



# Solidarity

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No 406 25 May 2016 50p/£1

## CUTS BRING RECORD DEFICIT



# TORIES ARE STRANGLING NHS

NHS trusts in England trusts ran up a record deficit of £2.45 billion in the year 2014-15, according to figures released on 20 May.

And the deficits are rising. The Government's projections admit that health care will rise: from a little over £100 billion in 2015, they reckon, by a further £30 billion.

But funding will rise only £10 billion. The other £20 billion is supposed to come from "productivity savings."

More on page 5 including news on junior doctors' contract

### Inside:

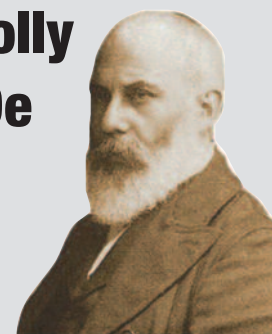
#### What's behind the academies program?



As the National Union of Teachers starts balloting for strikes we discuss what's behind the plan to acadmise all schools.

See page 3

#### Connolly and De Leon



The fifth part in Michael Johnson's series on the life and politics of James Connolly.

See pages 6-7

#### The books behind Livingstone's "anti-Zionism"

What is wrong with the books by Lenni Brenner which Livingstone claims as vindication?

See page 8

#### Join Labour!

Momentum votes to campaign to remain in Europe

See page 10

# Austria: far right surge and Green's narrow win

By Martin Thomas

**On 22 May the far right candidate for Austria's presidency, Norbert Hofer, was defeated by the narrowest of margins.**

Hofer, candidate of the "Freedom Party", stood on a strident anti-migrant platform, and was way ahead of other candidates in the first round of the presidential election on 24 April. He scored 35.1%.

Alexander Van der Bellen, a veteran ex-Green running as an independent, who rallied a range of support to defeat Hofer on the second round, got 21.3% on the first.

The candidates of the two par-

ties which completely dominated Austrian politics for decades after World War 2, and governed in permanent coalition from 1945 to 1966 — the Social Democrats and the conservative People's Party — got just 11.3% and 11.1% respectively.

The "Freedom Party" (FPÖ) was founded in 1956 with former Nazis in its leadership, but then tacked towards presenting itself as a mainstream pro-free-market party. After 1986, with Jorg Haider as leader, it veered sharply to the populist right and gained support.

By 1999 it was up to 27% of the vote, and was accepted by the People's Party into a coalition government. (The presidency, in Austria, is usually ceremonial). Other EU

countries introduced sanctions against Austria, and stated that "the admission of the FPÖ into a coalition government legitimises the extreme right in Europe."

FPÖ support declined for a while, but has risen again now, after the 2008 economic crash and conflict over refugees. Marxist academic Moishe Postone, who has recently been working in Vienna, told *Solidarity* that what was for many decades "Red Vienna" — one of the most solidly social-democratic cities in the world — has now become "red-green" in the better-off inner suburbs, and "red-blue" in the poorer outer districts.

Blue is the colour of the FPÖ. According to exit polls cited by the

BBC, Hofer swept 86% of the manual working-class vote.

The Austrian socialist group RSO, backing a protest on 19 May against the rise of the FPÖ, wrote: "The FPÖ is no workers' party. It is the most radical representative of the Austrian elites. We need not brutal and inhuman rabble-rousing, but solidarity in order to fight for our rights."

**"Not the hypocritical cohesion of the nation against the alleged threat from outside, but the joining-together of all the workers and unemployed, of whatever origin, against the big bosses and the party bureaucrats".**



Norbert Hofer

## Manchester Uni catering staff win

By Neil Laker

**In March, the University of Manchester announced plans to restructure its subsidiary company, UMC, making 46 redundancies in catering while moving the remaining staff on to "term-time only" contracts.**

This latter move would have meant cuts of about one third to their total pay. But now, as a result of solid negotiating by Unison, and agitation, occupations and disruption by students, management have backed down. There will be no compulsory redundancies, no loss of hours and no pay cuts.

These victories in the fight against the university's contemptuous treatment of its workers should embolden us all.

It is clear that despite framing the restructure as a question of affordability the university simply

sought to protect its profits. UMC served as an underhand way of employing people below the living wage which the university claimed to adhere to

It functions as an internal outsourcing project, and though the worst excesses of the restructure have been defeated, the trade union should continue a campaign for UMC workers to be brought back in house.

We also must not forget that some staff felt pressured to choose "voluntary" redundancy, either because of an understandable fear of facing increasingly precarious working conditions, or a lack of faith in the ability of the union to fight their corner.

**This is an important reminder of the continuing need to build a strong movement. Indeed the drive towards marketisation in higher education is putting all jobs at risk.**

## Labour law fight steps up

By Gemma Short

**The mobilisation against the "labour law" in France is both stepping up and facing increasing police repression.**

Strikes have spread to lorry drivers, oil refineries, some dock workers and rail workers — some despite the hesitancy of union leaders. Oil refinery workers in Normandy have struck and been blocking roads, industrial estates and fuel depots.

Railworkers in some stations in Paris, Tours and Grenoble have voted in general assemblies to start an open-ended strike, despite the majority union, the CGT, still trying to hold things back to strikes only on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

The day of action called by unions on 19 May saw the largest turn out by far in demonstrations nationwide. Another demonstration is planned for Thursday 26 May, the second day of a 48-hour strike of railworkers.

The government has responded by sending in police to break the pickets and blockades, and may well use the powers given to it by the state of emergency put in place after the Paris bombings to regain "order". Riot police were called on an occupation of the Town Hall in Rennes, and the government banned a demonstration in Nantes.

This may be a turning point in the fight against the law which has so far been hesitant and successfully held back by the union leaderships. The movement seems to be going beyond the losing strategy of the union leaders of spaced-out general strikes and demonstrations.

**If the strikes continue, and more of them turn into open-ended strikes controlled by local general assemblies, more industries and workers may be drawn in.**

• Commentary by French far-left group Etincelle: [bit.ly/where-france](http://bit.ly/where-france)

## Israeli government shifts to the right

By Phil Grimm

**Binyamin Netanyahu looks set to appoint Avigdor Lieberman, a right-wing nationalist demagogue, as his Defence Minister in a new Israeli government.**

It had looked like Netanyahu's Likud party might make a deal with the moderate parties to its left in order to bolster his governing coalition's parliamentary majority.

Instead, the Prime Minister is now negotiating with the ultra-nationalist Yisrael Beitenu ("Israel is our home"). Apparently Lieberman, the party's leader, demanded the role of defence minister in exchange for his support.

The former defence boss, Moshe Ya'alon, was on the moderate wing of Likud. Tellingly, he had fallen out with Netanyahu over internet footage of an IDF soldier executing a wounded Palestinian (Ya'alon and the military establishment, unlike the Likud right and Yisrael Beitenu, took the position that murdering the wounded is a violation of army



Lieberman

ethics.)

When he was dumped from the role Ya'alon claimed the government has been taken over by "extremist and dangerous elements".

It is true that the government is now dominated either by nationalists or religious conservatives — this in a country more accustomed to broader coalition governments.

Avigdor Lieberman has made his name by making inflammatory,

often straightforwardly racist, incitements against both Palestinians in the occupied territories and against the Arab citizens of Israel.

His base is among right-wing Jewish settlers in the West Bank, and a carefully cultivated bloc of support among Russian-speaking migrants from the former countries of the USSR. Lieberman himself is a West Bank settler, and moved to Israel from Moldova.

Much is made in the international press about how Lieberman used to be a night-club bouncer, a fact which tallies with his thuggish political persona. However, he is not just a thug. He is an extremely canny and calculating politician.

Like Donald Trump, his outrageous statements are not gaffes but precise, conscious attempts to divide society in a way that will favour his nationalist politics.

**His appointment as defence minister would mark a serious worsening in the political situation in Israel-Palestine.**

## Bolder than you'd guess

By Colin Foster

**"Solidarity. Socialism. Equality. Against Austerity. For Workers' Rights". A bolder message than we expect from the Labour Party, even under Jeremy Corbyn's new leadership.**

Yet that was a leaflet, printed in bright red too, issued before the 5 May election by the Scottish Labour Party under Kezia Dugdale, who was initially voted into leadership on a slate with ultra-Blairite Jim Murphy.

The leaflet did not sway the election. Not many copies seem to have been produced and distributed. It came out only shortly before polling day.

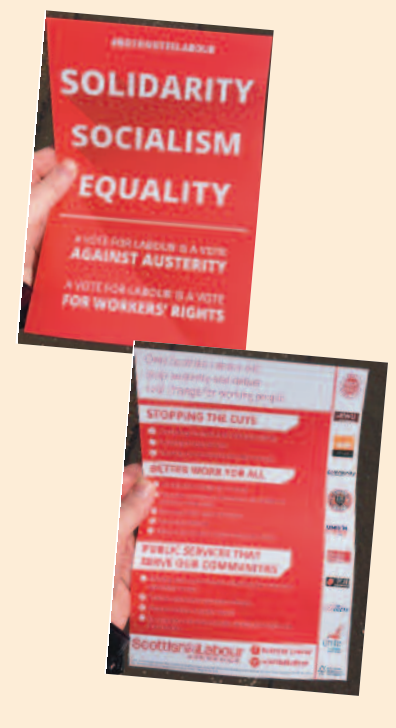
Its reverse side included "stopping the cuts"; but it was weaker

in definite commitments than the general slogans on the front; and Labour councils in Scotland, like Glasgow's, continue to make cuts.

But it was surely a shift. The leaflet carried the logos of ten unions as well as the Labour imprint, and seems to have been produced as a result of unions pushing.

If it can be done in Scotland, it can and should be done in England and Wales too.

**We should demand that Labour and its new leadership set themselves to campaigning for socialism, not just on detail demands, not just against the Tories being "chaotic" or "incompetent", and not just for supposedly cunning fix-it policies like a national investment bank.**



# Academies: force a real u-turn!

**By Patrick Murphy, National Union of Teachers Executive p.c.**

Facing a storm of protest, the government announced on 6 May what appeared to be a significant U-turn. Legislation to force academy status was dropped.

However, the Tories have not retreated from their objective to turn all schools into academies. They will now pursue this aim through a number of different routes.

Academies are state-funded schools which are independent from the local authority (LA).

The concept was introduced into the English education system by the last Labour government in 2003, as a supposed solution to "underperformance" in a small number of secondary schools, as deemed by Ofsted or because of exam results. The policy has never applied to Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, where there are no academy schools.

Under Labour academy schools were "sponsored", i.e. taken over by some outside outfit. Vast academy chains (United Learning, AET, EACT, Harris) quickly emerged. By the end of Labour's term in office in 2010 there were 203 academy schools in England.

## GOVE

**After the election of the coalition Government in 2010, the Education Secretary, Michael Gove, used emergency legislation to rush through an Academies Act which allowed and encouraged schools deemed outstanding by Ofsted to convert with the minimum of consultation.**

Funding was provided to facilitate the process, Department of Education officials were employed to tour the schools putting pressure on heads and governors to convert, and these schools had no need to join any of the big chains. At the same time Gove introduced the concept of "forced academy conversion", under which certain schools could be issued with an order which imposed the new status. It was a controversial idea and some heroic battles were fought to resist, most prominently Downhills in Haringey, but victories were rare.

By March 2016 roughly 60% of secondary schools (2,075 out of 3,381) and 15% of primaries (2,440 out of 16,766) were academies.

In common with most neo-liberal "reforms" of public services the rhetoric around academy schools is that of "freedom, diversity and choice". A school with academy status has a range of "freedoms" which are, according to the dogma, is the key to school improvement.

Unlike maintained schools they can adopt their own admissions cri-



teria (though they have to abide by a national admissions code), set their own terms and conditions for staff outside national and local agreements, and vary their term dates.

They are "free" from the requirement to have elected parent or staff governors, or indeed to have governing bodies at all. One of the largest chains, EACT, recently abolished their local governing bodies and replaced them with "ambassadorial advisory committees" whose main function seems to be to promote their schools in the local community and give out prizes.

Academies cannot, so far, be run for profit, but the big chains top-slice sizeable shares of the funding allocated for education to manage their operations and pay for their very expensive management structures. Sir Daniel Moynihan, chief executive of the Harris Federation, is paid £370,000 for running 28 schools.

At the same time as academy chain bosses have seen their salaries skyrocket, teachers and support staff in their schools have seen their wages frozen.

Academies have also introduced us to private sector corruption and nepotism.

There is another important funding issue here. When a school becomes an academy it is given money previously allocated to the local authority to provide support services to schools across the whole area. The academy can then choose to buy those services back, go to a cheaper supplier, or do without the services altogether. This has led to the decimation of many services that support young people with special needs, and, in some cases, the effective destruction of the local authority.

There are many Tory politicians and advisers who are quite open about their desire to see schools run for profit. The academy programme promotes individual self-interest and social atomisation against collective provision for all children and the pooling of our resources for the benefit of all. It is the marketisation of our school system.

One of the striking aspects of the White Paper (*Educational Excellence*

*Everywhere*) is that it contains no evidence for its recommendations.

During the last Labour government Price Waterhouse Cooper were commissioned to produce a report into progress with academies. They concluded that "there is no significant academy factor which improves outcomes". Since then a wide range of organisations and public bodies have reinforced and expanded on this conclusion including the House of Commons Education Select Committee, the Sutton Trust, the Local Schools' Network and Ofsted itself.

Michael Wilshaw summarised an inspection report into the seven largest academy chains earlier this year by stating that they were "contributing to poor progress and outcomes for too many pupils". In December 2015 data released by Ofsted in response to a question from a Labour peer showed that among schools rated as "inadequate" those taken over by academy chains were 12 times more likely to remain inadequate at their next inspection compared to local authority schools."

For its main advocates academies are really the means to abolish local authorities and dramatically weaken the power of teacher unions who, with 90% plus membership density, remain a major influence in the education system.

## UNION

**The National Union of Teachers has taken the lead in campaigning against forced academies and bases its public campaign on four key objections – the complete lack of evidence that academies deliver on their promise, democracy, the unions and the real needs of schools.**

There are problems which really could do with a White Paper from a radical government that wanted to improve the school system.

There is a growing teacher shortage, plus recruitment and retention problems, a severe lack of pupil places, increasing class sizes and savage funding cuts. 2016 has also seen the testing and assessment system descend into chaos.

The free school programme

makes the pupil places crisis worse as it bars local authorities from opening new school provision, while pouring millions into the pet projects of supporters who can open schools whether they are needed or not.

Forced academies are an attack on local democracy. They remove the role of local elected councils in managing the school system, replacing them with private organisations with no accountability (and no requirement for governors).

## PAY AND CONDITIONS

**In effect the forced academy programme would mean the complete de-regulation of all pay and conditions in state schools.**

Support staff don't have guaranteed national pay and conditions, but rely on local agreements with their local authority and the "Green Book".

For teachers the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Documents apply by law to all maintained and foundation (mainly religious) schools. These documents include pay ranges, working hours, notice periods, maternity and sickness rights and a host of other conditions. The teacher unions use them as the minimum standard for negotiating with academy chains and schools. If there are no maintained schools, then these documents have no status in law. They automatically apply to no-one, and it is difficult to see why any government would bother going through the process of renewing them.

The scale and breadth of opposition to the forced academy proposal and the public climb-down indicates the government had overreached.

A number of Labour local councils opposed the plans with Birmingham the first to act. Recently the largest Tory local authority in the country, West Sussex, became the latest to pass an anti-forced academies motion. When Jeremy Corbyn led on the plans at PMQs in April it was one of his best interventions. Two petitions launched to oppose the plans exceeded 100,000 signatures within days of the policy announcement. Forced academies

were opposed in the *Financial Times*, the *Economist* and by the National Governors' Association.

The danger now is that academy conversions proceed piecemeal under provisions of existing legislation.

Under the revised White Paper, all schools in a local authority area will be forced to convert where the number of academy schools in that area reaches a "critical mass" and it is judged that the council no longer has the capacity to support its remaining schools. This can also happen where it is judged that the authority is not supporting its schools adequately.

## TACTIC

**Since schools, local authorities and diocesan education bodies know very well that the agenda hasn't really changed, academy conversions are being actively considered all over the country.**

The most common tactic of those reluctant or sceptical about academies seems to be to mitigate the threat rather than oppose it outright. Individual schools often seek out benign sponsors. Local authorities and church dioceses are considering setting up their own Multi-academy trusts to fend off predatory and unknown sponsors. This is the educational equivalent of fools' gold. Once a school or group of schools adopt academy status, there is no going back and they are vulnerable to being taken over by a chain or trust other than the one they started with.

The DfE has the power to break up trusts and hand their schools over to one of the private academy chains. There will be no choice, no consultation and no local authority to fall back on.

But the government's revised plans can be beaten! They still have little or no support and the campaign of opposition to the original proposals was a potential game-changer.

**Knowledge and understanding of the academy programme has grown, and opposition can still become a mighty community force.**

# Debating how to tackle left anti-semitism

## THE LEFT

By Cathy Nugent

**On Thursday 19 May, Workers' Liberty debated Richard Angell, the Director of Progress, on how best to fight left anti-semitism.**

Angell has proposed an eight-point list of proposals which, he said, was about "getting this issue under control".\* These proposals include "training for the Labour's national executive in modern anti-semitism and unconscious bias", "new capacity for the Compliance Unit" and that "anti-semitism must lead to a lifetime ban". Defending this last point, Angell said he was supporting a call made by John McDonnell, and it was only a potential power; he did not envisage a lifetime ban for everyone found guilty of anti-semitism.

Speaking for Workers' Liberty, I argued this issue was being used by the right in the Labour Party and by the Tories to discredit the new left leadership of the Labour Party and put a break on left developments in the Party. Evidence for this is the way Jackie Walker, the vice-chair of Momentum, had old Facebook exchanges (half thought-out — as is the way of such things) dragged up and used to suspend her from the Party.

However the best way to tackle this attack would not be to pretend that the problem of

anti-semitism doesn't exist. Of course many people genuinely do not recognise what is being talked about here. All the more reason to confront it politically.

And this is why Angell's proposals would ultimately be ineffective — because there is little agreement (let alone recognition) on what "modern anti-semitism" is. Further, the Compliance Unit is not something that inspires confidence. It enforces party rules with capricious malice. It bans from membership socialists (such as myself), for being socialists (i.e. supporters of Workers' Liberty). We need an extensive debate, and at the grassroots of the labour movement.

Workers' Liberty's position is that, for the most part (although not entirely) left-anti-semitism is not racism. Rather it is a set of ideas which flow from demonisation of Israel, and an objection to its very existence as a national entity. The programme is in contrast to those of us on the left who propose radical and revolutionary change in Israel and want to see an independent Palestine alongside Israel.

The programme to "smash Israel" comes directly from Stalinist anti-Zionist campaigns by the Soviet Union, particularly those which gained wider currency in the 1970s onwards.

"Smash Israel" here means an end to the political entity that expresses the national identity of Jewish Israelis. The "left-anti-semitism" that flows from that programme includes, to put it crudely: Zionism is only

the ideology of the Israeli state, it cannot also be an expression of Jewish national identity, or identification with the idea of Israel (as opposed to the policies of its successive governments); all Jews who are Zionists are expressing the ideology of the Israeli state; all Zionists are thereby collectively responsible for what that state does.

Racism creeps into this argument when, for instance, the power of Israel is exaggerated. This is new version, but a version, of the myths of the huge power of Jews in the world featured in classic anti-semitism.

### RECOGNITION

**Unfortunately, among some members of the audience at the debate there was a sealed-up lack of recognition of the problems inherent in these themes.**

We have a long way to go, which underlies the point that we must use these circumstances, whatever the initial trouble they cause to the left, to debate and educate, rather than introducing new disciplinary measures.

Richard Angell denied making a push on this issue to destabilise Corbyn's leadership (but did not rule out such an attack in the future). True, Angell has a record of concern on anti-semitism, but he is also a bourgeois politician. Insofar as he expressed politics on these issues, there was a problem with his emphasis.

Specifically Angell endorsed the "Macpherson principle". This refers to one of

the recommendations of the enquiry into Stephen Lawrence's racist murder. In this context it means that an "anti-Semitic incident" is any incident "perceived" to be so by "the victim or any other person".

I did not have a chance to comment on this in the debate, and I do think there is a problem.

On the one hand of course reports of generalised hostility or individual instances of anti-semitism should be treated sympathetically. (And one does wonder whether the "nothing to see here" people on the left in Labour realise how hard-faced they come across.)

On the other hand in order to assess any complaint of any kind of injury we need to establish general principles. I'm sure there is a lot of room for debate on the difference between political anti-semitism as I have described it above, and racist anti-semitism. Should the levels of criticism about these forms of "injury" be treated differently? I think so, but I might be wrong.

**If we do not have this kind of critical in-depth discussion, we will not be able to tackle anti-semitism and moreover, our debates on the political situation in the Middle East will be poisoned.**

\* See <http://labourlist.org/2016/04/we-need-this-action-plan-to-tackle-anti-semitism-within-labour/>

# Decriminalise abortion now!

By Kate Harris

**The leadership of the Royal College of Midwives recently decided to support a campaign to fully decriminalise abortion. RCM's Chief Executive, Cathy Warwick, was on prime-time news programmes advocating for abortion to be legal up to nine months and for abortion to be removed from criminal law.**

There has been hot debate about this, with more than 200 midwives signing a statement disagreeing with the policy, and no end of right-wing columnists complaining. The main bugbear is removing the time limit, which currently stands at 24 weeks.

The Royal College of Midwives should democratise. Non-executive members have had no opportunity to vote on this policy. However, the arguments Warwick (who is also the Chair of the British Pregnancy Advisory Service) are absolutely correct.

As Warwick points out, the ethical codes that govern the practice of medical professionals mean that it would be unlikely for women or pregnant people to have "late" abortions unnecessarily. The number of abortions would be highly unlikely to increase. Other countries that have gone further in decriminalising abortion, such as Canada and Australia, have not seen an increase either in the number of abortions or the number of abortions at later gestation.

It should be a fundamental principle that people with uteruses, who are mostly women, should have the same rights over their bodies as men, and should not be forced to sustain a foetus.

I was in Birmingham city centre on 14 May, and as I bought my lunch saw an enormous march of around 1000 people carrying "pro-life" placards and chanting slogans about

banning abortion. Most of them were Christian, including clergy. I was with socialists and feminists, so we argued against them and shouted our own slogans back.

Some readers may be puzzled over the title of my article. Surely, we have legal abortion in Britain, so we can stop campaigning?

Abortion is heavily criminalised in many other countries, including Ireland, and that we need to work with sisters and comrades in those places so women's rights are recognised.

The 24-week limit in Britain is arbitrary and should be abolished. Moral arguments about whether a foetus is or is not a person should be confronted and exposed for their irrationality. No one makes a flippant choice to have an abortion, or would leave an abortion to the "last minute", as the procedure is much worse. These pro-life zealots value the lives of foetuses over the lives of women.

The process of going through two doctors who need to sign off on the abortion is patronising an unnecessarily arduous and time-consuming. If the patient ends her/their own pregnancy without the permission of two doctors, she/they can be "kept in penal servitude for life". Someone who takes abortion pills bought off the in-

ternet can be sent to prison for twelve years. A doctor who helps someone to safely terminate a pregnancy could go to prison for twelve years if they do not have the second signature. If the pro-lifers were really concerned about late-term abortions they would back calls to scrap the two-doctor rule and allow women to decide for themselves.

Doctors should not be put off caring for pregnant people due intimidation from bigots or fear of being prosecuted.

**We need to extend the Abortion Act, defend and extend our right to decide, and join with feminists and socialists around the world in calls for full decriminalisation.**

## Books by Workers' Liberty

Out now! Special offer until 27 May



### Can socialism make sense?

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

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£10 (inc. postage) if ordered before 27 May (usually £12 without postage)

[www.workersliberty.org/socialism](http://www.workersliberty.org/socialism)

### Why socialist feminism?

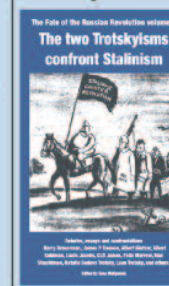
Workers' Liberty makes class struggle and radical social change central to our feminism. We are socialist feminists. This pamphlet explores what "socialist feminism" might mean in the context of the latest "wave", and global conditions.

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

### The two Trotskyisms confront Stalinism

For the revolutionary socialists, the Trotskyists, it has been a very long march through the 20th century and beyond, and over sometimes uncharted, unexpected, terrain. Central to it has been the fight against Stalinism, to understand it, to wipe the labour movement clean of it. This book surveys and documents for the first time the formative debates in the 1940s between the two main strands into which Trotskyism divided.

£23 (inc postage) from [bit.ly/twotrotskyisms](http://bit.ly/twotrotskyisms)





# Cuts are undermining NHS

**NHS trusts in England trusts ran up a record deficit of £2.45 billion in the year 2014-15, according to figures released on 20 May.**

And the deficits are rising. The Government's projections admit that health care costs will rise: from a little over £100 billion in 2015, they reckon, by a further £30 billion.

But funding will rise only £10 billion. The other £20 billion is supposed to come from "productivity savings."

The tariff paid by the CCGs (groups of GPs) to NHS Trusts for each medical procedure is being arbitrarily cut by 2-3% each year. NHS Trusts can't magic up "productivity" from nowhere, and so run into deficit rather than endanger patients.

There is an inbuilt tendency for health care costs to rise as a percentage of GDP as new medical procedures and drugs are developed and more people survive into old age.

NHS costs rose between 1949 and 1979 from 3.6% to 5% of GDP. After Thatcher took office in 1979 the budget was held at around 5% of GDP until 1999.

The NHS was blighted by low wages, long working hours, crumbling buildings, out-of-date-equipment, service shortages, and long waiting times.

Between 1999 and 2010 the Labour government raised funding to around 7.8% of GDP. The downside: it expanded the "internal market" and introduced PFI, which created a debt/contract overhang that continues to drain NHS resources.

Since 2010 funding levels have dropped back to 7% of GDP and towards 6%, which will be the lowest proportion on health care of the 34 richer countries in the OECD.

In both France and Germany (where the system is "social insurance" rather than direct free provision of health care) state spending on health care is around 8.5% of GDP, with total spending of 11% of GDP.

The situation in England is likely to become worse in the next four years for a number of reasons. Cuts in spending on the NHS are weighted towards the end of the five year cycle. 2015/16 and the current year, 2016/17, have relatively "generous" settlements. All the easy "productivity" savings have already been made, so the continued squeeze will

bite harder. And after six years of a pay freeze, wages are rising a bit.

It would appear that in order to keep down the deficit figure this year, the Department of Health has cooked the books. Capital budgets have been raided (perhaps for £1 billion). NHS-owned land, buildings, and sometimes high-cost medical equipment, have been sold, and sometimes leased back, in one-off money savings measures which will make future funding crises worse.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy suggests the NHS will exceed its budget by £10 billion a year by 2020, and it could be more.

The budget squeeze pushes us towards the blights of the 1980s and 90s — low wages, long working hours, crumbling buildings, out-of-date-equipment, shortages, long waiting times — and to worse.

It paves the way for the Tories to declare that a full health service is not "affordable", and some treatments must be paid for. That process already started under Thatcher, with dentistry becoming a paid-for and largely non-NHS service, and long-term care for the elderly being pushed into the private sector.

It will expand, and push more and more health-care into paid-for provision.

There is nothing inevitable about that. There is nothing impossible about a society which, thanks to technology, needs much less of its total labour-time to produce its goods and many services, directing more of its effort into health care.

Total health-care spending is certain to rise if more of it is pushed into the market. The USA, with the most marketised, pay-on-the-nail health-care system of all the rich countries, also has the highest percentage of GDP spent on health care. Some of that is profit-seeking doctors and hospitals "selling" well-off patients much more "care" than is good for them, while worse-off patients are denied care.

The question is, will the extra spending be captured by private profiteering or by public services free at the point of need?

**Will the rich be taxed to restore the National Health Service for us all, or will more and more of health care be taken over by profit-grabbing and denied to the worse-off?**

## "Cost-neutral" clause poisons ACAS formula for junior doctors

By Dr Pete Campbell

During the past year junior doctors have learnt a lot. From how to organise a picket and deal with the media, to contract law and equality impact assessments.

On Wednesday 18 May the Government taught us a lesson in media management. News of the deal at the government arbitration service ACAS broke, and the Government was able to shape the story. "The war is over", "the deal is done", "BMA agrees terms with NHS Employers".

It left a lot of junior doctors scratching their heads. Was that it? Had we just lost?

Jeremy Hunt appeared on the news, and we thought, how could the BMA have done a deal with this man? How could any deal be any good with the claims Hunt has made?

There are in fact parts of the deal which are good for junior doctors, and directly contradict Hunt's spin. There are other bits of the contract which are not good enough. The apparent return to accepting that the deal must be "cost-neutral" leaves junior doctors open to more attacks down the line.

The full contract will not be finalised and released until 31 May. However, barring major surprises, I will be arguing for junior doctors to reject this contract.

It will be put to a referendum of BMA junior doctor members (and last-but-one and last-year medical students) from 17 June to 1 July. The ACAS formula names 3 August 2016 as the "effective date" for a new contract, and says that "transition to the new terms and conditions of service" for various groups will be staggered from October 2016 to August 2017.

The BMA Junior Doctors' Committee will meet on 3 June to discuss our position on the contract.

Strikes, demonstrations, and tough negotiation have won us concessions from the government. I think we could win more. Junior doctors are in a powerful position and have made this a fight about the whole NHS. We should not lose faith in that collective power now.

With the release of the NHS deficit figures, and the evidence of a deliberate running down of the NHS by the government, I don't think we should give up the political fight for a few industrial gains.

### ACAS

#### What is in the ACAS formula?

**Pay and Weekends:** Currently junior doctors receive a pay uplift for unsocial hours (called banding.) The new contract splits this pot of money into sections. It has a pay premium for hours worked at night, retains a banding for Non-Resident on-call (NROC) and introduces a graded banding for weekend work.

This graded banding based on the number of weekends worked is vital for junior doctors. It will deter trusts from rostering more doctors at weekends.

Because it is a banding system it applies to the entire weekend. The risk of a junior doctor being asked to work repeated Saturdays as plain time has gone.

Junior doctors have got what we wanted, a financial disincentive to routine weekend working.

**Pay for all work done:** Late last year the Junior Doctors' Committee stated that it



wanted pay for all work done. The previous version of the contract honoured this on paper, but not in practice. It stated that if a junior doctor could predict the hours they were going to be overworked, then they could request to be paid for these hours. That would never work in practice.

The ACAS formula states that we will now be able to claim for these hours before, during or after the period of extra work. Doctors will be able to ask for the time to be added to annual leave or claim it back as money.

This will be overseen by the "Guardian", a newly created role with oversight over a number of areas.

**Equality:** Here that the ACAS document doesn't stand up well. The March contract was rightly attacked for its discrimination against women, lone carers and the disabled. The ACAS formula makes some moves in the right direction, but many of these are of speculative benefit.

Loss of annual pay progression means a less equal contract. The new contract is weak on evening working, where safeguards are particularly important for carers.

The Government plans for this contract to be implemented before much of the work around rotas, equality issues or safety has been completed.

**Cost Neutrality:** Jeremy Hunt argues this contract is "cost neutral". It doesn't require the government to give more funds to the NHS.

Compared to October 2015, he says, this new contract will cost no more than our current contract. If we were to transport ourselves back to October 2015 and put all junior doctors on the new contract, the pay envelope would be the same.

But the ACAS formula can't be cost neutral. An accurate estimate of the extra work done by junior doctors is difficult, but there is a lot of it. If the NHS starts paying for that extra work, then cost neutrality is blown out the window.

Hunt's "cost-neutral" claim, unless refuted, gives the Secretary of State political leverage for further cuts. In a year's time, when the pay bill has grown to the NHS actually paying doctors for the work they do, how will the Government respond?

**In order to keep the pay bill "cost-neutral", will it cut doctor numbers? Will it ask hospitals to cut services? Will it try to close whole wards or hospitals?**

# Connolly, Millerand, and D

The fifth part of Michael Johnson's series on the life and politics of James Connolly.

In 1900, the Irish Socialist Republican Party (ISRP) scored a victory when the Paris Congress of the Second International recognised its delegates, E.W. Stewart and Tom Lyng, as representing a separate national group from the British socialist organisations.

Amongst the delegates supporting this stance — against the British SDF — were those from Daniel De Leon's American Socialist Labour Party (SLP), whose struggle against reformism and opportunism in the socialist movement was admired by the Irish socialists.

One major issue of controversy at the 1900 conference was the decision in 1899 by the French socialist Alexander Millerand to accept a post in Pierre Waldeck-Rousseau's coalition for "Republican Defence" at the height of the Dreyfus Affair. In doing so, Millerand took a seat around the table alongside General de Gallifet, who had been the butcher of the Paris Commune in 1871 and now served as Minister of War.

The issue became an international dividing line. In attempt to heal the division, Karl Kautsky, the outstanding theorist of German Social Democracy, put forward a compromise motion which condemned class collaboration but added: "Whether in a particular case, the political situation necessitates this dangerous experiment [of entering capitalist governments] is a question of tactics and not principle."

Lenin sarcastically dismissed the compromise motion as being made from "Kaout-couch" ("caoutchouc" being India rubber, known for its elasticity). As George S Yates, the only SDF member to oppose Millerand,

put it: "A big wave of opportunism is passing through the ranks of the international socialist party." Yates would soon found the British SLP, with Connolly's enthusiastic support.

Connolly and the IRSP also opposed the Kautsky resolution, with Connolly writing in the pages of the SDF paper *Justice* that in entering a capitalist government, "Millerand could still logically claim to be considered a good socialist, differing only in tactics from the socialists of the world, who agreed with him in principle." He urged acceptance of the principle "that the revolutionary proletariat should, through its delegates, accept no governmental position which it cannot conquer by its own strength at the ballot box."

When Connolly soon afterwards undertook a lecture tour in Britain in 1901, he was well-received in Scotland but received a cold welcome in England, where Hyndman and Harry Quelch had opposed Connolly's stance on Millerand. One of the main opponents of "Millerandism" was John Carstairs Matheson, a teacher from Falkirk, who led what the SDF leadership denounced as the "unholy Scotch current".

Quelch suppressed their views in *Justice*, so oppositionists wrote for De Leon's *Weekly People*, which was widely circulated in Edinburgh and Glasgow. The following year, with Connolly's help, Matheson founded the *The Socialist* as an organ of the Scottish De Leonites, and it was printed on the ISRP presses in Dublin.

## SLP

In 1902, the SLP's National Secretary in the US, Henry Kuhn, wrote to the ISRP asking if they would send a speaker for a national tour. Connolly was already known in socialist circles in the US, and the SLP had printed the ISRP Manifesto and Connolly's *Erin's Hope*. Connolly agreed to go, hoping to raise funds and increase subscriptions to the *Workers' Republic*.

The tour lasted three and a half months, and took in New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New York on the east coast, before moving through the Midwest to California, Arizona and Colorado, and Canada.

The first date was on 15 September, when Connolly was officially greeted at the Cooper Union in New York. Asked by one reporter — used to well-worn tales from Ireland — where his ancestors were from and whether they had any castles, Connolly replied: "I have no 'ancestors'. My people were poor and obscure like the workers I am speaking to now."

Visibly affected by the enthusiastic cheers welcoming him to America, Connolly made clear to his audience: "I represent only the class to which I belong... I could not represent the entire Irish people on account of the antagonistic interests of these classes, no more than the wolf could represent the lambs or the fisherman the fish."

The tour was a success and, despite some logistical frustrations, Connolly supported the SLP's election campaign and proclaimed it "a real revolutionary movement."

After the high of his American tour, Connolly returned to Ireland to find the ISRP in a perilous state. Much of the money he raised from the tour had been spent plugging the deficit in a licensed bar that party members had opened on the premises, the paper was appearing irregularly, and inadequate financial accounts had been kept in Connolly's absence.

Against this backdrop, Connolly's vote in the 1903 municipal elections was down, despite backing from the United Labourers Union and Griffith's *United Irishman*. In frustration and anger, Connolly resigned and accepted a five month speaker tour from the Scottish District Council of the SDF. He would later come back but lasting damage in relations had been done.

Back in Scotland, Connolly worked closely with Matheson and a young socialist called Tom Bell, who later became the first national organiser of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB).

Bell recalled Connolly from this period, writing that his "quiet, reticent disposition concealed the store of knowledge he had acquired from extensive reading and wide travel. But, provoked into discussion or debate, he would rout opponents with incisive and merciless logic... A proletarian of proletarians, he had none of that snobbery and pretentiousness that mar so many of our leaders. He was... devoted and self-sacrificing for the cause of the workers' emancipation from capitalist slavery."

Around this time, the SDF in London warned that Matheson's paper *The Socialist* must change its critical tone or cease publication. Matheson was expelled and used the May issue of the paper to announce a conference the following month to found a new party in Edinburgh. The final showdown came at the SDF's conference in Shoreditch. When party members in Glasgow got the telegram to say that the De Leonites had been routed, they painted out the letters "SDF" from the local headquarters, renaming themselves temporarily as the Glasgow Socialist Society.

In the wake of the split, the SDF organ *Justice* wrote that "prompt action of the SDF in dealing effectually with those malcontents who are bent upon following the lead of the German-Venezuelan Jew Loeb, or 'de Leon', to the pit of infamy and disgrace, is regarded with much satisfaction on this side."

In June 1903, Connolly hit back in *The Socialist* that the SDF was "directly appealing to racial antipathies and religious prejudices" and that the attack on De Leon accurately reflected "the mental conditions and methods of the men in charge of [*Justice*]." If De Leon was "a German-Venezuelan-Jew, or a Cockney-Irish-Scotsman, or even, horror of horrors, an Anglo-Saxon, what is it to us or to Socialists generally?"

Of the SDF, he added that "this is no new trick of its policy. We all remember how, when the late Boer war was being launched upon this country, *Justice*, instead of grasping at the opportunity to demonstrate the unscrupulous and bloodthirsty methods of the

capitalist class, strove to divert the wrath of the advanced workers from the capitalists to the Jews; how its readers were nauseated by denunciations of 'Jewish millionaires', 'Jewish plots', 'Jew-controlled newspapers', 'German Jews', 'Israelitish schemes', and all the stock phrases of the lowest anti-Semitic papers, until the paper became positively unreadable to any fair-minded man who recognised the truth, viz, that the war was the child of capitalist greed, and inspired by men with whom race or religion were matters of no moment."

But as yet the split in the SDF around *The Socialist* newspaper had no name. At the June conference in Edinburgh to found the new party, Connolly was blunt: "It does not matter what you call yourselves: you'll be dubbed the Socialist Labour Party anyway."

## AMERICA

Struggling to find the means to support his family, and doing up to a dozen meetings a week for the new Scottish SLP, Connolly decided to move to the US.

Bell recalled that: "We were all filled with emotion when he sailed from the Broomielaw one September night, in the Irish boat, to go to Dublin, in preparation for emigration to New York."

On his arrival, the SLP's *The Weekly People* published a first-page interview with their newly-arrived comrade, and Connolly could rightly have expected a warm reception, having played a key role in the formation of a new section of the party in Scotland.

De Leon, however, greeted him coolly and the SLP did nothing to help Connolly settle and find work. Perhaps this was due to the collapse of the ISRP. In any case, Connolly's relations with De Leon only worsened.

The major conflict with broke out between the two men in 1904 started with a casual letter from Connolly to *The Weekly People*, but some of the issues it raised would rumble on until his complete separation from the SLP four years later.

On 23 March, Connolly wrote a letter entitled "Wages, Marriages and the Church" while living with his cousins in Troy in New York state. Stating that he was proud to be a member of the SLP, he nevertheless had encountered positions put forward by party comrades that he disagreed with.

On the issues of marriage and the church, Connolly's views are open to serious dispute. In both cases, Connolly demonstrates a tendency to reduce Marxism to a narrowly economic doctrine, not a materialist analysis of society as a whole. Objecting to the SLP's serialisation of August Bebel's classic *Woman and Socialism*, Connolly wrote that the book was "an attempt to seduce the proletariat from the firm ground of political and economic science on to the questionable ground of physiology and sex."

For him, "the abolition of the capitalist system will, undoubtedly, solve the economic side of the Woman Question, but it will solve that alone. The question of marriage, of divorce, of paternity, of the equality of woman



*Justice*, the newspaper of the British SDF

# e Leon

with man are physical and sexual questions, or questions of temperamental affiliation as in marriage, and were we living in a Socialist Republic would still be hotly contested as they are to-day."

This approach established an arbitrary firewall between the supposedly economic base of society and apparently "private" spheres such as the family, sexuality and the institution of marriage. The implication is that the latter are not necessarily questions for socialists. De Leon was right to respond that this view "denies the controlling influence of material conditions upon any and all social institutions", quoting Lewis Morgan's view that the "monogamian family owes its origin to property."

In a similar vein, Connolly complained that "it is scarcely possible to take up a copy of *The Weekly People* of late without realising from its contents that it and the party are becoming distinctly anti-religious. If a clergyman anywhere attacks Socialism the tendency is to hit back, not at his economic absurdities, but at his theology, with which we have nothing to do," concluding that the SLP "is a political and economic party, seeking the conquest of public power in order to clear the way for the Social Revolution. Let it keep to that. It is a big enough proposition."

As De Leon wrote back to Connolly, it is one thing to respect individuals' private views but another "to allow clergymen to extend the jurisdiction of 'theology' over terrestrial and civic matters, as they endeavour to do. To allow them to, and not 'hit back,' and hard, too, at such clerical usurpations over a domain that is purely civic, would be to allow them to walk into our encampment, take possession, and non-suit the cause of Socialism..."

## ERFURT PROGRAMME

**In some of his arguments, Connolly was echoing the 1891 "Erfurt Program" of the German socialists, which declared religion a private matter.**

Indeed, in 1901 Connolly wrote in *The New Evangel* pamphlet that the ISRP "prohibits the discussion of theological or anti-theological questions at its meetings, public or private. This is in conformity with the practice of the chief Socialist parties of the World, which have frequently, in Germany for example, declared Religion to be a private matter, and outside the scope of Socialist action."

However, in 1909 Lenin was to comment on this interpretation of the "Erfurt Program" in a Russian context, writing in *The Attitude of the Workers' Party to Religion* that in reaction against ultra-lefts who wished to proclaim a one-sided "war on religion", some socialists "managed to give rise to a new distortion of Marxism in the opposite direction, in the direction of opportunism. This point in the Erfurt Program has come to be interpreted as meaning that we Social-Democrats, our Party, consider religion to be a private matter, that religion is a private matter for us as Social-Democrats, for us as a party...[Engels] deliberately underlined that Social-Democ-

rats regard religion as a private matter in relation to the *state*, but not in relation to *themselves*, not in relation to Marxism, and not in relation to the *workers' party*."

Writing four years earlier, in *Socialism and Religion*, Lenin declared: "So far as the party of the socialist proletariat is concerned, religion is not a private affair.

"Our Party is an association of class-conscious, advanced fighters for the emancipation of the working class. Such an association cannot and must not be indifferent to lack of class-consciousness, ignorance or obscurantism in the shape of religious beliefs."

On the question of wages, however, Connolly was in the right. Having heard the view expounded by an SLP agitator that trade union wage struggles were pointless as higher wages would always be cancelled out by an increase in prices, Connolly wrote that:

## WAGES

**"The theory that a rise in prices always destroys the value of a rise in wages sounds very revolutionary, of course, but it is not true, and, furthermore, it is not part of our doctrine.**

'If it were, it knocks the feet from under the [SLP's trade union front] Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance and renders that body little else than a mere ward-heeling club for the SLP."

Undoubtedly Connolly had Marx's *Value, Price and Profit* (published only in 1898) on his side in this dispute. There, Marx was explicit that "the value of labor itself is not a fixed but variable magnitude...the fixation of its actual degree is only settled by the continuous struggle between capital and labour."

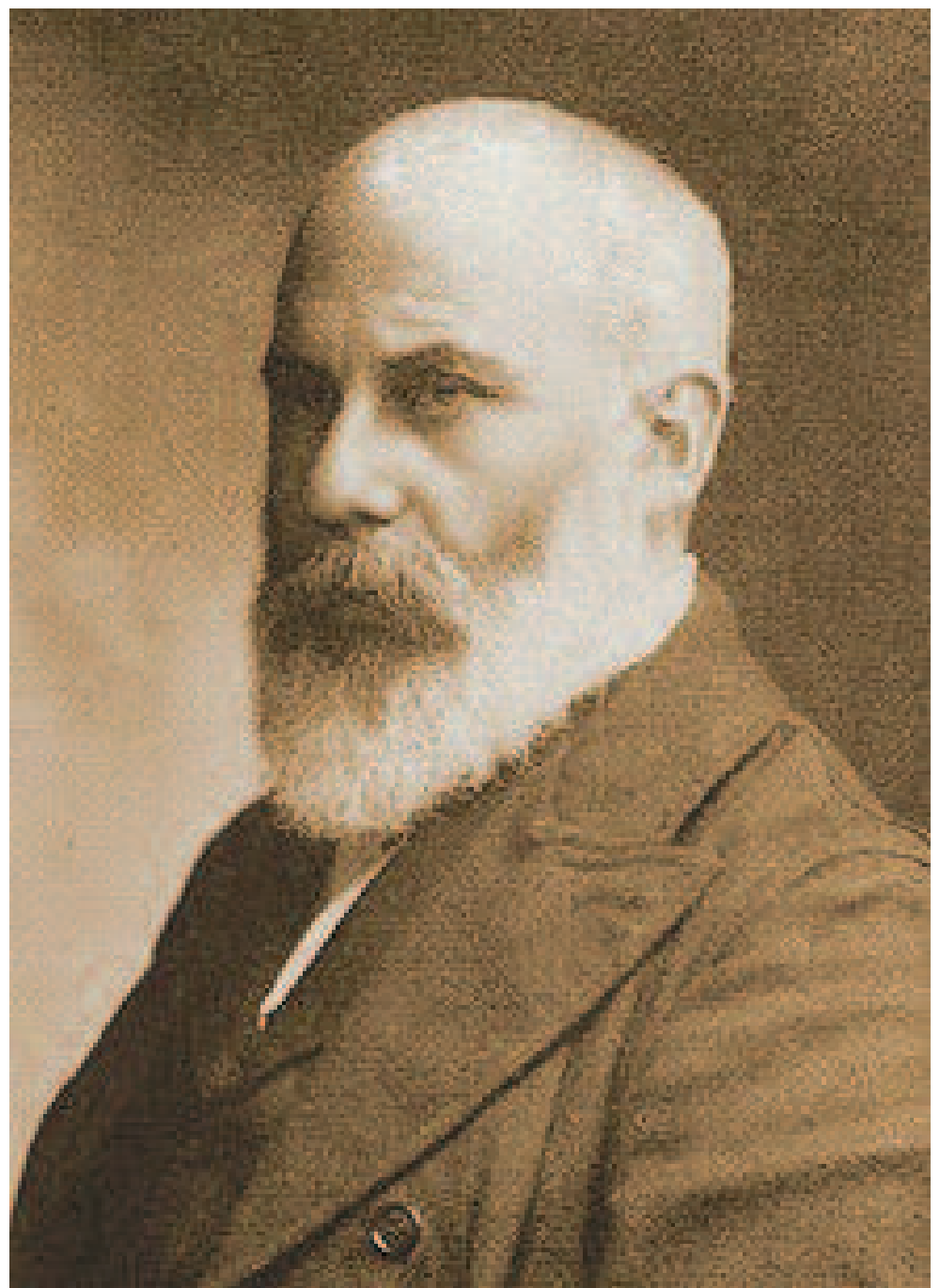
De Leon was only able to "prove" otherwise by tendentious misreading and misleading edits.

In fact, his view was closer to the "iron law of wages" propounded by the nineteenth century German socialist Ferdinand Lassalle, who saw trade union action as a distraction from the ultimate goal of socialist revolution.

For Connolly, this dispute had a real practical importance, and a theoretical error in this area could lead to sectarian isolation from the working-class and its everyday class battles. His original letter, he said, "was an attempt to free [the STLA] from the incubus of a false doctrine, and enable it to take a real live part in the struggles of the workers."

Connolly shared De Leon's views that industrial unions would be crucial in building up workers' strength under capitalism, and would provide the structures for a socialist society. However, he also recognised that short of this, the working class "perpetually rises in protest...organises to reduce the stealings of the Masters, and ever and anon throws down its tools, and enters on a bloodless insurrection against the conditions of its servitude...that the Class War is the one, great fact in the modern world."

His IRSP comrade John Lyng recalled that even while sharing the SLP's dismissive view of "pure and simple" non-revolutionary trade unionism, Connolly "was always ready



Daniel De Leon

and willing to lend a hand to any section of the working class. No matter what the intellectual level of the man — as long as he was striking a blow against capitalism Connolly stood with him. He was out to organise the working class, not a sect."

As important as the theoretical controversy in angering Connolly was the way in which De Leon dealt with the issues. Unwilling to answer Connolly's argument, De Leon denied him access to the paper, promising that the relevant documents would be circulated at the upcoming national convention. Even this was not forthcoming, for De Leon simply read out Connolly's position with his own one-sided commentary and, through these methods, had no difficulty in winning the day.

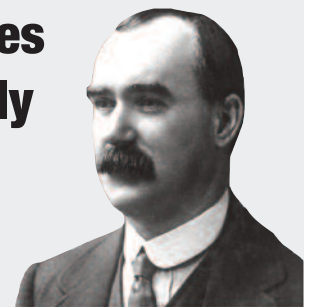
Nevertheless, Connolly continued to hold to his position while maintaining an uneasy truce with De Leon until 1907. The two men were still united in their views on industrial unionism, a semi-syndicalist approach to revolutionary socialism, and opposition to the class-collaborationism of the American Federation of Labor (AFL).

At this time, in 1904, Connolly was working in Troy for Metropolitan insurance. He lost this job when economic conditions worsened and workers could no longer afford the premiums. Moving to New York, he found a job working as the Troy representative for the Pacific Mutual Life insurance company. Shortly afterwards, a strike of young women

in the AFL Starchers' Union broke out in Troy. Connolly, unwilling to collect premiums from the striking workers, and spending much of his time instead raising strike benefit, soon lost this job too and was forced to move to Newark, New Jersey.

**Soon afterwards, however, he would throw himself into an exciting and militant new movement in the American labour movement: the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).**

## The life and politics of James Connolly



Read the whole series online at [bit.ly/cconnollyseries](http://bit.ly/cconnollyseries)

# The problem with Ken Livingstone's "evidence"

Ken Livingstone states he gets his evidence and ideas for his comments on Hitler and Zionism from Lenni Brenner's books. This review of two of Brenner's books *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators* and *The Iron Wall: Zionism Revisionism from Jabotinsky to Shamir* was published in *Socialist Organiser* on 4 October 1984.

By Gerry Ben-Noah

Denial of the holocaust has become the stock-in-trade of the far right in Europe and the USA, from Richard Harewood's *Did Six Million Really Die?* to Arthur Butz's *The Hoax of the Century*.

That pro-Nazis should seek to excuse their heroes of one of the greatest crimes in history can hardly be surprising.

What is remarkable, however, is the recent emergence of a "left-wing" version of holocaust revisionism.

At the most extreme, a French Trotskyist defends Robert Faurisson's right to deny the existence of gas chambers and extermination camps. More often, though, the "left" revisionists do not deny, that the holocaust happened: they merely argue for a redistribution of responsibility for the tragedy. They suggest that the Nazis were not solely to blame for the disaster that befell the Jewish people. Zionism, too, must share the guilt.

Now, in fact, various Zionist leaders did calculate that anti-semites would for their own reasons collaborate with them. They understood that there was logical common ground between Zionism and anti-semitism — old-fashioned, central European, p r e - Nazi Christian anti-semitism — in that both rejected assimilation.

Zionism was generated by anti-semitism. Then once embarked on their project of removing the Jews to Palestine, out of reach of the anti-semites, the Zionist leaders made hard-headed calculations and assessments of the world they lived in, seeking to find ways of realising their programme.

Thus Zionist leaders had discussions with ministers of the viciously anti-semitic Tsarist government, with Von Plehve, for example.

In the same way Zionists have allied in succession with Turkish, British and then US imperialism. Brutal realism and cynical real-politik in the service of their central goal of creating the Jewish state has always characterised the central leadership of the Zionist movement. It has led to shameful episodes and unsavoury contacts.

The realpolitik of the Zionist leaders, together with a slowness to realise that older strains of anti-semitism had evolved into the lethal, genocidal Nazi variant, with which there could be no accommodation, may well have helped blunt the response of European Jews to Nazism.

But to go on from this tragic confusion to identify Zionism and anti-semitism, to place the moral or political responsibility, or any share of it, on the Zionist Jews for Hitler's holocaust of European Jewry — that is hysterically and obscenely stupid.

Yet that is what the new revisionism — at its sharpest when it stops playing with hollow, abstract logical identification between Zionism and anti-semitism and bases itself on the historical facts — concludes and now proclaims to the world.

It is important to recognise that, whilst holocaust revisionism is absolutely central to the ideology of the far right, "left" revisionism remains — so far — a marginal and aberrant belief within the socialist movement.

Until now; it has been propagated only by scattered articles in the "Workers Revolutionary Party" press, or by quaintly-titled pamphlets such as Tony Greenstein's *Zionism: Anti-semitism's Twin in Jewish Garb*.

Until now, it has looked like the work of cranks.

Until now, Lenni Brenner, "left" revisionism's newest recruit, is a Jew, whose books have all the appearance of serious works of history and are published (expensively) by commercial publishers.

Both the books argue, with apparent authority, that Zionists did not fight back against anti-semitism because they were in sympathy with it. According to Brenner, the Zionists saw anti-semites as nationalists like themselves, with a common objective in the removal of the Jews from Europe and a similar evaluation of the intrinsic worth of diaspora Jewry.

Where does one begin to review work like this? The revisionists of the right have shown how easy it is to contest and even subvert what had seemed unassailable historical facts. For, of course, very little history can survive scepticism of this kind, based on the rejection of any evidence one does not like.

Now Brenner does not, by and large, engage in this kind of revisionism. Brenner's unique contribution to historical revision lies in the sense he makes of events.

Most of the events he refers to are real and publicly known. They have been described before by pro-Zionist writers, notably Hannah Arendt in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. (This is not to say that a sizeable catalogue of inaccuracies and contradictions within the Brenner corpus could not be assembled — but such an exercise would miss the point).

Brenner's "theory" of Zionist-Nazi congruence rests upon two sets of phenomena: the actions of individual collaborators who were Zionists, and the policies of Zionist organisations which, for him, were lacking in anti-Nazi resolution.

With the benefit of hindsight it is of course, easy to see that many Zionists underestimated the Nazis. They thought the new anti-semitism would be like the old; brutal, humiliating and dangerous for individual Jews.

They could not and did not conceive of the annihilation that was to come. Thus their strategy was based on a series of assumptions about the immediate prospects for Europe's Jews which was horribly wrong.

To move from this tragic confusion, however, to the suggestion that they were unconcerned about the fate of those Jews is absurd. To argue that they were therefore in sympathy with the Nazis is bizarre.

It would be foolish to deny that there were Zionists who collaborated. So, no doubt did some Communists, Bundists and liberals. In the nightmare world of Nazi Europe many people did bad things to save their own lives or those of people they loved.

For Brenner, though, these individual acts of collaboration are expressions of the inner logic of Zionism. Individual or collective acts of anti-fascist resistance by Zionists on the other hand are dismissed as merely historical accidents, exceptions that in some unexplained way prove the rule.

It would be trivially easy to write a similar account of the "inner logic" of capitalist democracy, or of Marxism, which proved to this standard their affinity with Nazism. Such accounts have little to do with serious history.

Brenner claims to be opposed to Jewish, Arab and every other kind of nationalism. Perhaps he is so far from nationalism that he

does not feel the need to avoid racial slurs, which he sprinkles throughout his writing. Thus, the inter-war Palestinian Arab leadership were not only "a parasitic upper class" but also "classic Levantines" (*Iron Wall* p.57); and the Palestinian Arabs as a whole had a "low level of culture" (*ibid* p.65). As for the Jews:

"...the old Jewish slums were notoriously filthy; 'Two Jews and one cheese make three smells' was an old Polish proverb. Karl Marx was only being matter-of-fact when he remarked that 'The Jews of Poland are the smeariest of all races.'" (*ibid* p.11).

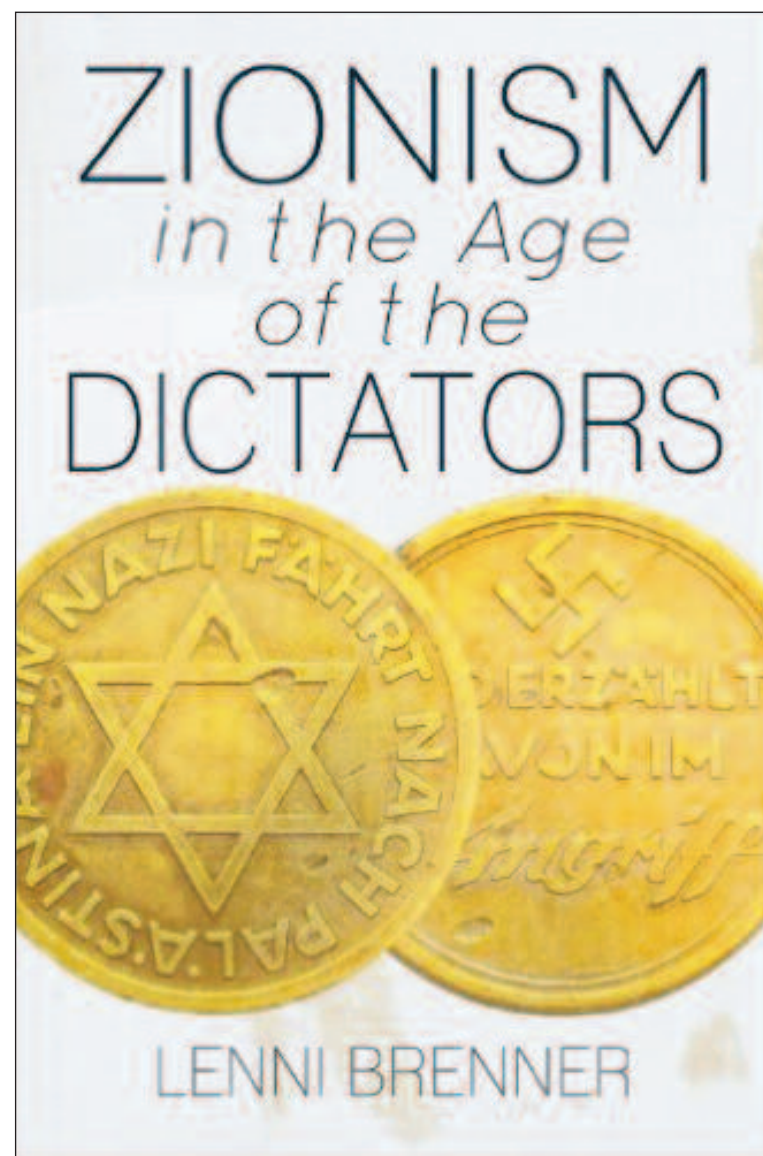
For a self-proclaimed socialist to repeat anti-semitic Polish proverbs as matters of fact is simply incredible. Such remarks are frequent in Brenner and range from the paranoid: the suggestion that rich Jews control the US Democratic Party and thus American foreign policy — to the merely unpleasant — Agudat Israel demanding from the Likud "their pound of flesh" (p.207) as the price for parliamentary support.

There is, then, a curious ambivalence in Brenner's writing. He censures Zionism for despising Jews and on the other hand he clearly despises them himself. Similarly, he characterises the Zionist-Revisionists as near-fascists, and cites quotes from anti-revisionist Zionists to establish this. But he also argues that the Revisionists were the most authentic Zionists, closest to the inner logic of the movement.

The opposition of the Labour Zionists to Revisionism, of which good use is made in proving the latter to be reactionaries, is then dismissed as either bad faith or false consciousness. Either Labour's disagreements with Jabotinsky's followers were entirely tactical, a contest over who should control the colonialist venture — or the left simply did not appreciate, as Brenner can appreciate, that they were really just logical Zionist-Revisionists.

For a Marxist, Brenner places enormous weight on his own ability to critically examine other people's psyches across the years. This ability is not restricted to the minds of Labour Zionists; Brenner also "shows" that Betar was Fascist by reference to the mental states of a hypothetical "average Betari" (*ZAD*, p.114).

We are also offered a psychoanalysis of Jabotinsky: "... there was nothing ambiguous about Jabotinsky's oral fixation... he hated mathematics and was always undisciplined



Brenner's book

as a student the infallible signs of oral fixation ...He had other stigmata of the fixation ...he became hopelessly addicted to detective stories and westerns." (*Iron Wall*, p.6).

This is the sort of thing that gets psychoanalysis a bad name. It reveals, too, that underneath the glossy covers Brenner's work is every bit as crankish as former attempts to construct a "socialist" version of historical revisionism.

Why, then, has it any credibility? A comment by Isaac Deutscher offers a clue:

"The anti-Zionist urged the Jews to trust their gentile environment, to help the 'progressive forces' in that environment ... and so hope that those forces would effectively defend the Jews against anti-semitism..."

"The Zionists on the other hand dwelt on the deep-seated hatred of non-Jews and urged the Jews to trust their future to nobody except their own state. In this controversy Zionism has scored a terrible victory, one which it could neither wish nor expect." (*The Non-Jewish Jew*, p.91).

Brenner, like most socialists, wishes that this victory had not happened. But instead of thinking seriously about what kind of socialist strategy could win the Jews away from Zionism, he constructs a fantasy-world in which the Zionists did wish for and expect the holocaust, and in which the most fanatical Jewish nationalists were, in reality, ardent anti-semites.

**All of this would undoubtedly be an interesting case-study for psychoanalysts. Marxists would be better off by turning to Nathan Weinstock's *Zionism: False Messiah*.**



# Varoufakis' plan to change Europe

John Cunningham reviews *And the Weak Suffer What They Must?* by Yanis Varoufakis (Bodley Head, 2016).

**During the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta, the Athenians captured the small island of Melia, considered to be friendly to their rival city state.**

The Melians, powerless before the might of Athens, pleaded for mercy but to no avail. The Athenians stated that justice belonged to the strong, they would do as they pleased "and the weak suffer what they must" (note that the original quote is a statement, not a question — a subtle but important difference).

And so it turned out. The Athenians put much of the population to the sword and enslaved the survivors. However, the story doesn't end there. The Melians had argued that the Athenians should show mercy because they too would one day suffer misfortune and "be visited by the most terrible vengeance, watched by the whole world". In other words, your actions have consequences. One year later Athens fell to the Spartan army and was itself destroyed.

This trip into the depths of ancient history explains the title of Yanis Varoufakis's recent book and acts as a metaphor, admittedly rather tortured at times, for the rest of his analysis. Who are the "Athenians" and who are the "Melians" shifts as we work our way through an economic history which Varoufakis cites as beginning with the Bretton Woods agreement (at the end of World War Two) and going up to the present day trials and tribulations of the Eurozone. It isn't always an easy narrative to follow and someone trained in the dark arts of international finance may make more sense of it than the present reviewer. Varoufakis himself is by now well-known as the bald-domed "bad

boy" of the European Union who told the German and French bankers what they could do with themselves before he resigned his post as Minister for Greece's collapsing economy.

According to Varoufakis, the European Union, but particularly his native Greece, is in the mess it is in primarily because of the establishment of the Eurozone. Although a staunch European, he is scathing of the way that the Eurozone was set up and has been administered. He draws some kind of rough parallel between the adoption of the Gold Standard between the wars and the adoption of the Euro by the major European states (with the exception of the UK and some others).

There was no political framework (or at best an inadequate one) in which the gold standard could operate. That left the weaker economies, such as war-shattered Germany, at the mercy of the big boys, namely the USA and to a lesser extent Britain. A similar pattern is behind the present impasse and mess in the Eurozone. As support for his argument Varoufakis cites, of all people, Margaret Thatcher, who opposed a single European currency and an independent European Central Bank on the grounds of its lack of accountability to national parliaments,

Varoufakis goes on: "The notion that money can be administered apolitically, by technical means alone, is dangerous folly of the greatest magnitude. The fantasy of apolitical money was what rendered the gold standard in the interwar period such a primitive system whose inevitable demise spawned fascist and Nazi thugs with effects we all know and lament." (p. 97)

A few pages later, referring specifically to the establishment of the Eurozone, he adds: "Ideally, Europe's institutions should have

harmonized the national interests of its members into a common European will. But to assume that monetary union would automatically achieve this harmony was a dangerous flight of fancy." (p. 99)

The powers that be but particularly German bankers (the "Athenians") assumed arrogantly that the establishment of European monetary union would be good for the European economy. Under the impulse of the neoliberal, free-market dogma that now holds sway in such circles, monetary union was a given, not an idea to be tried and tested. So what, if the Greek, Irish and Portuguese economies were devastated; so what if monetary union went hand-in-glove with austerity policies that reduced millions across Europe to destitution — the weak suffer what they must. People who raised objections, like Varoufakis, were ignored.

All this raises the even bigger question, which I suspect is the main thrust of Varoufakis' book: how can the European Union, which at the moment exists primarily to serve a bureaucratic and economic elite, be transformed into "a democracy serving a sovereign European people"? (p. 103)

His answer, partly, lies in the "modest proposals" he makes at the end of the book. Space does not allow a detailed consideration of the proposals but briefly Varoufakis is proposing a stronger role for European institutions such as the European Stability Mechanism to help ailing national banks and economies; an investment-led recovery which would include a pan-eurozone investment programme (using 8% of the Eurozone's GDP), concentrating on large infrastructural projects, green energy research, technical innovation, etc.; the European Central Bank to act as a mediator between investors and member states, providing more favourable conditions and facil-

ities for loans and repayments; an emergency social solidarity programme to combat austerity by the provision of food stamps and a European minimum energy programme.

This would shift the emphasis for recovery from the "surplus" nations (primarily Germany) who are supposedly bankrolling the lazy Mediterranean countries (and Ireland) — but who are also, crucially, the main drivers of austerity economics — to a European-global solution free from the vested interests of national governments and national banks.

Although these "modest" proposals may be too modest for some, they may offer some way out of the current impasse and, Varoufakis argues, they could be achieved within the existing framework of the European Union and would require no new institutions or rules. He doesn't however give the reader any indication how all this, however modest, is to be achieved.

This is not an easy book to recommend. Sometime the account rambles and sometimes the detail overwhelms, particularly in the field of international finance, Varoufakis's explanations aren't always as clear as I think they ought be and its 318 pages would have benefited by some pruning.

The most memorable aspects of the book, for me, were the personal accounts of incidents from the author's life and, particularly the encounter, given in detail, between an Irish journalist and a representative of the European Central Bank. The latter attempts to stonewall the probing questions of the journalist, eventually refusing to speak further, he slopes off, tail between his legs.

**There only remains one more thing to add: Varoufakis, for all his trenchant criticisms remains a European; for him the consequences that would follow the collapse of the European project, particularly the growth of the far right, are catastrophic.**

## Changing Labour, changing politics

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

- Ian Hodson
- Peter Tatchell
- Maryam Namazie
- David Rosenberg
- Janine Booth
- Danny Dorling
- Jill Mountford
- Jon Lansman
- Paula Peters
- Mandy Hudson
- Dr Yannis Gourtsoyannis
- Gita Sahgal
- Grunwick 40
- Ursula Huws
- Catherine Fletcher
- Feminist Fightback
- Hannah Weisfeld
- Clive Bradley

Marxism and Autism; Did the Grunwick strike change the labour movement for black and and migrant workers?; Introduction to the Iranian Revolution; New unionism: organising the unorganised; Changing labour: Work in global capitalism; From Chartism to the Labour Representation Committee; The fight for free speech around the world; Fighting for reproductive rights; How do we change the Labour Party?; How the Labour left organised in the past: the story of The Rank-and-File Mobilising Committee; The struggle for LGBT rights in the labour movement; 100 years since the Easter Rising; 1926 general strike; 50 years since the foundation of the AWL; Can religion play a progressive role in politics? ; The fight for disability rights; Anti-semitism, anti-zionism and the left; Fighting for solidarity across Europe; How inequality is killing us; The politics of crime dramas; Social reproduction and women's liberation; Hungary 1956; The story behind the junior doctors strike; Should we renew Trident? Workers' Liberty debates Luke Akehurst, Labour First; & more to be announced.

**Saturday night social: Our memories of the Grunwick strike**  
The Grunwick strike, 40 years on - with a film showing and presentation from the Grunwick 40 campaign, plus memories from attendees at the pickets.

[www.workersliberty.org/ideas](http://www.workersliberty.org/ideas)

### Thursday 7 July Walking with Minnie

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

### Friday 8 July What is the future of the Labour Party? The left debates John McTernan

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

# Where we stand

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## Events

### Saturday 28 May

**Vote in — Another Europe is Possible Conference.**  
11-5pm Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, WC1H.  
[bit.ly/AEIPrally](http://bit.ly/AEIPrally)

### 31 May to 4 June

**Vote in — Another Europe is Possible National Tour.**  
Various places.  
Bristol: [bit.ly/bristolAEIP](http://bit.ly/bristolAEIP)  
Birmingham: [bit.ly/brumAEIP](http://bit.ly/brumAEIP)  
Newcastle: [bit.ly/newcAEIP](http://bit.ly/newcAEIP)  
Sheffield: [bit.ly/sheffAEIP](http://bit.ly/sheffAEIP)  
Manchester: [bit.ly/mancAEIP](http://bit.ly/mancAEIP)

### Wednesday 1 June

**How to make socialism relevant today**  
6.30pm, Committee Room Laurie Grove Baths, Goldsmiths, London, SE14 6NH  
[bit.ly/relevantsooc](http://bit.ly/relevantsooc)

### Friday 3 June

**UCLU Labour club meeting — Fees, debt and privatisation: stopping the Tory plans for our universities**  
6.30pm, Engineering Front Suite 104, UCL, WC1E 6BT  
[bit.ly/uclfees](http://bit.ly/uclfees)

### Saturday 4 June

**Bursary or Bust National Demonstration**  
1pm, St Thomas' Hospital, London SE1 7EH  
[bit.ly/bursarymarch](http://bit.ly/bursarymarch)

**Got an event you want listing?**

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Workers' Liberty



@workersliberty

# Momentum votes "remain"

## LABOUR

By Jill Mountford

**On Saturday 21 May a meeting of Momentum's National Committee voted by 27 votes to 6, with 4 abstentions, for a left "in" position on Europe.**

The motion from Northern (north-east and Cumbria) and London regions, reflects a lot of discussion among local groups.

Here is the text of the motion:

Britain leaving the EU would be a victory for the nationalist right and their campaign against migrants, almost certainly reshaping the British political and social landscape for the worse.

The EU promotes neoliberal policies in the interests of capitalism — but so does the UK. The British ruling class and government will press ahead with attacks in or out — and outside the EU, the barriers to their assault will be lower, while barriers between us and our brothers and sisters in other countries will be higher.

We support an "in" vote.

We oppose David Cameron's reforms, which attack the rights of workers and migrants. We endorse Jeremy Corbyn's call for a "Europe that puts people, not multinationals, at its heart", through "public ownership

[...] democratisation, stronger workers' rights, sustainable growth and jobs", won through "alliances across Europe to end austerity".

We call for:

- Cross-European working-class and social movement struggles against austerity and for levelling up wages, conditions, services and rights, funded by taxing the rich and public ownership of finance;
- Radical democratisation, including empowering the European Parliament;
- An end to "Fortress Europe" — freedom of movement and equal



**Haringey Momentum activists leafletting with Another Europe is Possible.**

rights for all.

Using the slogans "Another Europe is possible", "For a workers' Europe" and "For a socialist Europe", Momentum nationally will campaign for an "in" on this basis, making defence of migrants, anti-austerity and international solidarity central. This will include an urgent press release, a leaflet and a rally in London at least.

We will work with Labour, with "in" unions, and with the Another Europe is Possible network.

**We call on the whole of Momentum to campaign on this basis.**

# Labour's "Workplace 2020"

By Ira Berkovic

**The Labour Party has launched a new initiative, entitled "Workplace2020", aimed at developing policies for workers' and trade union rights.**

The scheme is part consultation, part policy platform, with Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn announcing that the approach would be "based on full employment, a high-skilled workforce with decent pay, rights of the self-employed and the employed, and a voice that works for a collective bargain." Unite general secretary Len McCluskey has welcomed the initiative, and says Unite will be encouraging its members to take part in the consultation.

"Workplace 2020" is a step in the right direction from Labour. In some ways it is Labour's policy response to the Tories' Trade Union Act, and as such moves the party away from merely criticising and opposing what the Tories do and towards developing its own positive programme and policies around which working-class people can be mobilised.

Indeed, the test for the initiative, in the first instance, will be less in the precise detail of the policies and more in whether it is used as a tool to mobilise action — including demonstrations, rallies, and other forms of direct action — rather than simply being an electoral artefact.

The details of the policies matter too, however. Labour is already committed to repealing the Trade Union Act in its first 100 days in government, but will "Workplace 2020" advocate a positive right to strike, the right to take solidarity action, the right to effectively

picket, and the right to strike over political issues? All these things are essential for effective trade unionism, and if Labour is serious about helping rebuild trade union strength and confidence, it must loudly and unapologetically place the right to strike at the heart of its workplace policy agenda. It must embrace the labels the Tories throw at it as pejoratives: Labour must become the party of strikes.

"Workplace 2020", if it is to be meaningful, must also be bold and radical in the reforms it advocates. A real living wage in Britain is almost certainly at least £10 per hour, and at least £12 in London, rather than the £8.25 figure promoted by the Living Wage Foundation. Learning from the "Fight for \$15" movement in America, the Labour-affiliated Bakers, Food, and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU) has launched a campaign to organise fast food workers which includes the demand for a £10 per hour minimum wage. Will "Workplace 2020" follow the lead of the Labour-affiliated unions already at the forefront of some of the most radical campaigning on these issues, or stick with the more mainstream, but more conservative, living wage calculation?

When some Labour figures, including Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell, have spoken about collective bargaining and trade union voices in the workplace, their point of reference has appeared to be continental models of worker-participation where trade union representatives have seats on company boards. This would certainly be better than nothing, but the political wing of the industrial labour movement should aspire to some-

thing more: democratic workers' control of industry, where, rather than workers collaborating with bosses to run the business, there are no bosses at all. Certainly, this would terrify both the "business community", and the right in the party itself. Good! Let them be terrified! Labour should be a party of class combat, not class collaboration.

It is perhaps too much to expect, given the still delicate balance of forces in Labour, despite Corbyn's victory, and the political and organisational weakness of the wider labour movement, that "Workplace 2020" will be a manifesto for industrial warfare and workers' control.

But even short of that far-off aspiration, there can still be a struggle to determine its character. It is unclear exactly how "Workplace 2020" will work as a consultation process, but if local Labour Parties and branches of affiliated unions are able to contribute in a meaningful and democratic way, as they should be, then there is every chance that the initiative could be shaped in a radical way.

Socialists in Labour and Labour-affiliated unions should use the launch of "Workplace 2020" as an opportunity to advocate for bold, radical, class-struggle policies inside the party.

**If it develops in that direction, the initiative could play a serious role in rebuilding the confidence of workers to assert their interests and fight to extend their rights, rather than grimly defending a meagre status quo, or, worse, meekly accepting ceaseless attacks.**

# Support the Rio strikers

By Kelly Rogers

**Workers at the Rio cinema in Dalston will strike on Wednesday 25 May.**

They are campaigning to against proposals of forced redundancies, for a living wage, and for a commitment from management that they will continue and extend the progressive, community-focused programmes put on at the Rio.

The Rio is one of the increasingly few independent cinemas left. The Rio has a long history of catering to its local community, and being a forerunner in showing progressive films. Workers want to “save the soul” of their beloved cinema, and so have launched a “SOS RIO” campaign, through their trade union BECTU.

The dispute has been going for a long time. In 2013 the Rio staff made an exceptional sacrifice and took a 10% pay cut, for a period of

seven months, in a deal to save the cinema from closure. Since then, staff have been demanding a pay rise and for the money they sacrificed to be paid back now that the Rio has secured a more stable financial future. Management have now shut down negotiations, and have plans to “re-structure”, which will see a significant number of forced redundancies.

Workers voted by 93% in favour of strikes to demand:

The immediate withdrawal of the threat of compulsory redundancies due to take effect on 1 June.

The immediate withdrawal of the current restructure.

A commitment to try to find a solution that retains the staff and the high technical and customer service standards for which The Rio is renowned.

A detailed five year plan from the Board on how they intend to grow the cinema as a community re-



source for low income families.

A demonstrable commitment to a style of management that maximises openness, transparency and respect.

A pay rise for all, with the lowest paid being paid at least the London Living Wage.

**Support the campaign of the Rio staff!**

- [www.fb.com/SOSRioCinema/](http://www.fb.com/SOSRioCinema/)
- [@SOStheRIO](https://twitter.com/SOStheRIO)
- [Article with more background: bit.ly/riodispute](http://bit.ly/riodispute)

# Rail workers' disputes spread

By Ollie Moore

**RMT members in Southern struck again on Wednesday 18 May, continuing their resistance to de-skill the role of the guard and move towards “Driver Only Operation” (DOO) of trains.**

The strike was extremely solid, leading to widespread disruption of Southern’s services. Reports from picket lines, as well as opinion polls and interviews in the press, indicate strong support from the public despite the disruption, with passengers clearly opposed to the idea of removing or de-skilling safety-critical staff.

Drivers’ union Aslef is also supporting the dispute, with 84.4% in voting in favour of strikes on an 82.2% turnout. However, Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR), which operates several franchises including Southern and Gatwick Express, where Aslef is also balloting, have sought High Court injunctions against the union, claiming it has breached the anti-union laws which stipulate balloting procedure. GTR was granted an injunction against a ballot on Gatwick Express after it claimed that Aslef



unlawfully encouraged its members not to engage in DOO on new 12-car trains.

RMT has also announced a new ballot of its members on ScotRail over similar issues.

The move to DOO, recommended in the McNulty Report into the staffing and operation of Britain’s railways, commissioned by the last Labour government and of which the Tories are enthusiastic supporters, could see thousands of rail workers de-skilled and downgraded. In the longer term it could lead to thousands of job losses. Both Aslef and RMT are committed to launching disputes in response to any attempt, on any franchise, to extend DOO, but this necessarily means disputes are scattered and

defensive. Rail unions must urgently find a way to launch a counter-offensive, possibly by declaring disputes wherever train company bosses refuse to give guarantees not to extend DOO (rather than waiting for them to do it when new fleets are introduced).

Train operating companies, with the full support of the Department for Transport, are attempting to remodel the railway industry in a profound and fundamental way, attacking workers’ terms and conditions and making services less safe for passengers.

**National – and, very likely, lengthy – industrial action by rail worker of all grades is perhaps the only thing which can prevent them.**

# CalMac ferries stay public

By Darren Bedford

**Union activists in Scotland celebrated a win on 19 May, as the Scottish government announced that the operation of the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Service would remain in public hands.**

The RMT union, which represents seafarers, fought a long battle

to “Keep CalMac [Caledonian MacBrayne, the incumbent public-sector operator of the ferries] Public”, against calls from many, including some in the SNP leadership, to privatise it. RMT members working on the ferries struck last summer in a dispute to protect their terms and conditions.

An RMT statement said: “The Scottish government has accepted

the union’s argument over [...] the benefits of lifeline ferry services in the west of Scotland remaining in the public sector with CalMac.

“It is also a complete vindication of RMT members’ decision to take industrial action in June last year.”

**The “Keep CalMac Public” campaign was backed by the Scottish TUC, the Scottish Labour Party, and many others.**

# Lecturers strike

By Peggy Carter

**UCU members in Higher Education will strike on Wednesday 25 and Thursday 26 May in a dispute over pay.**

The Universities and Colleges Employers Association, the university employers’ body, only offered a 1.1% pay rise when lecturers’ pay has fallen 14.5% in real terms since 2009.

Meanwhile pay and benefits for university leaders have increased. The average pay and pensions package for a vice-chancellor is now over £270,000, and universities are heavily investing in flashy capital building projects.

However amongst UCU mem-

bers, pay may not be the issue with the most grip.

The gender pay gap and issues of casualisation must be kept prominent in the campaign. UCU’s record in the past few pay disputes has been poor. Few resources have been put into developing campus organisation in advance of strikes, leaving weaker branches struggling to sustain the action. The leadership has then used those struggling branches as an excuse to call off strikes.

**Labour movement solidarity on picket lines and in meetings may make all the different in given UCU members the confidence to go on the offensive for better pay and against marketisation in education.**

# Glen Hart reinstated

By Ollie Moore

**London Underground Station Supervisor Glen Hart has been reinstated following a suspension of almost two years.**

Glen was first suspended after he closed his station during a union overtime ban in Autumn 2014. As Glen had followed both company and legal protocols to the letter, LU was forced to drop its case against him, but soon concocted another one on the ludicrous basis that Glen had been rude to a manager during the investigations surrounding his initial suspension. The manager making the claim was, conveniently, the only witness.

Glen’s union, RMT, mounted a campaign to defend him, including demonstrations and a ballot of all RMT members across London Un-

derground, which returned a majority in favour of strikes. After months of wrangling, LU has finally seen sense and reinstated Glen to his job without disciplinary sanction.

An RMT activist told *Solidarity*, “this outcome is a testament to Glen’s resolve and the resolve of his fellow workers and union members, who stood by him throughout this ordeal.

“Glen probably could have been back at work sooner if he’d admitted some kind of culpability, but he — and all of us — knew he wasn’t guilty but rather was being fittied up and victimised.

**“Hopefully Glen’s reinstatement will strike a blow against LU’s increasingly heavy-handed, personalised, and authoritarian style of discipline.”**



**On Saturday 21 May hundreds of campaigners marched through Lewisham to protest against cuts to libraries. Follow the campaign: [bit.ly/librarieslewisham](http://bit.ly/librarieslewisham)**

# Left makes gains in PCS

By Charlotte Zalens

**Independent Left activists in the PCS union won seats on the Unions National Executive.**

Bev Laidlaw, Tom Bishell and Sarah Malone won seats from the leadership “Left Unity” group. Two other Independent Left activists, Gerry Noble and Chris Marks, got large votes but were not able to get seats due to the union’s rules on the number of seats which can be occupied by members from the same section.

The gains for the left might give an opportunity to turn the union around from its “big talking, little action” routine of the past five years.

**PCS conferences meet in Brighton as *Solidarity* goes to press. Affiliation to the Labour Party will be discussed, as will a motion to overturn the DWP group executive’s decision to recommend a deal on pay and performance management to members, and international motions on Kurdish solidarity and on Europe.**



# Solidarity

For a workers' government

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## WORKERS HAVE NOTHING TO GAIN FROM BREXIT

**By Matt Wrack, General Secretary, Fire Brigades Union\***

**This debate is between one set of people who want to exploit us in Europe, and one who want to exploit us out of Europe.**

It is about two people battling for the leadership of the Tory Party. If there is a big vote to leave the most likely outcome is that Boris Johnson will replace Cameron as Prime Minister. There is absolutely nothing to gain for working people from a vote to leave.

The FBU argues that the trade union movement needs a completely independent position. We should have nothing to do with any of the official campaigns. I was appalled to read the joint letter by Brendan Barber and David Cameron the other week and I complained to the TUC over that. This is a government that is attacking us on every single front and we should not line up with them on this issue.

But we can't stand aside. Millions of people are grappling with this; there are difficult and complicated issues involved.

There is a phrase that is used on the left about the EU. That the EU is a "bosses' club". Yes. It shouldn't come as any surprise. We live in a capitalist world! It is a bosses' club. But so is UK plc. The British state is a long-standing capitalist club where the rules of the game have been set to support big business, and to mobilise forces against our

people, as we try to organise.

We don't defend the status quo in the EU. We are well aware of what happened in Greece; austerity and the role of the EU institutions against Greek workers. In the FBU have tried to build practical solidarity with Greek workers.

But the one thing that is missed in this discussion is the history of the British establishment in driving, austerity, privatisation, attacks on workers. In the history of those ideas two figures stand out — Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. The people who argue this is all about the EU neglect the central role of Thatcher, Blair and Brown in establishing the neoliberal agenda.

The problem of privatisation in the UK has been down to decisions made by UK governments, going far beyond anything the EU has ever demanded.

Another thing never seriously addressed by those campaigning for a left exit is the question of an alternative trade model. What are the implications of negotiating new trade deals? It is not surprising that those unions which have a base in manufacturing, like Unite, have a real and practical concern about the effect of a Brexit on jobs. There is a real threat here.

I don't prettify the situation in the EU, but it does provide rights for workers and this has very real impact on people's lives, such as limits on the length of the working day.

Because this debate is not on our agenda, it has been dominated by

Two of the great intellects of British politics address the difficult issues in the most important question for a generation.



the question of immigration. The left has to come out clearly and challenge the lies and distortions that are being fed by the right wing. It wasn't migrants who caused the economic crisis, it was the failings in the capitalist system. It isn't migrants who are stretching public services, it is a lack of investment. It is not migrants that are stopping young people in London from getting somewhere to live, it is a complete failure of the

housing market.

If we do leave Europe, the debate in British politics for two years or more will be entirely focussed on the question of migration. The idea that this opens up opportunities for the left is just not credible.

We have come through an appalling economic crisis. It is an international economic crisis. If we are going to build resistance then that has to be international resistance.

We've already not done enough. The unions, the left haven't done enough.

**Leaving will put more obstacles in the way of us building unity between workers in Europe. That is why I am for voting to remain on 23 June.**

\* Speaking at a debate organised by Lewisham Momentum on Monday 23 May.

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Printed by Trinity Mirror