

# On Guard

Issue no. 15 March 2019



## Oppose Antisemitism!

### For unity between Palestinian and Israeli workers

#### What is happening in the Labour Party?

The Labour Party has been beset, since Jeremy Corbyn's leadership win, by accusations of antisemitism.

Some on the Left of the party have accused the right of cynically making up the existence of antisemitism in the party and have denied its existence.

*On Guard* believes that Antisemitism does exist in the labour party and in the wider labour movement, and that as a result, the right wing has been given ammunition against Corbyn's leadership unnecessarily. We should not leave the fight against antisemitism to the right wing.

#### What is Anti-Semitism?

- denying or minimising the Holocaust
- accusing people who complain about antisemitism of being in the pay of Israel
- holding Jews particularly responsible for the Israeli state's oppression of the Palestinians, or demanding that Jews renounce their identity and break links with Israel if they don't want to be called racist.
- denouncing 'Zionists' without any distinction between the many different Zionist viewpoints and without ever denouncing any other nationalism in similar terms
- promoting or making excuses for centuries-old antisemitic stereotypes or caricatures
- Indulging in conspiracy theories and fake news about Jews being capitalist exploiters

#### Where does it come from?

Jews have been persecuted for hundreds of years before the nazi death camps in 1940's Germany where 6 million Jews were slaughtered.



"The subhuman" Nazi 1943 propaganda poster

Propaganda used to justify persecution

Jews fleeing the holocaust were turned away from European ports, including in Britain.

Our rulers have always used the myth of "the enemy within" to divide us. For centuries they used the Jews as a "useful enemy" in their propaganda. The caricature of the "rich Jew" was useful to take the heat off the real exploiters – aristocrats and capitalists.



classic anti-Semitic cartoon from "Agitator": The fat Jew as a rich exploiter, the Star of David as the yoke of the masses, the dollar sign as the sun; the writing in "Hebrew" style. Agitator no. 12, June 1971.

#### But what about Israel and Palestine?

Israel was set up in 1948 as a result of the persecution of Jews. Zionism was an expression of the desire of Jews to have a safe homeland. Within the Zionist movement there were many different strands of thought from so-

cialists to rightwing nationalists.

#### 1948 war

In 1948 Arab states invaded Israel, intent on genocide. Their armies were led by British officers. Many Jews around the Middle East were driven by force to Israel. Israel responded with terrible brutality against Palestinians, which continues today.

#### Divided people

Israeli and Arab rulers have used war propaganda to divide their peoples and deflect blame from their own crimes ever since.

Socialists and pacifists in Israel work to resist the occupation. We should back them.



Israeli women, tair Kaminer 19 and Tanya Golan 19 refused to serve in the occupation army. Jan 2016 and were imprisoned.

Israel's oppression of the Palestinians and repeated attacks on Israel feed a hell of hatred both sides of the border.

Both Israel and Palestine have a right to exist. Jews have a right to identify with Israel or not, as they choose.

#### What do we say?

*On Guard* supports a two-states solution with reparations paid to Palestine. Equal rights for equal peoples – to drain the swamp of hatred and racism. Solidarity not boycott: our unions should link up with trade unions in both Israel and Palestine to fight the occupation.

## RAT WATCH



Angela Smith, Sheffield MP for Penistone and Stocksbridge, cited antisemitism and Brexit as her reasons for leaving the Labour Party; lashing up with ex-Tories Sourbry, Wollaston and Allen who defend austerity and benefit cuts. Smith had nothing to say about antisemitism before Corbyn was elected leader of the party. She became vociferous about it afterwards and was one of the most outspoken anti Corbyn MP's.

**We need to deal with antisemitism in our party but don't need lessons from her.**

Smith is no loss to the labour movement. She is pro-capitalist, pro academies, pro PFI and works hand in hand with the water and energy companies. Not surprising therefore that she came out in favour of fracking.

We should be honoured to know that in her new Independent group she has been given responsibility for Transport and the environment!

## Mess Room Blues

We've been being promised a new mess room by the company almost as long as it has held the franchise, and for nearly three years now it has seemed like a myth used as an excuse to do nothing about the state of the current one. It's been clear that the promises on the refurbishment from the local Operations Manager have been as worthless as most of his other ones but a circular from his superiors earlier this year and some signs here and there of contractors measuring up suggest that it is actually about to happen!

It is still not clear what the temporary arrangements will be while the work is carried out.

*No-one trusts the company to get it right - so we'd like to hear from anyone that uses the Northern/Transpennine mess room what you want. Get in touch at [onguard.bulletin@gmail.com](mailto:onguard.bulletin@gmail.com) and tell us what your 'fantasy mess room' would look like so we can see how the real thing measures up!*

## FIGHT FIGHT FIGHT

**Must see  
Northern vs Network Rail  
Leeds platform 1  
(6th carriage along)**

## Carnage In May

It's clear that the introduction of yet more new services in May is likely to go just as terribly as last May. The company is introducing the hand-me-down 170s over some of our routes but is struggling to train the train crew to drive them.

The rumour is that the only reason those units are being moved over to the Sheffield/Doncaster/Hull patch is that the stop-start, low speed nature of the Harrogate route was knacker-ing the transmissions - so why didn't the company know that would happen before they introduced them over there? Didn't they think they needed to speak to the Scotrail engineering dept for a few tips?

This cowboy outfit just piles disaster on top of disaster - now they're rushing to get train crew ready for the introduction of some already-knackered rolling stock and they're not going to manage.

May is going to be carnage, especially if ASLEF pulls Rest Day Working in April.

## Quote of the month

*"Of course the RMT are correct to fight DOO. It is about passenger safety".*

*(Forecourt SSP staff member)*

## DOO Latest

So, after 47 days of strike action carried out by the RMT to defend passenger safety, the company has expressed a willingness to accept that, for the duration of the current franchise, every train will have a conductor as well as a driver on board.

This is a significant shift from management, caused by the tenacious determination of the staff who have fought so bravely for such a long time. Their move from 'second person' to 'conductor', in particular, could herald a collapse of the management's attack on the safety critical role being removed from the train.

However, many of us are sceptical of their intentions, and rightly so. Until we have it signed and delivered, we won't trust them an inch.

In negotiations, the company are going to want to try and play RMT and ASLEF off against each other but that shouldn't be possible; look, here's ASLEF policy on DOO/DCONo extension of DOO schemes or introduction of DOO in the form of DCO or any other name:

*"All current DOO(P) schemes to be revisited and safety risk assessed with a policy of all trains having a second person who is trained and licensed at least to the standard required to carry out the duties of guard as detailed in the industry rule book".*

**On Guard** is a monthly socialist bulletin by and for rank and file workers at Sheffield rail. It is published by socialist group Workers' Liberty.

We welcome content on any issue from Sheffield rail workers, all grades and companies.

**Got a story for  
On Guard?**

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