaceutical corporations must be taken into public hands and placed under the democratic control of researchers, other pharma and health workers, and patients.

[1] bit.ly/StonewallSchools

AGAINST WAR AND IMPERIALISM

Europe's leading nations are imperial powers, extending their economic, political and military might around the world to serve the profits of European capitalists. Increasingly, they are merging their efforts through the EU – mainly in the economic and political spheres, but Emmanuel Macron has recently resurrected the prospect of a unified EU military.

Nevertheless, separation won't make the European powers less imperialist. At worst, it could lead to a return to the often-bloody rivalry that preceded the development of the EU, in which states and blocs sought to integrate the rest of the continent under their domination rather than cooperatively. And the retreat back into our nation-states and the rise in nationalism that it represents will undermine the development of internationalist class consciousness among workers, which can only make it easier for our ruling classes to corral us into fighting and dying in their wars, just as they did in 1914.

Instead, we propose to organise the cross-European working class to defeat our own rulers' militarism and imperialism.

Disarmament of all nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, and opposition to the creation of an EU army, are the most immediate necessities. We organise to obstruct and end our rulers' assistance to other tyrants, occupiers and warmongers around the world, and to build our own bonds of working-class solidarity with those under them struggling for freedom. As the Lucas Plan proposed four decades ago, arms production should be nationalised and, under workers' control, converted to socially useful production.

European domination is not just felt militarily and politically, but economically too. Replacing the present system of "aid" that traps poor countries in debt and forces right-wing economic policies on them, we demand a generous program of no-strings aid, and the granting of tariff-free access to Europe's markets for the exports of poorer countries while permitting them to protect their own developing industries with nursery tariffs. More importantly, through our own organisations as workers, we work to build solidarity with workers around the world, and to flex our industrial muscles together in pursuit of better conditions and pay for all of us.

A FEDERAL, DEMOCRATIC, UNITED STATES OF EUROPE

Europe is currently run mainly by committees of ministers from its member governments, surrounded by a bureaucracy, with the Parliament comparatively weak and toothless. We want to make the EU's executive institutions accountable and subordinate to a sovereign European Parliament, fully empowered over the Union's affairs.

Beyond reforms to the existing European Parliament, we propose a federal United States of Europe: democratic government above the national level can be our only response to the transnational challenges we face. We fight to win a workers' government for such a federation, and beyond that for revolutionary transition to socialism outright, in which context regional federations can be a stepping stone to socialist and democratic governance and cooperation at the global level.

CHAPTER 7

WE CAN WIN A SOCIALIST EUROPE: REMAIN AND REBEL!

The programme set out above is undoubtedly ambitious. We are quite some distance from it, let alone from complete socialist transformation. And it's not even as if the EU is moving – quickly or slowly – in this direction.

In fact, the Lexiteers tell us, it is not just impossible to push the EU in such a direction, it is impossible to implement radical left policies even at the national level without first leaving the EU. They claim that the 2017 Labour manifesto would be blocked by EU state aid restrictions. But two experts in EU law, Andy Tarrant and Andrea Biondi – not radicals, but supporters of the 2017 manifesto – set out in detail how state aid laws would not block any of that manifesto's pledges[1]. Likewise, recent analysis by the left-leaning IPPR think-tank found that state aid rules would not block an active industrial policy[2].

In any case, EU rules are bent or broken all the time, including the rules on state aid. If European institutions objected to radical measures by a Labour government, there would be ample opportunity, and a real political basis, for that government to link up with allies across the EU to defy and change the rules.

The claims by Lexiteers parallel those made by right-wing and liberal politicians, who have consistently exaggerated the requirements of EU regulations in order to cover for right-wing policies which, in fact, they have freely chosen.

For instance, as TSSA General Secretary Manuel Cortes has pointed out, successive Scottish governments claimed for well over a decade that EU law required them to put the ferries services to the Scottish islands out to tender. When they were finally forced to actually ask the EU, they were told there was no such requirement.

Within the EU, UK governments have persistently used the most expansive, exaggerated interpretations of these rules, both to excuse domestic right-wing policies and to demand that other countries adopt them too. By repeating these exaggerations, Lexiteers actively assist these right-wing politicians.

Of course, a radical left government going beyond Labour's 2017 manifesto would certainly need to impose some controls on the movement of capital, for example, and in doing so would have to confront one of the principles of the EU's Single Market.

But then EU rules will be the least of our worries. The real powers we will face do not reside in the Brussels bureaucracy. The solution is not to leave in pursuit of the fantasy of "socialism in one country", but to "remain and rebel".

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[1] bit.ly/tar-bio
[2] bit.ly/IPPRStateAid

THE REAL OBSTACLES FACING A LEFT-WING GOVERNMENT

"It is sheer insanity to believe that capitalists would good-humouredly obey the socialist verdict of a parliament or of a national assembly, that they would calmly renounce property, profit, the right to exploit."
Rosa Luxemburg, 'What does the Spartacus League Want?', 1918

The Lexit forecast of the prospects for reforming our way to "socialism in one country" is not only wrong about the possibility of change in Europe, it is delusionally and dangerously complacent about the real obstacles facing us from within the UK. Every historical experience of the left in or near government teaches us that our own capitalist class, with the assistance of parts of the state, will fight tooth and nail against any attempt to make substantial inroads on their hoarded wealth and power. They will not let it happen just because it has an electoral mandate, or because it is executed politely, gradually and legally.

The fevered response of the mainstream media to today's rejuvenated, yet still rather moderate, Labour left, illustrates how as we get anywhere near power, left-wing forces will face denunciation, derision, distortion and scandal-mongering. But more than this, an arsenal of weapons, from the subtle and constitutional to the bloody and extra-legal, will be employed on multiple interlocking fronts in the economy and within the state. The main enemy is at home!

Economic warfare

The capitalist class's ownership of the economy affords them immense leverage. By withholding investment and downsizing, suspending or closing their businesses, they can drain society of jobs, credit, goods, services and a tax base.

Sometimes they do so merely in financially prudent preparation for the expected impacts of policies on their investments. John McDonnell as Shadow Chancellor has said his team is wargaming to prepare for a possible run on the pound following a Labour electoral win.

But capitalists also withhold capital, or threaten to do so, as a politically deliberate act. They do this to cajole, bully, disrupt and coerce, in order to force the political changes they want, and block those they don't.

"Capital strikes" of various forms have faced governments from the radical left to the very moderate. Under Salvador Allende's government in Chile, owners of road hauling and manufacturing firms closed their businesses in attempts to derail reforms. François Mitterrand's radical social democratic government in 1980s France suffered sustained withholding of corporate investment. During even liberal Barack Obama's first year in office, the US saw the most damaging episode of disinvestment since World War Two. Big capitalists sat on trillions of dollars to ensure that the new President, elected on a promise of very mild positive change, would instead commit to retaining Bush's high-earner tax cuts, striking lucrative trade deals that did little to improve employment, and ruling out any serious reforms being imposed on the banking sector.

Within the state

Modern states do not solely consist of elected representatives, but of unelected civil servants as well as police and armed forces. These institutions are painted as the faithful servants of the democratic government, neutrally carrying out the people's will, but the bitter lessons of history demonstrate that they are anything but.

The British state has entirely legal and constitutional measures which would threaten to slow, derail or frustrate radical reforms by an elected government. Most important, of course, is the House of Lords, made up of life peers (i.e. unelected Establishment

appointees), the "Lords Spiritual" (bishops!) and the feudal hangover that is the remaining rump of hereditary aristocrats. Accountable to neither the electorate nor the elected government, their ruling class make-up means they inherently tend in a "small c conservative" direction and would be an immediate check on any socialist programme.

Our monarchy, too, with its power to appoint and dismiss governments and veto laws, could be used against us. This may sound far-fetched, but in Australia in 1975 the Queen's representative dismissed a reforming Labor Prime Minister.

When constitutionally legal means don't suffice, active anti-democratic subversion by elements within the state has also occurred. A 1999 government inquiry concluded that MI6 officers had likely been centrally involved in the fabricated "Zinoviev letter" scandal that sealed Labour's 1924 election defeat. As a cabinet member in the 1970s, left-winger Tony Benn faced obstruction from senior civil servants. And the 1973 military coup against Allende's democratic socialist government in Chile demonstrates what the ruling class is ultimately willing to do to protect its wealth, power and privilege from democracy.

Defending democracy against capitalism

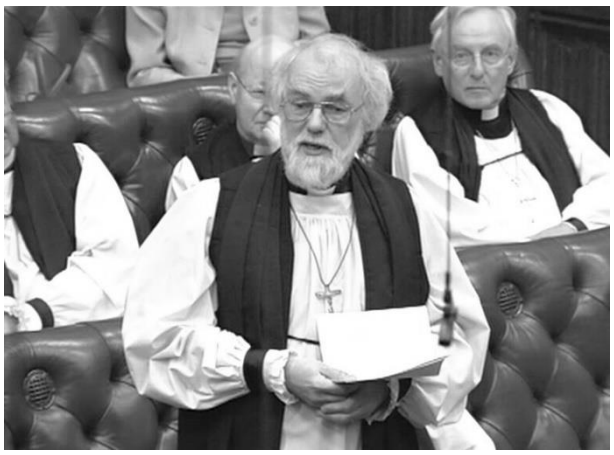
The challenges may seem unsurmountable. Leaving the EU will not allow us to side-step them. But they can be overcome.

In 1920, conservative, nationalist and monarchist political forces attempted a military coup to overthrow the democratic Weimar Republic and to install an authoritarian government. On 13 March, the military turned on its elected masters and swiftly took Berlin.

Yet just four days later, the coup collapsed. A general strike, called by the trade unions to defend the Republic, had brought the country to a stand-still. Workers formed local strike committees and militias. Where the elected government's authority was dependent on a state machine that ultimately revealed itself as a servant of the ruling class before democracy, the power of the workers – without whom not a single wheel could turn – proved decisive. Parliamentary democracy was restored.

In the same period, on a smaller scale, the socialist Labour councillors of working-class Poplar Borough in East London defied the Tory-Liberal government to carry out the social reforms they were elected for. Preferring to break the law than betray their constituents, they were jailed. The ensuing mass protests and threatened rent strike by the local community forced the courts to release them and Parliament to rush through new laws on local government funding – again, working class revolt was necessary to carry through a democratic programme.

Even the radical reforms of the 1945 UK Labour government escaped ruling class obstruction partly due to previous struggles. The wave of revolutionary upheaval at the



Bishops in the unelected House of Lords

A protest march during the Poplar rebellion

close of WW1 had capitalists worried about a repeat. The Tory Quintin Hogg famously said, "If you do not give the people social reform, they will give you social revolution."

Carrying through a democratic programme of socialist transformation – or even just defending what we have already secured – requires not only manoeuvring by political leaders in the official corridors of constitutional power, but at the very least a credible threat of substantial extra-parliamentary class struggle. But with that it can be done.

LESSONS FROM GREECE AND SYRIZA

"Those who make revolution halfway only dig their own graves."
Louis de Saint-Just, French revolutionary leader

In 2009, Pasok – the then main centre-left party of Greece – was elected. Soon after entering government, they announced that they had found Greece's finances in a much worse state than they had previously thought and embarked on a series of austerity measures. The next year, they signed the first of a string of Memoranda with the "troika" – the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank, and the EU. This agreement demanded vicious cuts, and neoliberal privatising reforms, in return for bailouts. In fact, these bailouts were of the private banks that had lent Greece money – rather than pumping money into the economy, they merely serviced debt.

The resulting brutal austerity was met with massive popular and working-class resistance in the forms of street protests and occupations, and of strikes and general strikes. With the previous main party of the left, Pasok, discredited, the protest movement eventually found its political and electoral voice in Syriza, the "Coalition of the Radical Left" that had been founded in 2004.

As the Pasok government collapsed, Syriza, with its promise to take on the Troika and save Greece from austerity, surged forward. Its growing support was not quite enough for it to beat the centre-right New Democracy party, which won the 2012 elections, but in further elections in January 2015 Syriza edged out New Democracy.

Yet the very next month, the new government under Syriza leader Alexis Tsipras was extending the second Memorandum that had been signed by their predecessors and pledging budget cuts. Within barely half a year, Tsipras' administration was agreeing a new third Memorandum of austerity and privatisation, driving its terms through Parliament with the votes of centrist parties, and pushing out dissenting left-wing MPs.

After three and a half years, household incomes have declined by over 30%. Unemployment exceeds 40% for young people. Pensions have been gutted. Health spending has been halved and education cut by more than a third. The right to strike, hard-won as a guard against the unrestrained big business tyranny that Greece experienced under military dictatorship, has been curtailed. Meanwhile, the rich and big business enjoy tax breaks, and every cent of the bailouts, plus a chunk of what output the battered economy can muster, have gone into the pockets of the lender banks. Greece's first government of the "left" has even been turned into a border guard for Fortress Europe, overseeing camps detaining tens of thousands of refugees and agreeing a deal to speed deportations to Turkey so aggressive that it has been condemned as illegal by the UN.

A radical force in which the Greek working-class had put its hopes, and the European left had looked to for leadership, was transformed with shocking speed into a brutal enforcer of austerity. How did this happen?

The Lexiteers present the Greek catastrophe as the ultimate argument proving that socialist policy is impossible within the EU, which cannot be reformed and must be exited. To

them, Syriza's error was its commitment to remaining in Europe – the supposed impossibility of changing Europe guaranteed their failure and left them with a choice between breaking from Europe or selling out.

This is a fundamental misdiagnosis of Syriza's failure.

First, for the purposes of an argument specific to Brexit – the UK is not part of the single currency and we do not say it should be. It is not subject to the very particular problems and rules of the Eurozone which defined aspects of the Greek crisis.

It is difficult to see how Brexit concretely answers any of the questions raised by Greece. The precise scenario experienced by Greece could not befall the non-Eurozone UK, while the more general possibility of having harsh terms dictated to an indebted country by creditors happens to many non-EU countries – it is in no way prevented by Brexit.

And in terms of solidarity, there is no explanation of how the Brexit helps the beleaguered Greek workers. On the contrary, a UK government led by the Labour Left could be a voice within European institutions against the rules and practices inflicted on Greece.

At best, the "solidarity" argument seems to be nothing more than a moralistic washing of hands, symbolically dissociating the British state from the crimes of the European institutions. But as socialists pursuing material change, we have zero interest in the abstract moral purity of the British state – an institution drenched in oceans of blood, orders of magnitude more than the EU has ever spilled.

Break from capitalism, not from Europe

Second and more fundamentally, Syriza's error was not its failure to reject Europe, but its failure to reject capitalism. The changes that occurred in Syriza's strategy, programme and organisation as it approached power are instructive in this matter.

The chief antagonist driving for harsher terms in the conflict was the German government, which was acting on behalf of the German banks that had lent so much to the Greek government and wanted their returns guaranteed. So imagine German workers declaring that key industries would be shut down and Berlin paralysed until their government relented. Imagine that act of solidarity growing and generalising into a cross-Europe working-class mobilisation, fighting not only for another Greece, but another Europe for all of us.

In 2012, Syriza appeared to understand that part of its ability to go up against Greece's creditors would lie in the leverage that working-class forces across Europe could bring to bear. In the run-up to that year's Greek elections, Syriza leaders toured Europe speaking to trade unionists and left-wing organisations, beginning to build the bonds that would be needed in such a battle.

But by 2015, Syriza's leadership was oriented not toward the left and labour movements of the other European nations, but their governments. Their visits were to ministers across the continent. They had put their faith in their own abilities as silver-tongued negotiators and in a belief that the European institutions would have to bow to the mandate of an elected government.

Politically, Syriza's programme had shifted from confrontation with capitalism to better management: the economist they appointed as Finance Minister, Yanis Varoufakis, famously described himself as "an erratic Marxist" on a mission to "save capitalism from itself". In 2013, the party's democratic congress committed not only to reversing cuts and privatisations, but abolishing or defaulting on the "illegitimate" bulk of the country's debt; public ownership and control of the banking system; and taxation of domestic big capital. This would have meant a serious battle across a divide drawn by class lines – an attack on capital.

But the following year, the party leadership de facto replaced these policies with the watered-down "Thessaloniki declaration",

pledging to renegotiate a better deal with the EU and distribute the proceeds in welfare measures. By the time they entered government, their approach essentially boiled down to: negotiate an exit from the crisis with relief from austerity, then redistribution will follow.

We wrote in 2015: "This is not a matter of abstractly counterposing immediate full socialist revolution (which Syriza could not have won majority support for in early 2015, and could not have carried through anyway at that point). Possible, if the Syriza leaders had stepped back, or been made to step back, from their drift of the couple of years leading up to 2015, was the creation of a workers' government which would have proceeded step by step to mobilise the working class, facilitate workers' control and workers' defence groups, enable rank-and-file organisation within the largely conscript army, taken punitive measures against the peaks of the Greek bourgeoisie, nationalised the banks, and negotiated with the eurozone leaders on the basis of cross-European mobilisation and a pause in debt repayments."

How was this sell-out enabled? A lack of democracy and bottom-up accountability within Syriza. Under the cover of rhetoric extolling "direct democracy" and rejecting democratic centralism, the movement was left reliant on an unaccountable leadership that was sent into the corridors of power to act on their behalf. When that leadership compromised with the forces confronting them, there was no authority from the grassroots able to effectively question their actions, keep them on track or replace them.

As Tsipras' leadership sold out, dissident forces in Syriza including a number of MPs split and attempted to fight for a better course. They set up a new party - Popular Unity (PU) - but have failed to win over more than a fragment of Syriza's base. One of the leading figures in PU, Costas Lapavitsas, is now an idol for the Lexiteers, preaching the necessity of "rupture" with the "unreformable" EU. But Lapavitsas and his colleagues do not seem to able to accept and absorb the real lessons of Syriza's failure.

Like Varoufakis, whom Lapavitsas denounces, in practice PU are still trying to save capitalism from itself. Their alternative programme rests centrally on a departure from the Euro and a return to an independent Greek currency as a silver bullet for Greece's problems.

As we wrote in 2015, "probably a workers' government pursuing socialistic policies would at some point find itself expelled from the eurozone, and having to coin a separate national currency, but that is an entirely different dynamic from the supposition that a new separate national currency in and of itself has socialist merits".

PU's strategy relied not on a mobilisation of working-class power for a confrontation with capitalism, but on getting government ministers who could be relied upon to solve the problems from above, using fiscal levers freed up by leaving the eurozone, building up Greece's "productive" capitalists and their exports. Keynesian "Drachma capitalism" for now, socialism postponed for later. The enemy identified not as the capitalist class, but the EU bureaucracy and/or Germany.

CAN THE EU BE REFORMED?

In one sense the question, "Can the EU be reformed?" is trivial. Of course it is possible to secure this or that change to EU policies: it happens all the time.

Equally a simple process of polite, orderly, constitutional reform will be no more able to abolish capitalism and institute socialism at EU level than at national level.

Our perspective on left-wing transformation at the European level is similar to that at the national level. Parliamentary efforts must be backed up with a struggle to shift the balance of class forces in wider society in order to secure and defend our gains. And ultimately,

working toward real socialism will mean going above and beyond the limited parliamentary democracy we have now to a more thorough form of democracy that also encompasses economic life, currently ruled by the petty tyrannies of business owners.

We are not talking about a band of insurrectionary radicals arming themselves to take over the state and enforce their will against the majority, but the mass exercise of working-class power in pursuit of the further democratisation of society. Workers occupying their factory to run it themselves without their bosses is illegal, but it is also absolutely democratic. If the House of Lords was blocking an elected radical left government's reforms, or the police or military hierarchy was threatening to overthrow such a government, a mass strike that demanded the dissolution of these anti-democratic ruling class forces, and that even seized control of economic and state infrastructure to halt or prevent their use against democratically-willed socialist transformation, would be a defence of democracy.

REMAIN & REBEL!

Our banner, as the left against Brexit, must be "Remain and Rebel". The "rebellion" we need is two-fold: first, of the workers' movement in the streets and on picket lines; and second, in the strategy of any left government or group of governments within the EU, determined to defy and re-write Europe's present capitalist rules.

The EU is not a force unto itself but a coordination of Europe's states. So any confrontation with the rules of the EU, just like any confrontation with international instruments of capitalist discipline, will really be a confrontation with European states and ruling classes. The battle would not be "the UK vs the EU" or "Greece vs the EU" but class against class. The strategy must be to rally the workers' movement across the continent and muster as big a fight as we can on both the political and industrial fronts.

EU membership means a common arena in which shared demands and a shared destiny are more concrete prospects. A left-wing government elected in one country could be more than a distant inspiration for movements in those other countries: it could be a close partner, assisting and urging them on and collaborating within that shared arena as well as its political institutions. And a battle to defend transformations in one country would have more potential to be generalised into a fight to extend such transformations continent-wide.

TAKE UP THE FIGHT

The task for socialists is to help build the left and workers' movements to face these challenges. Our movements need to be grown, organised and strengthened, and their arsenal of political ideas developed and sharpened.

On the industrial front, we need to work on building networks and committees of workplace reps first within our countries, and to link them up. Our employers and their supply chains cross borders, so our organisation, our solidarity, our demands and our strikes must too. On the political front, we need to build up the internal democratic life among the rank-and-file of socialist parties and labour parties. We need to connect those parties and the radical left tendencies within them, develop and debate our ideas together, and work toward a shared political programme on which we could jointly contest European elections.

The shortcuts and sidesteps to socialism offered by Lexit are a mirage. It is up to people like you and us to take on these tasks. If you agree with some or all of what you've read here, then get involved: discuss with us, work with us and join us.

ALLIANCE FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY

This pamphlet was written by the Alliance for Workers' Liberty, a socialist organisation. We aim to build a movement which can replace capitalism, the current economic and social system based on class division and exploitation, with a new society – socialism – based on consistent democracy, collective ownership and solidarity. You can find more information and contact details at the beginning of the pamphlet.

WIDER CAMPAIGNS TO JOIN

Labour for a Socialist Europe, Another Europe Is Possible and the Labour Campaign for Free Movement are broad campaigns which the AWL supports and participates in.

LABOUR FOR A SOCIALIST EUROPE

Founded in January 2019, Labour for a Socialist Europe seeks to organise and strengthen the anti-Brexit left in the Labour Party, to shift the party's stance while also creating the strongest possible Labour voice and campaigning force against Brexit. It fights to stop Brexit as part of our struggle for a Labour government that carries out radical pro-working-class policies and builds links to spread that struggle across Europe.

- labourforasocialisteurope.org
- info@labourforasocialisteurope.org
- @labourvsbrexit
- facebook.com/labourvsbrexit

ANOTHER EUROPE IS POSSIBLE

Another Europe Is Possible was founded to campaign for Remain in the 2016 EU referendum from a left-wing perspective. It continues today, fighting to stop Brexit and for left-wing transformation of the UK and Europe. There are local “Another Europe” and “Left Against Brexit” groups around the country, formally or informally affiliated to the national AEIP campaign.

- anothereurope.org
- info@anothereurope.org
- @anothereurope
- facebook.com/AnotherEuropeIsPossible

LABOUR CAMPAIGN FOR FREE MOVEMENT

The Labour Campaign for Free Movement was founded in August 2017. It is a coalition of Labour members and supporters campaigning within Labour and the trade unions for migrant rights and to defend and extend the free movement of people.

- labourfreemovement.org
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- facebook.com/labourfreemovement