

Student occupations and Black workers struggle in Brazil

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Fighting austerity

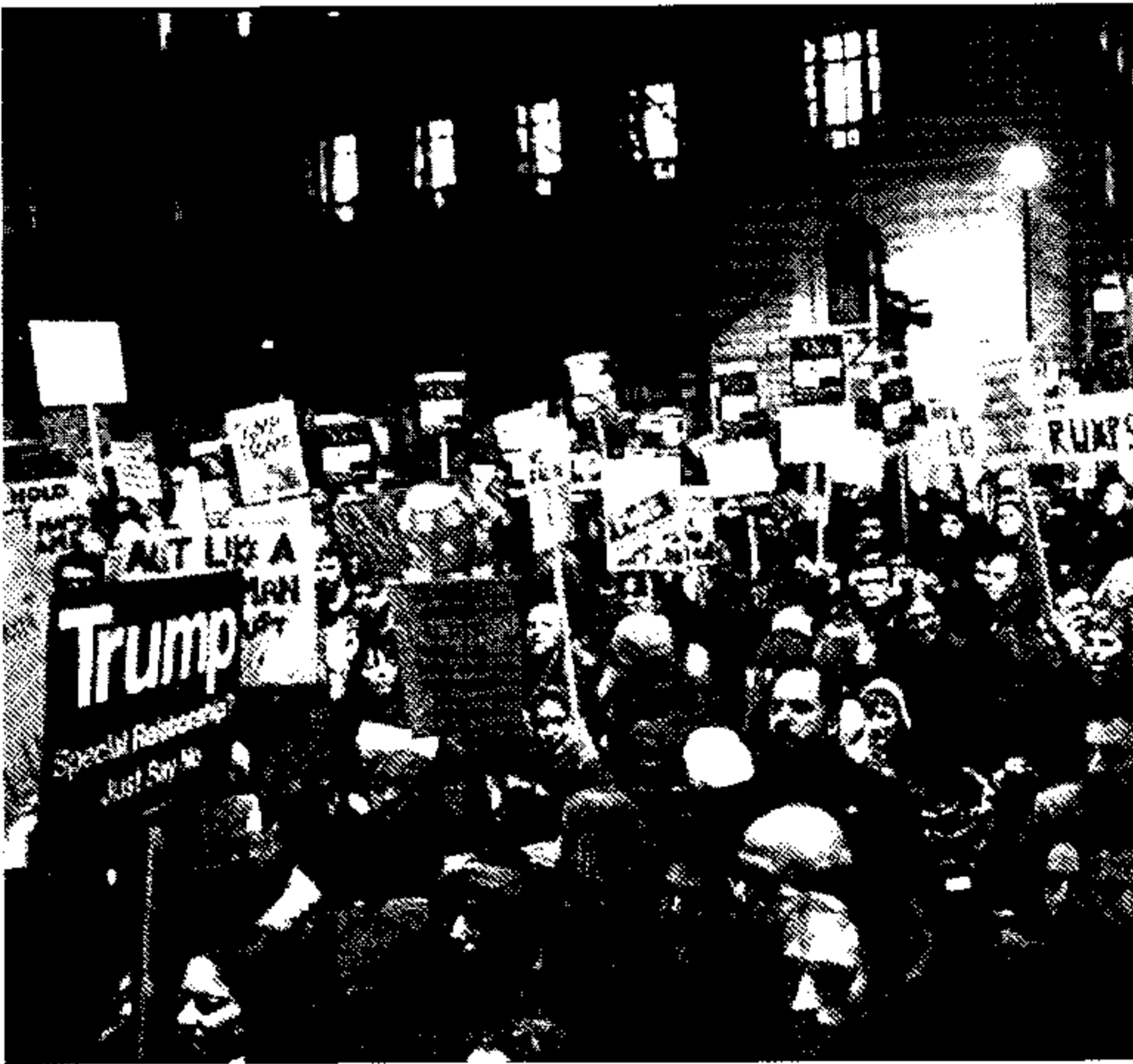
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Socialist Voice

Number 26 February/March 2017

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Trump Out Refugees In



The struggle for socialism against austerity: Corbyn, Left Unity, Old Swan Against the Cuts and the Socialist Party

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Socialist Voice

Newspaper of the ISL
International Socialist League
British section of the IWL-FI
(International Workers League
Fourth International)

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There is no room in this issue of Socialist Voice to cover all the important issues. Therefore, we direct readers to the website (www.isl.org.uk) and www.isl.org.uk

Syria: We must understand Syria as a Popular Struggle because its complications...

The popular uprising in Syria began in 2011, but the debate among the networks, associations, political parties and individuals that make up the political left is ongoing. By Joseph Coker

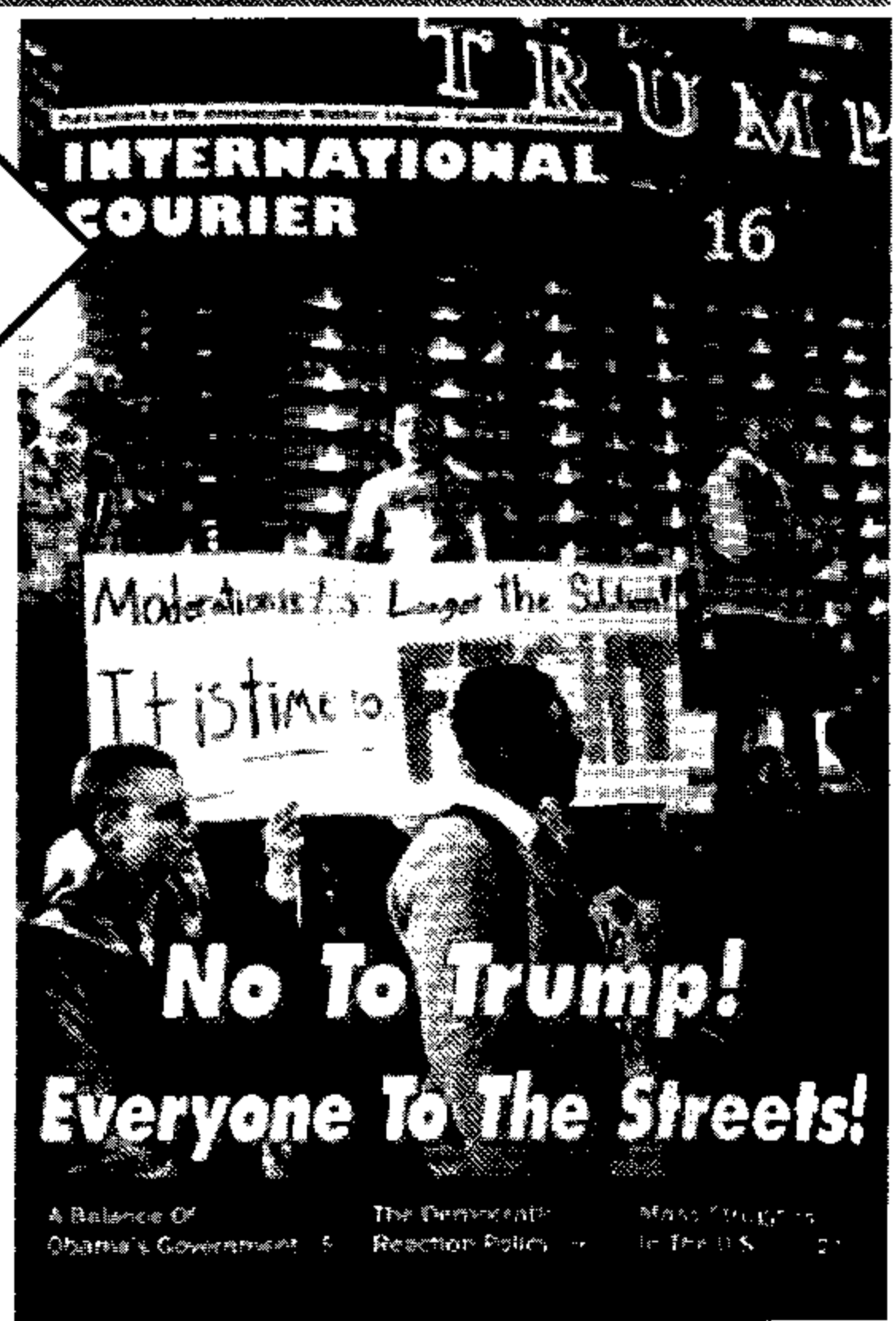
Yulia: Stop to trade and trade for Defending the Syrian Revolution! Concrete steps to an agenda debate in the left wing of the Syrian revolution and, specifically, on the demand regarding the measures taken in the face of which support the regime of the dictator Bashar al Assad. Study the debate was not limited to the narrow circle of the country, those who support the fall struggle of the Syrian people have been suffering unscrupulous attacks, intimidations and threats via mainly on social networks.

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Millions begin to march against Trump

Statement by International Socialist League



ANOTHER BRICK FOR THE WALL

4.8 million activists and workers across the world took to the streets to express opposition to Trump and his racist attack against Muslims and immigrants, and his sexist, homophobic, Islamophobic, and xenophobic attitudes and policies.

For a world 'rigged' in favour of the worlds' 99%

Immediately upon entering presidential office, Trump proceeded in haste to implement racist policies, including to order the construction of "a contiguous, physical wall or other similarly secure, contiguous, and impassable physical barrier" – but to keep out who?

Secondly, he signed an executive order to keep out of America nationals and refugees from seven Muslim-majority countries. A judicial challenge, arguing the unconstitutionality of the order, has halted its immediate implementation, much to Trump's arrogant annoyance. Millions across America, including workers from Silicon Valley (site of some of the world's biggest companies) are protesting against this.

Thirdly, he has signed orders to revive the construction of two pipelines – Dakota Access and Keystone XL. Millions of Americans, Native Americans, and climate change activists have opposed these dangerous pipelines, due to the threat posed to land, water, public health, sacred cultural sites, and the climate.

Furthermore, there will have to be a fight against the continued oppression of

all women, against his reactionary presidency with his patriarchal 'buddies' and their attempt to affirm the 'inferiority' of women, including over the ownership of their own bodies. In an assault on women's rights and overlooked by a bunch of blinkered white males, Trump signed away the reproductive rights of women in developing countries.

Anti-Trump demonstrations have only just begun. Across the world millions are expressing their hostility to and hatred of Trumps' policies with strong opposition to his nationalistic rants and sentiments, which has already led to racism on the streets and is fuelling a rise in far-right parties across the world.

Capitalism is in such a crisis now that the cracks are revealing to millions that its only way forward is more and more attacks on the world's working class.

Hand in hand, together in heart and mind, May and Trump will wage war on all workers, oppressed groups, and the environment. They will dismantle what is left of public services, jobs and workers' rights. Along with the reactionary policies of divide and rule, this is how they plan to secure a rotten capitalist system.

Therefore, the fight against Trump must be strongly linked with the fight against austerity and we must unite in a fight for a socialist alternative for all.

Capitalism cannot serve the needs of the 99%.

No Wall! Sanctuary for All!
litci.org/en/no-ban-no-wall-sanctuary-for-all/
litci.org/en/gop-introduces-right-to-work-law-the-unions-need-to-fight-back-now/

For a socialist needs budget

Many activists, including a majority of 640,000 Labour Party members, were hopeful that Jeremy Corbyn would take "decisive socialist measures" in defence of the working class in 2017.

However, under Corbyn's leadership, as in 2016, the right-wing have maintained their control.

For example, at the Labour party conference 80 per cent agreed to disallow Labour councillors from voting for a needs budget.

This came from a proposal approved by Labour's National Executive Council before the conference in a list of rule changes, "*Members of the Labour group in administration must comply with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and subsequent revisions and shall not vote against or abstain on a vote in full council to set a legal budget proposed by the administration.*"

Members of the Labour group shall not support any proposal to set an illegal budget. Any councillor who votes against or abstains on a Labour group policy decision in this matter may face disciplinary action."

So, leaderships in all Labour controlled councils will force through more cuts that will see the end of many services and jobs.

Labour councillors will continue to set "legal" budgets which also means more privatised services – today, to 'soften' the impact, they talk about community enterprise. Whilst at the same time acknowledging the terrible impact this will have on the vulnerable and our communities.

Support for cuts was endorsed by Corbyn in September 2015 in his first term as party leader, and reaffirmed in a letter signed by Corbyn and McDonnell in December 2015.

Corbyn even fails to live up to past struggles by left reformist leaders. "Better break the law, than break the poor", was the slogan in 1921 of the London Poplar council who stood with the working class and refused to raise rates. Actions to defend services and jobs are needed more than ever.

Continued on page 4

Left Unity: Can we go back to the Welfare State?

Martin Ralph

In September 2016, the Labour Party conference voted overwhelmingly that Labour councillors could not vote against or abstain, on so-called "legal" budgets, that is they must agree to make cuts.

In October 2016, the majority leadership of Left Unity put forward a motion saying "Restoration of Labour as a mass social democratic party is vital for the future of the working class in Britain", we "strongly support his [Jeremy Corbyn] struggle to restore the Labour Party to its original remit and ethos." A substantial minority voted against the motion.

The conflicting positions exist because the main leadership have very deep illusions in Social Democracy and believe it is possible to return to the welfare state created after the WWII and at the same time retain the illusion that social democracy can lead to socialism.

LU leaders are not alone. The Socialist Party have made statements that Labour can lead the struggle for socialism (see article in this edition). However, like ourselves, others see class struggle as the only way.

Of course, the welfare state was better than what we have now, but to think the clock can simply be turned back simply sows illusions in what the past and present Labour leadership did and can do under capitalism.

The ISL thinks that the real lesson is that unless we fight for and achieve socialism, which means a workers state and democratic workers control of health, banks, industry and education, capitalism will claw back what it was forced to give.

The establishment of the Welfare State came out of a fear of working class struggles, in the context of a time with revolutionary uprisings in Eastern Europe, India and China. It also came from a working class in Britain determined not to go back to the dreadful conditions of the 1930s and the terrible conditions they had experienced in the war.

There was an increase of militancy in the mines and engineering factories from 1942 onwards against war profiteering, which created a relationship of

forces that compelled the Labour government to carry out its nationalisation policy and Welfare State legislation after winning the 1945 election. British capitalism and its state were forced to temporarily retreat.

A book published in 1991, *Capitalism since 1945* (Armstrong, Glyn by Harrison) reveals the enormous threat to capitalism as the war ended and not only carefully considers the economic processes but gives correct place to the revolutionary turmoil whose history has been covered over in the period since.

It's not only capitalist economists and reformist ideologues who cover over the importance of revolutionary turmoil. Some Trotskyists and left-reformists bow low before bland generalisations of the 'long term viability' of bourgeois democracy and the strength of capitalism itself, and thus minimise the effects of the betrayals of workers' leadership and the crisis of leadership. So, the working class and revolutionaries learn nothing to assist the advancement of their struggle today except that the working class and its leadership are at the mercy of powerful objective forces.

One aspect of this history is that the post-war Labour government used the armed forces against the strikes of miners, dockworkers, and others. A 1948 White paper stated that there should be "no further general increase in the level of personal incomes without a corresponding increase in the volume of production". This agreement, shockingly, also secured the agreement of the trade union leadership.

While reforms had been a by-product of world revolutionary upsurges, the Labour leadership could carry out their nationalisation measures in a way that continued to assist British capitalism, that is by nationalising capitalism's unprofitable sectors.

The railways and mines, the main industries nationalised, had been dependent on state subsidies for years. The Labour government with a generous compensation offer, unlocked capital for profitable investment. Despite this, the workers' perception was of victory against coal owners and rail bosses. Today the working class must go much further.

Labour policy today does not match

Continued from page 2

For a socialist needs budget

Making the vulnerable pay

The 2017 austerity budgets that have been made public so far includes: cutting adult and children social care by ten percent, closing youth and homeless services, while selling off libraries and parks, cutting voluntary sector funding by 50 percent.

In Sunderland the housing support budget for homeless people will be cut to zero.

In London's Newham council is privatising services, Birmingham plan to cut another £78m Newcastle plans to cut services by £30m, and Liverpool plan £90m cuts over the next three years.

Mass resistance across the country is needed and every workers' community and union organisation should begin to discuss how to lead this struggle and organise resistance committees to fight to save jobs and services across the country.

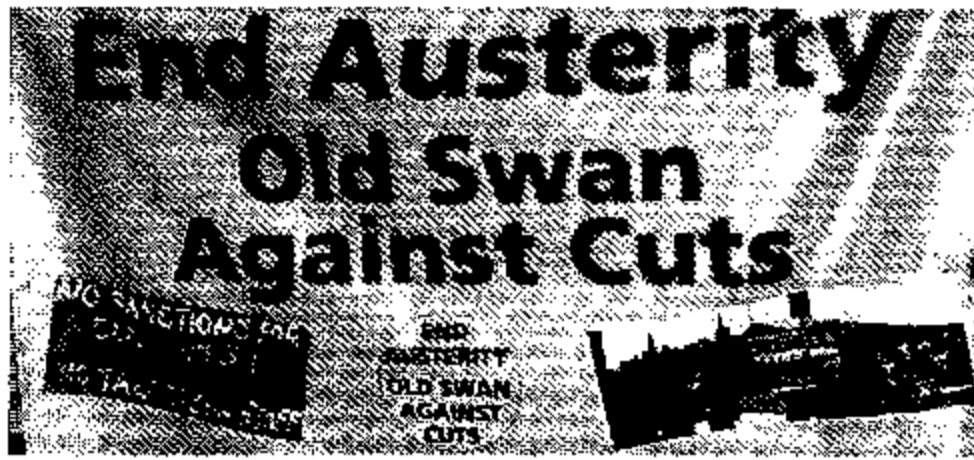
- ◆ Mobilise against all cuts, closures, sackings and sell-offs
- ◆ Organise assemblies to make and demand a needs budget
- ◆ Unite and mobilise

that of the 40s and Corbyn talks timidly about tinkering with capitalism's problems.

We disagree strongly with the LU view that social democracy and the Welfare State can and should be re-established on the old basis, there can be no going back to 1945.

There is an urgent need for a struggle for a Socialist Welfare State. This struggle will assist the working class to take the lead in struggles and change their lives, which can only come through masses taking to the streets and not wishful thinking from the hallowed corridors of parliament.

There must be discussions to develop and build alternatives to the tried and worn out programme of reforming capitalism. It is only the great aims of socialism based in workers national and international struggle that can inspire millions to fight to end this decaying system of exploitation and oppression.



Aiming to stand in Mayoral elections

End Austerity Old Swan Against the Cuts End Austerity, is seeking to stand in the Merseyside combined authorities (five local councils) Mayoral elections to be held on 4 May 2017.

OSAC was founded four years ago and achieved 12 percent of the vote in May's 2016 local election fighting against austerity on a workers socialist programme.

A deposit of £5000 is required from each candidate, thus making it difficult for small working class parties to stand.

The End Austerity programme aims to develop working class mobilisations to fight against devolution and Tory austerity.

Devolution will not benefit communities, it will impose cuts on the NHS, education, transport and many other public services and will be a fast-track to privatisation. See <http://litci.org/en/osac-standing-in-the-mayoral-election>.

End Austerity demands:

- Set a needs budget, use reserves, and borrow resources.
- Stop cuts and privatisations and fight to restore all services and jobs;
- Unite and build mobilisations against the government.

Beware of duplicity

The Labour Party is supporting devolution along with many trade union leaders. But it is a plan to cut, deregulate and privatise services that the government finds difficult to do so.

For example, the RMT (railway workers) are campaigning against Driver Only Operated (DOO) trains. That is the removal of guards on trains, which private train companies want to push through in the devolution process.

The RMT have pointed out that Merseyside Labour controlled councils voted against DOO. However, Labour councillors on the Mersey Transport Committee voted in favour of DOO!

Beware, duplicity is a common feature of Labour councils, it's action, not words that is needed.

Socialist Party suspend political challenge to Labour

Margaret McArdle

It is not that usual to read a Trotskyist journal overtly supporting left-wing populism. However, Peter Taaffe's article *Corbynism and the rise of left populism*, does just that. Today left populism at best means socialism in words, but without a socialist programme or action.

Under the name of TUSC (Trade Union and Socialist Coalition), the Socialist Party supported standing in elections against the Labour Party, but now they oppose this.

However, Taaffe's explanation for the change in position is contradictory

Taaffe explained that with the Rail, Maritime and Transport workers' union (RMT) and the Socialist Workers Party, they contested elections to fight against the cuts which were being implemented by Labour and Tory councils. "To this end, we stood in a number of elections in opposition to Labour. But when Corbyn's challenge was made for the Labour leadership we supported this."

"Now, after Jeremy Corbyn's second victory, we have suggested to TUSC that preparations for future electoral challenges should be suspended, in order for the time to be given to carry through necessary changes – like reselection – to consolidate the victory of the left."

The International Socialist League completely rejects this line of thinking of pandering to and supporting reformists. Under Corbyn's leadership, the Labour Party have agreed to continue cutting services and jobs. All Labour councils are led by the right-wing. Therefore, not to stand against them is to abandon the central political fight against austerity.

The SP harbours deep illusions in Cor-

byn's version of socialism. But what is this type of socialism? Corbyn looks towards parliament to make some reforms. However, even the proposed reforms go nowhere near the reforms of the 1940s.

It has become clear that Corbyn does not seek to mobilise and lead any opposition against the destruction of public services.

Taaffe argues that the LP needs time to get rid of the right-wing. But the position of Corbyn and McDonnell, the Shadow Chancellor, is to keep the LP as a "broad church" that includes the right wing. Furthermore they oppose reselection!

We do hear anti-austerity rhetoric but Corbyn's economic pledges clearly seek the maintenance of capitalism, and are not a step towards socialism.

Since March 2016 McDonnell has been committed to reducing the current deficit to zero over a five-year planning horizon, another parliamentary austerity policy.

According to Taaffe's article it would seem that the SP believe that Corbyn's policies can lead to the construction of a new workers' party, and they have agreed not to challenge the LP. Their capitulation to Corbynism is complete.

In total disagreement with the SP, the ISL programme is to fight all austerity measures whether implemented by Tory or Labour councils, and to support anti-austerity candidates who stand against Labour.

All Labour political representatives including Corbyn supporters, will be voting for support council cuts in March 2017.

We need a mass workers and socialist alternative to Labour to fight austerity and capitalism. This party, we propose, should be based in working class struggles independent of capitalism and the bureaucracy, be Marxist and internationalist and fight against the illusions in reformism inside the class struggle.

**END
AUSTERITY
OLD SWAN
AGAINST CUTS**

In defence of the Russian Revolution

Eduardo Almeida, International Workers League Fourth International
(Complete article can be found in <http://www.in-defense-of-the-russian-revolution.com>)



Introduction

It is the evening of 25 October, 1917 (7 November in the Gregorian calendar). The regiments led by the Revolutionary Military Committee of Petrograd surround the Winter Palace, headquarters of Kerensky's government. They demand the surrender of the battalions still defending Kerensky. The soldiers put up little resistance.

The Soviet Congress, battle noise in the background, begins. Lenin appears at the next day's session. According to Victor Serge: "The moment he appeared, there was a great ovation. He waited calmly until it finished, looking at the victorious crowd. And then, putting both hands in the table, his wide shoulders lightly towards the auditorium, he said in a simple way, with no gestures, 'we now begin the task of building a Socialist society'".

A workers' insurrection has just changed Russian and world history.

Lenin

For the first time, the working class took and exercised power, showing that control by the dominant classes is not a "divine decision" nor "something natural". The power of the Soviets was shown as a revolutionary example of another state, a different kind of state to the ones known so far.

The Bolshevik Party became a world reference to the vanguards of the struggles. Social-Democratic workers' parties all around the world split with the left-wing sectors that were knocking on the door of the III International. During those years, a revolutionary political reorganization of the proletariat occurred that had never been seen before in history.

That experience has been erased from workers' memory across the world. Today, the Russian Revolution and Stalinism are presented as one and the same thing. It is a historical farce: to substitute the Russian Revolution with the political counter-revolution, which transformed the workers' regime into a bureaucratic monstrosity.

Therefore, it is very important to remember what happened during the first seven years of the revolution. To do that, it is necessary to remove the thick layer of dust of imperialist and Stalinist propaganda, and to re-live the fantastic experience of a new power, and a new state. It had much greater democracy than any bourgeois democracy.

Some truths on the Russian Revolution

The Russian revolution overthrew a bourgeois state and built another type of state, a workers' state. It was an experience with no precedent in history.

The two months of existence of the Paris Commune in 1871 were extensively studied by the Bolsheviks, who learnt essential lessons from it to achieve victory in 1917. But the Commune only lasted two months; now it was about taking power and keeping it. What happened during the first seven years of the revolution was a very rich and fascinating historical experience.

The new State relied on workers' councils (soviets). Local soviets were the power base that directly linked factory workers through their workplaces and neighbourhoods.

The main goal was to link the daily activities of the masses with vital problems

of the state and economy. Thus, they sought to avoid becoming a privileged bureaucracy isolated from the masses.

Election mandates were chosen by the people, revocable at any time and their wage could not be higher than an average factory worker.

In bourgeois democracy masses vote every 4-5 years, individually, and the elected candidate does what he or she wants until the next election. In the Soviet Republic workers debated the matters of state every day and chose their representatives, who could be deposed at any moment.

The election was representative: in the cities, one delegate for every 25,000 people; in the countryside, one for every 125,000. Everyone could choose and be chosen, except the bourgeoisie.

There was full freedom for the parties that were part of the soviets, including the ones that were part of the government (Bolsheviks and left-wing Revolutionary Socialists, at the beginning) and the Mensheviks and right-wing Revolutionary Socialists, until the moment they armed themselves against the revolution – when they were outlawed.

Soviet democracy

Unlike bourgeois democracy, which separates the power into three (Executive, Legislative and Judiciary) in order that the bourgeoisie are more able to manoeuvre and decide everything in the shadows, the soviets' power was direct. The debates decided and implemented the resolutions.

The representatives of the local soviets were part of the regional soviets,

which also elected representatives for the Soviets' Congress – revocable at any time.

The Russian workers debated and decided in their soviets the course of the economy, peace and war (including the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk), and the organization of the Red Army.

It was nothing like bourgeois democracy, which is the dictatorship of capital. The bourgeoisie controls the greatest companies and finances the electoral campaigns of the party in government and the "opposition". The bourgeoisie also controls communications (TV, newspapers, internet channels), and can directly influence public opinion.

The people vote but do not decide anything. No matter who wins, the bourgeoisie is victorious. Even if the reformist parties are elected (like PT, Syriza, Podemos or Corbyn), they are already trained to align with bourgeois plans.

Therefore, as governments raise and fall, neo-liberal economic plans remain essentially the same. The people vote for a change in economic plans, but then they do not change anything. Four or five years later the people will vote again, to be deceived again.

reasons, as being "free", "equal", "democratic" and "universal". These words are designed to conceal the truth, to conceal the fact that the means of production and political power remain in the hands of the exploiters, and that therefore real freedom and real equality for the exploited, that is, for the vast majority of the population, are out of the question" [*"Democracy" and Dictatorship*].

A workers' state

The new state was, as every other state, a dictatorship. Only this time it was a workers' dictatorship, not a bourgeois dictatorship. It ensured wide democracy for the workers and the defense, as a state, of the inevitable attacks that would come from the bourgeoisie and imperialism.

The attacks had a brutal military expression. The new state was attacked across every border, by the White Army and troops from 14 countries, including the greater imperialist powers; and the new Soviet State won.

Even in conditions of civil war, it was the most democratic regime for the working class and the people that history has ever seen.

which oppression can be radically defeated. Women's struggles advanced and achieved the right to divorce, abortion and equal pay with men. The communarian restaurants, laundries and kindergartens attacked the basis of domestic work. All the laws against homosexuals were annulled together with Tsarist legislation. Soviet Courts approved marriage between homosexuals. Oppression of nationalities of Tsarist Russia was transformed into free unification – the USSR.

The expropriation of the bourgeoisie and a planned economy started the greatest change ever seen in economic history. The USSR, one of the most backward countries of Europe and Asia, became a country with economic development that no other country had ever developed in such a short time.

This fact shows the fallacy of the idea that "state companies are inefficient", which is an ideology that seeks to justify neo-liberal privatising policies. The private property of big business, that seeks profit, brings misery to workers, creates anarchy in production, and develops cyclical crisis. A combination of the nationalisation of the big companies and a planned economy led to a huge advance



In the Russian Revolution, the bourgeois were expropriated and the resources of the country were at workers' disposal. The central element in the debates were ideas, not the influence of capital.

Bourgeois parties, that did not defend the armed fight against the state, could present candidates, but they did not have money from big backers for their campaign.

Control by workplace delegates, in workplaces and communities, was the powerful expression of workers' democracy.

It was also the best way to avoid the plague of corruption, which is present in all other types of State. If there is no control by the rank and file and the revocability of delegates, there is no way to avoid corruption.

As Lenin said, comparing bourgeois democracy to the Soviet regime: "Elections held in such circumstances are lauded by the bourgeoisie, for very good

Art in revolution

It is not by chance that from such freedom, initiative and creativity there emerged a critical and vibrant art that brought forth many brilliant examples and left a mark in history in many areas. There was no "official" art, the Bolshevik Party and the state were categorically against it. They just guaranteed the resources for art movements to bloom.

In cinema, Eisenstein and Dziga Vertov broke the linear Hollywood narrative. Mayakovsky and Alexander Blok broke the rules of poetry. In plastic arts, Malevich and his 'suprematism', reflected the European explosion of surrealism, expressionism and futurism. Mayakovsky said, "There is no revolutionary art without revolutionary form".

Only the socialist revolution can defeat oppression

The Russian Revolution was also a historical demonstration of the only way in

of the USSR.

Even after the Stalinist counter-revolution the advantages of the planned State economy continued. In Trotsky's words: "Socialism has demonstrated its right to victory, not on the pages of Capital, but in an industrial area comprising one-sixth of the earth's surface – not in the language of dialectics, but in the language of steel, cement and electricity" [*In Defence Of Marxism*].

One of the most categorical examples that illustrate the difference of the USSR to capitalism is the crisis of 1929. While the capitalist world was facing its deepest crash, with a drop of 20 percent in annual GDP in many countries, USSR industry grew by 16 per cent per year between 1928 and 1940.

This is the historical truth, suppressed from the memories of workers all over the world. This is what we want to bring back in a celebration of 100 years of the Russian Revolution.

Socialism for those getting interested!

Chris McBride

Sergei Malyshev was among the Russian unemployed in the build-up to Russia's 1917 revolutions. His voice and influence on events was considered 'minimal', but when we read his pamphlet *How the Bolsheviks Organised the Unemployed*, we see how real events were affected by enthusiastic, confident, and honest plain speak! - and how we can learn lessons from their fight against the treacherous leaders in and around the St. Petersburg Duma (city council).

Malyshev's pamphlet centres on the struggle with the Duma in 1905-06.

In the 1905 revolution, working class struggle created worker's councils but was defeated. In the following 11-12 years, and the build-up to the 1917 Workers Revolution, struggle inside the Duma included Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.

The latter were a larger group in the Duma, and both were in the RSDLP (Russian Labour type party). As 'reformists' they responded to demands of the city unemployed with 'Wait until the economy gets better', and, 'The work contracts (public services, maintenance, factories, etc.) cannot include more workers', 'Live off the charity dole-outs until the masters agree to provide more employment', and so-on.

One hundred years later in Manchester we have a situation similar in many ways. We have a Labour Council with 'left' members and supporters who tell us the same thing such as 'You must pay your roof and bedroom tax', and, 'accept the cuts in services because we must set a legal budget'. This prevails despite Manchester staging the biggest protest in history, a demonstration that was against austerity.

Meanwhile - Labour and trade union leaders still refuse to fight. They tell us to 'Wait and make things easy' for an imaginary fairer government. For Labour, the struggle for socialist planning of the NHS and public services is always 'Not now', and/or, 'The workers don't understand and won't fight'.

These leaders and their bureaucratic manipulations are an obstacle, they do their best to prevent the enthusiastic emergence of a struggle because such a struggle threatens their own treacherous existence.

Malyshev clearly shows that the fight against the government was also a fight against the treacherous leadership in the workers movement.

"Owing to unemployment, numberless workers families are now without bread. The workers do not want charity or

dole. We demand work. The Masters refuse to give us work. They say that they have no contracts. But the city has contracts and can provide work for the unemployed. We think that the way the city disposes of the public funds is scandalous.

Public funds should be used for public needs and our need today is work. Therefore, we demand that the city Duma organize public work for all the needy.

We demand not charity but our rights and we will not be satisfied with charity. The public work which we demand must be started immediately. All the unemployed of St. Petersburg must be able to do this work: every unemployed worker must receive an adequate wage. We have been delegated to insist on the fulfilment of our demands. The masses who have sent us will not be satisfied with less. If you do not accede to our demands, we will report your refusal to the unemployed and then you will not have us to deal with, but those who sent us, the masses of the unemployed."

Today the demand is the same, for a public works programme under workers' control; proper work not dole; decent pay and conditions; and an end to zero hour contracts.

Jobs lost and their cost

Peter Windeler

The drive by capitalism to lower the living standards of workers, to make profits for the wealthy in Britain, is revealed in a recent study by Sheffield Hallam University - *Jobs, Welfare and Austerity* by Professors Christina Beatty and Steve Fothergill.

After the miners strike in 1984-85 there was a systematic drive to close down factories by the Tories. Manufacturing was left to wither and governments supported the City of London by deregulating finance industry in what was known then as the "Big Bang".

This shift has meant that with the loss of jobs, especially in the North there has been a subsequent loss of tax revenue for governments from in-work workers and an increasing benefit bill.

Ironically, this has led to a huge cost to the British government, which is struggling with a budget deficit. It is now estimated that up to £30bn a year is lost to the country due to the attacks on the working class in the 1980s. This figure amounts to more than half of the

country's £55bn budget deficit.

To solve the problem pro-capitalist governments, whether Teresa May's Tories or McDonnell/Corbyn Old Labour, will have to continue to reduce workers' living standards and cut services.

According to Larry Elliott, writing in *The Guardian*, the attacks on the working class have never let up since the defeat of the miners. He quotes the Sheffield report saying that the welfare reforms since 2010 and especially those since the 2015 election have continued the punishment on working communities for the benefit of capitalism, in order to balance its books.

The report notes that as well as the North of England, Scotland and Wales were also badly affected. Over the past 50 years 5 million manufacturing jobs have been lost.

Instead of protecting jobs and communities by supporting industries and enacting a proper industrial strategy, including reducing the working week, mil-

lions of workers and their communities have been thrown on the scrap heap.

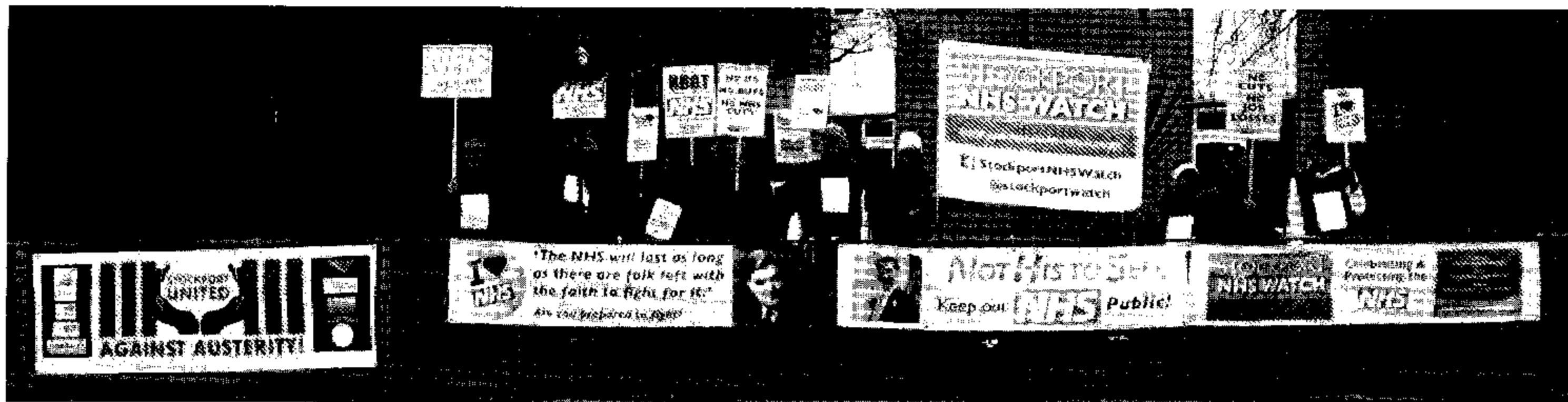
Capitalism's logic by attacking the working class was to diminish the power of organised workers in order to make workers subservient to capitalism and accept poorly paid jobs and zero hours contracts from which capitalism could rake in profits.

At the same time, the drive comes from capitalism's need to intensify the loss of jobs through technology such as automation, computerisation and robotics in the remaining manufacturing sectors such as cars.

On the docks for example automation of docks was enhanced through the destruction of union strength and rabid casualization.

Accompanying this the ruling class deregulated the City of London enabling it to become the casino of unbridled capitalism.

Or as Marx would describe the London of today: a metropolis of "coupon clippers".



NHS weekly protest: Stockport

Peter Windeler

Each Tuesday morning from 8.00 to 9.30 Stockport NHS Watch hold a picket at the gates to Stockport's main hospital, Stepping Hill.

The entrance is on the busy A6 and is accompanied by a steady blast of car horns supporting the demonstrators. Whether the cars in support are old bangers, executive limousines or heavy lorries – all demonstrate that there is universal support. Recently when Socialist Voice joined there was only one dissenter – an imbecile calling out from his warm car – “Get to work”. What he didn't know was that many on the protest were on Christmas holidays and gave up their lie-in to support the NHS.

The protestors receive support from the staff of the hospital and on the morning in question a junior doctor joined the demonstration prior to her shift.

The hospital has recently announced ward closures and 400 staff cuts despite rising demand.

Meanwhile *The Observer* on 1 January 2017, Will Hutton reported that death rates have risen to their highest level since 1940. This is part of the trend in a decline in well-being, that has risen since 2010.

Although increases in death rates affect all counties subject to austerity in

Britain, Oxford University's Professor Danny Dorling, according to Hutton, "... thinks part of the reason...is the roll-back in social and health provision."

Hutton goes on to say:

"Losses in adult homecare visits, meals on wheels, bus services and the general squeeze on health spending have been felt most acutely among the late middle aged and elderly. Former chancellor George Osborne's insistence that the entire deficit reduction programme be shouldered by spending cuts, rather than in balance with tax rises, was not only bad economics, it has been ruinous for health and well-being".

Save Liverpool Women's Hospital
For all our sisters, mothers, daughters & babies.

- Defend all the services for women and babies
- Remain on the site.
- Invest in resources like paediatric intensive care and level 3 intensive care.
- Improve the national maternity tariff; all babies matter.
- Fully Fund the NHS and maternity services across the UK.
- Train more midwives, junior doctors, paediatric nurses.
- Bring back the bursaries.
- Provide services publicly and not for profit
- Reform NHS insurance.
- Establish contracts with all specialist services required.
- No Spire, or other private hospital on the Crown Street site.
- Improve inter hospital transport systems.
- No cuts in beds or services.
- No wasteful pop up services.

No to Privatisation or Cuts. No to loss of beds.
Save Liverpool Women's Hospital

Save-Liverpool-Womens-Hospital
email: SaveLWH@outlook.com

Reject the alternatives

- No to moving to the Royal site; too crowded, too polluted, too much traffic.
- No to mega merger of all Liverpool hospitals; maintain the Liverpool Women's
- No to moving to Alder Hey site.
- No to private providers.

Fundamental problems are developing in the NHS because of cuts to NHS funding. The UK spends less per head than other advanced European Countries. (The USA spends more but gets a much inferior service because of the profit based system)

Accident and Emergency, Mental Health and Maternity are in the front line for cuts and shortages.

Care services are in crisis because of Austerity Cuts and Privatisation. We need a fully funded National Care Service.

Poor health care and poor social care is extremely costly to the individual, the family, employers, the community and the whole economy. Good care is a sound investment.

Our campaign is developing a detailed response to the proposals produced by the CCG and their management consultants.

Please help us organise meetings in your area or to speak at an organisation you are involved in.

SAVE OUR NATIONAL WILDFLOWER CENTRE

You Can Help!

How you can help...
 - Sponsor a plant
 - Donate
 - Volunteer
 - Spread the word
 - Contact us

END USE ON

and Along • Show Support • Share Ideas

Fight for your NHS

An option to keep Liverpool Women's Hospital on site with a £40m refurbishment has now been included in the plans as a direct consequence of the campaign.

Join the NHS national demonstration in London, 4 March. If you can help, please get in touch via email (Contact Facebook: Save Liverpool Women's Hospital.

The National Wildflower Centre (NWC) is a seasonal eco-visitor attraction where natural wildflower heritage is showcased.

The NWC is a lifeline to Merseyside residents of all ages. It's a family centre that provides a multitude of services and is a social oasis in the city – a beautiful sanctuary based in the heart of the community. The Cornflower Café was a social hub, where "everyone is family".

The staff and friends of the centre are fighting to re-open the centre and cafe. If you can support and help contact savethenwc@gmail.com

Brazil: School occupations

Lucas Santos member of the ISL, as a member of the PSTU participated in the school occupations in Sao Paulo that spread throughout the country in 2016



The new Brazilian president Michel Temer, who six months ago took over from the Workers Party impeached president Dilma Rousseff, has intensified Dilma's attacks on labour rights and public services.

Temer's constitutional amendment, PEC 55, is being called "the PEC of the end of the world". It is not hard to understand why. If it is approved, investments in public spending (mainly education and health) will be frozen for twenty years, and the minimum wage will be cut.

There have been years of unpopular wasteful projects, including the soccer stadiums and facilities for the FIFA World Cup and 2016 Summer Olympics; and there have been many corruption scandals, including Petrobras (the national oil company) and others totalling billions of Brazilian Reals.

At the same time unemployment has soared to 22 million; inflation has risen above 7 per cent, "No one can afford to pay the bills or pay for rice and beans in the supermarket, for electricity, gas and other tariffs. To solve this crisis, the federal government is throwing the bill on the backs of workers. Entrepreneurs, bankers and agribusiness, are not being harmed, they benefit." (cspconlutas.org.br).

Temer has proposed 20 years of cuts. The proposals in PEC55 represents one of the most serious attacks on the working class since the end of the dictatorship in 1985, and it is being fought by the trade unions, social movements and the population in general.

As if that was not enough the government also decreed terrible changes in the schools curriculum, removing important subjects, and with plans to use unqualified teachers.

Against these attacks a wave of mobilisations and occupations erupted among students and education workers. More than 200 universities and 1200 schools were occupied.

Police repression became increasingly violent, with many arrests and detentions without trial. This was a vicious attack on the right of assembly, occupation and demonstration.

At least 19 of Brazil's 27 states, as well as the federal district of Brasília, were shaken by "A National Day of Struggles, on 11 November, approved by Trade Union Centrals, and included education workers and other public sector workers, showing that the disposition to struggle of the workers is strong.

There were road blocks in São Paulo, Rio Grande do Norte, Bahia; in other states there were factory shutdowns; and there were demonstrations in State capitals from schools and universities.

Trade union federations called for a general strike on 25 November against PEC55 and the Social Security and Labor reform; in defense of employment and wages." (cspconlutas.org.br).

As in Britain, there are bureaucratic union leaderships such as the CUT and Forca Sindical. They oppose a united struggle of the working class, and are against organising general strikes.

Whilst they oppose the Temer government they do not want to defeat it on the streets, they seek to merely weaken it until the next election.

The same happens in Britain, the TUC, UnitetheUnion and other unions do not encourage mass mobilisations on the streets against austerity and cuts. Their policy is for unity with the Labour Party and hope for a future Labour government.

Brazil is not a racial democracy

Socialist Voice interviewed Vera Lúcia, a leader of the PSTU (Trotskyist party in Brazil; section of the International Workers League-Fourth International).

At the end of Part 1 of the interview in the last issue of Socialist Voice Vera said, "The establishment says Brazil is a country of racial democracy, but it is far from that. Racism is a very serious problem in Brazil, more so because it is white-washed."

SV: Where in Brazil's society today are Black men and Black women located?

VB: In countries like Brazil the Black population is part of the working class, they are part of the industrial working class and the make-up a majority of the workers in the oil, car and engineering industry. Outsourced workers are mainly composed of Black workers. And the social and rural struggles similarly mainly include people from the black communities.

SV: What is it about Brazil's history that has created the problems you talk about such as racism, and the poor and inferior working and living conditions of the Black population.

VB: Slavery existed in Brazil for 350 years and was abolished 130 years ago. But slavery was not just about Brazil. Marx showed that capitalism needed to have a previous production system of slavery before and during its development as a world system. Britain for example was the leading capitalist nation that took African land, products, and people.

Today Brazil is still dominated by our history of slavery.

SV: What are the problems that Black people and Black women in particular, face in Brazil?

VL: In Brazil, many of the rural communities are far from cities, so many young people who move in to the cities are pushed into conditions that are similar to those of the refugees in Europe.

Often Black girls exist as slaves in domestic work, and when they are older they are dismissed, and then are forced into prostitution.

Before 2014, in domestic work, work that Black women have done since the days of slavery, there was no sick pay, pension, minimum wage, maximum on hours worked, or holidays. In 2014 a law

BLACK LIVES MATTER

to regulate domestic work was approved (but not applied).

Middle class households now hire workers daily. Daily workers are not regulated by the law. This mainly affects Black women.

SV: Are there other historical problems affecting Black women that continue today?

VL: They are many. Black women did not have the possibility to breastfeed their own children, in the past this was because they had to breastfeed white babies. Today most Black women do not have the right to maternity leave, so once again Black women lose their right to breastfeed their children.

SV: You have talked about immigration, where have most of the immigrants in Brazil fled from? And do immigrants in Brazil experience discrimination or exploitation as happens in Europe?

VL: Recently in a factory in Sao Paulo, the richest state in Brazil, Bolivian immigrants were found to be working as slaves.

Other immigrants come from Paraguay, Nigeria, and more recently Haiti. Immigrants work in the worst jobs and worst conditions, like many Black Brazilians. In some cases, they are facing much worse conditions than Black people. There are well educated Haitians here who have to do menial and low-skilled work, which includes Haitian professors and other professionals.

Brazil is a puppet of US imperialism with our armed forces occupying Haiti.

Immigrants also face serious problems with incidents of xenophobia.

SV: What do you think is the way forward?

VL: In many countries, the issue of racism and xenophobia poses a serious question, what is the way out of all the suffering for Black people today? Black populations are oppressed by capitalism and imperialism, and the crisis in Europe means that Black female refugees will face the greatest problems and will suffer the most. The problems that women suffer are seen as cultural, because this reasoning has always served the interests of the dominant class. For this reason, men and women of the working class, Black and white, must fight all exploitation and oppressions, to unify the working class so as to combat the dominant class.

(Continued from page 12)

The outstanding thing about the Trotskyist movement and Trotsky is that they alone built on the basis of internationalism.

They continued as they began, for Bolshevik internationalism and the Permanent Revolution against Socialism in One Country.

The 'left' movement

The whole of what is called the 'left' movement – that is to say the people in the world socialist movement who have considered themselves to the left of Stalinism or reformism – have been shaken by the developments in imperialism and the break-up of Stalinism at the end of the 1980's. Not only them, but also the Trotskyist movement.

The collapse of the Soviet Union exploded, for example, a theory which was taken as a certainty by 'lefts' and Stalinists and which penetrated insidiously into the Trotskyist ranks, principally the Mandelists.

It was the theory that the development of objective circumstances and the relationship of forces would inevitably mean that China and the Soviet Union, with all their blemishes, would evolve to an equal level with the capitalist powers and then overtake them.

These people based most of their political thinking on this, whether or not they indulged in anti-Stalinist criticism. Despite denunciation of Stalinism they believed deep down that hope for the future only lay in its evolution.

The collapse of Stalinism brought a crisis in the whole of this 'left' and a paralysed confusion in some sections of Trotskyism, laying them open to the bourgeois ideological offensive against Marxism.

All the movements that call themselves Trotskyist have gone through a crisis in the last decade reflecting the crises of Imperialism and Stalinism and the end of the post-war stage of history.

The split in the Militant was not just due to their empirical turns to work outside the Labour Party, but was very much connected with international events and an inadequacy of old orientations on Stalinism. A document of the Militant majority on the differences they had declares that "Marxists" had thought there could not be a return of capitalist relations in the Soviet Union.

It is the old conclusion from objectivist thinking that it would be as impossible for the Soviet Union to go back to capi-



On March 1 1991, amid the sharpening constitutional crisis in the USSR, 300,000 coal miners across the USSR again came out on strike to force the government to deliver the promises made in 1989. Donbass and Kuzbass miners were at the centre.

talism as it is for the baby to go back into the womb.

Permanent Revolution

The programme of the Permanent Revolution is one pillar that is an absolute for building the International movement of the future.

The Permanent Revolution is not a statement of revolution everywhere. It is a strategical guide for our epoch when only under the leadership of the proletariat can the bourgeois democratic revolution be carried through and made permanent, and this proletarian revolution can only be made permanent by becoming part of a world revolution.

That is not to say that on the road towards building the Fourth International we will not make alliances with people who perhaps are not clear or who are unsure about the permanent evolution but who want a revolutionary international.

We enter into the struggle for that International together, because we seek to prove that our position on this and traditions built on it, give us the firmest and best guide in taking the working class to the resolution of its problems.

However, we learn from our intervention and we learn from the people we intervene with. We learn the best way to struggle for our principles.

The *Transitional Programme* is a strategical guide for taking the working class to power and bridging the gap between a lack of proletarian consciousness and the task posed by objective conditions. The bridge is not a propaganda bridge but a bridge of struggle.

This is what the turmoil and suffering in the 1980s and 1990s tells us. This is what the collapse of Stalinism and the crisis in all the former colonial countries shows us. Rulers will not lead a successful democratic revolution, only the working class in the struggle for the October Revolution can lead and complete it.

Bill Hunter's Archives

Why Stalinism collapsed

This 1993 archive article by Bill Hunter helps to understand how Stalinism collapsed and why. We are printing this article as part of the International Socialist League's contribution to the international campaign of 100 years since the October Revolution.

Gorbachev, who became general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1985, began Perestroika and Glasnost, proclaimed as "restructuring" and "openness", and introduced profound changes in economic practice, internal affairs and international relations. The changes were meant to defend the bureaucracy and its privileges in an increasingly desperate economic situation. Immediately there were forces unleashed which revealed that the bureaucracy had become a restorationist elite.

It was no longer possible – in fact it had not been possible for a very long time – to talk, as Trotsky did before the war, about the three wings of the bureaucracy: the right including fascists, the left, and the centre.

In the last two or three decades, this bureaucracy as a whole has been compelled to link the Soviet economy more closely with world imperialist relations, that meant increasing domination of the world market and imperialist finance.

If you want to understand what happened in Russia in the eighties, you have to build on Trotsky's *Revolution Betrayed*, the documents of the Left Opposition and the *Transitional Programme*. The *Transitional Programme* declares: "either the bureaucracy, becoming ever more the organ of the world bourgeoisie in the workers' state, will overthrow the new forms of property and plunge the country back to capitalism; or the working class will crush the bureaucracy and open the way to Socialism."

Have not these been the alternatives which are the framework for understanding the Soviet Union in the 1980s?

This is something that we found early agreement with in the 1982 International Workers League Thesis which pointed out the bureaucracy was leading Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to semi-colonisation. There were increasingly dominating connections of imperialism with the Soviet Union through, among



International Socialist League meeting (see Facebook) celebrating 100 years after the October Revolution. Our first day of discussion and debate centred on the 1871 Paris Commune and its importance for 1917 and the Bolsheviks. We will be holding more sessions throughout the year. The second will be April 2017 to discuss the 1905 revolution, how the working class took power and the first years of workers' power. Please contact if interested in attending.

other things, the IMF and the World Bank.

As Elizabeth (IWL comrade who went to Poland from Argentina, in the early 1990s) showed when she touched on this history of Poland. The government of Walesa as it began only sharpened up the process which had already been going on under Gierek. We have to say that the process towards capitalist restoration began before the uprisings of 1989/90 and we can see those processes going on in China, Vietnam and Cuba.

This is the other side of the equation in the *Transitional Programme*: either the working class smashes the bureaucracy or the bureaucracy develops into the arms of imperialism.

The working class has only begun to develop their independent organised class strength.

But over all this period before and after 1989/90, the restorationists and imperialists have not been able to develop a stable capitalist class because of the explicit, as well as the potential, resistance of the working class.

The destruction of all the conquests of the Russian Revolution has yet to be decided in struggle. It is this conflicting

equation posed in the *Transitional Programme* which has been becoming more and more decisive, ever since the 1970s.

The inability of the working class to take the lead meant that a great section of the bureaucracy was able to adjust itself and even join the forces of "democracy".

That does not mean that they were able to carry out their plans to preserve their privileges on a capitalist basis.

The same question of struggle between the forces of the working class and the forces of restoration exist. The issue is not decided. The question is of developing a programme and assisting the working class in their independent class struggle – on workers' control, in defence of the social conquests, against privatisation and so on.

Stalinism or internationalism

One cannot build an International unless you start with the contribution that Trotskyism has made as a consistent force – in fact the only force – which has fought and organised for proletarian internationalism in the last seventy years.

(Continued on page 11)