

Solidarity & Workers' Liberty



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For a workers' government

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What is the Alliance for Workers' Liberty?

Today one class, the working class, lives by selling its labour power to another, the capitalist class, which owns the means of production. Society is shaped by the capitalists' relentless drive to increase their wealth. Capitalism 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 has one weapon: solidarity.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty aims to build solidarity through struggle so that the working class can overthrow capitalism. We want 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 the labour movement to break with "social partnership" and assert working-class interests militantly against the bosses.

Our priority is to work in the workplaces and trade unions, supporting workers' struggles, producing workplace bulletins, helping organise rank-and-file groups.

We are also active among students and in many campaigns and 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 the burden of housework. Free abortion on request. 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.
- Working-class solidarity in international politics: 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!

Contact us:

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Fight saves a library

By Vicki Morris

Save Friern Barnet Library campaigners are celebrating partial victory in their fight to save their local library, closed by Barnet Council in April 2012.

Barnet Council has agreed to give a two-year lease to a group from the

community to continue running a library in the building. They had planned to sell the building.

This climbdown result from a two-year campaign by residents, given an added boost recently by Occupy London activists coming to squat the building. With the existing Save Friern Barnet Library Group, the squatters re-

opened the library, stocked with donated books.

Throughout, the campaigners have demanded that the library remain integrated with Barnet's libraries, staffed by library professionals, and paid for by the Council.

The squatters lost their case against eviction in December and were given a month to leave.

With time running out before the library was due to revert to the Council, the campaigners accepted, reluctantly, that the only way to save it for the time being was to put in a "community bid" to run a volunteer library. The Council has agreed, it seems, to pay £25,000 a year running costs.

The local Tory administration will try to paint this as a victory for the "Big Society" idea, but the campaigners reject such a spin. In a statement they say: "... putting in place a paid

librarian is a priority. ... the funding offered by the council does not cover a full time librarian, but as the two year lease is negotiated... this will be kept at the front of the conversation. We are strongly opposed to austerity and all the cuts, especially to the library service."

Barnet Council has now moved to cut most of its professional librarians — keeping a proper library service in the borough will be a fight for all of us, not just for Friern Barnet.

The Labour group will have to be pushed to commit to reintegrating the library into Barnet Libraries should it win the 2014 council elections.

The partial victory of the Friern Barnet Library campaign is an inspiration to all anti-cuts campaigners, but we know that much remains to be fought for.

British troops go to Mali

By Colin Foster

On 29 January the Government announced that up to 400 British troops will be sent to Mali to help the French intervention, and maybe for over a year.

The French troops have now taken control of all three main towns in the north-west of Mali, and the

French government talks of withdrawing soon.

Full French withdrawal any time soon still remains unlikely. The Islamist militias have retreated from the towns to the desert, rather than being defeated in combat.

A stable and widely-accepted political settlement in Mali is still remote.

Oppose cuts at Whittington Hospital

By Daniel Rawnsley

More than 70 people attended a meeting at Camden Town Hall to discuss halting cuts at Whittington Hospital in Islington.

Whittington Health Trust Board wants to close in-patient wards and reduce bed numbers for the elderly and new parents, close and sell off all staff accommodation, and cap births at the hospital at 4,000 a year.

570 workers face redundancy and, in total, a third of the hospital site is being put up for sale.

At the meeting Shirley Franklin, chair of Defend Whittington Coalition, said involving workers from the hospital was "absolutely essential", but also an uphill struggle.

She accused hospital management of intimidating workers, saying they had warned them to stay away from the campaign.

CAMPAIGN DATES

- Tuesday 12 February, Defend Whittington Coalition Public Meeting, Archway Methodist Hall, Archway Close, 7.30pm.
- Monday 18 February, Campaign Organising Meeting, Archway Methodist Hall, Archway Close, 7.30pm.
- Wednesday 27 February, Lobby of Whittington Hospital Board Meeting, 2pm, details TBC.

Freedom bookshop

The anarchist and radical East London bookshop Freedom, linked to the Freedom Press publishing house founded in Whitechapel by Peter Kropotkin in 1886, was firebombed on the morning of Friday 1 February.

No-one was hurt, but the store's stock, and the archives of the *Freedom* newspaper, were badly damaged. It is not yet known who carried out the attack, but Freedom has previously suffered attacks by Nazi groups due to its links with anti-fascist activism.

The shop has launched an appeal to help pay for repairs. Hip-hop artist Skribbo has released a mixtape, featuring Workers' Liberty member The Ruby Kid, to support the appeal.

● "How you can help", from Freedom's website: bit.ly/11FOVqq

● Download the "Demanding the Impossible" mixtape: bit.ly/URoklV

Special offer on books by AWL authors

● Three-pack: *Antonio Gramsci: working-class revolutionary* (ed: Martin Thomas); *Working-class politics and anarchism* (ed: Ira Berkovic); and *What is capitalism? Can it last?* (ed: Cathy Nugent). Three books for £10 (plus £2.20 postage within UK)



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Buy online: www.workersliberty.org/bookoffer. Cheques to AWL, 20E Tower Workshops, Riley Rd, London SE1 3DG. For postage prices for destinations outside UK, email awl@workersliberty.org. Offer lasts until 16 February.

Hunt announces Lewisham cuts. The fight continues

By Jill Mountford, Save Lewisham Hospital Campaign organising committee (pc)

When he was just an opposition MP and looking for votes, Jeremy Hunt, with David Cameron's support, campaigned to save his local A&E (the Royal Surrey Hospital) from closure. That was then.

As Health Minister he is closing down hospitals, cutting jobs, selling off and giving away services, and generally "reconfiguring" the Health Service to his heart's content.

On 31 January, only five days after 25,000 people marched to defend Lewisham Hospital, Hunt announced plans to downgrade state of the art A&E and maternity units, to slash elderly care and acclaimed children's services, to sell off or demolish parts of the hospital campus, to sell off land. And this was dressed up as a concession to the magnificent community campaign!

Hunt says the 285,000 strong population of Lewisham will still enjoy 75% of its newly refurbished (to the tune of £12 million) A&E. This is pure spin. As Chidi Ejimofa, Lewisham Hospital A&E consultant, pointed out:

"An A&E of the type described (by Hunt) is little more than an Urgent Care unit. Patients will still have to be transported to other hospitals because we will no longer have acute provision here."

Later this year a new Trust will be formed (Lewisham together with three hospitals from the old now bankrupt South London Healthcare Trust). Under these plans services currently provided by Lewisham will be wound down over three years. Patients will be transferred to already over-stretched neighbouring hospitals.

Hunt has allocated just £36 million to get those ready to cope with Lewisham patients.

Dr Louise Irvine, Chair of the Save Lewisham Hospital Campaign, says "Hunt tells us he has accepted the recommendations on the basis of '100 lives per annum saved' but this is just a snapshot figure of a national assessment, not locally accurate in the context of the model proposed. As a GP, I can state unequivocally that these proposals are going to cost lives."

Hours after Hunt's announcement, 400 people converged on the hospital to show their support for the campaign and in solidarity with the hospital workers. The mood was one of anger and, for some, dis-

Thousands on the streets, more battles ahead

belief that Hunt could ignore the strength of local opposition.

Over the coming months we have to make sure the energy and angry determination of the campaign continues to grow and is ready and able to fight on a number of fronts.

PLANS

Very careful consideration is now being given to legal challenges.

These are not to be dismissed; winning a stay of execution is useful as part of an overall strategy to defend the hospital and proved to be useful in other hospital campaigns such as in Gloucester and Chase Farm.

In the meantime we have to make sure that everyone understands that it is "business as usual" at Lewisham Hospital. Urging patients to choose Lewisham, GPs to refer patients, Clinical Com-

missioning Groups (CCGs) continue to commission services, and health workers to choose to work at Lewisham hospital, are necessary to keep the hospital going. That way it is hard for the service to be closed.

There are many proposals on the table to keep the campaign going.

- A shop front on the high street funded by the council;

- A newspaper outlining the arguments to be distributed across the borough into neighbouring boroughs and around London.

- A conference to bring together hospital campaigns from around the country to share ideas and plan coordinated action in defence of our NHS.

- A pledge for health workers in Lewisham to stay with the hospital and fight to defend its services.

- Taking the campaign to the unions, winning the ar-

guments for solidarity in support of the NHS. To put pressure on Unite and the TUC to call a national demonstration in defence of the NHS.

The workers in the hospital also have to become better organised. Now is the time to look at how a work-in or occupation to keep the hospital could work. And if the bulldozers do come onto the hospital campus, how do we organise to stop the demolition?

WRECKERS

The cuts to Lewisham Hospital make no sense.

For the last three years Lewisham has been in the top 40 hospitals list. It has no financial deficit, it has state-of-the-art services, and it is bang in the centre of one of London's, indeed the country's, most deprived areas.

No sense at all unless your point of view is formed by Tory ideology. Jeremy Hunt is not working freelance. He's doing a job on behalf of the government and the class he politically represents. The Tories and the snivelling coalition bag carriers, the Lib-Dems, are out to wreck the NHS.

The Health and Social Care Act is set to reorganise the NHS so that it is little more than a brand, a logo on contracted out services.

There are more than 20 hospital trusts across the

country facing crisis point, wondering what to do with the eye-watering deficits as a result of paying hand over fist on PFI contracts. The re-organisation of Lewisham Hospital and the South London Health Trust is a test case for the government, but they cannot afford to wait around to see how it goes over the next three years.

If they are to implement their plans for the NHS, they will need to open up a number of second fronts in their war on universal free health care. More sham consultations and reconfigurations will soon be taking place, followed by more cuts and closures.

Just two years off a general election where the NHS will be centre stage, we should be demanding things from Labour. At last year's Labour Party conference policy was passed to "liberate the NHS of PFI debts". Yet Shadow Health Minister Andy Burnham has merely said that he will abolish *elements* of the Health and Social Care Act. What does this mean?

As we move closer to the general election, we should make sure that individual Labour candidates give their full and unconditional support to rebuilding the NHS as a priority for the next Labour government.

Q & A: How workers can save Lewisham Hospital

By a Lewisham health worker

When a service is threatened with closure, our tactics must aim to keep the service open and running. Strike action just won't work. The thing that workers can do is keep working!

But isn't the main focus the community campaign?

The campaign has demonstrated how important Lewisham is to local people. The thousands on the streets to defend it has boosted the morale of the staff, and got attention in the media.

But it hasn't changed Hunt's mind. When it comes down to it no amount of demonstrations are going to force the gov-

ernment to back down. This is why we have to force the government to leave Lewisham Hospital alone.

And how can workers do this?

The Trust's management has calculated it is in its interests to try to maintain services at the hospital. But management could change its mind or be replaced. When workers are instructed to start closing down services, they will have to refuse to do this and keep the services open.

By disobeying a management instruction workers immediately raise the issue of who is in charge of the service.

In today's society we assume it is management who is in charge; normally staff do as they are told.

But we don't just obey

managers; we use our judgement and experience to make the practical decisions about how best to provide the service from day-to-day and week-to-week.

This reality of how things get done is normally hidden. By challenging management it becomes clear that workers, in any organisation, when they act collectively, have the real power. They can take over the workplace. They are able to be in control.

So you want a revolution in Lewisham Hospital?

We just need workers to do what is necessary to ensure that safe health services continue to be provided in Lewisham Hospital.

In some ways the idea of the NHS itself — universal free health care — is revolu-

tionary. This doesn't fit with today's capitalist model. That's why the government wants to destroy it.

Can workers take over?

Workers will have to have a flexible strategy which changes as events unfold.

In the first place we need an organised network of workers who are prepared to act, in contact with the community campaign, with workers in other workplaces and crucially neighbouring hospitals.

All grades, all job groups, will have to be united in this network.

This network will initially gather information about which services are being threatened at any given time. This information will be communicated across the network so that co-ordi-

nated action can be taken.

In A&E it would mean working with the Ambulance Service to make sure patients are not taken away from A&E. It would mean all other departments continuing to provide support services to A&E.

In maternity it would mean mothers continuing to choose Lewisham, midwives and GPs continuing to refer there.

It will be necessary for workers in other hospitals to act in solidarity with Lewisham, to prevent sham or not-as-good services being set up in other hospitals as a justification for closing services at Lewisham.

So this "network" is in place?

Sadly not. Traditionally a union would provide the

structure and resources for such a network. But the unions in Lewisham hospital are either not willing, or not big enough to take on this role.

While the community campaign will continue and give courage to workers, the essential task now is for workers to organise. We will not build this kind of network overnight and so we need to make it a priority now.

The campaign has been organising meetings for staff; this needs to continue.

Most importantly, the unions need to be renewed to in order to make them a fit structure for a proper workers' struggle against the closure of our hospital.

Debating France's role in Mali

Letters



I find it difficult to agree with Martin Thomas' statement in the *Solidarity* 272 (30 January): "Better troops out now than an African Afghanistan."

The differences between the French action in Mali and the US-led action in Afghanistan are as important as any similarities.

For a start, the French are in Mali at the invitation of the Malian government (admitted not a democratically elected government), and all credible reports show overwhelming popular support from Malians for the French action.

Additionally, this is not just a French action. It is supported by the African Union and west African countries are sending troops to fight alongside the French.

The form of Islam espoused by the groups (including al-Qaida fighters dislodged from Libya, Somalia and other former sanctuaries) who have attacked Mali has nothing in common with Islam as actually practised in Mali.

In fact, these Islamists can properly be considered fascists and have destroyed the shrines to Sufi saints and precious collections of ancient manuscripts in Timbuktu.

The Islamists have even outlawed music: a thoroughly imperialist and alien measure, as Malian music, by such performers as Salif Keita, Mory Kante and Ali Farka Toure, is famed and loved across Africa.

The cultural vandalism of these fascists is, of course, merely an adjunct to their brutality towards the majority Malian population. Proper concern over likely reprisals against the Tuareg population should not blind us to the fact that the majority Malian population have greeted French forces as liberators.

The French invasion is not our way of doing things, and we should of course note the possible dangers of "mission creep" and a long-term presence that becomes increasingly oppressive and unpopular.

But to simply denounce the French action and call for "troops out now" is the worst kind of irresponsible fake-"anti-imperialist" posturing of the sort that the AWL and *Solidarity* usually avoids.

Jim Denham, Birmingham

Neo-colonial quagmire

Jim is right that control of the towns of north-west Mali by French troops is a lesser evil than control by Al Qaeda and its allies.

By all accounts most people in Mali (and not just the government installed by a military coup last year) see it that way.

For the purpose of teasing out and following through debates on the left, we should note that the groups which denounced AWL as insufficiently "anti-imperialist" for refusing positively to support the Taliban in Afghanistan, Saddam Hussein in Iraq in 2003, Argentina in the South Atlantic in 1982, etc., when they were "fighting imperialism", have refused to follow their own logic: none of them positively backs the jihadist militias.

However, I think we should look at things in the logic of their development, rather than as snapshots.

French withdrawal does not mean Al Qaeda victory. The jihadist militias — an alliance of three Tuareg and Arab groups, totalling a few thousand fighters, with little popular support — could not have conquered the densely-populated black-African south of Mali, where the population is at odds with them not only politically but also linguistically and culturally.

Continued French presence in Mali is, on the other hand, unlikely to be a short-term affair defined by its official "good reason" — pushing back the jihadist militias. It is likely to have a neo-colonial logic, much more so than the US presence in Iraq or Afghanistan, let alone NATO operations in Libya.

The jihadists have only retreated into the desert areas (maybe three times the area of southern Afghanistan in

which the Taliban is strong) or across the desert borders (over twice the length of the Afghanistan/Pakistan border).

With secular Tuareg demands compounding the complexity, and the Malian government probably having less political credit and clout than the pro-US government in Afghanistan after the Taliban's

defeat in 2001, a "mopping-up" operation by French troops is likely to suck France into a neo-colonial role.

There is neo-colonial push as well as pull. France is intervening in a region where it has been the colonial or neo-colonial power for over 130 years, and has large economic interests.

France already had troops in many neighbouring countries — Senegal, Chad, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mauritania.

Since landing troops in Mali, France has also sent soldiers to guard the uranium mines owned by the French multinational Areva in Niger.

Better French withdrawal than a neo-colonial quagmire.

Martin Thomas, London

Slogans for Syria

As Tom Unterrainer (letter, *Solidarity* 272) notes, *Solidarity* headlines on Syria used to feature text like "Down with Assad!"

No-one reading our recent comment on Syria (*Solidarity* 269: bit.ly/119BC1p) can think we've become less hostile to Assad. So what's changed?

In 2011 and early 2012, "down with Assad!" was shorthand for "support the opposition which is fighting to oust Assad". Our articles expressed that support, despite also criticising and warning.

Now, as Tom himself notes, the secular and democratic revolt in Syria has been sidelined by the dominance in the opposition of ultra-Islamist, sectarian, and often gangster-like militias. Thus a shift in our attitude.

We could still use the words "Down with Assad!" while explaining that we now give them a different meaning: a call on the other Ba'hist rulers to get rid of the dictator.

Such a palace coup would be welcome. Realistically no "bourgeois peace", no deal between the rulers and the opposition which allows some breathing space for secular and democratic forces to revive, will happen without it.

But to make *our slogan* the demand for a palace coup is another matter. Demands on the second-rank despots to push aside the top despot are not a means to mobilise mass activity. If they have any political effect, it can only be to encourage people to look for a way forward not in self-organisation but in speculation on rifts among the rulers.

A third option would be to have a slogan like "Down with Assad! Down with the sectarian militias!", analogous to the call "Down with the Shah! Down with Khomeiny!" which some socialists (not us, alas!) advanced for Iran in 1978.

But in Iran there was a powerful workers' movement and a sizeable left. "Down with the Shah! Down with Khomeiny!" could have been made reality by a political reorientation of the left and the workers' movement such as, in principle, could have happened quite quickly.

We are as yet far from that in Syria. The cry "Down with Assad! Down with the sectarian militias!" would be sloganising in mid-air.

And, to my mind, one of the lessons we must learn from movements like Lenin's Bolsheviks is that — contrary to the habits of most would-be Trotskyists for many decades now — it is not always necessary or desirable to have a snappy slogan.

Colin Foster, London

Challenging traditional models

As a vocal supporter of same sex marriage, I was very interested by Jack Saffrey-Rowe's confrontation with Phillip Hammond MP regarding same sex marriage (*Solidarity* 272).

However, I was deeply disappointed that he wrote that he felt that people in an incestuous relationship is "invalid".

There is no compelling reason to treat incestuous couples as some sort of verboten aberration, when incest is as old and as enduring in our culture as homosexuality. More recently, a phenomenon known as Genetic Sexual Attraction has been studied, where close relatives who first meet as adults often experience overpowering sexual feelings for each other — isn't the "I can't help the way I am" argument the first one trotted out to justify LGBT liberation?

Critics such as Phillip Hammond are entirely right in saying that if society accepts gay relationships, then there's no reason why siblings can't get married — our responsibility should be to defend the right of any consenting adult to have whatever relationships they want with any other consenting adult, not to be outraged at the comparison in the horror of our own unthinking taboos.

If we are divorcing marriage, relationships and sex from the traditional model for making babies, as we have and as we continue to do, then the idea of prohibiting sibling relationships or treating them as out of the ordinary also stops making any sense. And if you are currently saying to yourself, "Well, ok, but what about the possibility of deformed children?!", ask yourself this: do you have a problem with same sex sibling relationships?

It is a matter of months before Jack and I will be able to marry the people we love — I hope it will not be too much longer before everyone will be able to do the same.

Sarah McCulloch

SWP and the EU

The Left



Under the headline "No easy solution in or out", *Socialist Worker* (2 Feb) describes the divisions which exist in the ruling class and the Tory party over Europe.

It identifies these divisions as rooted in the divergent interests and strategies of different groups of capitalists, concluding that "Neither group really knows what to do for the best to pursue profits except to make us pay".

Yet another box on the same page sides with one of the two capitalist factions, saying that SW will "argue to vote to leave [the EU] in any referendum".

"The EU is a club for bosses" (and the UK isn't?) ... "In this crisis the EU has been used as a negotiating committee to push through austerity" (unlike the British cabinet and parliament?) ... "We should oppose the EU as part of confronting the bosses' agenda" (what is it they oppose, the bosses bit, or the Euro bit?)

Despite the protest that "socialists have no truck with the nationalism of the Tory right", the inescapable conclusion is that workers in Britain have something to gain from Britain leaving the EU. But SW gives no actual explanation of why this might be the case.

Arguing for British withdrawal from the EU cuts against building links with workers in other European countries, and plays into the hands of the nationalist right.

Expropriate the banks!

Fiddling around with ring-fences isn't enough. To organise investment for social benefit; to redress inequality; to give any reforming government the means it would need to fend off the pressure of global financial markets — there is no alternative but to expropriate the banks and high finance.

They should be converted into a public banking, mortgage, and pension service, under public ownership and democratic and workers' control.

The last five or six years have indicted the banks. Even the conservative *Financial Times* columnist Martin Wolf admits, though without drawing full conclusions, that: "Banks, as presently constituted and managed, cannot be trusted to perform any publicly important function, against the perceived interests of their staff [meaning their top bosses, not the routine clerical staff]. Today's banks represent the incarnation of profit-seeking behaviour taken to its logical limits, in which the only question asked by senior staff is not what is their duty or their responsibility, but what can they get away with".

Yet the banks control the bulk of the fluid, mobile wealth in society. They stand at the crossroads where investment decisions are made.

The control of investment funds by the banks makes it apparently not "realistic" to invest in health, education, welfare, and other public services, but very "realistic" to invest the £38 billion currently being put by property developers into building new luxury housing in London at an average of £2.5 million a dwelling.

Banks are also a vast engine of inequality.

After being bailed out by the taxpayer in 2008, banks made about £35 billion profits last year. That is a sum comparable to the total cuts planned by the coalition government in education and welfare for five years.

CUTS

The banks and other financial firms paid out £13 billion in bonuses in 2011-2. That £13 billion, plus £7 billion from the huge salaries paid to top bankers, would be enough from one year to cover all the £20 billion cuts the coalition has planned to the NHS over five years.

The economic crisis which exploded in 2007-8, and still lingers on, was generated by the collapse of an ever-more-precarious spiral of profit-seeking gambits by the banks. Now more and more scandals come to light.

Banks were rigging the Libor interest rate — the published benchmark rate at which banks borrow from each other — and thus skewing huge numbers of financial transactions across the world which use that benchmark.

Barclays, RBS, and the Swiss bank UBS have agreed to pay fines for the rigging. Investigations continue. Under pressure, chancellor George Osborne has pressed RBS to deduct the cost of the fines it has paid to US authorities from the bonuses it pays to top bankers. After taking part in the biggest financial scam in history, the bank bosses don't personally get fined, or sacked, or jailed: some have their bonuses reduced, and that's all.

British banks have been forced to set aside £12 billion for compensation payments to those mis-sold payment protec-

tion insurance (PPI). The Financial Ombudsman Service received 180,679 new complaints between October and December 2012 on PPI.

Barclays, HSBC, Royal Bank of Scotland and Lloyds have also had to set aside £700 million so far for compensation for mis-selling complex derivative products like interest-rate swaps to small businesses.

Barclays is being investigated about claims that, in 2008, it made a loan (i.e. from the money deposited with it by customers) to the government of Qatar so that Qatar, in turn, could buy Barclays shares, and then the bank could claim that it had enough of its own funds to avoid the annoyances of a state bail-out.

None of those scandals can be explained away as an understandable blunder of immaturity. These banks have been operating for hundreds of years. In the years running up to the crisis in 2008, both bankers and governments assured us again and again that the management and regulation of banking had reached near-perfect excellence.

CAPITALISM

It is in the nature of capitalism that bankers always push into ventures which offer extra profit. They know some will go wrong, or be found out — but then they'll pay a fine and carry on. That's business.

In 2008 the British government, like others, poured vast quantities of cash, credit, and guarantees into the banks to keep them afloat: a total of £1,107 billion, something like the equivalent of £18,000 for every child, woman, and man in the UK.

There was much talk then of a radical improvement in the regulation of banks. Very little has come of it. Lobbying by the bankers has made the new regulations looser than was predicted in 2008.

Banks were nationalised then, but that just meant that the government put money into them and left much the same bankers running them, on exactly the same criteria as before. It was more like "compensation without nationalisation" — without any public control, that is — than the old socialist demand of "nationalisation without compensation".

A few bankers have resigned — like Barclays boss Bob Diamond, with a "golden goodbye" of £2 million — but mostly the top bankers are still shamelessly taking home truckloads of loot.

They are confident enough to voice outrage when chancellor George Osborne, under pressure from MPs, says that he will legislate so that if banks break new rules about ring-fencing their investment banking (large-scale dealing in financial markets) off from their retail banking (their "High Street" business), then they can be forcibly divided into separate investment-banking and retail-banking businesses. Penalised for breaking the rules! That shouldn't happen to us, say the bankers!

The TUC should dust off the policy for "full public ownership of the [banking] sector and the creation of a publicly owned banking service, democratically and accountably managed", decided by its congress last September, and campaign for it. Unions should press for the Labour Party to take up the demand.

Help us raise £15,000

Adam David Morton, a senior lecturer at the University of Nottingham, says that our book, *Antonio Gramsci: Working-Class Revolutionary* is "straight onto the reading list of [his] third-year 'Gramsci & Global Politics' module".

Murray Kane, Australian socialist activist, said: "Although only 70 pages long, [it] is remarkable in containing more insights than many a full length book on Gramsci."

British socialist activist Richard Price wrote: "This pamphlet ... can not only stimulate discussion upon the philosophical aspects of Gramsci's thought, but it can also force socialists to think more deeply about their relationship to the rest of society, and how to transform it."

Peter Thomas, the author of *The Gramscian Moment* and winner of the Fondazione Istituto Piemontese Antonio Gramsci's Premio internazionale Giuseppe Sormani Prize in 2011, spoke at the book's launch and praised the book's contribution to the field of Gramsci scholarship.

We were able to publish and distribute this book because of the financial support we received from readers of *Solidarity*. With more such support, we can publish more books.

In 2013, we plan to publish a collection of the writings of American socialist Max Shachtman on the ideas of Leon Trotsky, again developing the real legacy of a revolutionary theorist whose work is obscured not only by his own eventual political mistakes but by the distortions of a hostile orthodoxy.

To help us publish this book, and continue to reinvigorate a tradition of independent, critical Marxist thought, please donate to our fund appeal. Help us by:

- Taking out a monthly standing order using the form below or at www.workersliberty.org/resources. Please post completed forms to us at the AWL address below.
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Total raised so far: £7,044

We raised £88 this week from sales of literature and donations and increased standing orders. Thanks to Ed, Eric and northern comrades.

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From revolutionary syndicalism to Trotskyism

Our Movement

By Michaél MacEoin



Alfred Rosmer (1877-1964) was a leading figure in the French revolutionary syndicalist union movement at the turn of the 20th century. Along with many others in that movement he joined the French Communist Party when it was created after the Russian revolution. Later he became an ally of Leon Trotsky.

Rosmer was born in America, the son of a worker who had fled France after the Paris Commune of 1871. In 1884 the family returned to France. Rosmer became attracted to anarchism while working as a proof-reader.

Rosmer became a militant in the revolutionary syndicalist *Confédération générale du travail* (CGT, Generation Confederation of Labour). He worked alongside Pierre Monatte, founder of the journal *La Vie Ouvrière*.

When the CGT caved into patriotism and backed “national unity” during World War One, Rosmer followed Monatte in opposing the war from a revolutionary internationalist perspective. Although they were in a tiny minority at first, their efforts laid the groundwork for an anti-war movement. It was through this political work that Rosmer met his lifelong partner Marguerite Thevener, and first encountered Leon Trotsky.

Disgusted by the hypocrisy of parliamentary politics and distrustful of the social democratic parties many revolutionaries in the syndicalist movement such as Victor Serge, Monatte, the Industrial Workers of the World’s “Big Bill” Haywood and Rosmer were inspired by the Russian Revolution and came over to the consistent revolutionaries of the revolution, the Bolshevik party.

Serge summed up this thinking: “The unity of thought and action gave Bolshevism its original power; without entering into doctrinal questions we can define Bolshevism as a movement to the left of socialism — which brought it closer to anarchism — inspired by the will to achieve the revolution immediately.”

In 1920 Rosmer travelled to Moscow and took part in the debates at the Second Congress of the Communist International.

The Bolsheviks’ desire to attract the best elements from revolutionary syndicalism is evident in the debates on the role of the Communist party in the revolution. Lauding their role in opposing the war when the Second International crumbled, Trotsky spoke of his “common ground” with Rosmer and argued that the revolutionary minority of syndicalists “was a portent of the future development, which, despite their prejudices and illusions, has not hindered these same syndicalist comrades from playing a revolutionary role in France, and from producing that small minority which has come to our International Congress.”

Illustrating the bridge between revolutionary syndicalism and Bolshevism, the following year Rosmer recalled the intervention of Jack Tanner from the British Shop Steward Network “who on the whole shares the standpoint of the French syndicalists about the labour movement, opposed the role defined by the Communist Party, and in justifying his opposition he stated how he conceived the organisation of the revolutionary struggle in the workers’

Above: Rosmer in Moscow 1919 (to the left of Trotsky). Rosmer was on the Executive Committee of the Third International

organisations. He said: “We want to unite the boldest and most class conscious from among the proletariat and to create from them a tightly welded minority, which alone will be capable of inspiring the masses and drawing them with it.”

“When Tanner had finished his speech, Lenin spoke in the following terms: ‘The definition which you have given of your conception of the revolutionary movement coincides completely with ours. But we give this minority a different name: we call it ... the Communist Party’.”

This conception of the revolutionary party as the vanguard of the most conscious elements of the working-class has been buried under decades of Stalinism, with some would-be Trotskyist propaganda groups now operating as if they are the vanguard parties of the future.

The growth of Stalinism in Russia and the Communist International led to Trotsky’s supporters in the European Communist parties being ousted from the leadership and later being expelled or quitting. In France this included Rosmer, Monatte and Boris Souvarine.

The Rosmers were amongst Trotsky’s staunchest allies. Although Rosmer later developed political differences with Trotsky, he remained close and took part in the Dewey Commission set up to counter-act the falsifications of the Moscow Trials. When the Fourth International was launched, it held its first congress in Rosmer’s suburban Paris home in 1938.

After World War Two, Rosmer agreed with Trotsky’s widow Natalia Sedova that the socialist conquests of the Russian Revolution had been extinguished, describing the Soviet Union as “nothing but a great power, military and militaristic...distinctive only by the brutality of a totalitarian regime”.

In his later years, Rosmer kept the flame of anti-Stalinist Marxism alive as a living link to the genuine Bolshevik tradition.

Syriza: rev

By Theodora Polenta

Greece’s three-party coalition government, under the leadership of Antonis Samaras and the right-wing New Democracy (ND) party, is trying to stabilise itself.

It is trying to construct an alliance with the most reactionary and backward elements of the Greek population — conservative older people, and petty bourgeois layers who yearn for “law and order”. And it could succeed.

The latest polls are showing a stagnation of support for the left-wing party Syriza, which nearly won an election in June 2012. Of course the polls cannot be trusted, but it would be foolish to ignore their evidence.

One on 10 January gave first position in ND to 29%, with Syriza coming second with 28.5%. Another on 19 January shows Syriza leading by just 0.1% (18.8% Syriza, 18.7%, ND). A third shows ND and Syriza tied with 29.5%.

In each case, the same poll company had Syriza well ahead in late 2012.

Why can’t Syriza extend its support, faced with a government that continues a policy of brutal austerity against the working class and the people?

Because Syriza leaders have been increasingly making their positions more “rounded” — in fact moving more and more to the right.

Syriza’s leaders have arbitrarily (without consulting Syriza’s committees) replaced the policy of refusing to repay Greece’s debt with one of renegotiation of the debt in a Europe-wide framework.

Syriza leaders such as Giannis Dragasakis have declared that “Syriza will not take unilateral action against the Troika”. The policy of nationalisations has disappeared from the statements of prominent members of Syriza.

Syriza’s central leader, Alexis Tsipras, went to Berlin on 14 January to meet German finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble and declared a shared commitment to “achieve primary surplus” (though “through the fight against tax evasion and wealthy tax evaders”). Tsipras also said he agreed on the need for “structural changes that will allow the establishment of an effective state,” but added that there need to be a “European solution to the debt problem” with a “generous haircut” and “terms of development”.

At a speech to the Brookings Institution in the USA (22 January), Tsipras said: “We look for allies, but the policy of Germany is catastrophic. Here [in the US], we can find allies to prevent disastrous policies”.

The Syriza leadership’s shift to the right has disappointed the working class. That is reflected in the polls. The workers and youth who voted en masse for Syriza — and, the most advanced of them, joined Syriza — want a radical Syriza that will confront the vested interests of the capitalist class and its political representatives, a Syriza that will smash the Memorandum, and not a Syriza that tries to reconcile the interests of the financial oligarchy with the interests of the workers.

Syriza leaders increasingly present the changes they want as peaceful, common-sense adjustments. Alexis Tsipras has said: “The Memorandum is already dead... we will re-negotiate the loan agreement without the Memorandum... because the cost of the exit of Greece from the euro is greater for the eurozone than the cost of rescue...” But the Memorandum is anything but dead for workers and the people. Salaries and pensions are being cut to starvation level, trade union rights are being smashed, official unemployment is at 27%, public services are being dismantled, and taxes on the majority are being increased.

In the last few months ND and the government have un-

verse drift to right!

leashed ideological warfare against the left in general and in particular against Syriza. They are targeting the trade union movement or any other movement which ventures into “illegality” (meaning, any collective and social organisation that challenges the core values of the capitalist system).

The offensive started in December 2012 with the storming by police and evacuation of squats which were well-connected with neighbourhood and community movements. “Villa Amalia”, a squatted former high school in Athens, was an oasis for cultural events and daily solidarity, and a fortress of resistance against the spread of the fascist vermin in the Agios Panteleimonas area. The police said they had found glass bottles and masks there and “criminalised” the squatters; the government declared that it would cleanse Athens of all squatting.

Syriza was cornered and bullied for not wholeheartedly condemning and denouncing the squats and for embracing and supporting illegality. Syriza’s leaders responded, after long hesitation, by eventually condemning “illegality” and declaring its faith in the constitution and parliamentary democracy, while still denouncing the government’s attempts to distract the public from the burning issues of the cuts “Memorandum” imposed by the European Union, European Central Bank, and IMF.

Syriza’s shift to the right was also signalled in Tsipras’s tour of Latin America in late December 2012. His itinerary excluded, as probably too radical and left wing, Chavez’s Venezuela and Morales’s Bolivia, opting instead for talks

with the leaders of the alternative “management models”, within the framework of IMF, such as Rousseff in Brazil and Kirchner in Argentina.

Yet the overthrow of the Memorandum will not come by following Obama’s model, or Rousseff’s, or by reformist illusions. It will come through the escalation of working-class struggles while building the anti-capitalist left.

Syriza is due to hold a congress in the coming months. On Sunday 3 February, its Central Committee met, and Syriza’s Left Platform put down four amendments:

- that Syriza should avoid taking important initiatives without involving the collective bodies of the party (this was a reference to meetings like the one with Schäuble)
- that Syriza should reaffirm that it will re-nationalise all the privatised companies, starting with those that are of strategic importance to the economy
- commitment to a government of the left (and not the centre-left, let alone one with sections of the “patriotic-populist” right); initiatives for joint action and a united front to KKE and Antarsya and other left forces
- that Syriza should realise that the EU leaders, the IMF, and the USA, despite all their differences, will share an intense hostility to a government of the left operating outside the strait-jacket of Memorandum-restricted parliamentary democracy. Syriza should prepare for confrontations to come, and realise that a government of the left cannot play off the different big-power blocs to gain a position of tolerance.

The Left Platform argues for a new wave of radicalisation. It calls for new re-orientation of Syriza’s leadership and rank and file organisations towards the working-class movement, with particular emphasis on the youth, in order to overthrow the three party coalition government and all governmental policies. Syriza should link its perspective for a government of the left with every struggle that erupts in the industrial and social field.

STRIKE

As a first step Syriza must mobilise to radicalise and politicise the 20 February general strike in support of workers’ rights and collective bargaining called by the union confederations GSEE and ADEDY.

Ruling circles in the EU are now saying that the chances of Greece leaving the euro are eliminated because of Greece sticking to the memorandum austerity packages.

All that, however, remains dependent on continuation of the resolute implementation of austerity and harsh neoliberal restructuring. Syriza should once again underline that it will not accept any blackmail, and will stick to its progressive anti-memorandum proposals regardless of threats about the position of Greece in the eurozone.

If Syriza sticks to its promise that when in government it will abolish the Memorandum and all the laws introduced under it, what do Syriza’s leaders really think the response of the EU/ ECB/ IMF Troika will be?

Will they accept the democratic will of the people and continue to provide the loan installments? Will they sit down to talk with Syriza? Or will they carry on being inflexible and stating that any bailout funds will be provided only on condition that Syriza will stick to the Memorandum program?

The cost to the EU’s big powers of the exit of Greece from the euro would indeed be great. But the political cost to the EU leaders of continuing the bailout fund without Greece following the Memorandum would be huge.

If it is accepted that Greece is bailed out without implementing austerity measures, then Spain, Italy, Portugal, and Ireland will demand similar treatment.

Global capitalists, despite their conflicts among themselves, including the Greek capitalist class, will try to smash

Syriza eventually condemned “illegality” of the Villa Amalia squat (top). Then Tsipras met Latin American politicians who are, like Brazil’s President Dilma Rousseff (bottom), “on message” with IMF policies

a government of the left upon its infancy. They will strike without mercy, they will cut the funding, they will move to push Greece out of the euro.

They will want to make an example of Greece, so that no one else dares to challenge their policies, their hegemony and the profits of the bankers and bondholders

A frightened and compliant Syriza, a Syriza which ultimately accepts the framework of its opponents, will not be able to resist effectively.

And unless Syriza shows a will to resist effectively, it quickly lose its base in the world of resistance and among thousands of leftists who saw in the Syriza project the greatest hope in decades.

Cameron says he wants to renegotiate the terms of Britain’s terms of membership of the EU. The anti-EU faction in the Tory Party, who put pressure on Cameron, want further attacks on workers’ rights and living standards.

The Lincoln myth on film

By Sacha Ismail

The “second American revolution” was a two decade-long political and social upheaval, from the 1850s to the 1870s, which freed millions of black slaves (the Civil War, 1861-5) and drove towards a more radical transformation of United States society (Reconstruction).

The radical phase of this revolution was defeated in the 1870s when the dominant sections of the Northern ruling class betrayed the former slaves and allowed them to be deprived of political rights in order to enforce labour discipline in a new, capitalist South.

The real heroes of this drama were, in the first instance, the slaves themselves, who destroyed slavery through what black historian W E B Du Bois called “a general strike” of mass rebellion and desertion, and went on to demand full equality and briefly push Southern society in a more democratic, egalitarian direction. They were helped by white “Radicals” in the North who with the coming of war moved from the despised, persecuted left fringe of US politics to reshape Northern public opinion and even dominate Congress.

Steven Spielberg’s new film, *Lincoln*, written by playwright Tony Kushner, pretty much writes out the story of black self-emancipation. Right at the start we see a black soldier criticising Lincoln’s inertia and conservatism, but this theme is not developed. The two black characters in the film, White House servants, were real people who in real life were political activists — but not in Spielberg’s version. Lincoln includes depictions of white Radicals, including one of the greatest of them, but in a way that is dismissive and misleading.

The film stands in what is now the dominant tradition of serious Civil War history, not to mention official commemoration: what has been called “Lincolnolatry”. This view casts Lincoln as a — perhaps uniquely — just and wise leader, who won the Civil War and ended slavery by resisting both the rebelling Southern slaveowners and Northerners who wanted to go too far, too fast, whose policy would have undermined Northern chances of victory. Had he not been killed his approach could have laid the basis for a more desirable settlement of the issues posed by Reconstruction.

This Lincoln myth is wrong. Lincoln won the election, and entered the Civil War, and departed life with his assassination in 1865, a white supremacist opposed to equality for the ex-slaves and all black people.

While opposing slavery on an abstract level, he regarded

short-term emancipation as a greater evil, and worked to save what he could of slavery until events — the action of the slaves, the growing strength of anti-slavery activism in the North, and the threat of losing the war — overwhelmed him.

Far from being “realistic” policy, the conservatism and racism of his faction undermined the Northern war effort, lengthened the conflict and cost many thousands of black and white lives.

Spielberg’s film does not attempt to deal with any of this. It avoids doing so by setting its action around events right at the war’s end, with the passing by Congress of the Thirteenth Amendment to the US Constitution, which banned slavery. It was a very close vote.

This sounds dramatic, and in the sense that the Amendment showed how far things had moved during the four years of the war, it was. For almost the first two years of the conflict, the Lincoln government had insisted that it had no intention of touching the “peculiar institution”; Congress had actually passed an earlier Thirteenth Amendment guaranteeing slavery for ever, only for this to be short-circuited by the war’s outbreak! But by 1865, slavery was already dead — so much so that even the Southern leadership was discussing freeing slaves in order to use them as soldiers. Moreover anti-slavery Republicans had already won an election which a month later would dramatically increase their Congressional majority. This was in no sense a make-or-break moment.

A more interesting film would have looked at the arguments of 1862-3, when, against Lincoln’s stubborn resistance, anti-slavery forces outside and inside Congress pushed for the freeing and arming of the slaves, the recruitment of black troops in the North and other revolutionary measures judged necessary both morally and in order to win the war. A really interesting film would have explored some of the ironies — such as Lincoln issuing his famous Emancipation Proclamation in order to undercut the more radical policy agreed by Congress, so that taken literally the Proclamation returned many people to slavery.

Instead Lincoln presents the Radical Republicans as naive idealists, who in the decisive crunch were pulled by Lincoln rather than pushing him.

Thaddeus Stevens, the dominant figure in the Radical-led House of Representatives, is treated sympathetically and given what I thought was the most moving scene in the film. His real goals are stated: to win complete racial equality and give the former slaveowners’ land to the former slaves. But

Daniel Day Lewis as Abraham Lincoln

this battle-scarred fighter against slavery and racism is also rewritten as a political understudy to Lincoln, and when it comes to it cannot answer the great leader’s arguments.

The real Stevens was part of the last batch of bourgeois politicians in the US who were in any sense progressive or revolutionary. His death, after which 20,000 Americans, black and white, marched at his funeral, heralded the end of an era. The defeat of his goals produced the US of today — an advanced capitalist economy and bourgeois democracy, one shaped by a peculiarly reactionary political legacy, even after the “Second Reconstruction” of the 1950s and 60s.

The year the last Southern Reconstruction government fell to the white supremacist counter-revolution, 1877, was the same year that US capital and labour confronted each other bloodily in a virtual workers’ uprising — the first national railworkers’ strike. The best of the Radicals and anti-slavery activists were finding their way into the labour movement; the Republican leadership, having betrayed black Americans, was now purely a party for the ruling class.

There can be no doubt which side the real Abraham Lincoln would have been on.

Django, Lincoln, and the most revolutionary idea



Eric Lee

“The emancipation of the working class must be the act of the workers themselves” — that’s a phrase which will be familiar to most Marxists and originates in the Rules of the International Workingmen’s Association which Marx drafted.

A century later, Max Shachtman wrote that “When speaking of socialism and socialist revolution we seek ‘no condescending saviours’ as our great battle hymn, the International, so ably says. We do not believe that well-wishing reforms — and there are well-wishing reformers — will solve the problems of society, let alone bring socialism... We believe that task belongs to the proletariat, only the proletariat itself. That is a world-shattering idea. It overshadows all social thought. The most profound, important and lasting thought in Marxism, the most pregnant thought in Marxism is contained in Marx’s phrase that the emancipation of the proletariat is the task of the proletariat itself. It is clearly the most revolutionary idea ever conceived, if you understand it in all of its great implications.”

I thought of this “most revolutionary idea” the other day as I watched two recent acclaimed films on the same subject — Steven Spielberg’s *Lincoln* and Quentin Tarantino’s *Django*

Unchained. Tarantino and Spielberg have now made their films about American slavery, just as previously they both made films about the Nazi Holocaust — *Schindler’s List* and *Inglourious Basterds*.

And those four films reflect two very different approaches to the issue of emancipation.

Spielberg’s films — which are largely historically accurate, extremely well crafted, and well-intentioned — are accounts of how a gentile (Schindler) risked everything to save the Jews and how a white man (Lincoln) did the same for black slaves.

Spielberg chose when taking on the giant subjects of slavery and the Holocaust to focus on those two men. He could have made different films, could have focussed his Holocaust film on, say, the Jewish fighters who battled the Wehrmacht in the final days of the Warsaw Ghetto. He could have chosen one of the many Black slave rebellions that preceded the American Civil War — for example, the story of Nat Turner who led an uprising 1831 that resulted in some 160 deaths.

Instead he chose to focus on brave white men (the abolitionists) and a brave gentile (Schindler).

Tarantino made a radically different choice when he decided to make films about Nazi Germany and the American South.

Tarantino’s films are fantasies — and unlike Spielberg’s are often hilariously funny, even if brutally violent.

Tarantino’s “basterds” are American Jewish soldiers sent into Nazi-occupied Europe to kill — and scalp — as many

German soldiers as they can. In the end, their efforts combine with those of a French Jewish women also seeking revenge on the Nazis.

Django too is a story not about good white men who come to free the slaves, but about a slave who frees himself. Even though *Django* is assisted by a white German (the magnificent Christoph Waltz, who played a terrifying Nazi in *Basterds*), it is he — and not Waltz — who deals the death blow to the slave-owners in the film.

One could make the argument that while Tarantino’s take on slavery and the Third Reich may prove more satisfying, the reality is that it wasn’t black slaves who brought down slavery and it wasn’t armed Jews who defeated Hitler. It was a mostly (though not entirely) white army led by a white man that brought an end to the Confederacy. And it was the allied armies — particularly the Red Army — that destroyed the German Reich.

So yes, Spielberg’s view may be the more accurate one, but Tarantino’s reflects an aspiration — the hope that the oppressed, slaves and others, can liberate themselves and indeed that only they can do so.

This is, as Shachtman wrote, “the most pregnant thought” in Marxism, and while one can be fairly certain that Quentin Tarantino has never heard of the great third camp socialist, it is his films — not Spielberg’s — that most closely realise that idea.

Keeping their dreams alive

Tim Thomas previews Ken Loach's new documentary, *The Spirit of '45*

Ken Loach's documentary, to be released in March, is probably not going to be seen at your local cinema. You are more likely to be offered Sylvester Stallone in *Bullet to the Head* (two stars and totally worthless).

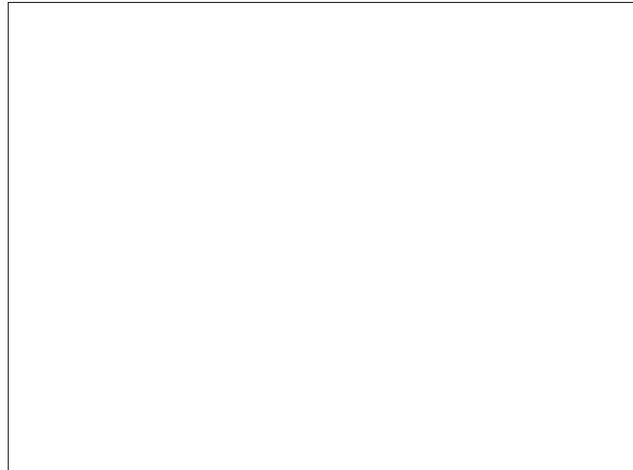
Spirit of '45 should be shown in every cinema in the land but it won't be; you can maybe catch it on Film Four. You might guess the reason why!

The production team (Sixteen Films) are letting groups book it for public film showings. Getting this film shown depends on you.

It is a film about the General Election of 1945, which was won by Labour because the working class had had enough of the appalling conditions they endured in the 1930s. They had seen fascism, fought against it and won. Here was the promise of a better world, better living conditions, better health, housing, an end to the corruption of a coal-owners' state. Perhaps a socialist state instead.

We are told and shown what it was like before and after and then we are shown what it is like now. We see the destruction of all the heroes' and heroines' ideals — the selling off of coal, steel, water, electricity, transport and the termination of the hope of the Labour Party's "Clause Four".

All this we see through the eyes of ordinary people. And how wonderful they are and their stories are. It is not by any subtle design of the film maker that the eyes of the nurses,



After the war, they wanted a different peace

the GPs, the railway workers, the miners seem to shine with humanity, and the men and women in the crowd that adulated Margaret Thatcher's first victorious conference seem so intensely mercenary, so filled with hatred and triumph over what had been built and was now to be destroyed for the sake of a quick profit and the gangsterism of the banks.

No matter what ideological disputes we may have with Ken Loach, he has the ability to make matters clear cinemat-

ically. So you must see this film, no matter how old you are, no matter whether you are a man or a woman, no matter what your sexual orientation is or what your culture might be, or whether you are in Cameron's England because your village has been bombed by British imperialists or by the clerical-fascism born from this same imperialism. Don't let them split us. But Loach puts it better than I do:

"The Second World War was a struggle, perhaps the most considerable collective struggle this country has ever experienced. While others made greater sacrifices, the people of Russia for example, the determination to build a better world was as strong here as anywhere. Never again, it was believed, would we allow poverty, unemployment and the rise of fascism to disfigure our lives.

"We had won the war together, together we could win the peace. If we could plan to wage military campaigns, could we not plan to build houses, create a health service and a transport system, and to make goods that we needed for reconstruction?"

"The central idea was common ownership, where production and services were to benefit all. The few should not get rich to the detriment of everyone else.

"It was a noble idea, popular and acclaimed by the majority. It was the Spirit of 1945. Maybe it is time to remember it today."

• If you want to book this film for a public showing, write to: patrick@dogwoof.com

Is Gove irreversible?

By Pat Yarker

On the day of the June 1987 General Election journalist Peter Wilby, then education editor of the *Independent*, predicted that "The return of a Conservative government... will mean the break-up of the state education system which has existed since 1944".

It has taken twenty-five years, but it looks as if Wilby will see his prediction come true.

Education Secretary Michael Gove's war aim is now clear. In one electoral term he will fragment the education system and parcel it out amongst academy sponsors (and supporters of free schools) so that a future Labour government would balk at restoring a unified state comprehensive system. Beyond this he hopes, in a Tory second term, to see the law changed to enable widespread schooling for profit.

Gove has built on the breach made in the state-maintained education service first by Kenneth Baker's City Technology Colleges and then by New Labour's City Academies policy.

By April last year, more than half of England's 3,261 state secondary schools had become, or were about to become, new-style Tory Academies.

These schools are funded directly from Whitehall and run by businesses, "faith" groups, charities and the fee-paying sector. These organisations sponsor academies in their own interest, and do so competitively. In the process they wreck any prospect of locally-developed co-operation between schools, a hallmark of the previous Local Authority-based dispensation, and developed for the benefit of all children in a wide geographical area, irrespective of which school they attend.

Some academy pupils are now even denied the chance to attend an alternative educational establishment (such as an Further Education college on day-release) purely because that establishment is run by a rival sponsor.

Mounting evidence indicates that many academies shape their intake by covert selection, and continue to mould it through the overuse of exclusion.

Some academies institute draconian regimes to ensure compliance, locking down pupils and preventing teachers from working in self-directed ways. They use the pressure exerted by a national regime of floor-targets, testing and League Tables to justify a blinkered focus on exam-attain-

ment (driven by relentless data-tracking which turns pupils into objects) rather than the provision of a broad and rounded educational experience for all.

Gove has forced the pace of "academisation", and many opportunists have scrambled to back him. Last month a report produced by the self-appointed "Academies Commission", published by edu-business Pearson and the academy-sponsoring Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA), had fulsome praise for the initiative.

COMPLETE

Former Ofsted Chief Inspector Christine Gilbert, who chaired the Commission, looked forward to the complete academisation of the secondary school system before the next election.

The primary sector, where only 5% of schools are academies now, can, apparently, wait a little longer. At the launch of the report no dissent was tolerated from the floor, and none was forthcoming from a platform which featured, among others, the Director of the Institute of Education.

Academisation has been accompanied by a "war on teachers". Just before Christmas Gove told the *Times* he had set his department on a "war footing". Identifying his chief enemy as organised labour in schools, he has gone looking for trouble.

He abolished national pay scales, and in a further provocation urged Heads to challenge teachers taking part in the current "work to contract" action. He is boosting anti-union initiatives in schools, and pushing to change the law on industrial action there.

Gove's media-savvy self-presentation hides a spectacular cynicism. He is contemptuous of the educability of working-class children and fawning towards those edu-businesses whose future profits he is committed to boosting. His emollient and urbane talk deflects attention from his coercive and destructive actions.

He discourses on the importance of a highly-qualified cadre of teachers, but ensures academies can hire (cheaper) staff lacking Qualified Teacher Status, and cancels funding for teachers trying to gain a Master's level qualification.

He declares he will scrap modular exams post-16 to encourage "deep thinking", but is about to inflict more rote-

learning on children through his primary curriculum reforms.

He admits last summer's mid-course shift of GCSE grade boundaries was unfair to pupils but does nothing to correct the injustice.

Loud in support of the right of parents to choose a school for their child, he imposes academisation on targeted schools regardless of parental opposition.

He traduces decades of achievement by state schools, especially comprehensives, and lies about what they do, claiming they "neglect the brightest", "avoid competitive sport", and are "happy with failure". He delights in denigrating the work and commitment of the staff in such schools.

Academisation has cost £8.3 billion so far (*New Statesman*, 3 December 2012). While voting for cuts and austerity, Gove has overspent on his own programme by £1 billion. He knows whatever money he needs to smash one of the main pillars of the welfare state will be forthcoming.

TWIGG

Gove is helped by the utter lack of meaningful opposition from shadow Education Secretary Stephen Twigg.

Last month, Peter Wilby, writing this time in the *Guardian*, gave Twigg the chance to confirm a Labour government would rebuild a unified state education system and reverse the ruination Gove has caused. Twigg gave no such undertaking. In his mind, at least, Gove's project is already irreversible and the war lost.

Parents, education workers, students, and socialists will take a more resolute line, aware that working-class interest cannot be served by an education-system devoid of democratic accountability, strait-jacketed by belief in fixed innate "ability", in thrall to free-market liberalism, and content to replicate an unjust social order while siphoning public monies into private pockets.

After a quarter-century and more of retreat, appeasement and aiding the enemy, how much longer will it be until Labour again commits to a fully-comprehensive unified state-maintained education system fit to nurture the intellectual and emotional growth of all children together and every individual child?

Where did it all go wrong?

On 3 February the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) National Committee met and voted to authorise the smaller Central Committee to expel members of the opposition which has developed within the SWP since the run-up to its 4-6 January conference. Former *Socialist Worker* journalist Tom Walker has already quit and published a long analysis of the SWP. We print extracts. Full text: bit.ly/twalk

The first charge levelled at any opposition is that they are “outside the tradition”, either because they have consciously abandoned it or because they never understood it in the first place. But let us go back a little into the history of the International Socialism (IS) tradition, and examine exactly what is and isn’t part of it.

The SWP traces its roots back to the IS of the 1960s and 70s, and from there to the 1950s Socialist Review group. This then-tiny tendency, led by Tony Cliff and expelled from the Revolutionary Communist Party, was born out of the crisis of post-war Trotskyism. The failure of the second world war to end in revolution had seen the Trotskyists’ perspectives systematically falsified. They were attempting to deny this in various ways, and collapsing into placing their hopes in Stalinist regimes of one sort or another.

Against the orthodoxy of “official” Trotskyism, Cliff’s group was deeply heterodox. Realising the mess it was in, its members devoted themselves to rethinking and debating. They developed new theory as they attempted to find a way out of the rut...

[This] from then-member Jim Higgins’ *More Years for the Locust...* give[s] a feel for the spirit of the group: “In these days of harsh ‘Leninist’ orthodoxy, it is hard to recall the atmosphere at the cusp of the Socialist Review Group and the International Socialism Group. The regime was relaxed and activity was directed by persuasion and moral pressure

rather than the threat of sanctions...”

Yet Cliff, who had seen the predictions of imminent revolution for what they were just two decades previously, was taken aback by the scale of the events of 1968. He attributed the failure of the French May to end in revolution to the lack of a disciplined revolutionary organisation... The loose, undisciplined IS group looked to him ill-suited to the task of challenging for state power.

Cliff began... to push for more Leninist discipline in the group. In doing so he provoked a bitter faction fight that ended with many of the IS’s most prominent members walking out. It was after their departure that, in 1977, Cliff declared the transformation of the IS into the Socialist Workers Party — a party designed for revolutionary possibilities that by then were receding. It emerged into an era of defeats, which Cliff later called the “downturn”.

LIBERTARIAN

Shorn of its more libertarian elements, the SWP had a newfound rigidity. It became unable to change course, and had difficulty relating even to a struggle on the scale of the 1984-5 Miners’ Strike.

Then the defeat of that great strike turned the “downturn” from a reverse to a rout. The party went further in locking itself down...

By the turn of the century, when the leadership recognised the new political radicalisation of the anticapitalist movement and attempted to look outwards once more, the party was deeply scarred by its years of insularity. It came out of the bunker, but could not break with the bunker mentality. The result has been protracted crisis...

Nevertheless, the real IS tradition is surely to be found in the iconoclastic spirit of those years [1950s]...

Real history of SWP

Tom Walker’s picture of SWP history is askew on important points.

Tony Cliff wrote his text on state capitalism in Russia in 1948. Many Trotskyists proposed varied ideas on the USSR in the 1940s, and drew conclusions. Cliff remained in the majority of the Revolutionary Communist Party (the British Trotskyist group of the time), without differentiation on immediate political issues.

Cliff and others were not expelled from the RCP, but from the Trotskyist group created within the Labour Party after the collapse of the RCP. The immediate issue was the refusal of Cliff’s co-thinkers to back North Korea in the Korean war. The stance of the Trotskyist majority led by Gerry Healy can surely be criticised; but it is exaggeration to accuse the majority Trotskyists of “placing their hopes in Stalinist regime”. Moreover, in December 1952 Cliff’s Socialist Review group switched to a line on Korea, emphasising the call for US and allied troops to get out, which was in practice not much different from the majority’s.

ORTHODOX

SR was, in all but Cliff’s theory on Russia, a variant “orthodox Trotskyist” group. In 1958-60 it switched to call itself “Luxemburgist”. It conceded that Healy’s SLL were the real “Trotskyists” and “Leninists”, but deplored that “Leninism”.

Rosa Luxemburg wrote a polemic in 1904 against Lenin’s pamphlet on the 1903 congress of the Russian Marxists and the subsequent unilateral annulling by the Mensheviks of the congress’s decision on the editorial board of the paper *Iskra*. Lenin replied, rightly I think: “I must point out that Rosa Luxemburg’s... article does not acquaint the reader with my book, but with something else”: bit.ly/vilreply.

By June 1906 Luxemburg was, and remained, clearly on the side of the Bolsheviks against the Mensheviks: bit.ly/rl-bol. It is not true that she and Lenin had rival “theories of the party”: subsequent “Luxemburgism” was concocted in the 1930s from snippets of her writings: bit.ly/rl-fi, bit.ly/ho-rl.

In 1968 Cliff proposed that the group (now called IS) switch back to having a committee elected by its conference,

rather than a federal structure where each branch sent a representative to a committee. The initial argument was more about the impracticality of federal structure, now the group was larger, than about any theory, let alone about “challenging for state power”: bit.ly/cliff68. Bit by bit, without ever saying it had been wrong in the “Luxemburgist” period, the group took to calling itself “Leninist” and “Trotskyist”.

Lenin’s focus was on the means to fight for political clarity; the IS-SWP “Leninism” was administrative centralism. It turned nasty as soon as political battles spilled beyond the old family discussion circle mode. In December 1971 IS expelled the Trotskyist Tendency (forerunner of AWL), essentially for being a “permanent faction”; in 1973, another group, for having excessive differences with majority politics; in 1974, yet another, for refusing to dissolve as a faction after annual conference.

The alleged libertarian Jim Higgins was, as chair of the IS Executive and then National Secretary, central in imposing the new regime. He then fell foul of it himself. He and co-thinkers were expelled in 1975 after a row not about regime but about a push by Cliff for “steering left”, towards “raw youth who wanted to chop the head off capitalism”, and away from patience in trade-union work.

IS (SWP, from 1977) did not become “unable to change course”. More’s the pity. It veered from “steering left” to declaring an all-stifling industrial “downturn”; etc.

It dropped its 1979-88 “downturn” orientation not at the turn of the century, but at the end of the 1980s. By the early 1990s it was claiming that vast revolutionary recruitment was possible with an effort. In 1992 it called for a general strike (after insisting during the 1984-5 miners’ strike that it was fantasy); soon it had banners saying: “Paris 1968, London 1994”.

In the meantime, it had shifted its world orientation away from those elements of “Third Camp” politics it once had. From 1980 it opposed the Iran-Iraq war on both sides; in 1987 it shifted, with thin excuses and no accounting, to backing Iran.

That shift set the framework for subsequent turns, including the Respect fiasco and the shift from April 2002 to explicit alliance with political Islam continued these days with its call for votes for the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

Martin Thomas

Luxemburg was no spontaneist opponent of centralism — in fact she was a defender of her own conception of centralism against Lenin’s. But equally she understood the importance of apparently spontaneous action and what it can teach us, and believed no one had an organisational model that would be correct for all situations...

Luxemburg is, in my view, the best place to start in further reading if you want to understand the problems of the SWP.. Start with her relatively short 1904 work, *Organisational Questions*, then from there — and especially if you think 1917 invalidated her earlier criticisms — read *The Russian Revolution*, written in 1918 and posing some hard questions about the Bolsheviks’ theory and practice...

• More: bit.ly/s-w-p

When SWP became “Leninist”

In the 1960s, a central SWP (IS) text was a pamphlet by Tony Cliff on Rosa Luxemburg. In 1968 the pamphlet was reprinted, with its argument unchanged — but a crucial concluding paragraph reversed! This comment is from an article on “The Politics of IS”, written by Sean Matgamna, and published by the Trotskyist Tendency, forerunner of AWL, at Easter 1969.

In *Luxemburg*, edition ’68, Cliff is a changed man! Nowhere is the result more startling than in the final paragraph of the chapter on Luxemburg and Lenin.

1959 edition: “For Marxists in advanced industrial countries, Lenin’s original position can much less serve as a guide than Rosa Luxemburg’s, notwithstanding her overstatements on the question of spontaneity.”

1968 edition: “However, whatever the historical circumstances moulding Rosa’s thoughts regarding organisation, these thoughts showed a great weakness in the German revolution of 1918-19.”

Of course people change their minds. When Marxists do so it would be good to know why and how... In this case there is a mystery: one and the same exposition (without supplement) leads to opposite conclusions. Why? How does Comrade Cliff reach his conclusions?...

The IS attitude to the question of the Leninist Party has been... contempt for the idea of organising a small propaganda group as a fighting propaganda group.

The current change — motivated allegedly on the May [1968] events in France but seemingly owing as much if not more to the happy coincidence that the Group had just too many members to make federalism comfortable: after all, what conclusions were drawn from the Belgian General Strike in 1961? — has resembled not so much a rectification of theory and practice by serious communists, as an exercise in the medieval art of palimpsestry.

The leadership does not have a clear conception of the party that needs to be built. “Whether the IS group will by simple arithmetic progression grow into a revolutionary party, or whether the party will grow from a yet unformed group is not important for us” (Political Committee document, October 1968). On the contrary, it is vital.

If the strategy is one which expects any big changes from the shift to come in the already organised labour movement (all experience in the past suggests that this is the likely way a real mass revolutionary movement will develop in a country like Britain) rather than by arithmetical accretion, then this decrees the need for us to build a cadre movement to be able to intervene. The lack of a clear strategy on the relationship of IS to the class and the organised labour movement is obvious.

Consequently IS is being built as a loose, all-in type of group. Lacking a strategy the leadership looks always for short cuts.

NUT rank and file pushes for strikes

By Darren Bedford

Activists at National Union of Teachers (NUT) "pay briefings" have called on the Executive to reverse its decision of 24 January and name dates for strikes against Michael Gove's pay reforms as soon as possible.

The London briefing on 30 January had an almost-unanimous show of hands for a strike in March. Joe Flynn, from Croydon NUT, told *Solidarity*: "Speaker after speaker expressed bewilderment at the lack of strike action announced so far and emphasised that one day of action alone would not be enough to

win." The same mood had prevailed at the much bigger London meeting on 19 January.

32 activists attended a meeting in Sheffield, where Deputy General Secretary Kevin Courtney spoke.

Gemma Short, from Rotherham NUT, said: "There was a good range of comments from people there, not just the left either. A rep from Barnsley talked about the problem of having been marched up the hill and down again and the lack of leadership from the union."

Meetings also took place in Newcastle, Manchester, and Birmingham, with more due in Brighton (9 February) and Norwich (13 February). Supporters of

the Local Associations Network have distributed a bulletin making the case for action now.

Joe Flynn reports: "[The night after the 30 January briefing], another NUT email arrived in my inbox, very stridently announcing that strike action was a question of not whether, but when. It also included a reasonably punchy summation in bullet point form of the pay changes and how dreadful they are.

"We need to keep the pressure on at the remaining pay briefings. Judging by what some of the London executive members said at the London Regional Council meeting on 4 February, the Exec is very unlikely to call a strike this

term. I am going to ask members in my school to send emails to Exec members lobbying them, and I would encourage others to do the same."

Several NUT Associations have called a lobby

of the Executive meeting on 27 February.

• Local Associations National Action Campaign — nutlan.org.uk

Ballot in anti-victimisation fight

Teachers at Bishop Challoner School in East London will hold an indicative ballot for strikes against the victimisation of an NUT rep.

School managers are taking revenge for a successful campaign to resist a draconian observation and inspection policy.

Hospital strikers burn dismissal notices



By a health worker

Strikers from Pinderfields, Pontefract and Dewsbury Hospitals burnt their dismissal notices during a protest outside their Hospital Trust Board meeting last week.

Medical secretaries, receptionists, and other admin workers from Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS

Trust, who face pay cuts of up to £2,800, struck for five days following the Trust's decision to issue dismissal and reengagement notices to hundreds of workers.

The Trust has stated they are prepared to look at alternative plans with trade unions, but in the Board meeting their lead negotiator made it clear they would not negotiate on the level of cuts and that the "savings" must come from

the current group of workers. Suggestions from strikers that money was being wasted paying consultants Ernst and Young £3 million to cut their pay were met with blank faces.

A meeting of strikers at the end of the strike endorsed the idea that the dispute should be escalated with an indicative ballot of all union members in the hospital.

Liverpool jobs fight

By Ollie Moore

Around 10% of the workforce at the Royal Hospital in Liverpool could be at risk of losing their jobs, as bosses announce a five-year plan to shed 600 posts.

Hospital unions have said they believe the cuts plan is part of a project to fund investment in a new site as part of a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) scheme. The site, which was greenlighted by the government in June 2012, will cost £450 million.

Local NHS bosses have

denied a connection between the proposed job cuts and the new investment, but a Unison official said: "I cover most NHS trusts in the Merseyside area and I'm not aware of any trust that's looking to shed up to 600 posts."

Private sector workers in the area also face a battle for jobs, as bosses at glass firm Pilkington look to cut 150 jobs across sites in the north west. They are also looking to make cuts to workers' pension schemes.

The GMB union said the moves "could well lead to industrial action".

Foxconn workers win union vote

Workers of the world

By Ira Berkovic

Workers at Foxconn, China's largest private-sector employer, have won the right to elect their representatives.

Foxconn, which manufactures electronic goods for the likes of Nokia and Apple, is easing its control of its in-house "union" and will allow employees to elect shop-floor repre-

sentatives.

The move is the first of its type at a large firm in China, and is the result of substantial pressure from Foxconn workers who have been involved in strikes, protests, and even riots over the past few months.

Cleaners demand dignity

By Rebecca Galbraith

On Saturday 2 February, around 70 cleaners held an angry and inspiring protest at the Barbican Centre in London.

Cleaners at the City of London Corporation's prestigious arts centre are demanding pay increases to £8.55 an hour (the "London Living Wage") from their current wage of £6.19.

One female worker who was pregnant was forced to work with dangerous chemicals and carry out unsuitable tasks. She very nearly lost her baby. The manager responsible for this still works at the Barbican and working practices remain the same. Mitie is refusing to recognise and negotiate with the Industrial Workers of Great Britain (IWGB), which organises many of the cleaners at the centre.

The cleaners' demands go far beyond a Living Wage; they want to be treated with dignity. Placards said: "We are not the dirt we clean".

Cleaners from the Barbican were joined by many other cleaners from workplaces across London, giving their solidarity. Workers from different industries also came to support this important struggle.

The cleaners are now balloting for strikes and intend to fight until they win.

Cleaners at the University of London also rallied as part of their "3 Cosas" ("3 Causes") campaign to win sick pay, holiday, and pensions equality with their directly-employed colleagues.

The campaign also involves catering, security, and maintenance workers employed by Balfour Beatty Workplace and Aramark.

• More: iwgb.org.uk

Agency workers' fight continues

Agency workers employed by the Trainpeople agency on London Underground, without work since 16 January, have voted unanimously for strike action to win their jobs back.

Trainpeople workers will use the ballot mandate to continue their cam-

paign of direct action, including demonstrations and pickets at Tube stations and LUL and Transport for London offices.

The RMT is also organising action against Sodexo, which runs staff canteens on the network. Sodexo is victimising RMT rep Petrit Mehaj

after he led a successful campaign for union recognition amongst canteen workers.

Workers and supporters will rally outside Sodexo headquarters (1 Southampton Row, WC1B 5HA) at 8am on 7 February.

Solidarity & Workers' Liberty

Around 200 activists marched on Birmingham Town Hall to protest cuts on 4 February, storming its balcony and displaying a banner. Birmingham is one of five councils facing a legal challenge over council tax benefit cuts.

Council tax benefit cuts hit poor

By Pete Gilman

From April, the system of funding council tax benefit is being “devolved” to local authorities, but with only 90% of funds being made available.

Thus, every local authority will face a 10% shortfall which has to be made up. It is to be left up to individual councils to decide how to do this, but it will almost certainly mean that those who pay no or very little

council tax will lose some of the benefit they currently receive.

Because of “redistributive factors”, and certain exemptions that will remain, this loss will be substantially higher than 10%.

This cut, coming on top of all the other cuts, severely limits the alternatives open to councils, and is particularly pernicious because it will hurt (indeed, it is designed to hurt) the very poorest and most vulnerable in society.

Moreover, according to the government’s impact assessment of the 660,000 households adversely affected, 420,000 contain someone who is disabled — people who are likely to already be suffering from government attacks on benefits.

CHALLENGE

Already, residents are mounting legal challenges against five councils (Birmingham, Hackney, Haringey, Rochdale, and Sheffield).

Lawyer Alex Rook said: “Residents are facing a postcode lottery as to how the new council tax rebate system will be implemented. People living across the road from each other but in different boroughs could face a significantly different council tax bill because different councils have different policies.”

“Some councils are passing on cuts from the Government to everyone other than pensioners, hitting the poorest hardest. Our clients

are devastated at the thought of this additional burden when they are already struggling to pay for basics such as food and heating.”

This must be seen in the context of the Tory onslaught against the welfare state, the privatisation of the NHS, the closure of critically-needed hospitals, the proposed skyrocketing rent increase, and George Osborne’s deliberate destruction of hundreds of thousands of public sector jobs. All while the Tories give tax concessions to multimillionaires.

The Tories are encouraged and emboldened in their attacks by the timidity of the Labour Party and union leaders.

We need a national campaign of resistance, linking up, involving, and mobilising all those under attack, led by trade unions, to reverse the Tory onslaught and save the welfare state.

Workers plan action to defend Bob Carnegie

By Ira Berkovic

Australian construction workers and dock workers will take action on Monday 11 February in solidarity with Bob Carnegie, as construction bosses begin their court case to victimise him for his role in a successful construction dispute in August-October 2012.

Paddy Crumlin, the National Secretary of the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA), which represents dock workers, and the CFMEU, which represents construction workers, have called on their members to take action on 11 February. The Queensland Council of Unions has also backed the campaign and is lending its support to protests and other actions on the day.

The move represents a major breakthrough for the campaign in terms of winning official backing from major Australian unions.

Crumlin said: “The legal case against Bob is a simple case of corporate bullying. The actual dispute with Abigroup, which is owned by Lend Lease, was settled and, in fact, as part of the settlement, Abigroup agreed not to pursue legal action against a number of workers.

“But, they are putting a full legal press on against Bob. Bob faces a jail sentence and over a million dollars in fines, as well as thousands of dollars in legal expenses.

“What did Bob do during his support for the community protest? He acted in good trade union

fashion, putting his passion, energy and solidarity to work.”

International support has also continued to flood in, with messages of solidarity received from the Swedish Dockworkers’ Union, the Philippine Airlines Employees’ Association (PALEA-ITF), All Pakistan Federation of United Trade Unions (AP-FUTU), Intersindical-CSC Catalan Workers’ Union, Trades Union International of Workers in the Building, Wood, Building Materials, and Allied Industries (UITBB-WFTU), and the Left Party of Luxembourg. British and Irish construction union UCATT also backed the campaign.

UK-based supporters of the campaign will also rally on 11 February, at 1pm outside Broadgate Tower near Liverpool Street, London. The tower was a major construction project for Lend Lease, the parent company of Abigroup (the company bringing the case against Bob).

Lend Lease is also involved in attacks on working-class communities in south London, where leaked documents recently revealed that its planned “regeneration” of the Heygate Estate, currently home to over 3,000 people, will provide just 79 socially-rented properties.

- London rally - on.fb.me/12phY1B
- Brisbane rally - on.fb.me/TDLxJ4
- Campaign supporters list - bobcarnegiedefence.wordpress.com/supporters

Boom for profiteers

According to research by investment bank Seymour Pierce, the public sector is likely to be contracting-out £101 billion worth of work by 2014-15.

Already the value of contracts awarded each year has doubled in four years since 2008. The rise has not been steady, but rapidly increasing in the

last year.

60% of the contracts awarded in 2012 were from local authorities rather than central government, but the bankers say “healthcare is also seen as a growth market, with the value of private sector deals rising from £157 million to £552 million between 2008 and 2012”.