



& Workers' Liberty

Solidarity

For social ownership of the banks and industry

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Against Johnson and Trump



FIGHT FOR A SOCIALIST EUROPE

Boris Johnson is likely to become the new Tory leader and prime minister, some time in the week after 22 July.

If by some fluke he throws the leadership contest, almost surely someone equally hard-Brexit will win.

This sharpens the choices on Brexit, and narrows further the space for temporising.

Johnson is less a right-wing ideologue, and more a mainstream opportunist, than Mario Salvini in Italy. But his choice is to project the Tories so as to appear as Brexiter as Farage (and thus recoup votes).

His choice is to cut away from the EU and to veer towards Trump.

Neither Johnson nor any other Tory candidate think that Britain can develop as a walled-off economy. They want trade deals.

Above all the top Tories want a trade deal with the USA, on Trump's terms, with all the neoliberal provisos about investor rights and opening public services to profit-piracy. And with none of the dimensions of opening borders and limited social levelling-up which exist in the EU.

They see that reorientation as a way to "complete the Thatcherite revolution" in Britain.

To win that, they are willing to pay the price of a new "hard border" in Ireland.

Socialists want to bring down borders, by free association between nations. A federal united Europe has been a left-wing slogan for over 100 years, and even back into the 19th century.

Because the working class has not been able to take power and make that united Europe in a socialist way, and because the old system of walled-off states in Europe was unviable from any realistic point of view, the capitalist classes have made a quarter-united Europe in their own bureaucratic, neoliberal way.

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Ideas for Freedom 20-23 June

- Friday 7pm Student Central, Malet St, WC1E 7HY
- Saturday and Sunday, Camden School for Girls, Sandall Road, London, NW5 2DB

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The Tory schisms

Andrew Gamble on the Tories' divisions over Brexit

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On the streets against Brexit

New anti-Brexit marches called for 20 July and 12 October

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Renew Labour

The new rulebook

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Labour and Brexit: call a Special Conference!

Sudan: the uprising regroups



Interview

By Hamid Khalafallah

The occupation of the streets around the army headquarters in Khartoum, which began on 6 April, was the spearhead of the revolutionary movement. On 3 June that was repressed and dispersed.

However, protests are still happening in Khartoum and in other parts of the country.

The sit-in was very large. On the first day something like a million people marched on the army HQ, and the occupation grew out of that, to protest against the regime and try to at least neutralise the army. Its size fluctuated between hundreds of thousands and back up to millions at certain points.

Bashir was ousted on 11 April and the Transitional Military Council, as they call themselves, took power. They appointed one of Bashir's allies, Ahmed Awad Ibn Auf, as effective head of state but there was such outrage that protests took him down in literally a day.

They replaced him with another general, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan. The movement has called and continues to call for the replacement of the military council with a civilian government.

Forces of Freedom and Change, which is the opposition coalition [see its declaration at bit.ly/2WPUmlo], entered negotiations with the TMC, but the latter dragged it out and used the time to manoeuvre. There were some attempts to crack down on the occupation, but protesters resisted, and there was also some resistance from lower-ranking officers.

However, on 3 June the army came with very large numbers, including from the Janjaweed militias, which are now called the Rapid Support Forces, and they used very violent methods in a crackdown. There were over a hundred documented deaths, and

probably many more, as many bodies were taken away and hidden by the military.

The protests now are not nearly as big. There is a sense of shock and sorrow since 3 June and people are taking time to regroup. A new campaign of civil disobedience is beginning and there are discussions about the possibilities for a new, longer general strike.

The new Vice President, Mohamed Hamdan, known as Hemeti, is head of the Janjaweed, and now he is trying to become the strongman. That has exposed the nature of the new military regime.

You touched on dissent in the military. Has that gone any further? What about rank-and-file soldiers organising?

Most of the senior officers are pro-the old regime, for obvious reasons. It is very difficult to change that direction – junior officers can do bits and pieces, but they are very limited.

I don't know any sign of rank-and-file soldiers organising independently, and to be honest I would be concerned if that happened because you could end up with even more militias fighting each other, which could take the country to a very dark place. Look at Libya.

Have unions played an important role?

The FFC includes various political parties and coalitions, but the main player is the Sudanese Professionals Association, which is an umbrella for a range of professional workers' trade unions – including teachers, doctors, lawyers, journalists and engineers.

Many people have lost faith in political parties and were hesitant about responding to their calls, whereas the SPA is seen as much more representative and in tune with the people's interests. The SPA unions had previously focused on economic issues such as wages and working conditions, but from the end of last year especially they started to address things from a more political angle, saying that while this regime is in power we cannot achieve better rights for workers, so we must look at the root cause.

Now other trade unions have joined the struggle too – factory workers, tea-sellers, food-sellers – and signed by the FFC's declaration.

Many of these unions were created in the last decade as independent, parallel organisations formed by various groups of workers as an alternative to associations set up and controlled by the regime. During the recent movement independent unions and groups of activists took over properties and facilities belonging to the regime's unions, and after Bashir was ousted the TMC gave the order to disman-



Protestors outside the military headquarters in May 2019

tle the state unions.

However, as part of the crackdown, these state organisations are being re-established.

In Sudan, if you strike within an institution, there is some protection, but not if it's a more general strike or for political purposes. In addition, a worker can be sacked after three days on strike.

At the moment a lot of private employers are supportive of the movement and have not taken against their employees, but others are pro-regime and so it's more tricky. Many workers are determined anyway, regardless of what their employers say – there is an attitude that people have lost their lives, so it's worth risking our jobs.

There are also conversations about laws under a new regime. Particularly in a transitional period when the government is not elected it is crucial that people have very strong rights to strike and protest. Workers' mobilisations during the revolution must surely mean they have a chance of influencing these things in a positive way.

There is a consensus that we need a transitional period before elections, because otherwise part of the regime could easily use elections to come back to power. It's the same problem with the support they get from various foreign powers, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt, China, Russia, and in effect the US. We need to create political counterweights to those influences.

Are the protests widespread outside Khartoum?

When the protests started in December they actually started in other cities – in 13 December in Damazin, which is the capital of Blue Nile State, on the border with South Sudan [independent since 2011], and then in Atbara in River Nile state. They reached Khartoum on Christmas day.

Since then there have been protests in many parts of the country – Khartoum is the biggest for obvious reasons. There have also

been protests in some villages, including in Darfur where the Janjaweed have re-escalated repression as a result.

Is this an anti-Islamist movement?

Definitely, because all the Islamist forces and parties were part of the previous regime. And their ideology is what has brought Sudan to this terrible state.

However, there are people in the movement who are not Islamist, but let's say Islamic, as opposed to just Muslim, and they express concerns about whether the country will be sufficiently Islamic under a new regime.

I share the view that we should pick our battles right now and focus on the need for an elected, civilian government. Once we have that we can agitate around the constitution and policies we want. We need more time to build awareness around the idea of secularism and separating religion and politics.

I can see potential problems there but I'm optimistic. Thirty years of Islamism in power has made it very difficult for many people to sympathise with them. Even now a large number of people are against mixing religion and politics, despite being religious Muslims – particularly in Khartoum.

From the start women have taken a leading and prominent role in the protests, leading the chanting, as organisers and so on. But the top decision-making circles of the FFC are not representative. The FFC is saying there should be a quota of at least 40pc women in all government bodies, but its organisations do not necessarily reflect that. It's a source of frustration and there's a struggle around it.

At a more grassroots level, women's role has not led to many arguments, as it did in the past. The size of women's role has made it very hard for even more socially conservative people to challenge it.

I would add that the sit-in was an amazing space for people to come

together and tell their stories, individually and as groups in society, and learn from each other.

The Egyptian regime is an inspiration for our regime and is directly linked to supporting it. On the other hand, the Egyptian revolutionaries have inspired us and provided us with warnings about what to avoid. There is widespread knowledge among our activists about Egypt and also some direct links, particularly online. "Either victory – or Egypt" is one of our slogans, one of our chants.

What kind of economic and social model would you like to see in a new Sudan? What do you think about capitalism and socialism?

There is some discussion about that. Socialist parties here have done some questionable things including support for previous dictatorships, and they no longer have much of a popular base. Religion is also a factor in why people might not favour socialism.

Most support is for centrist type of parties. There is a consensus for a moderate regime and many people are not keen on radical ideologies.

There is certainly a desire for more social provision, welfare, public services, free education and healthcare. You could ask how that relates to capitalism, but the debate is not really on that level.

I am on the left but I find it hard to see a left-wing regime coming into being in Sudan in the near future.

It requires us to win democracy and more space for discussion and debate, so we can initiate a process of political education and experiment in what works and doesn't.

• Hamid Khalafallah, a democracy activist in Sudan, talked with Sacha Ismail from *Solidarity*.

• Abridged. Full interview at bit.ly/sudan-u



Corrections

The closing date for the NEU ballot was given wrongly in *Solidarity* 509 as 12 July. It is 2 July. In *Workers' Liberty* 68, the omission of a full stop made it read as if an article was prescribing "solidarity with the Birmingham bombings": the passage should have read "... solidarity. [new para] With the Birmingham..." There were some errors in the Ideas for Freedom agenda printed in *Solidarity* 510, and anyway a few changes have been made since then: consult www.workersliberty.org/ideas.

Boris Johnson, climate denier



By Mike Zubrowski

Staring at the snow settling on a flower pot, in January 2013, Boris Johnson said he had an "open mind" as to "the encroachment of a mini ice age", and cast qualified doubts about global warming.

Indeed, his spewing contained the deep wisdom that "human beings have become so blind with conceit and self-love that we genuinely believe that the fate of the planet is in our hands" (bit.ly/bj-cli).

Johnson, here, hasn't so much got his mind so open that his brain falls out, as his eyes so tightly shut that it squeezes his brain out of his ears and nose, dribbling onto his face.

Boris Johnson outdoes even many of his competitors, much of the Conservative party, in his awful record on climate change: in rhetoric and beyond. I survey some choice examples.

In 2012, in his regular *Telegraph* column, Johnson played down the energy that could be supplied by green power in the UK. He regrets, it seems, that "[w]e are prevented [by Kyoto] from putting in a new system of coal-fired power stations" (bit.ly/bj-frk). In a classic evocation of nationalist and even xenophobic sentiment, he views importation of energy as "humiliating". Yet, "as if by a miracle", we have "the solution" — fracking!

He repeats questionable claims about job creation, points to its ability to lower the price of natural gas, and even presents it as, somehow, green.

Sure, natural gas produces significantly less CO2 per unit energy

than coal. Fracking, through leaks, releases significant quantities of methane, an even more potent greenhouse gas. The energy intensity of fracking technology compounds this, making it significantly less green than "conventional" natural gas.

Even switching from coal to natural gas and remaining content is like celebrating while you keep your foot on the accelerator, only applying slightly less pressure, yet hurtle at ever-increasing speeds towards a cliff edge.

In the *Telegraph* in December 2015, Johnson inverted his impressionistic conclusions from January 2013's snow and dismissed a winter heat-wave as unrelated to global warming.

Johnson is paid handsomely for his weekly column at the *Telegraph*, where he was previously Brussels correspondent (after being sacked from his previous journalist job for making up a quote).

The *Telegraph* is one of the most serious purveyors of climate denial in the UK media. Even in the last couple of years, long term columnists and former editors have promoted denial, and celebrated climate inaction. In January "The Independent Press Standards Organisation" forced the *Telegraph* to print substantial corrections to one such article. (bit.ly/dt-cbk, bit.ly/dt-cmo, bit.ly/dt-nla).

In 2017, Johnson congratulated the government he was in for "continu[ing] to lobby the U.S. at all levels to continue to take climate change extremely seriously." A change in his politics for the better? The money tells a different story.

Later that year, he launched a new thinktank, "The Institute for Free Trade (IFT)", with various links to anti-environmental groups and individuals (bit.ly/i-f-t). In a

2018 trip, Johnson's team had their "accommodation, travel and hospitality" paid for by the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), which has a history of spreading climate scepticism and opposing reductions, receiving significant funding from ExxonMobil (bit.ly/dsm-bj).

Most damningly, on 12 June this year, openDemocracy revealed that First Corporate Shipping, co-owned by Terence Mordaunt, a director of the Global Warming Policy Forum, the advocacy arm of the climate-science-denial "Global Warming Policy Foundation", donated £25,000 to both Boris Johnson and Jeremy Hunt's Conservative Party leadership campaigns (bit.ly/bj-cash). In the leadership contest, his commentary on climate change has been notable, and noted, by its absence.

His politics is reflected by his supporters in the Tory rank-and-file, of which 27% "would like to see less emphasis on climate change", a significantly higher proportion than the average for all members.

We have no confidence in the ruling class to take even minimal substantive moves towards limiting climate change, let alone the serious systemic changes necessary to fully bring about a net zero economy. Still less do we have confidence in, or look to, any Tories to bring about this change. The prospect of a Prime Minister with politics like Johnson's is nonetheless scary, and reaffirms the need for bold, assertive, socialist environmentalist campaigning.

One of Johnson's only redeeming factors — in itself a double-edged sword, currently cutting us more — is his rampant opportunism, which means he could be susceptible to pressure to change his course.

General strike in Brazil

By Luiza Xavier

On Friday 14 June, schools, public transport, banks, universities and factories in Brazil stopped in Brazil for the first general strike under the right-wing Bolsonaro administration which took office in January.

The strike was called collectively by various trade union "centrals", political parties (such as the PT, PSOL and the PCdoB), and numerous student unions. Its main demand is a stop to the pensions reform, which is set to go through the Chamber of Deputies in the week starting 17 June.

Pensions have been used as a scapegoat, since the Temer government, to justify the lack of investment in health and education. The reforms plan to increase the age of retirement and open the doors for private banking to take over the pension market.

The general strike followed a day of action on 30 May against the 6 billion reais worth of education cuts announced by Bolsonaro. The announcements also said that the universities to be hit the hardest were the "troublemakers", the universities whose students had organised against the government.

It is estimated that those universities will not be able to function after August, as there will be no money for overhead costs such as electricity.

The traditionally well organised sectors of transport, education, banking and metal work were the most affected by the 14 June strike. All major Brazilian cities saw at least a partial paralysation of their transport networks, and tens of thousands strong demonstrations.

Strikers and demonstrators also demanded an end to unemployment (which now afflicts 13 million Brazilians), the return of economic

growth, an end to the cuts to education and appropriate responses to the newly uncovered scandal involving the Minister of Justice Sergio Mouro.

Last week, Telegram and WhatsApp messages were leaked between Mouro (now Minister of Justice, and previously the judge in Operation Car Wash, which sent ex-president Lula to prison) and prosecutors of the republic.

In the messages, Mouro gave prosecutors tips, revealed decisions ahead of time and, notably, agreed not to allow the press to talk to ex-president Lula during the elections — to appease the prosecutors' worries that PT's candidate Fernando Haddad might win the elections if an interview was aired.

This has caused great uproar from the Brazilian left, demanding that Mouro be removed as a minister and for Lula to be retried.



A 6 June march to the Iranian Consulate in London to call for the freedom of political prisoners in Iran

Behind the US-Iran tension

By Morad Shirin

Clearly the attacks on Norwegian and Japanese tankers off the Gulf of Oman on Thursday 14 June increase the risk of a miscalculation leading to military clashes in the region.

However, these attacks were probably not carried out by any of the Iranian regime's armed forces, not even the Pasdaran or a section of the Pasdaran (though that can't be completely ruled out). In order to assess them correctly we shouldn't just zoom in on their level of sophistication but also follow up other factors, especially their political and diplomatic purpose.

We have to ask: "Which state is going to benefit from delaying, or maybe even preventing, a deal?" That state is not the Iranian regime but one (or more) of US imperialism's local allies. A regional power like Israel (although others can't be ruled out) is probably behind them.

Given the economic and social situation, it is highly unlikely that the Iranian regime would do this — no matter what US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo asserts.

The attacks justify US imperialism sending even more troops to the region, including an extra 1000 soldiers announced earlier this week. They also justify the \$110 billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia and support for its military intervention in Yemen; building new Israeli settlements like Trump Heights in the Golan and carving up more of the West Bank; and repression by all US allies (like Egypt) in the region.

The rising tension also keeps the price of oil above \$60 a barrel, which helps not only the profits of the big oil companies but also of all sectors involved in facilitating

this industry, like shipping, insurance and others.

The main thing to remember is that the media excitement and focus on the military aspect of US imperialism's relationship with the Iranian regime ignores the long-standing back-channels of diplomacy and mutually beneficial economic concessions — including, for example, allowing Iraq to import Iranian gas for another three months, the IMF delegation that went to Iran a few weeks ago, and so on.

The economic pressure on the Iranian regime is constantly rising and the level of mass discontent, particularly among workers, keeps going up.

Oil production has fallen below 227,000 barrels a month, the economy shrank by 4.9% last (Iranian) year, production of domestic appliances is at 25-30% of capacity, and so on.

Following the repression of Haft Tappeh and other strikes, and the May Day arrests, there was a lull in strikes and protests. But these are picking up again, particularly by the Pensioners' Unity Group, who will be demonstrating in front of the regime's parliament on 18 June.

They have had solidarity messages from teachers, Haft Tappeh workers, Vahed bus drivers and so on. It is important to step up our solidarity work, not only supporting workers' struggles, but also campaigning for the release of all political prisoners and jailed workers in Iran.

Especially those involved in the Haft Tappeh Sugar Cane workers' strike, like Esmail Bakhshi and Sepideh Gholian.

• Morad Shirin is a member of the Iranian Revolutionary Marxists' Tendency. More: shahrokhzamani.com

Hong Kong: a Yankee plot?



Antidoto

By Jim Denham

Throughout the recent dramas in Hong Kong, Britain's "socialist daily" the *Morning Star*, said precisely... nothing. No coverage at all until after the Hong Kong government had backed down.

Then that after-the-event coverage was (as we shall see) even more revealing than the previous non-coverage.

Perhaps the people who run the paper (i.e. the Communist Party of Britain – the CPB) thought their readers wouldn't be interested -- but then, the paper recently carried a lengthy and highly diplomatic report of a CPB delegation to China.

Since 9 June, up to two million people in Hong Kong — more than one in seven city residents — have taken to the streets to protest against legislation that would allow local officials to arrest and extradite to the

mainland any person accused of one of 37 types of crime.

Political offences are, in theory, excluded from the list, but nobody is fooled: contriving criminal charges against political opponents is child's play for Beijing, which controls the mainland's courts and has well-documented form in concocting legal cases for political purposes.

The extradition bill is just the latest breach of China's commitment to maintain Hong Kong's way of life for 50 years after its handover from Britain in 1997.

In 2015, mainland authorities abducted five Hong Kong booksellers known for selling politically sensitive titles and held them in solitary confinement for months until they pleaded guilty to various offences.

On Wednesday 12 June, demonstrations spiralled into the worst political violence since the handover from British rule, with police firing teargas and rubber bullets and attacking protesters. Later, there were arrests of activists, including in hospital.

With another march already scheduled for Sunday 16 June, and public anger heightened

by police brutality and detentions, China's puppet Lam was forced into a dramatic reversal, suspending the extradition bill, after meeting top Chinese officials.

Then on Monday 17 June the *Morning Star* carried a brief report on page 7. "Thousands" (not the one or two million reported elsewhere and shown in aerial film) protested against "a proposed law that would allow the extradition of suspects to the rest of China on a case-by-case basis."

The report notes that the protesters "say the law would allow mainland authorities to target political opponents" but dismissed those fears. "*China Daily* journalist Ian Goodrum argues that 'there's [currently] no legal way to prevent criminals in other parts of China from escaping charges by fleeing to Hong Kong. It would be like Louisiana — which you'll remember, has a unique judicial system — refusing to send fugitives to Texas or California for crimes committed in those states."

The *Morning Star* had little to say against the law, but it had a fair bit to say against the protests.

"A key protest organiser is the Civil

Human Rights Front, which lists the US National Endowment for Democracy-funded Hong Kong Human Rights movement among its constituent organisations".

So let's get this straight: according to the *Morning Star*, one of the key protest organisations includes another organisation that (are you following this?) has accepted funding from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

According to the NED's online Democracy Projects Database, it has given funding to that Hong Kong group for programs relating to China's Xinjiang province and its Uyghur people. The NED states that it will "maintain an English- and Uyghur-language website on the human rights situation of Uyghur women and children; conduct a civic education seminar for Uyghur women; and conduct advocacy on behalf of the human rights of Uyghurs in China." Bound to be sinister, then.

For the *Morning Star*, it proved that the "Yankees" (the *Morning Star* has recently revived that term) were behind the protests!

Who to be expelled?



Letters

This letter follows up on my previous one in *Solidarity* 510, on the "Willsman affair" in the Labour Party.

In an open letter to Jeremy Corbyn (*Solidarity* 497, bit.ly/ol-jc), Sean Matgamna advocated that, as well as political education, "the party should declare advocacy of the destruction of Israel... incompatible with membership of the Labour Party.

"Encoded versions of that policy — via 'right of return' for example — should not be tolerated in the labour movement. Advocacy of measures that are code for driving Israel out of existence — 'right of return', 'from the river to the sea', etc. — should not be tolerated in a healthy labour movement."

He fleshes this out with caveats: "Holocaust mitigation, the idea that the Holocaust happened but it should be treated as if it is of no consequence in history, especially for understanding how Israel came into existence", is common currency amongst "absolute anti-Zionists". "But things like that do not lend themselves to political warfare measures. Specific criticisms of Israel only become lethal and should be impermissible when they are used (as they too often are) to justify the conclusion that therefore Israel should not exist and that 'we' should side with Arab and Islamic states that try to put it out of existence." That is, not all antisemitism, or not all ideas descended from antisemitism, are grounds for expulsion — agreed.

There are many ideas and actions that should not be tolerated, but for which we would not advocate expulsion, or other bureaucratic discipline. It seems clear, however, that Sean was advocating expelling some "absolute anti-Zionists" from the Labour party. Aiming to clarify exactly where he thinks the line is, I had a useful and interesting discussion with him.

As Sean reiterated to me, such ideas are

linked to wider, widespread antisemitism, ideas of "good" and "bad" peoples, and it is all very blurry — hence the centrality of education.

"Left" anti-semites bring poison into our movement, making it less welcoming to Jews, undermining serious solidarity with the Palestinian people, and impeding the fight against capitalism. We must drive "left" antisemitism out of our movement, fight ideas tainted by it uncompromisingly. But beyond occasional individuals, this must be done through political education, and fostering an open atmosphere of debate that bureaucratic measures cut against.

Sean maintains that, while the line must be clear, he doesn't advocate — unlike what you might reasonably interpret from his earlier open letter — that advocating the "right of return" or for a "single secular democratic state" are *in themselves* grounds for expulsion. I agree, such a bar would be too high. Such ideas, in whatever form, are unfortunately widely supported on the far-left and Labour.

But those that unknowingly transmit previously-encoded versions of "destroy Israel" should be treated qualitatively different from those who knowingly and consciously advocate it.

Is Sean, then, advocating that everyone who clearly and openly advocates "destroy Israel", inscribes it in plain text on their banners, be expelled? In principle, yes.

But, he continued, we don't need answers for all of the fine details, all of the exact practicality. Responding to my concerns about bureaucratic responses to political issues, he observes that everything the Labour party as it currently exists does will be bureaucratic. We aim to transform that, to bring about much wider changes, deeper democratic and political cultures. We need not take responsibility for the fine details of how the Really Existing Labour Party manages individual cases, absent any broader changes.

More on other issues raised in another letter, next issue.

Mike Zubrowski, Bristol



Workers' Liberty Summer Camp

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This will be a long weekend of music, campfires, food, drink, socialist discussions, workshops, tree climbing, and arsing about in the great outdoors — open to all!

Tickets — which include food for the weekend but not booze — are £20 school/college students or unemployed; £25 low-waged; £35 waged. They're more expensive after 1 August.

• See www.workersliberty.org/camp

Limits of observation



Letters

I'd like to comment on Martin Thomas's tale of contrasted autistic students in his maths class (interview with Judy Singer, *Solidarity* 510).

For sure, the autistic students he describes are very different from each other — there is a significant contrast between Student A who needs just a little adjustment in order to participate, and Student B who does not participate but knits and occasionally shouts.

But it is a leap of logic to automatically conclude from this that Student B is impaired.

Student B is certainly a lot more divergent than Student A: a lot more different from typical students. Classroom education is not working for Student B, and this will not be solved by a few adjustment.

But wider divergence is not the same as im-

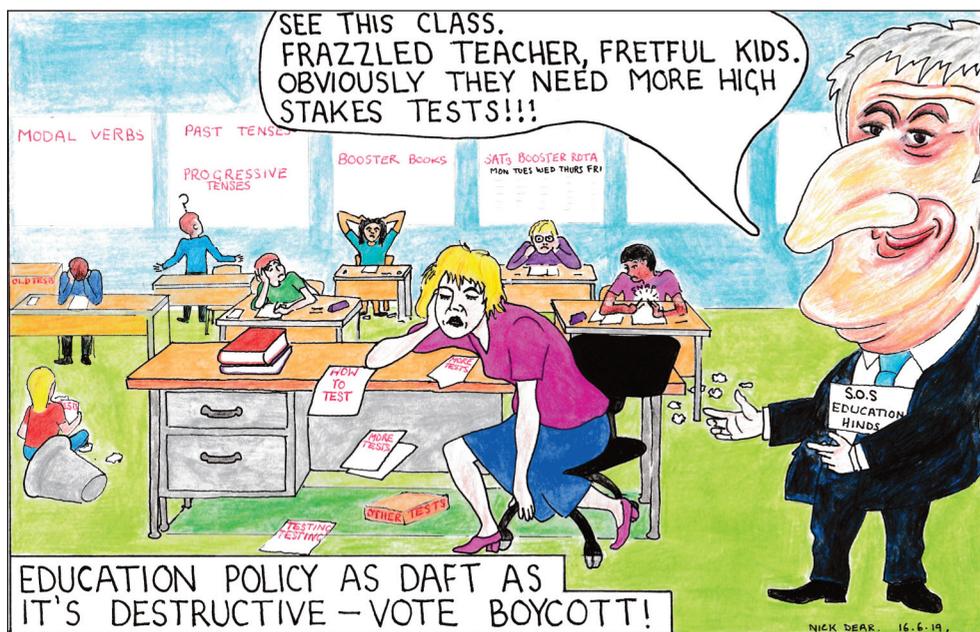
pairment. It may be that this student is not suited to the teaching format or maybe to the classroom environment. It may be that s/he would learn well in a very different set-up — perhaps one-to-one, perhaps an element of self-teaching, perhaps being allowed to drive their learning through their own interests and habits (there is surely scope for learning maths via knitting?).

Or it may be that this student is impaired.

My point is that we don't know for sure just from observing that Student B is more divergent than Student A.

Janine Booth, Hackney

• In this actual case, Student B worked in the school's Special Education Unit most of the time, and went to only a few regular classes. B was supposed to have a teacher aide from the SEU working with him when in regular classes: it just so happened that the teacher aide (when he turned up) chose to work with other students instead. More on the broader issues in next issue. MT



Fight for a socialist Europe

From page one

The socialist answer must be to build on the quarter-progress, to push through it, rather than regress to the walled-off past or to prefer the US option.

The fantasies of “Lexit” (a “left-wing” Brexit) faded long ago. In the months of jockeying in Parliament about Brexit formulas, none of the pro-Brexit Labour MPs have proposed anything Labour or leftist.

They have supported one of the Tory options — May’s deal (perhaps with tweaks) or “no-deal”. The *Morning Star*, the paper closest to the Labour Leader’s Office, backs the more right-wing Tory option: “no-deal”.

Lexit has become Textit — one or another form of Tory exit.

We don’t know how Johnson will try to finesse the difficulties that brought down Theresa May. All his options are risky. He may take the risk an early general election, or a snap referendum, timed in the hope of carrying it on the crest of a Tory-leader election victory.

That prospect sharpens the choices further.

On 17 June, Labour’s right-wing deputy leader Tom Watson made a much-trailed speech calling for Labour to back Remain.

Some in the Labour Party will say that proves Remain is a right-wing cause. It proves nothing of the sort.

In 2016 most of the capitalist class backed Remain. They voted the same as most younger or big-city working-class people, but for different reasons.

The capitalists saw the status quo as safer than a dash for a US trade deal which might not come off, and for a “completed Thatcherite revolution” which might reduce the UK’s social infrastructure to the public squalor which prevails in the USA alongside private hyper-wealth.

Working-class Remain voters valued EU’s freedom of movement and limited social levelling-up. For most of the Remain capitalists, those were acceptable prices to pay for the safety of the status quo.

Since then most (not all) capitalists have settled for something like Theresa May’s deal — a formula to try to keep many of the trade and investment advantages of the EU, though not all, without the social elements.

Working-class Remainers are, of course, not against keeping supply chains free-flowing. But for us, the core is to develop workers’ unity and build on the EU’s free movement and limited social levelling-up. Remain and Transform! With a strong and clear argument along those lines, Labour can treat working-class Leave voters with respect (rather than

trying to manipulate and placate them), and win many of them over. In case, socialist principle leaves no choice but to try.

Remain is more a working-class cause now than it was in 2016, when the mass-media debate was conducted almost entirely between different shades of Tory opinion.

Watson was a key mover in pushing Jeremy Corbyn to abandon the defence of free movement within Europe which Corbyn maintained for five months after the June 2016 referendum, before collapsing under pressure from Watson and nationalist-minded sections of the self-proclaimed left.

He is not to be trusted now. His new move is opportunist, designed to put him in line with the overwhelming majority of Labour opinion. But it is not a shift to the right. It is a feint to the left, such as right-wingers often make under pressure.

That Watson’s speech appears as a threat to Jeremy Corbyn is entirely the fault of Corbyn and his leader’s office.

After the Euro-elections, Keir Starmer, Emily Thornberry, and John McDonnell rightly called for Labour to back a new public vote and say it would vote Remain.

Corbyn eventually said that Labour should back a new public vote on any deal, but then (30 May) shelved that by saying a new vote was “some way off” and refusing to commit to back Remain in that new vote.

Many Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs) are voting this month on their motions to go to the Labour Party conference in September. Solidarity and Workers’ Liberty are working with Labour for a Socialist Europe and Another Europe is Possible to push clear left-wing anti-Brexit, pro-new-vote motions.

In other CLPs the decision on motions to conference will not be taken until nearer the final deadline on 12 September. We will keep pushing in those areas.

And we will be out on the streets. We will join left blocs and organise a clear socialist presence on the 20 July and 12 October anti-Brexit demonstrations.

We will organise new and more vigorous local Labour for a Socialist Europe groups. We will be out in shopping centres with Labour for a Socialist Europe stalls, spreading the arguments, pulling in new supporters.

Dominic Raab has said he could “prorogue” Parliament — send it home, deny it a vote — in order to push through Brexit.

The other Tory leader-candidates differ only in wanting to “prorogue” the whole electorate in order to do that. Don’t let them!

Build for 20 July anti-Brexit march

Two anti-Brexit marches have been announced for the coming months, to follow up the big demonstrations on 20 October 2018 and 23 March this year.

The first, on 20 July, noon from Park Lane, London, will go under the bland title “March for Change”, but bills itself as the “pro-European grassroots demo”.

Its lead slogan is “Reunite with Europe”. It also has a string of other demands: “For the NHS; For the Environment; For our Rights, Freedoms and Equalities; For our Communities, our Jobs and our Pensions; For our Voice, our Votes and our Veto”.

Another Europe is Possible and Labour for a Socialist Europe are organising a “left bloc” on the 20 July, with spikier demands: “Decent jobs and homes for all; A Europe-wide green new deal; Workers’ rights and a living wage across Europe; Scrap all anti-union laws; Free movement for all — no to Fortress Europe; An economy that serves the many not the few, with democratic ownership and control; A Europe that challenges the power of big corporations, with tough regulation and taxes; A well-funded, entirely publicly-owned and run, NHS”.

The chief organiser for 20 July is Tom

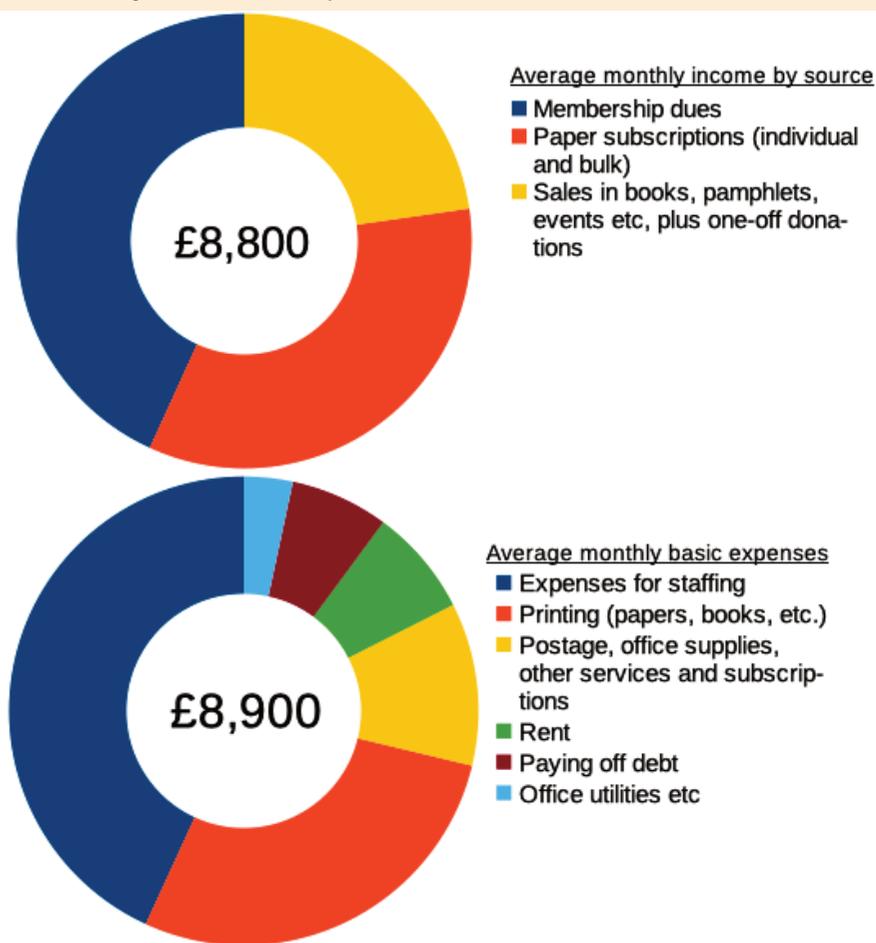
Bruffato, who bills himself as “chair, Britain4Europe, head of campaigns for People’s Vote”, the person who “organised the ‘PutItToThePeople’ march [on 23 March]”.

People’s Vote as such — a conglomerate of groups — is not backing the 20 July march, and instead is organising rallies across the country from 22 June onwards, and a march on 12 October, for which the single slogan so far is “Let us be heard”.

The core group in People’s Vote seems to be Open Britain, of which the best-known officers are Peter Mandelson, Trevor Phillips, Richard Reed, and Will Straw. Britain for Europe is the umbrella for local groups like Leeds for Europe.

Best for Britain is the chief mainstream lobby group not in the People’s Vote coalition. Chaired by George Soros’s sidekick Mark Malloch-Brown, it is backing the 20 July demonstration.

Solidarity and Workers’ Liberty are mobilising to establish a left-wing presence on both the July and the October demonstration, as well as organising local Labour for a Socialist Europe stalls and groups and pushing left anti-Brexit motions in Labour Parties and trade unions.



Workers’ Liberty’s finances and fundraising

• **Above:** Workers’ Liberty’s approximate basic monthly income, excluding fundraising drives.

• **Below:** Workers’ Liberty’s approximate basic monthly outgoings, excluding special, additional, or “extra” outgoings.

These figures were calculated, for the most part, through averages from January to June. We have increased the number of people working in the office recently, allowing us to do more, in particular on the website, but at greater expense. For comparison, in 2017 Labour Party’s monthly income was over £4.6 million a month, over 500 times our £8,800. Between September 2018 and May 2019, we raised £15,000 in our fundraising drive. Thank you everyone who donated!

Some of the things we’ve spent this fundraised money on, since January, are

£3,000 on expert support for the website, and £3,000 on event expenses, particularly for our Ideas For Freedom event.

We’ve also finally replaced some decrepit, broken or lacking equipment, getting a new (second-hand) computer, office chairs, and a printer, a scanner, and microwave — £1,700 altogether. Around £300 has supported comrades to travel to meetings.

To continue all of this — getting more website help, organising future events, publishing new books and pamphlets, intervening in more events — we need such donations, again.

We’d like to do *more*, and *better*. With more, we could start looking into moving to a new office and do more of everything described.

• **We’re launching a new fundraising drive, please donate: workersliberty.org/donate**

The Labour Party's new ru

By Dave Levy

The current Labour Party rules, as set by Conference 2018, are now being circulated. It's about time, and they are still not available on Labour's websites (though they can be found on bit.ly/lp-r19).

This is despite one of the rules agreed setting the inception date of the new rules as at 27 September 2018, eight months ago.

The new rules are the result of the fabled Democracy Review, a process which over nine months took "evidence" from thousands of members and affiliated organisations, together with rule changes proposed by CLPs and affiliated organisations and tabled at conference 2017.

Having taken nine months to gather evidence and take views, the NEC (National Executive Committee) gave conference delegates less than one day's notice of the content of the rule changes representing their proposals from the Democracy Review.

There was a furore at Conference 2016 where the then right-wing NEC presented their entrenching "reforms" as a single take-it-or-leave-it omnibus change. The 2018 NEC were more careful, and presented the changes as eight packages.

The packages covered members' rights, local structures, regional structures, national structures, leadership elections, the National Constitutional Committee (structure and remit) and Westminster selections.

The most controversial and newsworthy items in the new rulebook are the changes to Westminster candidate selections and the revising of the nominations required to stand for Leader (in the case of a vacancy).

Labour MPs seeking re-election now need to win 70% of branches and 70% of affiliates in a trigger ballot. This ends the situation where MPs need not face a new selection contest even if the overwhelming majority of the local members wanted one. The membership votes and affiliate votes are now counted in separate classes and the decision to avoid an open selection requires 70% in both.

An alternative proposal to abolish the trigger ballot and to re-implement mandatory re-election in all cases was deemed to have fallen.

The new means of determining whether to have an open selection is being propagated throughout the rule book. It is also being applied to some of upper-tier local government.

The rules on Leadership Elections were changed so that the nomination threshold (where a vacancy occurs) now requires 10% of the PLP (Parliamentary Labour Party) and European PLP, and 5% of the Unions or 5% of the CLPs. It also requires CLPs to hold all-members'-meetings to make leadership nominations. Some CLPs will need an exceedingly large and exceedingly expensive room!

The new rules have also established some norms about the leadership voting eligibility freeze dates. The freeze date must be after the announcement of the election. There is to be no further membership longevity requirement of the sort used in 2016.

The Democracy Review recommended that the PLP/EPLP threshold be reduced to 5% but the NEC voted to put the 10% threshold to Conference. 10% of the PLP is 23, and now there are 19 EPLP members.

Jeremy Corbyn and Dianne Abbott only got onto the Leader's ballot with the help of their opponents, John McDonnell could not

collect the names necessary in 2007.

It is common wisdom on the left that this threshold needs to be reduced to 5%, a figure which has ample historical precedent. CLPD (the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy) are asking members to pass motions (bit.ly/lp-ld) calling on the NEC to reassess their views and bring rule changes to the next Conference.

Two further important changes in the rules are those related to Member's Rights and Local Structures.

The introduction of a Members' Rights sub-clause codifies the longevity requirements for selection or election as a candidate or to internal office, restates the need to belong to a union, and reduces the membership longevity required to stand as a delegate to conference. It also introduces a right to dignity and respect and a duty for all party officers to behave fairly. (Not quite the Nolan principles, although challenging enough in some cases!)

Shamefully, this is the first time such a requirement has been made. It would be good to see the duty to be fair extended to all staff and voluntary role-holders. CLPD are producing model rule changes to strengthen the right to fairness by extending the duty to all officers and staff, specifying the standard of behaviour as Nolan principles, and placing a duty on the Party to meet members' human rights.

Local Structures (CLPs and Branches) defines the means of changing from branch and delegate to all-members'-meeting (AMM) governance, reduces the quorum, places further variations in the hands of the Regional Boards not the Director, requires the NEC to define its criteria by which it puts CLPs into special measures, mandates equalities branches including youth, reconstitutes the CLP ECs by including branch secretaries, mandates branch women's officers, permits officer role job shares, and proposes a new rule on meeting frequency. (All members must be invited to eight meetings each year of which two must be policy meetings.)

The legal authority of the EC is reduced, placing it under the authority of the GC or AMM. The package also authorises multi-constituency parties, and talks about using IT to maximise participation. All constituency documents are to be available to all members via an IT platform.

AMM VS GS

Much attention has been given to the change in the rules about the management schemes of CLPs (AMM vs Branch and Delegate).

This decision must now be taken by all-members'-meetings. That is thought to tilt the likelihood of their adoption in favour of AMMs. Possibly more important is the subordination of the ECs to the AMM or GC. ECs now have no power of decision unless confirmed by the now superior body. This will be a major advance in many CLPs.

GC-led CLPs must ensure that Branches are meeting and discussing policy because there is no other way all members can be invited to the necessary number of meetings. Members in defunct or suppressed branches with GC-led CLPs should study this rule, as it's an opportunity to have your say.

On national structures, the rule changes provide for the representation of young, BAME, and disabled members on the NEC using an electoral college of 50% members



expressed through OMOV and 50% via affiliates; Scottish and Welsh representation with rules passed to the Scottish and Welsh Conferences; and the European Parliamentary Party. They establish the rule that NEC vacancies will be filled by by-elections (rather than by the runner-up from the previous ballot filling the vacancy). Critically, it provides that rule changes passed at Conference will be current from the day following Conference.

The addition of a disabled persons' representative and the revision of the BAME representation are to be welcomed, but the likely result is that these three positions will be won by affiliate nominees, in effect negating the effect of the three additional CLP reps established last year. In any case the impending replacement of Keith Vaz as the BAME representative on the NEC should also be welcomed.

REGIONAL STRUCTURES

Rule changes were made to the chapters on Regional Structures and National Conference. The latter lays the groundwork for equalities structures in the party.

Sadly the proposal to drop the so-called three year rule, C2.II.2.H, which prohibits rule changes being considered anew without a four gap, was stymied. CLPD is drafting an amendment on this.

The rulebook reverts the name of the elected bodies in regions back to Regional Executive Committee, thus reversing the management-speak reforms of the Blairite era. Regional rules are to be now owned by the NEC and published in the rule book. Regional Conferences are to have rulebook-approved standing orders. Equalities committees and similar bodies are to be responsible to the Regional Executive Committee not the NEC.

Appropriate rules are to be developed to

ensure that candidates and Labour officials most appropriately accountable through Regional Executive Committee are managed as such. It's just shocking that these reforms were needed.

On National Conference, the new rulebook establishes an additional disabled member of CAC, deletes the requirement that motions be "contemporary", increases the number of motions to be debated to 20, and establishes new woman's, youth, BAME and disabled members' conferences and other representational structures. The proposal to delete the "three year rule" did not make it into the package.

CLPs and affiliated organisations used to have to wait 12 months before their amendments were voted on. Conference 2018 changed this. Now rule changes are to be debated at the Conference they are proposed for.)

The rules changes relating to the National Constitutional Committee (NCC) proposed to increase the size of the NCC; set a three-month deadline for hearings; establish a broader list of penalties, including apologies, reprimands, warnings and mandatory training; makes leaking of confidential information prejudicial. The power to suspend and investigate may be delegated (possibly to third parties) and the rules on CLP disciplinary procedures are to be reviewed and amended subject to conference 2019 approval.

The NEC also amended the rule that defines unacceptable behaviour (2.I.8) despite having said that discipline was outside the scope of the Democracy Review, and presumably rejecting all evidence from members as to what they want. There is a view that 2.I.8 is still not what we need as it weakens the presumption of innocence and the segregation of duties between Conference, the NEC and the NCC.

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The life and work of Georg Lukács

By John Cunningham

There is a tendency in the literature to regard Lukács's first 30-odd years as a waste of time: to say that it was only really when Lukács heard about the Russian revolution did he start to wake up and engage with the world.

His earlier life should not be so easily dismissed. His two main works of that period, *The Theory of the Novel* and *Soul and Form* have little value today. They're extremely difficult to understand.

But Michel Löwy brings out another side of it in his excellent book on Lukács. In that period, through his reading of Dostoevsky and the influence of the Hungarian poet Endre Ady, Lukács developed an intense hatred of bourgeois society.

He also developed a strong grounding in the writings of Hegel and Fichte.

His letters of that early period talk of him walking his lonely paths of darkness. Gloom is all around him. He considers suicide.

When he was confronted with the reality of 1917, his hopeless search for individual solutions gave way to a realisation that there is a collective solution.

He saw the reality of working-class power, which he'd never contemplated before. He had had a very low opinion of the Hungarian Social Democratic Party.

He was confronted for the first time with the idea that power lay with a certain stratum of society which could be wielded to change the world.

From about 1914 Lukács had become acquainted with the works of Georges Sorel, Antonio Labriola, and of Ervin Szabó, considered to have been the founder of Hungarian Marxism.

Between 1914 and 1919 a number of things came together. Lukács was very much opposed to World War One. He was at Heidelberg at the time, and was appalled by the support for the war of Max Weber, to whom he had previously been close.

As soldiers returned to Hungary from the war, there were mutinies, soldiers' councils, workers' councils.

That propelled Lukács to read Lenin. He read *State and Revolution* in 1917.

After talks with prisoners-of-war returning from Russia, where they had converted to Bolshevism, he made the absolutely right decision to join the Communist Party on 12 December 1918.

It is easy to dismiss Lukács's early life. But if you look at it in a sympathetic way, there's more to it. His father was one of the richest men in Hungary, so Lukács had baggage to

The ISL and Lukács

The first translation from German of any of Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness* appeared in the heterodox Trotskyist (ISL) journal *The New Internationalist*, in the summer 1957 issue. Michael Harrington translated *What is Orthodox Marxism?*, the first essay in the book, with an introduction reprinted on our website at bit.ly/lu-ha. There is currently a campaign to save the Lukács archives in Budapest: bit.ly/lu-arc



Georg Lukács (pictured above in 1919) was one of the best-known Marxist writers of the 20th century.

He joined the Hungarian Communist Party in December 1918 and was a People's Commissar in the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic of March-July 1919. After fleeing to Vienna, he published *History and Class Consciousness* (in 1923, but collecting texts written since 1919).

He lived in the USSR between 1929 and 1945. He was a minister in the reforming Nagy government in Hungary in 1956, survived the Russian invasion and the repression, and died in 1971.

John Cunningham talked with Martin Thomas from Solidarity to preview the session on Lukács at Ideas for Freedom, 20-23 June.

shake off.

Lukács is best known for *History and Class Consciousness*. It's a complex text. I want to approach it from a slightly different angle from usual, to place it in its context in working-class and communist history.

Lukács was trying, in *History and Class Consciousness*, to look at why the Hungarian revolution of 1919 failed, and the Russian revolution of 1917 succeeded.

He turned to Hegel as a way of overcoming what Lukács saw as a tendency to bureaucratisation in the international communist movement, and a tendency after 1917 to see the world revolution as inevitable. He stressed class consciousness, as a way of defeating reification. He looks at the role of the party, and develops ideas about totality and praxis.

That stress on the subjective factors of history led him at times to neglect economics. Some of the criticism of *History and Class Consciousness* as being idealistic is probably correct.

But we should take into account Lukács's unpublished defence of *History and Class Consciousness*, called *Tailism and the Dialectic*, written around 1925 but not published until after it was discovered in the archives in the 1990s.

He defended his work against Abram Deborin, then the leading philosopher in the USSR, and László Rudas, who, like Bela Kun and others, had become a disciple of Zinoviev. His critique was sharp and to the point.

One of Lukács's most important later works was *The Historical Novel*. He wrote that when he was in Moscow in 1929-45 (except for 1931-2 in Berlin).

Lukács worked on the journal *Literaturnyi Kritik*. *The Historical Novel* was not actually

published as a book in 1937, as is often said; it appeared then as a series of articles in the journal, and was not published as a book until after World War Two.

The Historical Novel does not give a voice to "socialist realism". It tries to put the development of the novel in a historical framework, and avoid at least some of the excesses of "socialist realism".

Throughout that period, when the purges were at their height, Lukács and the team he was working with on the journal were in a covert war of manoeuvre against "socialist realism". For example, the journal, and Lukács, supported the writer Andrei Platonov, whom Stalin loathed.

Lukács conceded to a whole range of things while he was in the USSR — if he hadn't, he would have died — but he did make a stand for some writers who were on the margins. He counterposed bourgeois 19th century realism to "socialist realism". His advice to writers in the USSR was essentially: be more like Balzac. The downside is that he loathed modernism. He had no time for Samuel Beckett or James Joyce.

After Lukács came out of internment in Romania (where he had been sent after 1956) someone sent him some Kafka to read. He apparently remarked: perhaps Kafka had a point. Maybe Lukács's reference to Kafka was partly prompted by his being detained in a Romanian holiday camp for the Party elite.

If I have time at IFF, I will also say a few words about the Blum Theses of 1929, Lukács's proposed programme for the underground Hungarian Communist Party.

The Theses decisively rejected by the Comintern, and that marked a major turning point in Lukács's life.

We have elected the new NCC members, and now we'll have to see how the broader punishment scale and the change of rules work, and whether we will have a better justice system inside the party. The jury is out on this one.

The only CLP-authored rule changes to get through were the abolition of the need for motions to be "contemporary", the abolition of the requirement that rule changes have to wait for a year before they can be voted on, and the establishment of Conference Standing Orders.

EXCLUSIONS

There was a debate at conference 2018 about Rule 4.1.2.B, the rule under which a number of good campaigning comrades have been expelled or "auto-excluded" for "supporting an organisation other than official Labour organisations".

A submission proposed qualifying the type of organisation that might lead to expulsion as one that conflicted with Labour's aims and values and placing the process by which such exclusion would be undertaken under auspices of the disciplinary procedures. The current rule allows a secret decision and no appeal: the disciplinary procedures are marginally more visible than that. Actions taken under the old have been factionally motivated and contrary to the rules of natural justice.

Unfortunately the proposing CLP had allowed the rule change to be called "membership of other parties" which isn't what the rule is about. Its current words make "support for organisations other than official Labour organisations" an act that renders one liable for exclusion.

This rule is usually used against small groups in the party which leads one to ask, why not Progress, Labour First or Momentum? It has been most visibly used against Workers' Liberty and Socialist Appeal. It was also used against three long-term activists in NW Surrey who had wanted to explore running a "progressive alliance" candidate against Jeremy Hunt.

It was also used against Moshe Machover, although the decision in his case was revoked on the grounds that writing an article for a newspaper couldn't be considered "support for an organisation other than ..."

There is no certainty with this rule, and there's certainly no justice.

In summary, the trigger ballot reform is a tremendous step forward, and so is the rewriting of the CLP rules. The establishment of a charter of members' rights is also an important gain.

The NEC reforms must be assessed as a score draw, but if they act as a focus for autonomous organisation of BAME, youth and the disabled, these will be victories. We need to review the leadership election rules.

As we make democratic advances, we need to balance the transfer of power to individual members with the ability to take collective decisions. Given the reactions to the Party's Brexit compromise, with neither side particularly happy, a number of Labour Party people need to learn how concede to others in the Party. The "othering" of members must stop, and the arguments we should use must allow us to come together.

The refusal to accept that the outcome from the policy process is a point of unity must also stop.

Brexit and the Tory schisms



Interview

By Andrew Gamble

There are at least three relatively long-standing strands of division in the Conservative Party now in play:

- *US orientation vs European orientation*
- *English-nationalist orientation vs UK orientation*
- *Ideological orientation vs traditional pragmatic small-c conservative orientation.*

What roles do you think they are playing?

Probably the strand to the fore is the US vs European one. That goes to the heart of the Leave-Remain split.

Some of the Tory Remainers are also pro-US, but among the Leavers there is a very strong rejection of Europe and a very strong orientation to the USA.

That orientation is geopolitical, but it also comes down to national identity. It's been thought about by some Conservative intellectuals through the idea of the "Anglosphere" — that Britain is part of the Anglosphere, it's not part of Europe.

Many political and economic implications follow from that. Donald Trump was emphasising some of those in his recent visit, and his ambassador even more so, with the suggestion that a trade deal with the US would have to include access for US companies to the NHS. A trade deal with the US would be a very different package from the arrangements that Britain has with the EU.

A clear division has opened in the Conservative party, certainly at the parliamentary level and the elite level.

It's less pronounced at the level of the party membership, who are quite solidly in favour of a hard Brexit, but the motivation there is less a matter of ideas about the Anglosphere and more a matter of nationalism and social conservatism. The EU is rejected because it's seen as alien to the English national tradition.

Strong English nationalism is an important factor. There are still a lot of Conservatives who place importance on maintaining the United Kingdom, but it's hard to assess how strong that commitment is. If Theresa May had not had to rely on DUP votes after 2017,



Andrew Gamble is emeritus professor of politics at Sheffield University, and author of many books on Marxist theory and of many studies of the Conservative party. He talked with Martin Thomas from *Solidarity*.

the Conservatives would have prioritised getting a Brexit deal above DUP concerns.

There are parts of the Conservative party where the Union is still very important, for example in Scotland, but I think it is not nearly as strong as it used to be among the English elite.

Imperial nostalgia has also been cited as a factor.

You can see that nostalgia in some of the leading Brexit supporters. I've just been reading some of Jacob Rees-Mogg's new book on the Victorians. It is very interesting as a window on him, less interesting as a work of history.

The complete blindness about the dark side of Empire is mind-boggling.

More generally among Conservative party members, the social conservatism is a wish that Britain should be what it once was rather than what it is now. Part of that is a desire for a much whiter Britain, and a Britain that was much more powerful and independent. You see that strand very clearly outside the Conservative party in Farage.

I wouldn't say that imperial nostalgia was a big factor among the Conservative elite. They've come to terms with the fact that Britain isn't going to get its empire back.

Boris Johnson is an interesting case. When he was visiting Myanmar in January 2017 as foreign secretary, he began reciting Kipling's *Mandalay* under his breath, and the ambassador had to reprove him.

Johnson is steeped in Kipling and a romantic view of the British Empire; but he is enough of a realist that actually he's quite happy to have Britain dependent on the US, and he doesn't envisage Britain become an independent imperial country again.

Even those most infected by imperial nostalgia, and using it in their discourse, are aware of its limits as a policy position. In fact they want the closest relations with the US and the rest of the Anglosphere.

The idea of the Anglosphere is a strange construct. Under other names it goes back a long way, to the 1880s or earlier. But it is hard to make it material. Canada, Australia, New Zealand, let alone Ireland, long ago developed their own independent foreign policies.

If Johnson becomes prime minister, I'm sure he and Trump will indulge in Anglosphere rhetoric, but the key thing will be a trade deal with the US on terms quite brutal for Britain.

The actual word Anglosphere was invented in the 1990s. A number of intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic took it up. James Bennett wrote a book called *The Anglosphere Challenge* in 2004 in which he argued that the future lay with a networked commonwealth of the English-speaking countries.

I suspect that the revival of the general idea came from Samuel Huntington, with his 1993 article on *The Clash of Civilisations* and his subsequent book *Who Are We?*, which is about US identity being actually English identity and needing to be defended against a rising tide of Hispanic immigration.

The earlier lineage goes back to Charles Dilke, the radical Liberal MP, who wrote a book in 1868 called *Greater Britain*. The idea then meant an alliance between the two big English-speaking powers, the US and the British Empire.

Arthur Balfour and Theodore Roosevelt were very interested in the idea of the An-



glosphere. Churchill emphasised "the English-speaking peoples" and the "three circles" (the British Empire, the US, Europe).

But the United States quickly became so dominant that no other association that Britain had could match it. The US elite has its Anglophiliac element, but also other elements indifferent or hostile to Britain.

Will the Conservative party split?

Depending on who is elected as leader, I think that is a strong possibility. If a new leader goes for a hard Brexit without a deal, then part of the Conservative parliamentary party would rather support a vote of no confidence than let that go through.

With a leader like Dominic Raab, a split would be very likely. Boris Johnson is the most untrustworthy figure in British politics, and capable of changing his position on almost anything. Despite what he says, I doubt he would really contemplate a no-deal Brexit because of the financial collapse that would follow. I suspect that as Conservative leader he would tack to the centre and try to hold the Conservative party together.

The obvious thing would be for Johnson, or whoever becomes Conservative leader, to call an immediate general election, because their parliamentary situation is so poor. But the rise of the Brexit party makes that enormously risky. The Peterborough by-election shows the Conservatives how Labour could pick up lots of seats because the vote on the right becomes fragmented between the Conservatives and the Brexit party.

There is no time for a renegotiation. Johnson's only other possibility, besides going for a no-deal Brexit in October, would be to call a referendum, which again would have its risks. But Johnson could live with a referendum which went for Remain.

It's very hard to see how the Conservative party can stay together unless it can resolve the Brexit issue.

It is likely to be a dramatic split in the case of a no-deal Brexit, and otherwise there may be a process of attrition, with the pro-European wing leaving the party or being edged out.

That would be like what happened to the Conservative party before 1914, with the big row over tariff reform and free trade. Churchill left the Conservative party and joined the Liberals because he was a free-trader, and there was a fairly systematic

weeding-out of free-trade Conservative MPs in the constituencies. Between about 1906 and 1910 the Conservatives were turned almost entirely into a party of imperial protection, tariff reform, and social imperialism.

That position was maintained through the inter-war years. It was essentially a defensive position to try to hold on to the Empire and fashion into an economic and political bloc which could stand up against both the US and Germany.

There was an implicit anti-US element to it. When in the 1920s Trotsky speculated about the possibility of a military clash between Britain and the US, there was a logic which could have seen that develop. In fact in the early 1900s the free-trade element of the British elite had already made a whole series of concessions to the US in the Western Hemisphere to avoid such a clash.

The division now in the Conservative party is very deep. If a hard Brexit is pushed through by whomever becomes leader, it has huge implications.

Jacob Rees-Mogg has been open about this. It means, for example, giving up car production. The whole pattern of business integration with Europe established over 40 years will be dismantled and unwound. And Rees-Mogg himself says that the benefits may not be apparent for 50 years.

The radical turn in Conservative policy is a bit like the Thatcher period, except that this time they're going into it with their eyes open.

They see a cost, but for them the cost is worth paying to free British businesses from the constraints of the European Union.

There was a big shake-out of industry in the early 1980s. Part of it was planned by the Thatcher government; part of it wasn't, but the Thatcher government took it as an opportunity.

There is a new Conservative generation which takes that as a model, and sees new industries growing up after Brexit. Unfortunately they're going for it as we are entering an era of trade wars.

They see it as a matter of reconstructing the British economy, completing the Thatcher revolution, and further dismantling workers' rights and welfare.

Most of the time you can't find politicians who say that outright, but Dominic Raab, in his book *Britannia Unchained*, sets it out very clearly.

Stonewall and the early days

By Ian Townson

The “Stonewall riots”, which began on 28 June 1969 in New York, marked the start of the modern lesbian and gay rights movement.

During the McCarthyite witch hunts in 1950s America it was believed that a homosexual underground existed as part of a “communist conspiracy”. It was sometimes called the Homintern (after the Comintern, the Stalinist Communist International).

The fearful authorities went so far as to depict this threat to security as a contagious social disease.

Despite the fact that it was completely illegal to be gay and despite rabid persecution by the FBI and other state agencies, some brave souls formed a “homophile” association called the Mattachine Society in 1950. Harry Hay, a longtime member of the Communist Party, was among the first to point out that homosexuals were a “cultural minority” and not just individuals. He and the Mattachine society had even begun to call for public protests for gay rights, thus pre-figuring later gay pride marches.

Hay was expelled from the CP in 1951 as a “security risk”. The only left group to come vaguely close to supporting gay rights was the Young Socialists (then influenced by the “Shachtmanite” Independent Socialist League) which in 1952 published an article in the *Young Socialist Review* (bit.ly/ys-1952).

The sixties blew apart the repressive political climate and stifling conventions of the 1950s, with massive civil unrest throughout America. The Black Civil Rights Movement was on the march against racism, and then the more militant Black Panther Movement, and Malcom X’s uncompromising message of political and social revolution. Black communities rose up against social injustice and there were “race” riots in many US towns and cities, notably the Watts riots of 1965.

There were huge demonstrations against the Vietnam war from about 1967. Students rebelled and demanded greater democracy and freedom in education. The “counter-culture” refused to conform to the dictates of bourgeois norms. The growth of the Women’s Liberation Movement began a journey towards self-determination and freedom from the straitjacket of oppression and second class citizenship.

REFORMIST GAY GROUPS AND UNPLANNED UPRISINGS

“We homosexuals plead with our people to please help maintain peaceful and quiet conduct on the streets of the village” — Mattachine, September 1969.

This plea from the Mattachine Society, now much more conservative in outlook, was posted in a window of the Stonewall Inn three months after the riots.

The MS had become a liberal lobby group trying to influence and educate the great and good heterosexuals towards more “tolerance” of homosexuality, and was clearly spooked by the spontaneous uprising of the oppressed. They sought to prove that gay people could be assimilated into bourgeois society and favoured a non-confrontational, conformist approach. The new Gay Liberation Movement would be different.

Gay people living under conditions of complete illegality had become easy prey for police entrapment, blackmailers, queer-bashers, criminal gangs, homophobic employers and landlords and were refused entry to bars



The Stonewall Inn, 1969

if their behaviour or appearance was “odd”.

The Stonewall Inn gay bar is situated on Christopher Street, Greenwich Village. That was the centre of liberal/ radical/ artistic/ bohemian life in New York. The bar was controlled by the Genovese crime family (Mafia).

Almost all of the gay bars were controlled by organised crime and money was extorted through overpriced alcohol, watered down beer and blackmailing the richer gay clientele. The bar was also paying off the police to allow this to happen, in weekly envelopes of cash.

The bar had no liquor licence, no running water, overflowing toilets, no fire exits, and drug dealing was rife. Customers were inspected through a “speakeasy” peep-hole by a bouncer and (to avoid undercover police entrapment) only allowed entry if they were known or “looked gay”. People rarely signed their real names in a book to gain entry. Only a few trans people or men in drag were allowed in by the bouncers.

A few lesbians came to the bar, but it was 98% male. Homeless young men would try to get in for free drinks from customers. The age of the patrons ranged from late teens to early thirties, and there was an even racial mix between white, black and hispanic people. It was the only gay bar in New York where dancing was allowed.

The patrons included drag queens, transgender people, effeminate young men, butch lesbians, male prostitutes, and homeless youth — some of the most oppressed sections of the working class.

WHAT CAUSED THE RIOTS

Police raids against gay venues were routine and frequent. The Stonewall was raided at least once a month and patrons were arrested, handcuffed and herded into police wagons.

The management knew about the raids before hand and they were early enough for them to re-stock the bar from hidden supplies to carry on serving once the police had gone. The mafia still wanted its cut of the profits.

This was the modus operandi during the raids: “... the lights were turned on, and customers were lined up and their identification cards checked. Those without identification or dressed in full drag were arrested; others were allowed to leave. Some of the men, including those in drag, used their draft cards as identification.

“Women were required to wear three pieces of feminine clothing, and would be arrested if found not wearing them. Employees and management of the bars were also typically arrested. The period immediately before June 28, 1969, was marked by frequent raids of local bars—including a raid at the Stonewall Inn on the Tuesday before the riots—and the closing of the Checkerboard, the Tele-Star, and two other clubs in Greenwich Village.”

Things came to a head when, so it was rumoured, the police where no longer able to receive kickbacks from blackmail and payoffs, including the theft of negotiable bonds from threatened gay Wall Street employees. It was more than likely that the Public Morals or the Food and Drugs Administration had decided to close the Stonewall Inn permanently on alleged “health and safety” grounds, as had happened with other bars in the neighbourhood.

People began to defy the police. They refused to show ID cards or be hustled into the bathroom so that police could verify their sexual identity. Men in drag were immediately arrested. Those not arrested congregated outside the bar and were joined by others in ever increasing numbers from the neighbourhood.

Some people were rescued from the patrol wagons, and when a lesbian resisted arrest the police started to beat her and knocked others to the ground. The police were pelted with coins and bottles to begin with, by the crowd, and later bricks and stones from a nearby building site. Barricading themselves inside the Stonewall Inn, police were forced to call for assistance.

From there on as crowds swelled in num-

bers over several successive nights, the whole thing escalated into a full blown riot. It took three days and nights before the Tactical Patrol Force, trained to deal with Vietnam war protests, could finally subdue the rioters.

THE OUTCOME

The rioting was not organised or orchestrated by any particular group.

It was a spontaneous uprising and rebellion by people who had been beaten down to the lowest level of human existence by repressive anti-gay laws, corrupt police and officials in cahoots with criminal organisations.

After years of unchecked oppression they had reached the end of the tether and vented their fury on the oppressors.

However during the riots leaflets were distributed, one of them reading “Get the Mafia and Cops out of Gay Bars”. Others called for gays to own their own establishments, for a boycott of the Stonewall and other Mafia-owned bars, and for public pressure on the Mayor’s office to investigate the “intolerable situation”.

Within days of the rioting groups did begin to spring up to demand equality, and the Gay Liberation Front was born. Within a year or two, GLF organisations had spread to many towns and cities throughout the USA, making radical, revolutionary demands in line with black and women’s liberation movements of the time.

GLF IN BRITAIN

The establishment of the Gay Liberation Front in Britain was a much more subdued affair.

It was founded at the London School of Economics, by two Maoists, Aubrey Walter and Bob Mellors, in October 1970, despite Mao’s “Cultural Revolution” in China killing thousands or millions and homosexuality being illegal in China until 1997 and classed as a “mental illness” until 2001.

continued page 10

Stonewall and the early days

From p. 9

Walter and Mellors had visited America, and were mightily impressed. The GLF imported the radical politics of its sister organisations in the USA and the revolutionary demands of the movement are embodied in the Gay Liberation Manifesto of 1971 (bit.ly/glf-71).

Almost in a parallel way to the GLF in America, groups sprouted up in many towns and cities in Britain, and practically every University had a GaySoc. The GLF experimented with consciousness-raising “think-ins”, alternative lifestyles to what was expected in bourgeois “straight” society. Many campaigns were enhanced through street theatre and direct action, challenging anti-gay moral crusades, repressive legislation, media censorship and social intolerance in general.

Always with a clear anti-capitalist objective in mind.

Feminist, academic, and lesbian Elizabeth Wilson later looked back on the achievements of the Gay Liberation Front:

“The ‘Manifesto Group’ was one of many launched in the ferment of activity that was the Gay Liberation Front in 1970-71. Today it seems incredible that so many young adults had the time and energy to devote themselves full time to political struggle (although incidentally many of us also had paid jobs – the workplace just wasn’t as demanding as it is today).

“GLF is best understood as a fabulous political firework display. Demonstrations, sit-ins, drag events, consciousness raising groups, street theatre, night graffiti raids, workshops, rallies, dances and ‘think-ins’ were all included in the stellar spectacular that was GLF.

“The Manifesto Group came from the ideological, intellectual side of the movement and debated the question: What was it about



society that led to the oppression of lesbians and gay men? The Manifesto’s answer was what would now be termed a ‘functionalist’ one: that capitalism ‘needed’ gay oppression – to shore up the nuclear family (a big bugbear for radicals at the time) and to police citizens into conformity.

“The Manifesto reads today as a fairly one-dimensional attempt to account for gender and sexual victimisation. However, it asked an important and still relevant question about the sources of prejudice and hatred. The group met in my basement living room throughout a rather hot summer.

“The atmosphere was sometimes tense and febrile, but however black and white the answers we developed appear today, it seemed crucial at the time to understand better the nature of the society we lived and live in. If it seems both raw and over-simplified now, it did actually (along with the work of feminists) spark a way of thinking about human relations in society that has led to significant change.

“Like all pioneers, we sometimes got it wrong, but we believed in what we were

doing. We believed in our power to change society. And that is surely a good thing.”

Elizabeth Wilson has captured the political zeitgeist of the 1970s that affected the GLF. Scarcely a day would go by without some form of struggle going on, whether it be strikes, demonstrations, sit ins or pickets.

Not just in the labour movement but right across the board including School Students’ strikes, anti Vietnam war demonstrations, Troops out of Ireland, anti-apartheid movement, Anti-Nazi League, the burgeoning Women’s Liberation and Black power movements, the start of the Environmental-Green Movement, continuing counter-cultural influences, the student movement sparking educational reforms and prompting the labour movement to engage with political issues beyond the workplace, the squatters’ movement for housing and alternative lifestyles and so on.

Despite all that there was very little connection between the GLF and the labour movement — hostility and distrust on both sides. Despite some Marxist and socialist individuals, the GLFers hitched their wagon

mostly to the Women’s Liberation Movement and to a lesser extent to the Black movement. (Macho posturing and aversion to gay people got in the way there. Huey Newton, a leading member of the Black Panthers, in a very strong statement urged solidarity with the gay movement: bit.ly/huey-70. But others accused Black gay men of being traitors to their race for not producing black children).

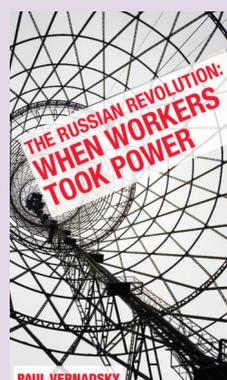
The lack of connectedness to the labour movement considerably diminished the GLF’s (I could write “our”, since I was active then) understanding of working-class consciousness and why that is important.

Patriarchy and male privilege were the enemies and many gay radicals felt that ridding the world of male power and chauvinism and throwing in our lot with oppressed women was sufficient to bring about equality and freedom.

Even today it is still a big task to stop LGBT+ people from being exiled from our class and raise awareness that as part of the working-class struggle for emancipation we can share in the potential to overthrow capitalism.

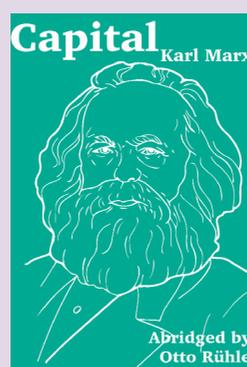


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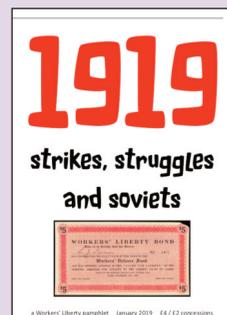
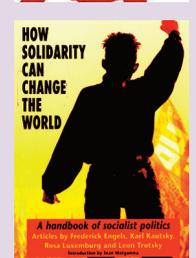
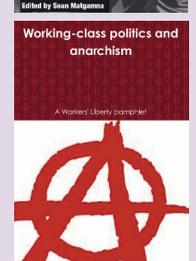
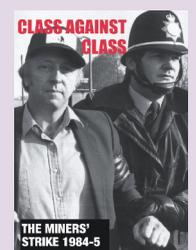
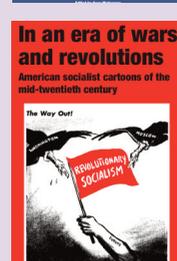
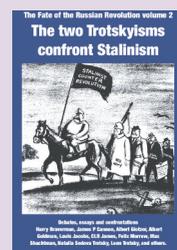
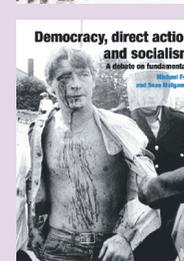
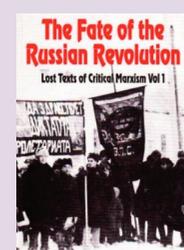


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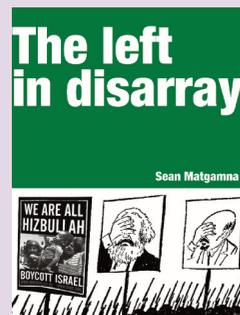
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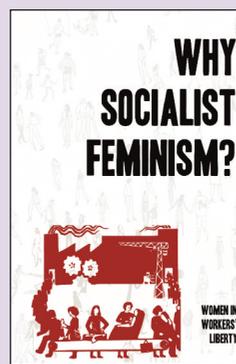
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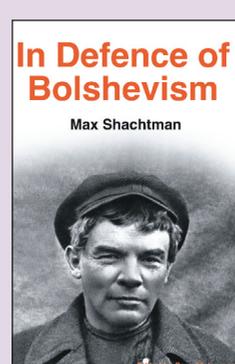


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Not the worst kind of renegade

By August Grabski

Karol Modzelewski did on 28 April 2019. He was a well known personality on the western anticapitalist left in the 1960s, as co-author of the "Open letter to the Party".

After the collapse of "actually existing socialism", he was treated as a moral authority by the liberal media in the Third Polish Republic, as one of the fighters for Polish democracy.

Karol Modzelewski was born in Moscow in 1937 in a family of Communist activists. His stepfather, Zygmunt Modzelewski, became the foreign affairs minister in "People's Poland" in 1947.

In 1964 Modzelewski, who was then a lecturer at the Historical Institute of Warsaw University, and Jacek Kuroń, a functionary of the Polish Scouting Association, jointly wrote "An open letter to the Party", where they accused the governing Polish United Workers Party of both political and economical treason of socialism.

The authors claimed that a party-state bureaucracy had taken over Poland, while exploiting the working class. A real workers' state could only be implemented as a result of a workers' revolution. The revolution would accept a pluralism of workers' parties.

Kuroń and Modzelewski saw the possible anti-bureaucratic revolution in Poland as a part of a world revolutionary triad: anti-bureaucratic revolutions in the Eastern Bloc, socialist revolution in the West and anti-colonial revolt in the Third World. An obvious inspiration for Kuroń and Modzelewski was Leon Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed*, though later in his memoirs Modzelewski pointed at Milovan Djilas, a much less controversial figure in Poland.

Modzelewski and Kuron were both expelled from the party and sentenced to time in prison (Modzelewski for three and a half years, Kuroń for three years).

Modzelewski was released some months before the student revolt in March 1968. After that he was sent to prison for another three and half years.

During the March 1968 events he was a mentor for the so called "commando" group which led the Polish student protests. It was a group of young people from nomenklatura families. Part of that group, after their parents had lost their party office, would become an important current of the so called democratic opposition, and later an influential current in the Solidarity union leadership.

Over the decades they drifted to the right of the political spectrum. In the 1990s they created the liberal Unia Wolności (Freedom Union) and *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Electoral Newspaper: still the most powerful daily), edited by Adam Michnik.

In the 1970s Modzelewski continued his work as a researcher on Middle Ages, working, with the party's permission, at the Polish Academy of Sciences. He returned to politics in 1980, when "People's Poland" experienced its greatest political conflict.

The sides in that conflict were the Party and the "Solidarity" union. In that conflict "Solidarity" is usually considered to have been the emancipating subject, and the Party, the source of oppression. In reality though the conflict was also happening across both organisations. On each sides there were followers of socialism, and of capitalism. Our tradition should therefore not be tied to either of those sides, but rather refer to the followers of non-authoritarian socialism on both sides of that barricade.

Modzelewski, who since the 1960s had evolved from Marxist to social-democrat, became a member of Solidarity's leadership. He saw the 1980-1981 union political movement first and foremost as a school of egalitarianism and social justice:

"It was the drivers on whom the public transport [of Wrocław] strike depended, because it was they who could stop the buses. They worked extremely hard, 14 hours every day, but I had seen the [pay] slip Władek Frasyniuk [driver and Wrocław Solidarity leader], who got 16,400 złoty... I was an adjunct professor and was paid (like each adjunct) 4700 złoty. Frasyński made almost four times what I did and six times what a cleaning lady made.

Drivers in Wrocław went on strike considering this an uneven share of salary — against themselves. They wanted their salaries to be cut for the cleaners' and mechanics' sake... Today there's a mass dismissal of teachers. Nobody strikes for their sake. Not even other teachers." (*Gazeta Wyborcza*, 14.9.2013).

The question of capitalist restoration in Poland was not part of the thinking of the Solidarity mass membership. As Modzelewski mentioned: "During the 'great' time of Solidarity there were many different demands... People drew caricatures of the Russian bear and [trade union activist Andrzej] Różkowski claimed that if we were strident enough, the Kremlin bells would play the Dąbrowski Mazurek [Polish national anthem]."

PRIVATISATION

"At the same time there was not a single mention of re-privatisation of any property nationalised between 1945 and 1956."

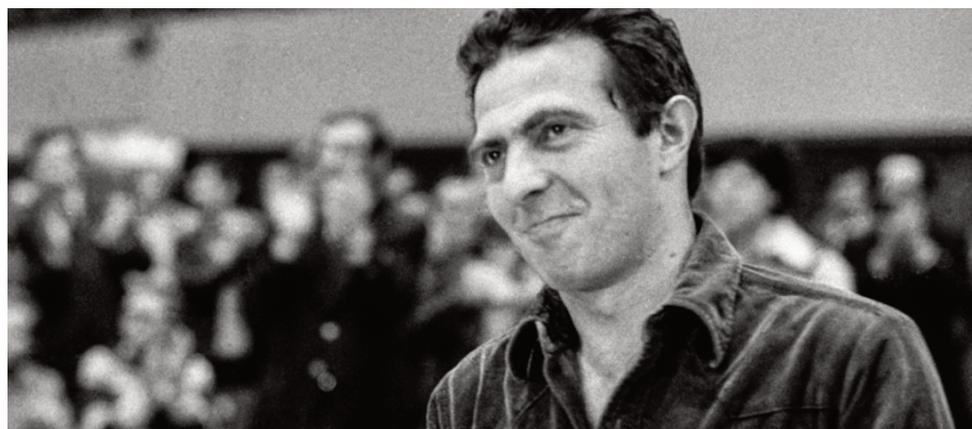
There was not a single mention of privatising the economy. There was no such thing. Not because that seemed impossible. The Kremlin bells seemed equally impossible. It was just not a part of the moral horizon of this movement." (*Gazeta Wyborcza*, 14.9.2013).

And yet Solidarity in 1989 was in the vanguard when a very brutal version of capitalism was introduced. In 1989 "S" was something completely different from 1980. Its class function had changed: from progressive into regressive and pro-capitalist.

As it was put by Modzelewski himself: "the mass movement was crushed [by the martial law era repressions], the underground structures were weak and no longer had roots in the mass movement, in the factories, but the myth survived. And the [new groups of] workers [striking in 1988], so that the country understood and supported them, had to call not only for pay rises, but also for the more general 'solidarity'. The owners of that myth were Lech Wałęsa and the old Solidarity activists surrounding him. The survivors in the army uniforms [led by Wojciech Jaruzelski] had to make a truce with the remnants in the historical dress of Solidarity leaders. And that is how the Round Table [agreement between the nomenklatura and Solidarity] came to existence". (*Krytykapolityczna.pl*, 4.09.2010).

Since the martial law Solidarity had ceased to be a mass egalitarian movement. Democratic mechanisms and grassroots control stopped working within it. It became dependent on the Catholic Church, and — as Modzelewski failed to mention — the Central Intelligence Agency. The American CIA gave Solidarity sums amounting to \$20m (today's equivalent of \$40m).

That was recently described by American researcher Seth G. Jones in his book *A Covert*



Karol Modzelewski at the First National Congress of Delegates of Solidarność in 1981

Action: Reagan, the CIA, and the Cold War Struggle in Poland. This subject is a great taboo of the Polish political class. We know when the CIA started the collaboration with some Solidarity activists, but we still don't know when it came to an end...

In result, the restoration of capitalism in Poland was a joint work of the main current within the nomenklatura and the main current of the Solidarity leadership, with the blessing of western imperialism and the Polish pope blessing.

Trotsky's prediction from the 1930s: "The political prognosis has an alternative character: either the bureaucracy, becoming ever more the organ of the world bourgeoisie in the workers' state, will overthrow the new forms of property and plunge the country back to capitalism; or the working class will crush the bureaucracy and open the way to socialism" (*Transitional Program*, 1938), had been fulfilled, but in a negative sense.

Without Trotsky we cannot understand the history of Poland after 1989. For example, one attempt of resistance by the Polish society against the outcomes of capitalist transition was without doubt the passing of power to the post-Communist Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) in 1993 and of the presidency into the hands of Aleksander Kwaśniewski in 1995. Yet, to the surprise of the disoriented SLD voters, the party turned out to be even more in favour of privatisation, coy towards the Catholic Church, and servile towards the USA and NATO than various right wing groups. It is hard to understand that without the analysis of the bureaucracy by Trotsky expressed in his *Revolution Betrayed* from 1936.

Modzelewski was a co-author of capitalist restoration in Poland and at the same time a critic of the high social costs of the transition. In his memoirs he even claimed: "I have never fought for capitalism. I did eight and half years in prison, but I would have not done a day for capitalism." (*We will drive the horse of history to death*, 2013).

But in practice as an MP he helped introduce capitalism in 1989-1991, simply not agreeing to its most anti-social model.

The costs of the transition were shocking. Poland after 1989 was a country which has shown what Poles haven't seen for several decades. Poland experienced an enormous regression in the realm of social rights. Poles experienced mass unemployment, evictions with no replacement housing, homelessness, state economy robbery, economic penetration by the foreign capital, deindustrialisation, mass clergy privileges, regression of women's rights, such as a ban on abortion, etc.

Fourteen years after capitalist restoration, in 2003, 59% of the society lived below the social minimum, and that resulted, among other things, in mass emigration by Poles

after Poland's accession to the EU.

The political milieu with whom Modzelewski collaborated most closely (leaders such as Adam Michnik or Jacek Kuron) in the 1990s turned into liberals. And very peculiar at that: the Freedom Union accepted the ban on abortion, the introduction of compulsory Catholic religion lessons in state schools, and the mass cult of John Paul II.

Modzelewski himself withdrew from political activity in 1990s, despite remaining the honorary leader of the weak Labour Union, a social democratic party whose peak success was 7.5% of vote in the parliamentary elections in 1993. He focused on academic work about the Middle Ages. But he remained a commentator on Polish political life.

In his critique of the capitalist transition we find no criticism of capitalism as such, but only an appeal for a greater concern about workers. In the year 2000, with Jacek Kuron, he wrote:

"The arrogant, aristocratic treatment of workers will bring no good to anyone. Nothing can be built upon that. This is the main weakness of capitalist system when it is left without any leftist counterweight. Without such thing we will forever remain a developing country.

"Development is a result of the balance between socialism and liberalism. 'People's Poland' disrupted it by killing the market — today we are hitting yet another wall. We are convinced that defence of those ones employed in the small and medium companies, who find themselves in growingly difficult material situations, equals defence of modernity and is our modernity's only chance". (*Krytyka Polityczna*, Issue 2, 2002).

In the conclusions of his memoir, addressed to the younger generation, Modzelewski wrote:

"I no longer have the strength or health for the barricades. What's more, I realise too much. I know revolution is either impossible or too costly. In any case, its conclusion is not what we were wishing for. The revolutionary could not know this. His knowledge empowers him and lets him accomplish the impossible, which changes the world.

"Afterwards, he will be disappointed or at least unsatisfied with the change he helped bringing, but this is another story." (*We will drive the horse of history to death*, 2013).

An erstwhile revolutionary died as a renegade, somebody who was ashamed of the piece of writing which made him famous among the western anticapitalist left. He might not be the worst one of that sort, but he was still a renegade.

• August Grabski is a Polish Marxist and an academic at Warsaw University

Zionism and the left, from Arendt

By Barry Finger

“How has it come to this?” asks Susie Linfield. “How has ‘Zionist,’ sometimes shortened to the disparaging ‘Zio,’ become the dirtiest word to the international Left—akin, say to racist, pedophile or rapist?...

“How is it that signs proclaiming ‘We Are All Hezbollah’ are brandished at supposedly left-wing demonstrations in London and New York? This is not the lunatic fringe. On the contrary: a highly respected American academic has praised Hezbollah and Hamas as ‘progressive’ social movements that are part of the ‘global left’...

“An acclaimed British psychoanalyst diagnoses Zionism as a ‘form of collective insanity’ that is dogmatic, ruthless and irrational. A leading womens’-rights activist in the United States proclaims that feminism and Zionism are irreconcilable...”

The Lions’ Den does not address this latest phase in the degeneracy of the left, a left still bruised and gangrenous even after having sloughed off its most overtly Stalinist-infected appendages. To answer her questions would require a deep dive elsewhere.

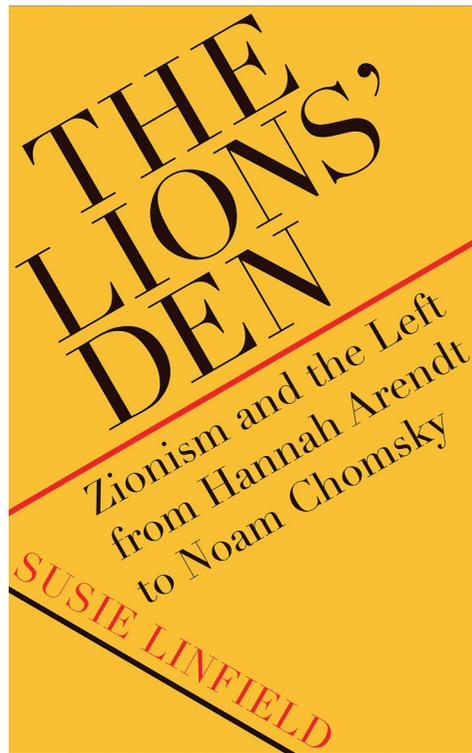
This particular toxic stew has long brewed in the confluence of Third Worldism, post-modernism, and Orientalism-in-reverse that has captured the Left. But we would have to rummage even further back to understand its disastrous political antecedents: to the revanchist accommodation of the 19th Century French revolutionary left to Boulangist chauvinism after the loss of Alsace, where sections of that left buried their ideals and immersed themselves in a movement that sought to stop the clock of world history until that region was reconquered and returned to its “rightful” owner.

What Linfield seeks to do, and does exceedingly well, is to illuminate a “fraught, sometimes buried intellectual history” from a curated selection of Marxist (Isaac Deutscher and Fred Halliday), Mizrahi-leftist (Albert Memmi), Orientalist (Maxime Rodinson), radical democratic (Hannah Arendt, I. F. Stone and Noam Chomsky) and air-borne intellectuals (Arthur Koestler) who grappled with the “Zionist Question.”

The problem is this. They were addressing themselves to a different order of humanity, one rooted in the intellectual shadow of pre- and post-Holocaust immediacy, where no-one on the left denied the elemental legitimacy of the Israeli state. That alone defies the core sensibilities of today’s bien pensant revolutionaries.

Even the most implacable enemies of Zionism (arising from a section of the Israeli left with whom Halliday, a hero of Linfield’s narrative, was most proximate, Matzpen) argued that were Israel “to be defeated militarily and cease to exist as a state, the Hebrew nation will still exist.”

For that reason, the “Israeli masses will not be liberated from the influence of Zionism and will not struggle against it unless the progressive forces in the Arab world present them with a prospect of coexistence without national oppression.” Opposition to Zionism did not mean opposition to the Jewish presence in Palestine, nor to the Hebrew claim to be a legitimate constituent sovereignty in Palestine. It was about opposition to the Hebrew nation claiming for itself sole sovereignty in Israel and building a state



Barry Finger reviews Susie Linfield’s book, *The Lions’ Den*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2019

apparatus that embodies that claim.

It was about raising a revolutionary alternative to expand democratic rights in Israel beyond that of individual equality between Jew and Arab, given formal recognition in the Israeli Declaration of Independence, to equal collective rights in Israel and all of Palestine. To recognize Israel’s legitimacy, or that of any other state for that matter, is not the same as accepting its self-declared borders, its internal governmental principles and arrangements or its international power alignments.

BI-NATIONAL

That a revolutionary bi-nationalist orientation never had traction among the Jewish or Arab peoples is indisputable.

Winning a traumatized Jewish population of refugees to this perspective after being immediately set upon by the entire Arab world may have been unrealistic in 1947-8, but it is no less necessary than now if the hope of national reconciliation rooted in equality is to be kept alive.

But it is this revolutionary perspective that the Boycott, Diversity and Sanctions movement, despite its nonviolent façade, most adamantly and centrally withholds. Omar Barghouti has explained his eliminationist perspective in every venue of which he has availed himself: “I am completely and categorically against binationalism because it assumes that there are two nations with equal moral claims to the land and therefore, we have to accommodate both national rights.”

This is antithetical to Matzpen’s initial revolutionary two-fold indictment of Zionism, which in its own way encapsulated the lessons of Hal Draper’s third camp socialist perspective. Both rejected a unitary state that privileged one nation (its majority Hebrew segment) over another (its Arab minority), as does a Zionist Israel, for the democratic limitations that such a state necessarily imposes on a binational reality.

As they further argued, such a Jewish

chauvinist state would be, for that reason, an impediment to Middle East integration, rendering it reliant on imperialist powers for its survival.

Zionist Israel, in early Matzpen’s and Draper’s view, returned the Hebrew nation to the very defining vulnerability from which Zionism sought to rescue the Jewish people: as a buffer and diversionary scapegoat between (foreign) exploiters and the (Arab) masses. A Zionist state undermined the animating premise of Zionism, to afford Jews a safe haven free from persecution.

Third camp socialists fought to secure that aim instead with an agenda of consistent internationalist democracy. They raised the call for a wide-ranging program to secure equal national rights of Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs within a broader regional transformation, thereby offering a revolutionary socialist alternative to secure Zionism’s promissory note.

In practical terms, that means fighting for a two state solution in Palestine and a de-Zionised Israel: but also for the elimination of “Arab” and “Islamic” chauvinist states and their replacement by symmetrical democratic multinational, secular republics with recognised rights for all — for a Jewish majority binational state in Israel and for Arab majority multinational states, with full equality including the right to secession for national minorities, throughout a socialist Middle East.

But that was then. For it is sadly true that today many if not most ageing Matzpen-ists and students of Draper have completely lost or consciously jettisoned and inverted this thread.

In their bitterness at a brutal and seemingly endless occupation, they have abandoned the fight for a consistent democratic future, folded their camp and enlisted in the international left brigades that reviles Israeli Jews and their sympathisers abroad and seeks Israel’s penitent “reintegration” into the Arab fold.

In practice, this means stripping Israeli Jews of their right to national self-expression and of permanently suppressing those who would resist this oppressive prescription. The left’s “solution” to a Jewish chauvinist state is an Arab chauvinist state, which is to say — no solution, and certainly no revolutionary socialist solution, at all.

And Israeli Jews who are dissatisfied with the prospective loss of any and all claim to constituent sovereignty and their subordination to an Arab majority nation...well they, presumably, would be free to depart to any part of the world where the absence of sovereignty might sting less.

None of the figures Linfield discusses deteriorated to this level, critical as many were of Zionism and Israel’s ruling circles. Arendt, a liberal bi-national Zionist until the critical moment of Israel’s birth, simply fled from reality in her advocacy of a permanent international protectorate over Palestine as the desired means to preserve the Jewish stake in its homeland. Until the Eichmann trial, she had very little further to say about Israel or Zionism.

Maxime Rodinson seemingly laid the modern framework of anti-Israel eliminationism by castigating the desperate return of Palestine’s once indigenous people as a colonial-settler state project, “an outrage committed against the Arabs as a people”... for which

there is “no (!) revolutionary solution.” But this “outrage” took the coloration for him of an ineluctable tragedy, as it did for Deutscher.

After all, Rodinson asked of the Holocaust refugees, “where else could they go?” In the end, he opined that the bitter-pill return of Jews to Palestine would ultimately have to be swallowed as a fait accompli, similar to the Orange presence in Ireland.

RODINSON

Halliday, a student of Rodinson, expanded his mentor’s begrudging realism by pointing to the normality of colonial-settlerism in shaping the modern world.

He held no brief for the argument that “the Israelis are not a nation because they are a recently formed colonising community.”

He advanced the argument one step further, “There did not exist a distinct Palestinian nation one hundred years ago, or a distinct Iraqi or Libyan one, yet only the most blind would deny that such nations have been or are being formed today. The fact of immigration is also not a serious counter-argument: most of the nations in the new world were formed through migration.”

Even so, Rodinson’s framework fundamentally misrepresents reality. Did Jews, as Rodinson states, “leave their country to populate another”? Even Halliday, despite his admirably principled socialist position, drove himself into a logical pretzel over this. “The Jews of the world are not a nation,” he insisted, “but Israelis are not just Jews. Israelis are those born in Israel, or citizens of that country; they have a culture, language and history distinct from that of Jews in gentile countries.

“The Afrikaaners are not Dutch, the Australians are not English, the Argentinians are not Spaniards or Italians, because they retain common characteristics and links with people elsewhere...”

Quite true, but there are no other states that bear intimate parental and cultural ties with Israel. If the Afrikaaners are not Dutch, and the Argentinians are not Spaniards or Italians, what then is the parallel for Israel? Israelis are not... what? There were no “Jewish” countries in Europe and the Middle East from which a separate Hebrew nation was spawned.

The Jews who “colonized” and “settled” Palestine were an isolated, unwanted, persecuted, outcast people, narrowly escaping utter annihilation. They did not introduce a European language to their “colonies” or rename their settlements as sentimental odes to the “cherished” homelands from which they supposedly sprang. There are no “New” Amsterdams, Yorks, Londons, Pinsks, or Baghdads in Israel, and for good reason: their “homelands” abroad were abattoirs.

So yes, Jews could only reintroduce themselves en masse to Palestine as settlers, but settlers unlike settlers anywhere else in that they had an indigenous tie to the land that gave birth to them as a nation. And these indigenous settlers, to coin an oxymoron, confronted an existing Arab population distributed from the Arabian Peninsula by centuries-old Islamic conquests, a durable and jealous imperialism of geographic accumulation.

To put it plainly, Jewish migrants to Palestine confronted a well-established community of Arab settler-colonialists. That is why, in the end, Rodinson’s novel introduction of

to Chomsky



colonial-settlerism adds no additional social or political clarity to the problem of nationalities.

Which community one judges to be “settler-colonialist” (if this criterion, contra Halliday, is judged to be a valid standard of national rights) is conditioned by which lens of the telescope one peers through.

That brings us to Arthur Koestler, who in his final act might be seen as the unwitting precursor to a different strand of Israeli eliminationism. Linfield provocatively titles Koestler’s chapter: The Zionist as Anti-Semite.

That is meant in a two-fold sense — his disdain for non-assimilated Jews who refuse to emigrate to Israel, and his literal denial of the Semitic origins of the Jewish people. Neither his journalistic account of Palestine under the Mandate, *Promise and Fulfilment*, nor his novel about Palestine, *Thieves in the Night*, have reentered the modern debate. Rather, his project of de-judaisation that has contemporary resonance.

That project reached its summit with *The Thirteenth Tribe*, where, he argued, if argued is a synonym of phantasmised, that anti-Semitism was all just a big misunderstanding: “a misapprehension shared by both killers and their victims.” For those who we now call Jews are in fact — a fact known best only to Koestler — a community descended from Khazars, a defunct Turkic tribe that converted to Judaism in the 8th Century, and not from a Semitic people of the Middle East.

All this might have been justifiably consigned to Koestler’s cloud-cuckooland were it not for its usefulness to those who wish to deny a Jewish connection to Palestine. It is the reason why Shlomo Sand’s revivification of Koestler’s absurd thesis became an instant hit among Arab and Palestinian nationalists and their supporters on the left.

What claims do Khazars have to Palestine? And if those who we mischaracterise as “Jews” today are not descended from the Canaanite tribes of antiquity, who is? Koestler and Sand did not offer an answer. It did and does not concern them.

But an answer was never short in coming: the Palestinian Arabs are really not Arabs at all, but the descendants of Jews who converted to Islam and Christianity.

This is the subtext of the popular anti-Zionist tweet, or taunt, that Moses and Jesus were Palestinians. Or, as Henry Cattan, a Palestinian jurist, states: “The Palestinians are the original and continuous inhabitants of Palestine from time immemorial.” Saed Erakat claims to be descended from the Canaanites of Jericho. Arafat asserted he was of Canaanite lineage from the tribe of Jebusites.

Of course, that strand of anti-Zionism presents its own propagandistic difficulties. It is one thing to bleach away Jewish history. But what is to be gained if that denial comes at

the cost of severing the abiding connection between Palestinians and Arabs? What stake, other than religious, would the Arab world have in whom the rightful non-Arab Canaanite heir to Palestine is?

The Hamas minister, Fathi Hammad, for one, pounced in horror at the prospect of Arabs washing their hands of the conflict on this account. “Who are the Palestinians? ... We are Egyptians; we are Arabs. We are Muslims. We are part of you, Egyptians! Personally, half my family is Egyptian—and the other half is Saudi.”

In the end, Susie Linfield is dead right that all the anti-Jewish and anti-Israeli huffery is little more than an exercise in political futility. “What distinguishes the Palestinians is not that their right to return has been denied. In fact, that is precisely what they share with others...”

“One would be hard-pressed to find a case in which millions of refugees and their descendants have returned to a country from which they were exiled in the midst of a war that they started, especially when many of those returnees reject the legitimacy of the extant nation and their population might overwhelm it...”

RIGHT

“What does distinguish the Palestinians is that, for decades, they have been kept in cruel political limbo and, often, in impoverished refugee camps: by the Israelis, by their ‘brothers’ in the Arab world, and by their own leadership.

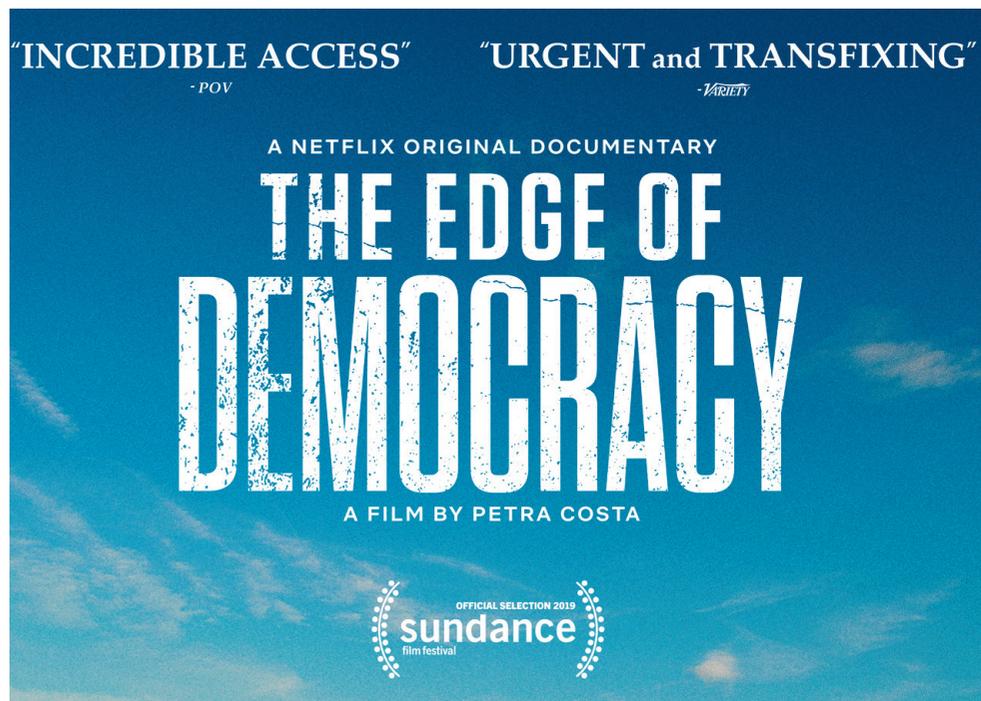
What also distinguishes them is that they have often refused political solutions in favour of insisting on ephemeral ‘right’.”

The “unconditional support” of the rights of the oppressed has become the left’s guiding star — its shibboleth — even when it means upholding the dream of the oppressed to settle accounts with its oppressor by reversing the axis of domination. It is symptomatic of an infantile separation of the world’s nations into “good” and “bad,” “exploiter” and “oppressed” peoples.

This is a parody of Marxism. And it is a fundamental departure from any revolutionary socialist program predicated on fostering mutual respect and joint activity needed to overcome entrenched chauvinist attitudes.

We defend the right to self-determination, as does Linfield, by championing a Palestinian claim to international equality with Israel in a two state solution. We also need to raise the binational principle embodied in that two state solution beyond the point where borders end to the state level where nations overlap.

We have our work cut out for us. But if our task were easy, it would have already happened.



Edge of democracy



Review

by Janet Burstall and Tony Brown

Petra Costa was a child when Workers’ Party (PT) leader Lula da Silva became President of Brazil in 2003.

Her parents had been detained and worked underground for the PT and the overthrow of the military dictatorship of 1965-1985. This documentary is a personal quest to make sense of her deep disappointment at the overthrow of the PT government of 2003-2018 by supporters of that military dictatorship.

She has assembled footage of her family, of protests, of interviews with PT supporters, with the two PT Presidents Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff, and, of parliamentary proceedings. Opponents of the PT initiated an investigation called Operation CarWash into

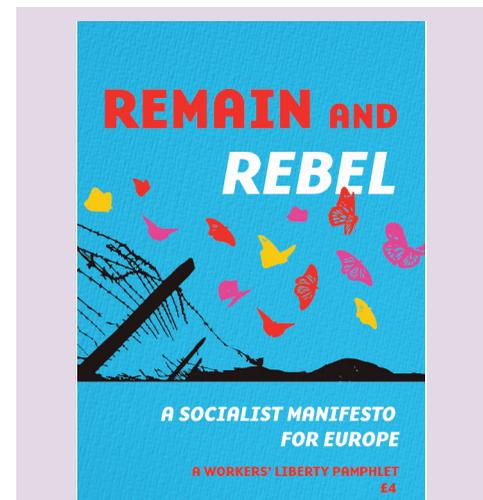
corrupt political funding, which had been a feature of all parties in Brazil, including the PT, for decades. Then the economic instability following the 2014 crisis made it difficult for the PT government to fund its programs. This provided an opportunity for opponents of the PT to stir up popular opposition to the PT, and to use legal institutions that had not been changed since the dictatorship to oust Dilma Rousseff and jail Lula. This detailed behind the scenes account of how the PT lost government, and Bolsonaro became President of Brazil contradicts the impression given by mainstream media that Lula and Dilma were ousted because they were corrupt. It shows rather that Brazil is now back in the hands of an elite which is making it safer for the corrupt.

Edge of democracy is worth seeing because it raises questions about how a radical workers’ government can survive against opposition from the privileged and powerful.

Solidarity 512 will be printed on Wednesday 3 July. The deviation from our usual schedule is due to the Ideas for Freedom event.

Background reading for IFF

Our website, at www.workersliberty.org/ideas, has full details of our 20-23 June Ideas for Freedom event, and lists one or two background-reading items for each session at the event.



A new pamphlet from Workers’ Liberty summarises our arguments on Brexit, Europe, international solidarity, free movement, immigration, and how to build socialist politics cross-borders.

40 pages A4. Cover price £4. With postage — non-UK £6, UK £5. Cheap rates for bulk orders: four for £15, ten for £35, twenty for £60.
• Buy online at bit.ly/r-rebel

NEU lets down Harbinger

By Todd Hamer

Schoolworkers at Harbinger Primary School in east London have suffered a major setback in their dispute over management bullying.

The National Education Union's most senior unelected official, Assistant General Secretary Avis Gilmore, and the so-called NEU Action Committee withdrew union support for the Harbinger workers' strikes, hobbling the union group, on the eve of their long awaited grievance hearing. They agreed to accept an offer from the head-teacher's union behind the backs of school workers. The same offer had already been rejected by the Harbinger union group weeks ago.

After the May half term, the workers had a plan of escalating action starting with one day on Thursday 6 June, two days the following week, three days the week after, etc. 48 hours before the 6 June strike, and the day before the long-awaited grievance hearing, the NEU Action Committee sent word via a Regional Official that the union bureaucracy was withdrawing official support for the strikes.

A leak from the local authority suggests that management knew about the withdrawal of union support before the union's own members.

There is a big question mark over how the decision to withdraw union support was made without any discussion with workers in the school. The official line from Gilmore is that the head has apologised, agreed to undertake additional training as advised in the independent investigation, and agreed to mediation.

She says the official demands of the strike were for mediation and for meaningful consultation on changes at the school. Given the head's agreement to mediation the strike can be considered a success.

But the demands of the union group were not for "mediation and meaningful consultation on change". The union group passed a motion in March setting out a long list of demands including: "the head commits to stop shouting at staff, belittling staff, and talking about staff in an unprofessional way".

The demands were designed specifically to ensure someone in management, perhaps the head himself, acknowledged the reality of the head's wrongdoing and took measures to make amends. These demands were made public and formed the basis of negotiations at ACAS. The Action Committee, or people close to the Action Committee, appear to have made up their own (much weaker) demands behind the backs of the workers in the

school. Second, even by the low standards of the Action Committee's demands, 50% of the demands have not been met. There is no commitment to consult on changes.

Third, the union group demanded that the head engage in anger management therapy and equalities training, and that there was a system in place to ensure basic competency. The head has not agreed to any of these demands.

Fourth, the union group rejected the offer because the head's half-apology was really no apology at all. The union group felt that mediation was pointless as long as the head continued to lie and malign members of staff.

Fifth, the offer Gilmore accepted was rejected by the union group before the strikes had taken place.

The deal between Gilmore and management was brokered by the NAHT (National Association of Head Teachers). The actions of the NAHT have gone well beyond a union's duty to defend a member.

Just before the strikes a letter from Matthew Waterfall, the NAHT regional official, went out to all NAHT members in Tower Hamlets (about 75% of heads) stating the Harbinger dispute was the work of "a handful of members" with "no stated aims" intent only on "hounding out" the head and "ruining his future career". Effectively, Waterfall ran a campaign to

blacklist striking workers within the borough.

After his letter any head would think twice before hiring an ex-Harbinger worker. If the LEA, or indeed the NEU, were serious about their duty of care to their workers, then they should sue the NAHT for defamation.

Waterfall was once a left-wing activist within Hackney Unison. His role in the NAHT's vicious campaign is a stark reminder of how principled left-wingers can so easily become corrupted by the power and money of the union machine.

There are motions going through NEU branches calling for an independent investigation into the decision-making process. The NEU can have no claim to be a member-led union while unelected officials and distant committees have the power to shut down workers' action without any discussion with the workers involved.

The Harbinger workers have shown us that workers have a higher moral code than the liars and bullies, the scabs and the toadies that are currently in power.

• More: bit.ly/h-bg

Part 2 of our report from the IWGB union AGM is at bit.ly/iwgb-2 and will be printed in *Solidarity* 512

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

The capitalists' control over the economy and their relentless drive to increase their wealth causes poverty, unemployment, the blighting of lives by overwork, imperialism, the destruction of the environment and much else.

Against the accumulated wealth and power of the capitalists, the working class must unite to struggle against capitalist power in the workplace and in wider society.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty wants socialist revolution: collective ownership of industry and services, workers' control, and a democracy much fuller than the present system, with elected representatives recallable at any time and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

We fight for trade unions and the Labour Party to break with "social partnership" with the bosses and to militantly assert working-class interests.

In workplaces, trade unions, and Labour organisations; among students; in local campaigns; on the left and in wider political alliances we stand for:

- Independent working-class representation in politics.
- A workers' government, based on and accountable to the labour movement.
- A workers' charter of trade union rights — to organise, to strike, to picket effectively, and to take solidarity action.
- Taxation of the rich to fund decent public services, homes, education and jobs for all.
- A workers' movement that fights all forms of oppression. Full equality for women, and social provision to free women from domestic labour. For reproductive justice: free abortion on demand; the right to choose when and whether to have children. Full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Black and white workers' unity against racism.
- Open borders.
- Global solidarity against global capital — workers everywhere have more in common with each other than with their capitalist or Stalinist rulers.
- Democracy at every level of society, from the smallest workplace or community to global social organisation.
- Equal rights for all nations, against imperialists and predators big and small.
- Maximum left unity in action, and openness in debate.

If you agree with us, please take some copies of *Solidarity* to sell — and join us!

Fat-cat college threatens to sink pension scheme

By another Cambridge UCU member

Trinity College, the richest college of the University of Cambridge (net worth £1.5bn), recently took the decision to remove itself from the USS pension agreement — the same agreement that saw 2018's mass industrial action on dozens of university campuses.

This verdict, taken based on flawed financial grounds and with disregard to the wider education sector, puts at greater risk the pensions of over 400,000 university workers across the UK, and is already leading other universities to re-consider their long-term commitment to the scheme. (bit.ly/2x1JaYE)

University and College Union members in Cambridge have begun a series of demonstrations each week at the College's entrance, are actively campaigning for all university academic staff to withdraw their teaching commitments to Trinity's undergraduate students, and have been lobbying members of the College's Executive body to reverse their decision.

Fellows of Trinity have called for a Special College Meeting on 21

June in which they hope to force either a revocation of the decision, or a commitment to re-join the USS. Should this fail, UCU nationally must be prepared for stronger and more concerted action to support local workers and students who are rightly outraged with Trinity.

This struggle may be an early test for newly-elected General Secretary, Jo Grady, who has come out strongly against the college's decision. Over the long summer break and with students away from full-time undergraduate study, the withdrawal of teaching commitments is less likely to focus the college's attention as sharply, therefore an escalation of tactics must be considered more urgently.

The long-term survival of the national USS pension scheme may be decided by a small, unaccountable body in just one of Cambridge's colleges. UCU Rank and File are set to meet on 30 June in Leeds ([//bit.ly/2ITkQ0j](http://bit.ly/2ITkQ0j)).

This offers an opportunity for grassroots activists to help organise the fight-back against Trinity's withdrawal, plan for our upcoming strike ballot in September, and develop the wider fight for the democratisation of our union and holding our new leadership to account.

TDL couriers turn tide

By Alex Marshall

12 months of negotiating. The IWGB's "Rise of the precarious workers" demonstration descending on TDL's headquarters doorstep.

Demonstrating outside the company Christmas party they weren't invited to. A two day strike that included a motorbike procession to prestigious clients in the Harley St area and temporary occupation of the company loading bay.

Amazing speakers on the picket line including Owen Jones, Dave "Blacklist" Smith and Dr Louise Irvine and support from clients, entrepreneurs and heavyweights like the ITF. And finally on Friday a breakthrough for the unionised medical couriers at TDL!

In negotiations on Friday between the IWGB and TDL, the threat of more industrial action from a workforce that is more united than ever proved too much for TDL. After stonewalling their couriers reasonable requests for improvements in working conditions for the last six months, senior management arrived at negotiations with a revised pay proposal.

The revised proposal offers couriers guaranteed hours (there was a threat of zero hours before),



enhanced pay for night work, vehicles and petrol for PAYE staff (who were previously providing their own equipment), a six month review of conditions, and an annual pay review, amongst other things.

In a precarious industry where workers are notoriously mistreated, where wages have stagnated for decades, where death is a genuine daily threat, and where workers thought things would only get worse, these unionised couriers have breathed hope and shown that by coming together they can turn the tides.

• Alex Marshall is a TDL (The Doctors' Laboratory) courier and rep, IWGB CLB chair

Outsourced workers' strikes

By John Moloney, Assistant General Secretary, PCS union (personal capacity)

Outsourced workers at the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) began a five day strike from 17 June, immediately following an outsourced workers' strike at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (F&CO).

Both strikes have had exceptionally lively picket lines. Jeremy Hunt, the Foreign Secretary, walked past the F&CO picket and naturally strikers and supporters took the opportunity to make him aware of the issues, politely and diplomatically, of course. The following day, Hunt wrote to Inter-serve, the contractor which employs outsourced workers in the F&CO, to press them to resolve the dispute! This may be the only instance of a Tory party leadership candidate expressing any support whatsoever for a strike. We also saw an excellent gesture of solidarity from an Usdaw rep, driving a super market delivery van, who re-

fused to cross the picket line, meaning managerial staff from the F&CO had to come out to carry their groceries inside.

Interestingly we also saw that the agency workers hired at the F&CO to cover strikers' work (which is in fact illegal, but outsourced employers often use loopholes to get around the legal restriction) were mainly white English people. This turns the nationalist myth about migrant workers undercutting British workers' wages and conditions on its head; here we see a predominantly migrant workforce, fighting for better pay and conditions, seeing their employer use "local" labour to try to undermine their strike!

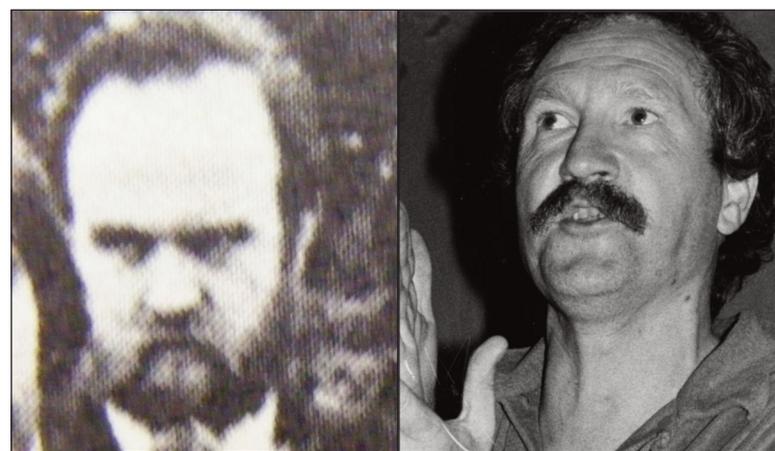
In both the BEIS and F&CO disputes, PCS has rightly taken the decision to pay full strike pay. A union's fundamental role is to enable its members to take direct action against their boss so this is an important and necessary step. We need to extend that commitment, and fundraise as much as necessary to sustain it.

I'm convening a meeting of PCS reps from across the Whitehall es-

tate to discuss how the union as a whole can support the BEIS and F&CO disputes, but also to talk about what we can do to spread the organisation and action of outsourced workers to other departments.

The PCS National Executive Committee meeting in July will discuss the union's strategy for the pay campaign for directly-employed civil servants. Our Annual Delegate Conference recently voted for a proposal that we should have a further national ballot, having narrowly missed the thresholds on the last one, so the NEC will discuss possible timetables and strategies for that. I'm also looking to meet with PCS reps and activists to discuss developing our environmental activity, which will be one of my responsibilities as Assistant General Secretary. The union has good policy on these issues, which we need to develop into activity.

I'm particularly keen to discuss how we can use environmental issues as organising and recruitment tools in the workplace, especially amongst young workers.



Lysaght in 1971 (left); Matgamna in 1982 (right)

Marxism and Irish politics

The November 2018 debate on Marxism and Irish politics between Donal Rayner O'Connor Lysaght and Sean Matgamna is now online as a two-part video recording on the Workers' Liberty website at bit.ly/drocl-sm.

Both Lysaght and Matgamna have written extensively and continuously on Irish politics and history for over fifty years now.

Other videos at www.workersliberty.org/video include:

- **Israel-Palestine, Two Nations, Two States 101, with Camila Bassi**
- **Invite of Chinese "Communist" Official is an insult to Chinese workers and to Marx**
- **Left antisemitism — what it is and how to fight it, with Daniel Randall**
- **Marx's Capital (a series of 19 videos), with Martin Thomas**
- **Marxism and autism, with Janine Booth**
- **Love thy neighbour or class struggle? — debate with a bishop, with Daisy Forest.**

New guards' strikes up the ante

From Off the Rails

RMT has upped the ante in the dispute against DDO on South Western Railway, by announcing a five-day strike from 18-22 June.

Despite winning what appeared to be a "guard guarantee" in February via previous strikes, SWR

bosses have dithered and have failed to implement an agreement to retain guards' jobs. Naming new strikes is absolutely the right thing to do, and it's absolutely right to go big. Incidental one-day strikes won't get the goods: sustained action might.

RMT needs to finance these strikes to ensure members aren't

forced back to work for financial reasons. And if the action doesn't bear fruit immediately, we need to be prepared to name more action.

And, most importantly, this return to action on SWR needs to herald a wider return to action on Northern and Merseyrail too.

- workersliberty.org/blogs/rails

Unison clash over tests boycott

By a conference delegate

The most contentious debate at the Local Government sector conference of public sector workers' union Unison, which finished on 17 June, was around a motion proposed by Lambeth Unison, supported by Workers' Liberty Unison activists.

The motion advocated that Unison organise its members working in primary schools to support the National Education Union's planned boycott of testing in primary schools. Arguing that "Unison members must not be put in the position of being asked to cover work that another union's members are boycotting as part of a legitimate dispute", it asked that all Unison members in primary schools be balloted for industrial action to boycott testing.

The conference's Standing Orders Committee ruled the motion out of order on bureaucratic grounds, arguing that the confer-

ence could not "instruct" the Service Group Executive, the relevant Unison committee, to hold a ballot.

Delegates from Lambeth, Barnet, and Southwark Unison branches challenged the ruling, and conference voted by a large majority to refer back the section of the SOC report ruling out the motion.

Despite this, and the clear mood it expressed from delegates to have the motion discussed, SOC dug in and refused to allow the motion to be heard. Nevertheless, the vote to refer back shows that there is an appetite amongst Unison activists to discuss how their union can support the NEU's planned boycott.

Workers' Liberty members at the conference were able to work well with other rank-and-file militants and socialists, including Socialist Party activists, to challenge the SOC and raise the profile of the issue.

As a result of the pressure from conference, the Service Group Executive will now discuss the matter

at its July meeting. Activists are organising to lobby SGE members in advance of that meeting.

The issue reinforces the need, in the first place, for meaningful collaboration at workplace level between members of different unions, and ultimately for a single industrial union of school workers. The fact that the most hotly debated issue at the conference was one that related to a Standing Orders Committee decision is also an indication of the undemocratic, bureaucratic culture that still prevails in Unison nationally.

Unison's National Delegate Conference, which brings together delegates from local government, health, and the other sectors in which Unison organises, is due to begin on 18 June, as *Solidarity* goes to press.

Motions tabled include a proposal for Unison to pursue a clear "remain and reform" policy on Brexit, to defend free movement, and to fight for Labour to advocate this.

NEU can win yes for school boycott action

By Duncan Morrison

The National Education Union's indicative ballot of its Primary School members to boycott high stakes summative testing opened on 4 June and closes on 2 July.

Thus far the turnout seems to be good, if uneven. Where districts are organising school meetings and phone-banking their members, the results are strong. In those areas, the process of building the ballot is bringing in new members and new reps and building the sinews of organisation that have been missing in primary schools for many years.

With continued effort, many districts will pass the 50% turnout threshold.

The ballot poses two questions. The first is about whether the member supports the campaign to replace high stakes testing, and the response is that is expected to be very highly in favour.

The second is about whether the member would be willing to boycott the tests. The yes vote for that might be lower. We need to win the argument with members that if they think the system is wrong, and the vast majority do, then we have to do something effective to get rid of it. That means boycott.

Some hesitation over the boycott proposal is to be expected. It is a clear and sustained piece of ac-

tion which will require some school groups to face down their management. Members can see that it really is a possibility and are thus weighing it up soberly.

On top of that a number of allegedly "left" districts led by the Socialist Teachers' Alliance and the Socialist Workers Party have educated their activist base over a number of years that it wasn't possible to get this boycott. This may also affect the yes vote to the second question in these areas.

The ballot closes on 2 July. At that point activists will need to consider if we can call for a formal national ballot to boycott, or whether we will need to disaggregate the formal ballot to areas where we are strongest.

In this calculation, we should remember that in the lead-up to the formal ballot in December we will have several months to persuade more members to vote, and to persuade members who maybe unsure of a boycott that it is the only method we have to rid us of these toxic tests. In the meantime, in the run up to 2 July we must fight for every vote in every school we can reach.

Every NEU member in primary schools must vote Yes to stop toxic testing.

• Duncan Morrison is Lewisham NEU Assistant Secretary, writing in a personal capacity.



Solidarity

For a workers' government

No 511 20 June 2019 50p/£1



A mass meeting of Ford workers in Bridgend on Friday 14 June (photo by Unite Wales Regional Secretary, @PeteHughesUnite)

Ford: build the fightback!

By Matt Dunn

At the Ford Bridgend engine plant, union members have voted to reject the closure and to take industrial action if needed.

The question now is what union leaders will do to build on those votes.

A plan to save the jobs at the Ford Bridgend engine plant should combine three key elements:

- A serious leverage campaign — aimed at hurting the key decision-makers right in their profit drivers
- Political campaigning, to commit Labour on a public ownership plan for key industrial enterprises such as this that come under threat — nationalisation under workers' control
- A campaign to win the work-

force over to a militant policy to protect jobs

Workers understand the argument that, although a big severance cheque may pay off your mortgage or set up your retirement, the thousands in the supply chain will get no such cheque, and your kids won't have the opportunity of a well-paid job with a union and a decent pension scheme. The job isn't yours to sell, however tempting the price may be.

This argument is particularly strong in Bridgend, where the closure will hit an already deprived area with very few alternative opportunities. And it appears that many shop stewards at other Ford plants are keen to fight too, correctly seeing that they are next.

It is no doubt a hard task to convince workers to say no to the sort of massive severance cheques car

companies can wave in order to keep production moving until a closure; but it is not impossible, especially if you start the work early.

Unite officials need to seriously up their game. The threat to the automotive industry, and to others such as aerospace and manufacturing, is clear.

Where is the campaign preparation that can seriously pressure the companies and executives that will make the decisions on which thousands of members and their communities depend? How are the workers affected being prepared? Where is the targeted organising to make sure that the union is strong and ready to take action in strategic enterprises?

Shop stewards need to be right at the centre of this process, coordinating together and setting the industrial agenda at a sector-wide

level.

The workforce at Honda Swindon — site of the previous large closure announcement — has apparently voted to accept large pay-offs from the company to sell their jobs. Some Unite officials see this as a good deal secured by the union for its existing members. Others see it as a shame but, "well, what can you do if the members won't fight?"

Yet others in the union see it for what it is — an industrial tragedy, in which the union officialdom played barely a walk-on role.

As with Bridgend, the news at Honda was hardly out of the blue. Brexit, the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement, plus noises from Japan pointed to bad news for Swindon for a long time.

When the company announced its intentions in February, Unite

quickly put Len McCluskey's heir apparent, Steve Turner, in charge of the campaign to save the plant. What came next was not very impressive.

Lobbies of the UK Parliament and marches round Swindon will have little impact on executives in Japan who are making cold calculations based on profits. The time from first rumblings to initial announcement in February, to confirmation in May, was utterly wasted.

A serious campaign to save the plant could have been planned and resourced in advance of any announcement — indeed, given Brexit, a plan should have been developed for the entire industry.

The union is running late. But the shopfloor votes in Bridgend show that — with more initiative from the union leaders — we can catch up.

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