

For a
workers'
government

Solidarity

For social ownership of the banks and industry

No 331 16 July 2014 30p/80p

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The path to peace, page 5

Stop Israel's assault on Gaza!

TWO NATIONS

TWO STATES!

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:

- 020 7394 8923 ● solidarity@workersliberty.org

The editor (Cathy Nugent), 20e Tower Workshops, Riley Road, London, SE1 3DG.

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Impasse in Iraq

By Colin Foster

Patrick Cockburn writes in *The Independent* (13 July): "Since the capture of Mosul by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Isis) on 10 June, Shia women and children have been killed in villages south of Kirkuk, and Shia air force cadets machine-gunned and buried in mass graves near Tikrit.

"In Mosul, Shia shrines and mosques have been blown up, and in the nearby Shia Turkoman city of Tal Afar 4,000 houses have been taken over by Isis fighters as 'spoils of war'. Simply to be identified as Shia or a related sect, such as the Alawites, in Sunni rebel-held parts of Iraq and Syria today, has become as dangerous as being a Jew was in Nazi-controlled parts of Eu-

rope in 1940".

Cockburn also quotes a former MI6 chief as recounting that some years back a leading Saudi prince told him: "The time is not far off in the Middle East when it will be literally 'God help the Shia'. More than a billion Sunnis have simply had enough of them."

The MI6 man reckons that ISIS got its initial funding from rich individuals in Saudi Arabia and the Qatar. The Saudi princes knew that the Sunni ultra-Islamists hate the "American Islam" of the Saudi monarchy as much as they hate the Shia, but reckoned they could safely license them to cause trouble for Shia powers.

Now, as Cockburn puts it, "The rise of Isis is bad news for the Shia of Iraq but it is worse news for the Sunni, whose leadership has been ceded to a pathologically

bloodthirsty and intolerant movement, a sort of Islamic Khmer Rouge, which has no aim but war without end".

Shia-sectarian militias are mobilising against ISIS more effectively than the Iraqi army. There have been sectarian killings of Sunnis in Baghdad.

Kurdish ministers have quit Nouri al-Maliki's government to protest against his wild accusations that Iraqi Kurdish authorities are sheltering and aiding ISIS; and the Kurdish regional government has seized oil fields around Kirkuk previously controlled from Baghdad.

Momentum is growing for formal independence for Iraqi Kurdistan, and both justice and sense add weight to that momentum. Maliki has ruled until now thanks to an alliance of convenience with Kurdish parties, and it

is hard to see how he can regain authority even in a rump Shia-dominated Iraqi state.

The US wants him out, and is keeping military aid against ISIS within narrow limits until it sees political movement. Iran at first hinted that it would back Maliki, but is now reported as wanting a replacement. Who the replacement can be, someone able to do business both with Iran and with the USA, is still obscure.

The left can do three main things amidst these horrors: defend the Iraqi labour movement, threatened both by ISIS and by Shia-sectarian war fever; argue for secular government as the only basis for uniting Iraq; and uphold the Kurds' right to self-determination.

Obama to deport 52,000 children

By Beth Redmond

The White House has announced plans to spend \$3.7 billion deporting 52,000 children to Central America.

The majority of these children come over the southern border into Texas from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, countries which are rife with drug wars and have been devastated by decades of US intervention.

Money is going to be spent on care for the children whilst they await detention and electronic tracking devices (in the form of ankle bracelets), enhanced border control and transport.

Obama has even pro-

posed changing current laws to make deportations quicker and easier, by removing protection statuses that apply to children crossing the southern border. Punishing anyone, but especially children, who have turned up on America's doorstep in desperation, begging for help, by demonizing them, treating them like criminals and immediately returning them to what they were running away from is both unforgivable and illogical. Problems can't be solved by hiding them and pretending they don't exist.

Obama should offer real aid to Central America, and relief in the mean time for any migrant who needs it.

Student demonstration called for 19 November

A coalition of students and organisations has come together to call a national demonstration for free education on 19 November in central London.

Members from NCAFC, the Young Greens, SWP and The Student Assembly are organising under the banner 'Free Education: no cuts, no fees, no debt'. The plan already has the backing of various sections of NUS.

One of the aims of the demo is to spark further action against the government's agenda of privatisation and fees, and further combat the idea of universities being treated as businesses.

The demonstration follows up on NUS national conference passing policy on free education this year.

● Facebook event here: <http://on.fb.me/Wckc4p>

Support Calais migrants



By Rachael Barnes

Authorities in Calais have created a by-law prohibiting groups of people occupying or setting up camps across the town.

Whilst the text of the decree does not specifically mention migrants, after the recent mass evictions on 28 May and again on 2 July, where riot police violently removed over 600 people from makeshift camps in the area, it is clear that they were in mind when the law was made.

Police used pepper spray and violence against the migrants who were, according to the Calais Migrant Solidarity campaign, humiliated, insulted, terrorised and then hauled onto buses and detained miles away from Calais.

Ten days afterwards, on

July 12, migrants started a new squat in a disused factory in Calais and are now asking for support from sympathisers and activists.

Repression does not solve desperation. The French and British governments would have everyone believe that the "nuisance" migrants want to live in a courtyard in Calais, that they are going on hunger strike for fun, when in reality the large majority are fleeing horrific situations in countries such as Egypt, Sudan, Afghanistan or Syria.

The migrants' camps are not the problem, the conditions which they are fleeing are. People in that desperate a situation will keep coming back no matter how many times you destroy their temporary home.

After 10 July, extend the action

By Ira Berkovic

10 July saw the biggest strike in Britain since the 30 November 2011 pensions strike.

The strike, which involved hundreds of thousands of teachers, council workers, civil servants, fire fighters, and other public sector staff, shut down schools and local government services across the country. Workers' Liberty members participating in the strike sent reports to *Solidarity*.

In Leeds, activists say the number of pickets matched the levels of the 2011 strike. Around 4,000 attended a city-centre rally.

65% of schools in Newcastle were closed to pupils, with almost all council facilities shut. Over 1,000 people attended the strike rally.

Around 600 strikers and supporters marched in Norwich, with 94 schools shut or partially shut across Norwich.

A striker from Lambeth, south London, told *Solidarity* the strike was "stronger than we'd expected", and a

march in Nottingham had "good attendances from all striking unions." However, in Nottingham the march's "slogans were weak. It could easily have been just "Gove must go!" the whole way round if Workers' Liberty members hadn't pushed for some "Tories out!" and "Low pay — no way!" as well."

In Wakefield, West Yorkshire, "Unison had most of the depots closed or unable to operate, the register of deaths office was completely closed, all of legal services were out, and most of housing. Swimming pools got the minimum of four people in to open up but they had to keep their gyms closed."

In some towns, Workers' Liberty members had pushed for strikers' meetings and assemblies, rather than just rallies, on the strike day. In Nottingham, "the Trades Council has set

up a working group on the living wage, responding to a motion from the Communication Workers' Union."

Workers' Liberty members produced and distributed a bulletin that discussed how to develop greater grassroots control of the public-sector pay dispute.

We want 10 July to be the start of an ongoing campaign of coordinated action, not a tokenistic exercise in letting-off-steam. Unions should coordinate and announce the next strike days

The July 10 demo in Newcastle



(which should escalate beyond a single day) now. They should agree on dates that maximise effectiveness and impact for as many workers as possible (the 9 and 10 September dates suggested by Unison's leaders would make it difficult for teachers and other school workers to participate effectively in the strike).

Unison, GMB, and Unite should also ballot their members who work in the health sector and in Academies for strikes as soon as possible.

Sweeping spy powers rushed through

By Phil Grimm

David Cameron has unveiled new "emergency" legislation on data surveillance that would compel internet service providers and mobile operators to store information on their customers for up to twelve months so that the police can use it for criminal cases.

The new measures are being rushed through parliament after the European Court of Justice ruled old UK surveillance laws illegal. The court stated they breached the right to privacy and the right to protection of personal data. Ironically, the new laws may formally legalise practices even more intrusive than the old ones. The civil

rights organisation Liberty has called them "sweeping surveillance powers", and warns that they could be used to spy on anyone and everyone.

The legislation makes changes to the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act which would allow the state to intercept phone calls, emails and texts. Documents and photos filed in remote storage services like iCloud and Google Drive could also be intercepted and retained.

Cameron has privately consulted with Labour and Liberal Democrat leaders Miliband and Clegg, and the three have agreed to steer the legislation through parliament in just three days. However, some MPs have defied their party leaders to speak out against the rush-

ing through of such consequential changes. Conservative backbencher David Davis has called for more scrutiny, and Labour's Tom Watson has accused the Prime Minister of arranging a stitch-up.

Not only would the new laws be an infringement of democratic and civil rights, but they would make it harder for our movement and our class to organise against the ruling class and its state. The blacklisting scandals in the construction industry are just one exam-



Good one, Dave.

ple of how state and corporate surveillance can be used against organised workers.

We can't leave opposition to this bill to supposedly "libertarian" Tory backbenchers. The labour movement and the left should clearly and vehemently oppose any strengthening of the state's ability to spy on us.

Justice for victims of child abuse!

By Elizabeth Butterworth

On Monday 14 July, Lady Butler-Sloss resigned as the chair of an inquiry into the sexual abuse of children by MPs and other high-profile, powerful people in the 1980s.

It was less than a week since she had been appointed.

It is almost unbelievable that she had been appointed in the first place. Her brother, Sir Michael Havers, was attorney general in the same period that is under question.

Much has been made by the Home Secretary, Theresa May, Chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee, Keith Vaz, and others, of Butler-Sloss's "integrity". It is certainly right that she resigned, and that in her resignation she cited concerns from victim and survivor groups as one of the reasons for her going.

But as Beatrix Campbell writes in the *Guardian*, even without the familial conflict of interest, Butler-Sloss would still be the wrong person to head this inquiry.

She is very much a part of the establishment, and has more of an interest even than some other members of the ruling class in respecting the current "order".

More importantly, there have been justified criti-

cisms of her handling of the Cleveland Report in 1988, which investigated reports of child sexual abuse by two paediatricians in the North-East of England. After this public inquiry, a confidential report was sent to the Department of Health.

This confidential report apparently suggested that in many cases, the paediatricians' diagnoses were accurate. Yet there was nothing made public, and Butler-Sloss's conclusions, that they acted in good faith but were over-zealous or put too much store in inaccurate tests, are still generally accepted today.

Time and time again we hear about cover-ups of instances of powerful people in our society raping children. It feels like the papers are full of stories of famous and privileged paedophiles.

Where is the justice for the victims of paedophiles and child abusers? Why are the most important questions not being asked? Why on earth would the Home Secretary appoint Lady Butler-Sloss?

It smacks of not taking the issues seriously, of a bloated and complacent establishment, and of a desire to protect the government's interests by giving the job to a 'safe pair of hands'.

The survivors of child abuse deserve much, much better.

WORKERS' LIBERTY SUMMER CAMP

14-17 August 2014, Height Gate Farm, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire

A weekend away for members and friends of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty.

Featuring socialist workshops and discussion, food, drink, music, films, games and the great outdoors.

Tickets cost £25 waged or £15 unwaged, including food. No tent required.

www.workersliberty.org/camp

awl@workersliberty.org or 07775 763 750

Marxist Revival

No.2 of the international revolutionary-socialist discussion magazine *Marxist Revival* is now out, and available for £2 (or £3.20 including postage) from AWL.

The first section of the issue is short articles from the participating organisations on recent interventions.

AWL has contributed a critical review of our

activity in the recent strikes against job cuts and restructuring on the Tube in London. Marksist Tutum, from Turkey, writes about a mobilisation by the workers' association UID-DER, and the Iranian Revolutionary Marxists' Tendency discusses activity for the worker political prisoners in Iran.

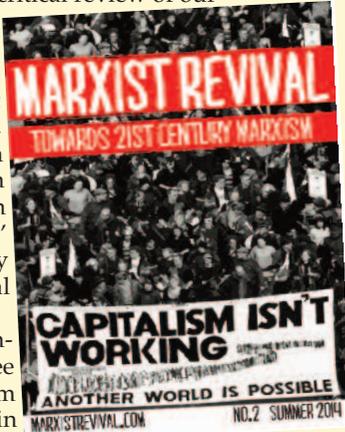
The second section comprises articles from the three groups on imperialism today. All three groups, in different idioms and from different angles, argue that there are large differences between the world-market imperialism of today and the "high imperialism" of rival colonial empires which flourished between the 1880s and the aftermath of World War Two.

Thus, to endorse strivings for "economic independence", or military action against the USA, by politically-independent capitalist powers which generally have their own ambitions for regional dominance, is not observance of the duty of socialists to back national liberation. It is subordinating working-class politics to battles of the weaker capitalists against the stronger. We should instead seek an independent working-class stance.

The third element in the issue is an article by Maziar Razi of IRMT on "The necessity of Marxists' convergence". Some of the ideas in that article were debated in a session at the AWL summer school, Ideas for Freedom, on 5-6 July, and again at a Marxist Revival seminar in Hamburg, Germany, on 11-12 July, which was also attended by L'Étincelle from France and Sozialistische Arbeiterstimme from Berlin.

Work is underway on producing a French edition of this issue of *Marxist Revival*, as a French edition of no.1 was produced.

It is a small beginning in international Marxist discussion, but a beginning which no-one else is making.



Their class war and ours

AWL
By Sacha Ismail



Over two hundred people attended Workers' Liberty's annual event Ideas for Freedom, which took place on 3-6 July.

The event included thirty sessions with a mix of formats. We had more speakers from outside Workers' Liberty than in recent years. There were academic speakers, but many more activists — from high profile struggles such as Focus E15 Mothers, the Ritzy Living Wage strike and Lambeth Union. We were pleased with the high level of presentation and debate.

As always, we had speakers and stalls from other left traditions and organisations.

As well as the historical themes of the 1984-5 Miners' Strike and World War One, the event had a strong focus on liberation and on international solidarity. All of it related to the overarching theme of "Their class war and ours" — reviving and re-equipping the labour movement for class struggle, and putting basic (not simplistic) ideas of socialism back on the political agenda.

Particularly popular sessions included "Marxism and intersectionality"; "What should the left demand of Labour?"; "How can unions regrow?"; "The left after the SWP crisis"; "India after Modi's election"; "Revolutionary Jews"; "Why everyone loves a TV murder"; and "Socialists and religion".

The Friday night meeting on "A century of women's struggles" was packed out, and our Saturday night social at the Institute of Education Student Union bar, organised jointly with the Worker-communist Party of Kurdistan, raised £240 for left-run refugees' organisations in Iraq.

Overall the event was pretty youthful, but there was a good mix of experienced comrades, newer or younger people and some who had never attended a socialist conference before. Six people joined or began the process of joining the AWL.

In terms of the spirit of the event, for me it was summed up by an anecdote in the Sunday morning session on the miners' strike and liberation politics.

Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners speaker Ray Goodspeed told the audience about an argument that took place in LGSM during the strike. Most of its activists wanted to publicly condemn the Polish government sending coal to Britain,



Becky Crocker delivers the opening speech of the event

but backed down in the face of opposition from the chair, a member of the Communist Party. The only person who kept arguing about it was a member of Workers' Liberty's predecessor organisation Socialist Organiser — someone who, as it happened, was speaking at Ideas for Freedom later that day.

Working constructively in broad movements while consistently arguing and fighting for our distinct ideas — and always striving to work out and tell the truth, even when it makes things awkward or difficult — is what Workers' Liberty is all about.

• If you would like to join, find out more about Workers' Liberty, or be put in touch with your local branch or activists in your area of work email awl@workersliberty.org or ring 07796 690 874. Please also get in touch if you have any comments or suggestions about the event.

A day out for the unions

Letter



Over 100,000 people came out for the glorious sunshine, music, banners, politics, history and beer at the Durham Miners' Gala on 12 July.

For over a hundred years the miners used to march with their banners and brass bands through Durham. This tradition nearly died after the closure of the pits, but the event has been reinvented. The ex-pit communities now walk with the banners, and other unions turn out with their banners and bands. The speakers are from a broad range of unions.

Seeing the union movement with our banners flying and enthusiastic mass support is inspiring. Some of the speeches were less so.

The sharpest speech was from a leader of the Ukrainian mine workers union who spoke about the importance of fighting for pay and conditions and about keeping the independence and unity of Ukraine. He also spoke about the importance of independent unions.

Other speakers included the general secretaries or presidents of the NUT, GMB, ASLEF, CWU and the POA. The leaders of the unions who were on strike on 10 July did not really explain what their strategy to win was; they preferred talking about the 1984-5 miners' strike, and the legacies of Tony Benn and Bob Crow.

Labour MP Dennis Skinner was well received; although he didn't criticise the Labour leadership by name he did call for the party's manifesto to be created by the labour movement as a whole at mass meetings like Durham and not by unrepresentative MPs.

Skinner is right. The same is true of the trade movement. We should use these mass gatherings to help advocate a rank and-file fightback.

Dave Kirk, Leeds

Help us raise £12,000 in 2014!

Since 2011, Workers' Liberty has run a summer camp in Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire. This year's is 14-17 August: www.workersliberty.org/camp. Summer Camp is popular because it gives members and friends of the AWL the space to discuss and think through important questions facing us as socialists. We need money to run it!

We want to raise £12,000 by our AGM in October 2014

You can set up a regular payment from your bank to: AWL, sort code: 08-60-01, account: 20047674, Unity Trust Bank, Nine Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HB.

Or send a cheque to us at the address below (cheques payable to "AWL"). Or donate online at workersliberty.org/payment. Take copies of *Solidarity* to sell at your workplace, university/college, or campaign group, or organise a fundraising event. And get in touch to discuss joining the AWL!

More information: 07796 690 874 / awl@workersliberty.org / AWL, 20E Tower Workshops, 58 Riley Road, London SE1 3DG.

Over the last month we have raised £360 from book sales, £693 in increased standing orders, £500 from a single donor and £1515 from our collection at Ideas for Freedom. Thanks to all comrades who have contributed.

Grand total: £6018



Two nations, two states!

Since the latest round of Israeli air bombardments of Gaza began on 8 July, around 200 Palestinians have died. 77% of have been civilians according to UN estimates. Many have been children

On 14 July, Israel ran a ground-troop operation in Gaza, and said it would expand its list of targets for bombing to include civilian institutions with suspected links to Hamas, the Islamist party which governs Gaza. Given that Hamas's political infrastructure is substantially enmeshed with the frail Gazan state, this could include almost any target Israel chooses. Also on 14 July, Israel began a leaflet-dropping campaign instructing residents of northern Gaza to evacuate as it was preparing to widen its bombing campaign. Hamas has instructed Gazans to stay put.

On Tuesday morning 15 July, Israel announced that it had accepted a ceasefire proposal from Egypt, but Hamas hesitated, and later that day Israel was bombing again.

Gaza's economy, always sore beset by Israeli restrictions, managed to grow nearly 15 percent in 2011 and 7 percent in 2012. Hamas was also boosted by the Palestinian "unity government" announced on 2 June this year, which allowed it to hope that public-sector workers in Gaza would be paid by the Palestinian Authority.

However, since a military-dominated government took over in Egypt in July 2013, ousting Muslim Brotherhood president Morsi, Egypt has shut down many of Gaza's routes to the outside world, and unemployment in Gaza has risen. The Palestinian Authority has stalled on paying wages: public sector workers in Gaza struck over that on 26 June.

Hamas wants to put pressure on Egypt and Israel to ease their grip on Gaza. Right-wing Israeli prime minister Netanyahu wants to keep Hamas off balance, and is under pressure from a growing far right in Israel.

The current conflict grew after three Israeli teenagers, Eyal Yifrach, Gilad Shaar, and Naftal Frenkel, went missing on 12 June in the West Bank. Israeli forces raided thousands of homes in the West Bank, arresting 570 Palestinians and killing several (5 by one report, 10 by another) in the process. The teenagers were found dead near the Palestinian town of Hebron on 30 June.

Far-right Jewish nationalists abducted and murdered 16-year-old Palestinian Mohammed Abu Khdeir on 2 July. Hamas began a barrage of rocket fire, and has now launched nearly 1,000 rockets at Israeli towns. It has also threatened to attack Ben Gurion International Airport in Tel Aviv. So far,



Demonstration against strikes on Gaza, Tel Aviv 13 July

no Israelis have been killed. Israel responded by bombing Gaza.

No state, Israeli nationalists claim, should tolerate rocket barrages, however poorly aimed and ineffective, against its civilian population. That is the rational kernel to the Israeli case. But Israel's actions go well beyond self-defence. Aerial bombardments of a densely-populated area, with an impoverished and essentially captive population, by one of the best-armed states in the world against are so disproportionate as to undermine the self-defence argument.

The Palestinians, too, have the right to defend themselves. Hamas rockets do not provide that defence.

Israel's bombardments cannot be abstracted from Israel's longstanding oppression of the Palestinians. Likewise,

Hamas's rockets are aimed at civilians and must be considered in the context of the social and political project of Hamas. Hamas is a clerical-fascist political party, which, despite the recent concessions to bourgeois diplomacy of some of its leaders, states its hostility to the Israeli-Jewish people even existing in historic Palestine.

Israel's war on Hamas cannot possibly have a progressive outcome. While Israel continues settlement building in the West Bank; while it keeps the population of Gaza under semi-permanent siege; discriminates against Arabs within its own borders; and operates a regime of walls and checkpoints, it creates the conditions in which Hamas grows.

The only way out is peace. And, for peace, Israel holds all the cards. Ending the siege of Gaza, dismantling West Bank settlements, ensuring equality for Israeli-Arabs, and allowing the Palestinians their right to set up a genuinely independent state in contiguous territory alongside Israel would allow peace — and security for Israel's people.

The hope for the future of both the Israeli and Palestinian people lies in the political potential of the Palestinian labour, women's, and LGBT movements, and the potential of the labour movement and internationalist, anti-war left inside Israel. Those movements can provide an alternative politics for Israeli and Palestinians that cut across the nationalism and chauvinism of both sides.

That potential can be glimpsed in the demonstrations which have taken place in Israel, on 3 July and 13 July. On 3 July, thousands demonstrated in Tel Aviv demanding an end to the atmosphere of incitement and vengeance following the deaths of the Israeli teenagers. On 13 July, hundreds of anti-war activists, many from the Israeli political left, demanded an end to the bombing, and faced violent reprisals from far-right nationalists.

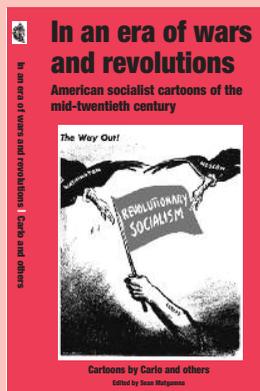
As Yacov Ben Efrat, wrote in the left-wing Israeli magazine *Challenge* following the Israeli assault on Gaza in 2010:

"Solidarity between Jewish and Arab workers is the only way to overcome the cycle of bloodshed. The supreme interest of the workers on both sides of the conflict is to build a political and social alternative, egalitarian and humane, against a right-wing Zionist chauvinism and an Islamic fundamentalism that are leading both peoples into catastrophe".

Summer schedule

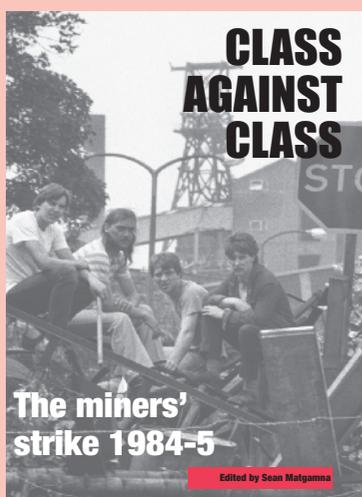
Solidarity will skip some weeks over the summer. Solidarity 332 will be out on Wednesday 30 July, and 333 on 13 August. Normal schedule restarts with no. 334, 2 September.

BOOKS TO CHANGE THE WORLD



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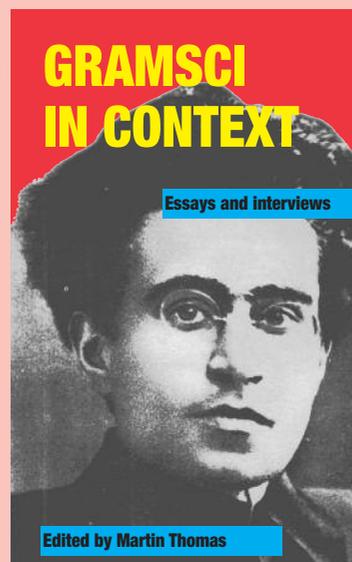
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This history marks the 30th anniversary of the miners' strike. A blow-by-blow account of events, an examination of key political lessons.
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Antonio Gramsci: working-class revolutionary, summarising Gramsci's life and thought.

It disputes the "post-Marxist" readings of Gramsci and discusses the relation between Gramsci's ideas and Trotsky's.

Price £6, or £7.60 including postage, order from workersliberty.org/books



GRAMSCI IN CONTEXT

Essays and interviews

Edited by Martin Thomas

The problem with migrants? Too much exploitation!

Rich & poor
By Matt Cooper



Non-British born migrants face a high level of exploitation. Policies supposed to offer workers protection are only weakly enforced.

That's not just us saying it. A new government advisory committee report confirms the picture.

The Migration Advisory Committee report *The growth of EU and non-EU labour in low-skilled jobs and its impact on the UK* looked at the 13 million UK jobs that are classified as "low-skilled" (requiring little or no training) — about 45% of all UK jobs. Two million are held by immigrants, half of whom are recent migrants and mainly from Eastern Europe.

Among the conclusions of this full and detailed report are:

- The increase in migrants has not displaced UK-born workers. Rather, UK-born workers have shifted to other jobs.

In 1997, 49% of UK-born workers were in "high-skill" jobs; in 2013 the figure was 55%. There are now fewer "low skilled" jobs. A greater proportion are now filled by migrants.

- Where UK-born workers cannot find jobs, and this is most prevalent amongst the under-25s, this is not a result of migration. Rather it is caused by an education system that gives low priority to students unlikely to gain five A*-C GCSEs and offers little and poor vocational training and apprenticeships. UK-born workers sometimes lose out to migrants with better skills.

- Migrants are often proactively sought in by UK employers because they are easier to exploit and are paid below the minimum wage.

The government is complicit with this by failing to enforce workers' rights. Only one in four hundred companies are inspected for minimum wage compliance every year. Even when the minimum wage is not being paid, criminal prosecutions are unlikely; only nine prosecutions were initiated between 2007 and 2013.

Civil penalties are more common but in 2012-2013, 708 employers faced penalties averaging only £1,000 each.

Meanwhile, many of the orders to pay workers' arrears (totalling £45 million to over 200,000 workers from 1999 to 2013) were avoided as employers declared themselves bankrupt and resumed business under a new corporate identity.

Exploitation of migrants is aided by the weakening of trade unions' collective bargaining power.

- The report suggests that migration "costs" Britain nothing. From 2001-2011 there was more spent on UK-born people than the taxes they paid (£624 billion) whereas migrants paid a surplus of tax of £78 billion. EU migrants paid a surplus of tax of around £2,700 per year each.

Although the report does not spell out the political conclusions to its analysis, it is clear that the supposed "problem" of migration is much more a problem of exploitation. Migrant workers' rights should be strongly policed, especially agencies and gangmasters, and the minimum wage enforced. Local authorities with large migrant settlements should be given money for more social housing and education.

Last but not least, barriers to unions organising these workers should be removed.

• <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/>



Pro-Russian soldier in Slaviansk before withdrawal

Pro-Russian separatists re

By Dale Street

Despite promising to defend the town to the last man and the last drop of blood, pro-Russian separatists pulled out of Slaviansk the weekend of 5-6 July. Kramatorsk and some smaller population centres were also abandoned. The separatists regrouped in Donetsk.

In an article entitled "We Left Slaviansk in Order to Return to Kiev", Igor Druz (adviser to the self-styled "Minister of Defence of the Donetsk People's Republic") explained:

"What would have happened if the Russian army had decided to defend Moscow to the end in 1812, or Kiev in 1941? Paris would not have been captured. And nor would have been Berlin. The army — the 'only ally of Russia' — would have perished. I am convinced of our victory, and that we will liberate Kiev as well."

Speaking at a press conference in Moscow, the unelected Prime Minister of the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR), Aleksandr Borodai, was equally supportive of the withdrawal:

"Slaviansk was a sad case. It was a symbol of resistance. Its heroic defence has already gone down in history. But from a purely military point of view, keeping hold of Slaviansk made no sense."

"Now we will establish rigid vertical lines of command of all military units. We are not preparing for a siege. We are preparing for military actions, for the launch of a counter-attack. And our concentration of forces allows us to look forward to success."

But not all cheerleaders of the Russian separatists were equally enthusiastic.

In a widely circulated interview-recording, Sergei Kurginyan, leader of the Russian-nationalist and semi-mystic movement "Essence of Time", savagely denounced Pavel Gubarev (self-proclaimed "People's Governor of Donetsk") for agreeing to the withdrawal.

The separatists marked their arrival in Donetsk by staging a city-centre rally. Out of a population of just under a million, fewer than two thousand turned up to show their support. As usual, Gubarev, who spoke at the rally, denounced the Kiev authorities as committing genocide.

A pro-separatist musical rally last Saturday (12 July) in Lenin Square in Donetsk — with the rock band Novorossiia topping the bill — attracted an audience of just a few dozen.

Another rally held in the same venue the following day, commemorating the 250th anniversary of the proclamation of the province of Novorossiia by the Empress Elizabeth II, attracted fewer than 500.

Speakers at the rally included Gubarev (who compared the Ukrainian military offensive with the Nazi invasion of Russia in 1941, and promised to conquer Kiev and Lviv) and Nina Popova of the Ukrainian Communist Party (who called for an end to the horrors of the fighting, but closed with the words: "Our war is a just war, victory will be ours!")

Donetsk's inhabitants are no keener to join the ranks of the separatists' militia than they are to attend their rallies.

In mid-June Borodai announced that a 10,000 strong military unit recruited from local miners was to be created: "The entire people of the Donbas is rising up to fight against the punitive Ukrainian forces of occupation. For us, this war is a truly patriotic one."

By early July, however, Strelkov-Girkin (the Russian commander-in-chief of the separatist forces) was striking a very different note:

"Every man must choose for himself. If someone regards himself to be a man, then he must defend his motherland. But for the past three months we have had very few volunteers for a mining region, where a lot of people are used to dangerous work."

"Commencing in the immediate future we will therefore begin to pay members of the militia around eight thousand hryvnya (a month)."

Under the headline "Trusted Fighters of the Russian World Gather in the DPR: New Head of State Security Appointed", Borodai and Strelkov-Girkin announced that security in the new separatist stronghold of Donetsk would be the responsibility of Vladimir Antyufeyev.

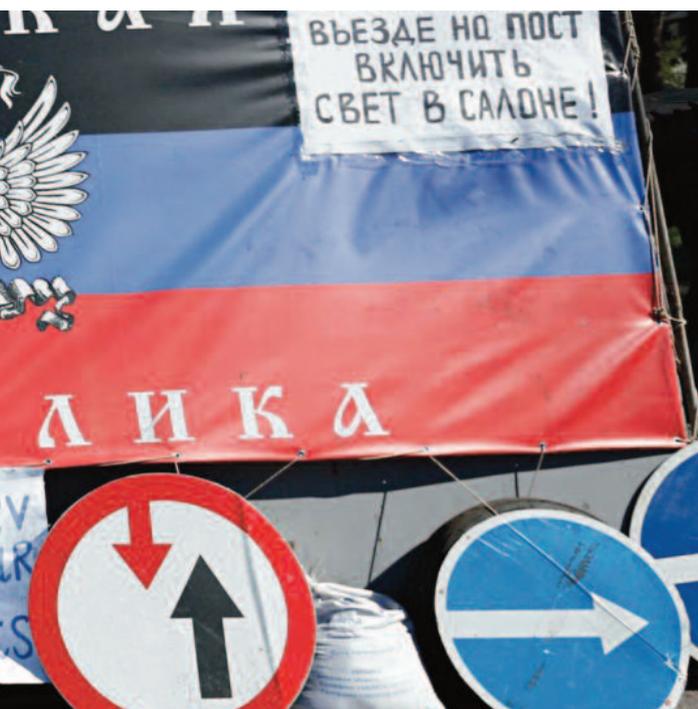
ANTYUFYEV

A Russian national (like Borodai and Strelkov-Girkin), Antyufeyev was in charge of the KGB for 20 years in the breakaway Transnistrian Moldovan Republic (TMR) before his return to Russia in 2012.

In the late 1980s Antyufeyev supported Russian militants in Latvia. He then moved to Moldova where (like Borodai and Strelkov-Girkin) he fought in the war which resulted in the breakaway TMR. He has been on Latvia's "wanted" list since 1991, and on the EU's "persona non grata" list since 2004.

Coinciding with the appointment of Antyufeyev, the self-styled leaders of the DPR (Prime Minister Borodai; President of the Supreme Soviet Denis Pushilin; and First Vice-Prime-Minister Andrei Purgin) appealed to the governments of the TMR and Abkhazia for diplomatic recognition of the DPR:

"In February 2014 a state coup, inspired by western secret services, took place in Ukraine. A military junta came to power and formed an illegitimate government consisting of



egroup

representatives of ultra-nationalist forces which preach a fascist ideology.”

“The new Ukrainian authorities have declared a war aimed at the destruction of the Russian-speaking population of the country.”

(In the real world, diplomatic recognition by the TMR and Abkhazia would count for nothing. They themselves are devoid of international recognition.)

Meanwhile, in the neighbouring fiction of the “Lugansk People’s Republic” (LPR) Valery Bolotov (whose official title is simply: “head of the LPR”) announced that he had sacked the entire LPR government and appointed Marat Bashirov as “President of the Council of Ministers”, tasked with creating a new government.

Like Borodai, Strelkov-Girkin, Antyufeyev and Pushilin, Bashirov is a Russian national. He is the former vice-president of a Russian private energy company and a former lobbyist for the private sector. In his first public statement after his appointment he announced that the LPR would be switching to the Russian ruble.

The separatists’ withdrawal from Slaviansk a fortnight ago does not signal the beginning of the end of the military conflict.

Ukraine has been unable to shut down its border with Russia. The separatists are still able to receive reinforcements from Russia: tanks, Grad missile launchers, anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons, anti-tank and anti-personnel mines, munitions, money and combatants.

By regrouping in Donetsk and Lugansk the separatists are able to use the civilian population as “protection”: bombardments by air or land by the Ukrainian forces would inevitably cause major civilian casualties.

But there already have been civilian casualties and damage to homes and businesses. And there will doubtless be more in future. This allows the separatists to portray themselves as “defenders” against Ukrainian aggression.

In the week following their withdrawal to Donetsk the separatists themselves blew up seven road and rail bridges around the city. Yet more bridges were blown up last weekend.

Many of the separatists have much more military experience than the Ukrainian military: they have fought in South Ossetia, in two wars in Chechnya, and, in some cases, in Bosnia (in support of Milosevic), and in the war in Moldova.

From their bases in Donetsk and Lugansk the separatists can also pick and choose the timing and targets of attacks on the surrounding Ukrainian forces, sometimes causing substantial numbers of casualties.

Novorossiya’s useful idiots

By Dale Street

An “international conference” entitled “The World Crisis and the Confrontation in Ukraine” was held in Yalta (Crimea, formerly Ukraine, now Russia) on 6-7 July.

The background to the conference was provided in an article published on the website of the Russian academic magazine, *Politicheskoye Obrazovaniye*¹. An identical report of the conference’s proceedings was subsequently published on the website of *Rabkor*² and *Russian Spring*³.

(The former is a left-wing website, edited by Boris Kagarlitsky. The latter is a right-wing website which is one of the electronic media mouthpieces of the Donetsk/Lugansk “People’s Republics”.)

According to its organisers, who included the “Centre of Co-ordination and Support for Novaya Rus’ (Novorossiya)”⁴, the purpose of the conference was three-fold:

“To create an international network of support for the movement for the creation of Novorossiya... To provide additional arguments and emotional materials for western activists and intellectuals who support us.”¹

“By inviting a number of western experts to Crimea, to demonstrate to the domestic (i.e. Russian) public the existence in western public opinion of a strong current hostile to the current anti-Russian campaign.”¹

“Publications by conference participants in the western press and in the English-language section of the web (which) must facilitate the dissemination of information which is positive for Russia about the processes now underway.”¹

The organisers also stressed the importance of the fact that the conference was being held in Crimea:

“The mere fact of the arrival in Crimea of an entire delegation of western intellectuals in and of itself is already a form of support for the changes which have taken place (i.e. the annexation of Crimea) and a blow to the various initiatives for a boycott of Russia.”¹

The conference agreed that the overthrow of Yanukovich and the uprising in the south-east of Ukraine were both the product of the European social-economic crisis. As one of the participants, Vasily Koltashov, put it:

“The struggle against the new Kiev authorities is really a struggle against the European Union, only not just in the form of a rejection of the politics of the destruction of the family and heterosexual relationships but in the form of a rejection of the entire anti-social neo-liberal policies of the western elites.”^{2,3}

“Banderite fascism,” the same speaker continued, was “needed by Washington and Brussels as an instrument to beat down social opposition.”^{2,3}

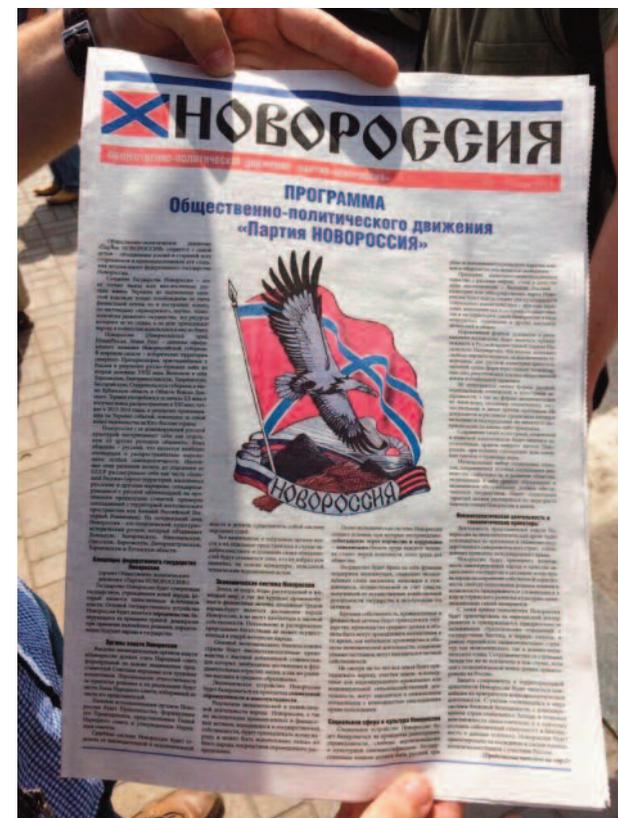
Representatives of the Donetsk and Lugansk so-called People’s Republics informed the conference:

“A fifth column in Donetsk dreamed of surrendering the city to the punitive expeditionaries [the name used by the separatists to describe Ukrainian troops]. They blocked initiatives to organize the rear and the defence of the city. But now order is being imposed.”^{2,3}

“We will not be raising the white flag, as desired by the oligarchs and the Banderite politicians and their American chiefs. We are very much in need of international support. We want people in Europe and beyond to know: we are fighting against the new fascism, we are fighting for freedom, we are fighting for our land.”^{2,3}

Described as “the co-ordinator of the campaign in defence of Novorossiya”, Richard Brenner [we assume Richard Brenner of Workers’ Power] is quoted as saying:

“For us it is very important to know what is happening in Donetsk and Lugansk, what is happening in the entire territory controlled by the junta. We perfectly understand that we are not helping some faraway incomprehensible



The paper of the “Federal Republic of Novorossiya”

rebels but are making common cause with the workers of Novorossiya.”^{2,3}

Other speakers stressed:

“The struggle of the people against fascism in former Ukraine has an international character. The Banderite-liberal-fascist regime in Kiev does not accord us any rights. And this is the doctrine of the USA and the EU, who are running the show on our land. The liberation struggle of Novorossiya not only has a Russian character but also a Eurasian one.”^{2,3}

An unnamed “European expert” present at the conference described the socio-economic havoc currently being wreaked by the “Euro-bureaucrats” and concluded:

“That is why we are in solidarity with you! Because we recognise that the enemy of Novorossiya is our common enemy — those neo-liberal forces who deprive us of our future.”^{2,3}

The conference concluded with agreement on an appeal to be published in English and Russian.

Apart from Richard Brenner, attendees at the conferences included Boris Kagarlitsky and Vasily Koltashov (Director and Deputy Director of the Institute for Global Research and Social Movements), the American economist Jeff Sommers, and Roger Ennis (“co-ordinator of the Canadian Campaign in Support of the Donetsk People’s Republic”).

Notes

- <http://www.lawinrussia.ru/node/299677>
 - <http://rabkor.ru/report/2014/07/09/yalta>
 - <http://rusvesna.su/news/1405106243>
 - This organisation defines its role as: “The struggle against the fascist junta which has seized power in Kiev. The struggle for the freedom of the citizens of Novorossiya. The struggle of the Russian World for the right to live according to its own laws, free of Neanderthal Galician nationalism and oligarchic fascism of the Latin-American variety.”
- See: <http://centerkor-ua.org/o-tsentre/pomoshch-soprotivleniyu.html>

Justice for all “honour crime” victims!

Kate Harris



On 7 July I attended a meeting at the House of Commons, hosted by Jeremy Corbyn MP, about honour killings in Iraqi Kurdistan. The meeting was called by the Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women’s Organisation (KMEWO).

Before this meeting, I have to say that I knew very little about the plight of some of the women in the region. The statistics and stories I heard have inspired me to take action on this issue and to ask others to do the same.

Women worldwide suffer structural and systematic oppression at the hands of men. We are beaten, raped, burned and killed by spouses, partners, family members and male friends.

In Britain, this means that, on average, two women are killed every week by their male partners. One in four women, according to statistics, will be a victim of rape during their lifetime (I suspect that this figure is very conservative). A young woman I met recently, N, was homeless due to extreme violence from her ex-partner and from her father, who had stamped so hard on her foot that her big toe had split.

Every single woman I know who I’ve talked to about such issues has been a victim of sexual assault, extreme harassment or abuse, often all three. According to 2010 statistics, there were at least 2823 “honour crimes” in that year in the UK.

Iraqi Kurdistan has a population of less than five million people. Yet according to women’s groups in the country there were more than 2,500 incidents of violence against

women and girls in just four months between January and May (that they are aware of). On average over the last ten years, 252 women have been murdered every year due to so-called “honour killings”.

In 2012, 15-year-old Nigar Rahim was brutally murdered by one of her brothers. At 14 a different brother raped and sexually assaulted her. She became pregnant and had a baby. Her life was at risk and went to a women’s shelter. After two months she returned to her family after they promised not to harm her. Forty days after this she was killed.

On 23rd May this year, 15-year-old Dunya was killed by her 45-year-old husband. He removed one of her eyes, severed her breasts, disembowelled her, tied her to a car and dragged her body into the road before firing nine bullets into her body. This was Dunya’s second forced marriage, after having to marry another man 35 years her senior when she was just 11 years old.

According to KWMEO, the authorities turn a blind eye on forced child marriages. Reports from Dunya’s mother to local media that Dunya was subject to burns and rape were not followed up. She also reported fears to the police hours before Dunya’s body was found and it took them hours to show up. So-called “tribal deals” have been offered to Dunya’s father, which involve offering ‘forgiveness’ in return for a sum of money.

The Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) say that they are taking steps to prevent honour killings, and are praised by the British government for doing so. But where is the justice for Dunya, for Nigar, and hundreds and thousands of other women subject to abuse, rape and murder at the hands of violent men?

The tragic loss of women’s lives is not the end of the story. Surma Hamed spoke in the meeting about being a survivor of FGM (Female Genital Mutilation), child marriage and sur-

living honour-based violence. Gona Saeed, Project Manager at KMEWO, spoke of women being burned to death or burning themselves to death because they can see no other way out. The authorities often ignore and in some cases perpetuate violence against women and girls by allowing “tribal agreements” between violent men and the fathers of victims, by letting off rapists who propose to their victims, by imprisoning women for adultery and through women not being able to register a child in their own name.

But Kurdish women, both in Iraq and Britain, are fighting back! Zhiyan, a grouping of more than 50 women’s organisations in Iraqi-Kurdistan, has released a statement asking for international support and solidarity in putting pressure on the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) to meet their demands.

KMEWO has released a template letter to send to the KRG’s embassy in London and have launched a campaign called “Justice for Dunya!” and are looking for signatories for their petition. With the support of Jeremy Corbyn MP, there will be an Early Day Motion going to the House of Commons and a delegation going to the KRG.

Women like Surma are speaking out about men’s violence, their experiences and are asking for solidarity. We, as feminists in Britain, need to respond with our support and sisterhood.

We call on the Kurdish Regional Government to turn their words into action and put the murderers, rapists and abusers of women on public trial.

Justice for Dunya! Justice for Nigar!

Justice for all victims of misogynistic “honour crimes” in Iraqi Kurdistan and around the world!

Challenge the attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate men’s violence against women across the world!

Third Camp Trotskyism and after

Tom Harris reviews *Solidarity*, a collection of essays by Dan Gallin and published by LabourStart

Dan Gallin is a life-long union official, so his memoirs might not seem a thrilling read for revolutionary socialists. But his career has been about as different from the standard dull trajectory of union officialdom as one could imagine.

Gallin has been a stateless exile, and a member of the heretodox Trotskyist movement of Max Shachtman and Hal Draper. He was expelled from the United States for subversive activities. Rising through the ranks of the International Union of Food workers, he clashed with CIA infiltrators and Soviet bloc bureaucrats, and succeeded in turning the IUF into one of the most militant and successful international union federations. His writing addresses issues ranging from Third Camp socialism to the degeneration of social democracy, from the Algerian revolution to Victor Serge.

Gallin was born in Czernowitz in the Austro-Hungarian Empire (now Chernivtsi in Ukraine). His father was a civil servant in the Romanian foreign service. The family was stationed abroad when the Stalinists took control of Romania in 1947. Their citizenship was cancelled in 1949, leaving a young Dan stateless in Switzerland.

He gained a scholarship to study in the US, and there he came across the Socialist Youth League, the youth branch of the ISL – the organisation of unorthodox, dissenting Trotskyists around Max Shachtman. The organisation was the successor of the group that had split from the orthodox official Trotskyist movement over its analysis of the character of the Soviet Union.

Gallin was won over to the group’s distinctive socialist politics, with its heavy emphasis on consistent democracy, freedom of debate, and its conception of a Third Camp. Building on the ideas of Marx and Trotsky, Third Camp socialism stressed the importance of working-class independence, of building a workers’ movement that was not beholden to the rival ruling-class forces that each sought to pull the workers’ in their directions.

As Gallin writes: “the fundamental line of cleavage in today’s world is not the vertical one separating the two blocs, it is the horizontal one separating the working class from its

rulers, and that one runs across both blocs. We are not ‘East’ or ‘West’ ... we are ‘below’ where the workers are”.

Throwing himself into political activity, Gallin dropped out of university and soon became a recognised face at protests and picket-lines. He was summoned to New York, and granted the euphemistic “privilege of voluntarily departure.”

Effectively deported, he found himself back in Switzerland, and struggled to establish international contacts for the ISL without much success. However, he took a job at the International Union of Foodworkers, and his career in the strange world of international union federations had begun.

Although he drifted out of organised Trotskyism, Gallin retained many of the lessons of his time in the ISL. As he was elected to higher and higher office in the IUF, he was faced with the immense pressures on the federation from the contending power blocs. At one point, he discovered that the whole South American branch had fallen under the control of the CIA. Whereas other Western union federations were happy to turn a blind eye to CIA influence, Gallin moved quickly to shut down and purge the operation.

His hostility to Stalinism and the warped orthodoxies of the official left also marked him out for his contemporaries. The book recalls how he would get funny looks from visitors to his office when they noticed the portrait of Andreu Nin on the wall. Nin, leader of the Trotskyist-influenced POUM, had been murdered in the Spanish Civil War by Stalinist agents.

The book is far from entirely autobiographical, and space is given to historical analysis and treatments of important political figures. Andreu Nin is not the only hero of the revolutionary left to be mentioned — there is also a piece from 1963 on Victor Serge. Serge, the famous Left Oppositionist, critic and novelist, is currently fashionable amongst leftist academia. Reading Gallin’s piece, written shortly after Serge’s memoirs were first translated into English forty years ago, provides an interesting insight into the impact that they must have first had on a world still dominated by the Cold War.

There are also many essays addressing the organisational problems that face the labour movement. The most recent of these deal with the problems of bureaucratism, and of how to organise informal and domestic labour. Gallin writes knowledgeably about the specifics of each situation, but keeps his



Gallin speaking about the domestic workers’ movement

solutions clear, concise and intelligible. The consistent thread through his argument is the importance of democracy and transparency, the idea that a union’s job is to fight for the class interests of its members, a job that is only possible if the union is accountable to the rank and file.

Gallin observes that the current crisis of the trade union movement is, in part, a political crisis. Across the world, social-democratic parties that were traditionally allied to the unions have drifted to the right, weakening their links with organised labour in the process. However, this theme isn’t really expanded upon, and the question of political action is left slightly vague.

At one point, Gallin jokes that he has always had “syndicalist deviations”, that he has had a tendency to prioritise economic struggles over the question of political organisation. I think there is probably some truth in this, and I would have liked to have read more of his thoughts on what trade unionists should do next with regard to party politics.

Nevertheless, *Solidarity* is a well-written and, in parts, fascinating read. It offers a sharply critical and humorous insight into the workers’ movement spanning decades.

You can buy the book here
• www.labourstart.org/solidarity/

Rebuilding the left among young people

By Martin Thomas

Ben Hillier, editor of the Australian socialist paper *Red Flag*, has written a reasoned and balanced article discussing the extent to which neo-liberalism has wormed its way into our daily lives and our thinking as well as into evil government policies (*Red Flag*, October 2013).

Socialist Worker increasingly tells us week after week that people everywhere are “angry”, that the ruling classes are losing their grip, and that mobilisations are “brilliant”.

Against that “one more heaven” school of socialist thinking, Hillier makes a strong case for sobriety. He does it without lapsing into defeatism or collapse.

In some ways his argument could be strengthened. World-market competition has sharpened since the mid-60s, and weighs down on each worker now more than it used to.

In the old industrial countries, though not in such places as China or Indonesia, workplaces have become somewhat smaller, and more likely to include different groups of workers employed by different bosses or working under different terms and conditions. Each worker’s pay is more likely to depend on her or his individual “performance management”.

More and more everyday transactions go through market or pseudo-market mechanisms. As we make our job, housing, pension, or education “choices”, we are drawn into *constructing* parts of the neo-liberal social web, as well as just submitting to it as something enforced.

A longstanding AWL member once remarked that the crucial blow to solidarity and organisation in the steelworks where he used to work was simple. The bosses stopped the workers taking their breaks at the same time. That blow has been struck in more workplaces.

We should, however, check our discussions against very similar discussions of half a century ago.

In the 1960s, too, writers argued that the working class had become atomised, or even “embourgeoisified”.

Then, too, they could point to real trends. The old social-democratic and Stalinist-becoming-social-democratic parties had decayed “culturally” as well as in activism; so had trade unions, even though they were still militant.

INDIVIDUALISM

More workers were commuting, living in suburbs with little community life, spending much time watching TV, and interested in acquiring the consumer durables (washing machines, fridges, cars, and so on) now within their reach.

A famous study in the 1960s of The Affluent Worker (seen as typified by car workers in Luton) concluded that workers were largely content with the basic structure of industry and converted to “instrumental” attitudes (calculating things in terms of individual advantage).

Then in 1968 those same car workers launched a militant strike which included seizing their management building and flying the red flag above it.

Many other workers’ struggles followed in 1968 and 1970s, and writers shelved the studies on atomisation and “embourgeoisement”.

But the “affluent worker” study was not a right-wing hatchet-job. The authors rejected the full “embourgeoisement” thesis.

There had been a real growth of individualism, mostly market-oriented individualism, and a real decay of the old left.

The big radicalisations of 1968 and the 1970s did not show that individualism within the working class was a myth. They showed that it was by no means rigidly fixed into being a pro-capitalist influence. Market-oriented individualism can segue into a working-class culture which values individual autonomy and critical thinking within solidarity and collective effort.

As Trotsky once wrote, under capitalism the working class generally suffers from too little rather than too much individualism. The Russian working class which made the revolution of 1917 was a class led by young workers, many moved recently to the city from the countryside rather being embedded in the tradition-bound working-class communities which are too often romanticised with hindsight. The USA’s great revolutionary workers’ movement of pre-1914, the IWW, was built by footloose workers.

The new left after 1968 became infected by many of the same diseases as the old Stalinist and social-democratic left, and now is in its turn becoming an old, dying left. That was avoidable. Without that setback, and without the working-class defeats of the 1980s, I think the neo-liberal restructuring of work and social life would have met different responses.

Hillier is right about the need for cohesive revolutionary socialist organisation. But that need exists in all phases of working-class struggle. Can we say some more specific about the socialist response to today’s specific neo-liberal restructured capitalism?

In the 1960s revolutionary socialists tended to assume that there was already a widespread will to socialism in the working class, thwarted by the misleadership of the Stalinists and social democrats.

The revolutionaries would triumph by exposing the misleaders in the big struggles which would in due course be triggered by capitalist crisis; and the workers would then turn to the revolutionaries to win the socialism they already wanted.

CRUDE

The scheme was not always so crude. You can find in the writings of our own tendency, right back to the 1960s, sharp criticisms of the crude scheme.

Moreover, there *was* a widespread vague sentiment for a sort of socialism in many working classes, in Europe at least — it hasn’t disappeared even today — and it was right to seek to build on that.

Today the scheme has stopped working. We must face the fact that our tasks include re-doing much of what the Second International did in its good days from the 1880s — grassroots agitation, education, and organisation to build up a socialist culture in a working class previously atomised or hegemonised by bourgeois politics.

The “hyper-agitationalism” which dominates so much of the left today, the subordination of everything to the search for the catchy and militant-sounding slogan, should not be flipped over into a passive lecturers’ socialism uninterested in struggles; but it must be replaced by an approach with due attention to education and explanation.

The German working class in which the Social Democratic Party built a socialist culture in its great days, over a hundred years ago, was a young class. Over 40% of blue-collar



workers in those days were under 25, and the SPD was over 90% a party of blue-collar workers.

The Bolsheviks in Russia were overwhelmingly a party of young workers. In Germany when the SPD became conservative during after World War One its age profile shifted (by the early 1930s a majority of its members were over 40) and the Communist Party in its revolutionary days recruited hugely among young workers.

In building new socialist awareness today, young workers are again central.

But we do not have factories with hundreds of apprentices fresh from school as the SPD had. Instead, the biggest concentrations of young people are in universities and colleges. Their campuses represent an exception to the rule of increased atomisation and fragmentation. They contain more people in one space than almost all workplaces, and with easy communication between them.

That mandates a priority for socialist activity — and socialist activity, not just militant student-unionism — on those campuses.

It has to be socialist activity which educates young people to become lifelong builders of socialist political culture in workplaces and communities, not just to be militant while at college and then lapse into NGO-ism or careerism.

Hillier on “retreat into the private”

Hillier cites atomisation: “In our largest cities... the sprawl creates satellite suburban wastelands kilometres from amenities and often more than an hour’s drive from the CBD...”

“People today have, on average, fewer friends, fewer relations with neighbours and fewer connections to community organisations. The latter is particularly true of young people... People are absorbed in TV (for three hours on average per night) or interacting through social media...”

“It has become fashionable to link social media to greater social engagement and events like the Arab revolutions. But the rise in usage is also linked to this broader trend to atomisation that has transformed the way many people experience the world”.

He also cites the content of the culture circulated through those TVs and computers and smartphones. “Neoliberal culture... counsels us to turn our back on the world, and the future, to turn inward as individuals and unearth ‘who we really are’. A whole generation judges its inner worth by its capacity to match the artificial forms of fashion models or the carefully cultivated images or skill sets of superstar athletes and singers... Human existence and intimacy [are transformed] into marketable goods”.

The cultural turning inwards is coupled with a shrivelling of democracy.

“The parties historically associated with the labour movement have become indistinguishable in many respects from the conservative parties of the rich... Governments have either ceded power to or had their democratic mandate undermined by unelected capitalist institutions such as the World Trade Organization, the World Economic Forum, the

European Central Bank [and national central banks, commissions...] etc.

This trend “reinforces the retreat into private lives as people attempt to escape perceived injustice, rather than challenge it. On the other, it can lead to profoundly anti-democratic conclusions... In Australia... only 39 percent of people 18 to 29 years old consider democracy ‘preferable to any other form of government’. (The figure is 74% for those over the age of 60.)”

Hillier is sceptical of “clicktivism”:

“The clicktivism rank and file of organisations such as Get Up! [a big Australian lobby group] generally remain as disengaged from any real world struggle as ever. They lend their identity and delegate their cash to unelected and unaccountable professional ‘campaigners’. The success or otherwise of the campaign seems to be judged only by how much advertising is created”.

Hillier, however, notes that “the working class can... break out of its passivity, identify the enemy and start swinging” again very quickly. “The basic structures and dynamics of the capitalist system remain”.

On-the-hoof radicalisation-through-struggle is not enough by itself. So Hillier concludes by emphasising the ideological tasks of socialists:

“Being able to explain convincingly the hows and whys of the failures of Stalinism and social democracy is as crucial to re-establishing a genuine revolutionary Marxist tradition as being able to explain the hows and whys of the failure of capitalism”.

• bit.ly/b-hill

Back whoever contests US hegemony?

Harry Glass reviews *Geopolitical Economy: After US Hegemony, Globalisation and Empire* by Radhika Desai

This book is a wretched apology for some of the worst regimes on the planet, dressed up as critique of political economy. It demonstrates how the language and words of the classical Marxist tradition can be appropriated and used for a world view subservient to the ruling classes of certain powerful, and ultimately imperialist or sub-imperialist states.

Desai takes the idea of uneven and combined development (U&CD), which she attributes to the Bolsheviks rather than specifically Trotsky, and turns it into a means of celebrating the rise of every rival to the US. It is a facile anti-Americanism – an “anyone-but the US” account of global politics – which has nothing to say to the American working class or indeed the working class of other “contender” states. The book conflates insights from classical Marxism such as U&CD and theories of imperialism with later Stalinist excrescences. The result is a series of apparently radically counter-intuitive claims that explain little and confuse much.

Desai makes three central arguments:

1) The materiality of nations means the world is made up of multiple states, signifying the end of single power hegemony.

2) The hegemony achieved by British imperialism in the mid-19th century is unrepeatable; and the US has never been hegemonic

3) “Globalisation” and “empire” are merely failed ideologies to justify US intervention, not theories of how the global order is.

The first argument is a species of methodological nationalism – elevating nation identity and national forms above more universal connections such as class or indeed the real material processes of global capitalism. Thus where Marx emphasised the progressive work of capitalism in creating threads that bind peoples and communities across the globe, as well as generating interdependent working classes, Desai’s framework is firmly rooted in national states.

This methodological statism abstracts states from capitalist social relations of production, leading to a weak, reformist conception of politics in the conclusion, whereby the working class mainly looks to influence progressive states to act for its interests. This is far from the self-liberation of the working class. It also offers no critique of those states, such as China and to a lesser extent Russia, where even organising for working class politics is confounded by state repression.

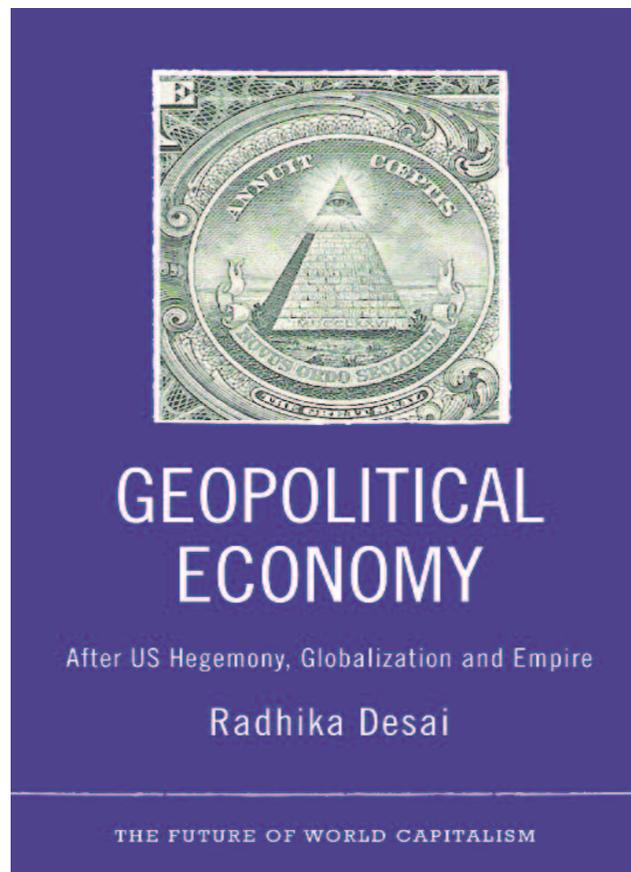
Desai juxtaposes “multipolarity” (which she clearly favours) to “cosmopolitanism”. This leads to utterly scandalous arguments. For example Desai states that in the post-war period, the USSR was responsible for decolonisation and the development of newly industrialised countries, and even the growth of welfare states in the advanced capitalist states. This is pure Stalinist apologetics.

It leaves out entirely the efforts of oppressed peoples to liberate themselves, and the role of the working class in fighting for its own improvements. It also radically misrepresents capitalism, dismissing the active agency of capital and its constant reproduction of its own gravediggers.

The attack on cosmopolitanism from a nationalist vantage point is ruinous. Cosmopolitanism has long been an integral trait of authentic Marxism. Marx and Engels subsumed the best elements of bourgeois cosmopolitanism: the philosophical sense of world citizenship; the institutional element of global self-government; the juridical idea of universal rights; and the economic interdependence of needs. Marxism fuses these conceptions into proletarian internationalism, the practical solidarity between workers globally that is necessary for working-class self-emancipation.

Of course the free-trade cosmopolitanism of Marx and Engels’ time, and the latter-day neoliberal cosmopolitanism, which are ideological articulations of the free movement of capital, are not carried out in the interest of working class people. However Marxists have rightly argued that the development of the world market and a capitalist mode of production across the globe is progressive, not least because it creates the material foundations for socialism.

There is also an underlying poison to polemics against cosmopolitanism that needs to be lanced. In the 1940s the Stal-



inist ruling class in the USSR launched an attack on cosmopolitanism. It was part of their drive against the emerging cold war and a blast at US imperial hegemony. It was explicitly chauvinistic, harking back to the Russian “Motherland”, with more than a whiff of anti-semitism. Unfortunately, recent events in Syria and Ukraine have shown a residual Russian apologist tendency on the left, particularly among those who don the mask of “multipolarity”.

None of this is to deny the materiality of nations. The class struggle takes place on national terrain, as well as at international, regional and local scales. National self-determination, in the sense of democratic political self-government remains a vital issue for many peoples, although again the one-sidedness of much of the left is evident: contrast campaigns for Palestinian self-determination with those on the rights of Kurdish people; US intervention in Iraq is rightly opposed, but Russian and Chinese oppression of national minorities receives almost no comment.

Desai’s second argument – the flat denial of US hegemony in the current world – completely misreads international relations since 1945. The book is dominated (ironically as the author points out) by a stinging critique of the US, but absolutely no assessment of other “contender” states. The reasoning is very shallow, implying that the economic recovery of Europe and Japan from the 1950s represented a return to the pre-1914 rivalries that led to world war, rather than a US-led reconstruction of global capitalism, in which the capitalist classes as well as the “rival” economies were integrated and interpenetrated to a significant extent.

Even a superficial familiarity with the real relation of forces shows that the US retains overwhelming hegemony in military, economic, technological and cultural matters. The US state had around 400 military bases in the 1960s, while today it has over 700. Militarily, the US outspends all its possible rivals put together, never mind has allies, alliances, nuclear and cyber capability, and other advantages. Economically, the top three or four firms in technological hardware and equipment, software and computers, aerospace/military, and oil equipment and services are American, as are most top global firms in healthcare equipment and global financial services. The US was still producing more manufactured goods and receiving more foreign investment in 2007 than all the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) combined.

It is a step forward that Desai recognises combined development in the current world and fluidity in the hierarchy of

states. This is an improvement on the rigid core-periphery model derived from the dependency and world systems theories, which imported third world nationalism into Marxism in the 1960s and 1970s. The book’s recognition of capitalist development in former colonies is also correct.

But nowhere does Desai discuss the idea of “sub-imperialism”, a category to describe regional powers such as Iran, Iraq, and Israel, Brazil, Argentina and Mexico, South Africa, Nigeria and other states. Such analysis has proven invaluable for understanding both changes in the world economy as well as numerous wars in recent decades. Desai doesn’t discuss sub-imperialism or the inter-relationships between actual capitalist states because it would undermine the facile multipolar thesis she defends.

Similarly, the third argument made, that “globalisation” and “empire” were merely failed ideologies to rationalise US foreign policy, elides more than it clarifies. Of course many apologists for the US state used these constructs as ideology. But others, including critics, have understood globalisation as part of the continuing internationalisation of capital, as well as the way capitalist states have ensured the reproduction and extension of capitalist social relations of production. Similarly, the idea of an informal US empire captures something of the structured hierarchy of states in the current global order. These terms sum up real processes in the real world that are not merely ideological constructs, and grasp important elements of an ever-changing reality.

Desai sneers at the anti-capitalist movement for accepting globalisation while seeking to change its form. But this was one of the virtues of the social forums, in which demands around working class solidarity were raised by pushing through actually-existing tendencies in the world economy. Of course some of the mobilisations were soiled by a heady mix of negative sloganeering (another world is possible, but not much detail on what that meant or who would bring it about) and anti-organisation movementism. But they also created dialogue on the left and some telling mass activity in protest at capitalist classes and their governments.

Actually, Desai’s book masks an implicit advocacy of the BRICS. All of these states have increased their importance in the world economy and geopolity in recent decades. But they are not an homogenous bloc, nor do they all obviously share common interests or even juxtapose themselves to the US.

Worse, Desai’s embrace of these states becomes effective promotion of their governments, silence on the fate of the peoples who live under them, and the extinction of the solidarity that needs to be developed between workers there and in other states.

LABOUR ACTION FOR SALE

How did socialists at the time respond to the events of 1944? Like D-Day? Like the Warsaw Rising against the Nazis in August-October 1944, deliberately not supported by Red Army troops standing on the other bank of the Vistula? Or the first battles of the civil war in Greece?

Or to the events of 1949? Mao’s victory in China? The end of the first Israeli-Arab war and of the India-Pakistan war which followed independence in 1947? The setting-up of Comecon and of NATO?

We have for sale two spare yearly volumes, 1944 and 1949, of *Labor Action*, the weekly publication produced in New York by Hal Draper, Max Shachtman, and other “Third Camp” socialists. Through those volumes you can learn about not only what they said about the big world events, but the texture of their day-to-day agitation.

£20 for each volume, plus £4 minimum for postage (Parcelforce two-day delivery to your local post office).

RMT election: vote John Leach!

By an RMT member

The individual members' ballot in the election for the new General Secretary of the Rail, Maritime, and Transport workers' union (RMT) begins on Monday 21 July, after a period of branch nominations.

RMT members face serious industrial and political challenges. Significant staffing cuts are threatened in the railway industry, the union's largest industrial sector, as bosses implement the recommendations of the McNulty Report, commissioned by Labour and completed by the Tories.

Some train companies are pushing for "driver-only-operation", scrapping the guard grade altogether, and companies like London Underground are attempting to push through drastic cuts to staffing levels and across-the-board closures of ticket offices.

Outsourcing and casualisation continue, with poverty pay endemic in grades like cleaning.

Within the union itself, a new General Secretary will need to help reinvigorate organisation at workplace and branch level, and improve the union's culture and structures on equalities: currently, 12.5% of the RMT's members are women, but its national leadership is made up entirely of men.

With the 2015 general election approaching, and the issue of rail renationalisation increasingly prominent, the union will also examine its political strategy. The "No2EU" project it backed at the European elections did poorly, and has since been quietly wound up as an electoral initiative.

The Trade Union and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) initiative the RMT also backed, which is mainly animated by the Socialist Party, shows few signs of making a breakthrough or developing into a force with real roots, significant democratic life, and a political vision beyond lowest-common-denominator "anti-austerity" politics.

Workers' Liberty members active in RMT are backing John Leach, the current London Transport Regional Organiser, former RMT President and Executive Member, and a London Underground worker. We have worked with John in number of capacities for many years.

We are backing him because he is a democrat, who believes in member leadership and an open, accessible culture within the union.

We are backing him because he favours a serious discussion about the union's political strategy, and supports a diversity of political tactics beyond the current culture of "contract-

ing out" the union's work in the political sphere to TUSC and other electoral initiatives.

And we are backing him because he is a genuine militant who wants the union to be effective and win, using tactics like strike pay where necessary.

John has emphasised workplace organisation and fighting effectively on day-to-day industrial issues as the foundation for continuing to grow the union. He has also fought hard on equalities, taking practical steps to ensure that the struggles of women, black, LGBT, and disabled workers (and passengers) have been at the heart of the RMT's current fight against cuts and closures on London Underground.

He has committed to "ensure that the union at every level is representative of the full diversity of [the] membership", addressing the current imbalance whereby the union's entire national leadership is white and male. John has also committed not to take the full General Secretary's salary if elected, and will remain on his London Underground wage.

CANDIDATES

There are four other candidates in the election.

The default culture in the RMT is a more "militant" and "left-wing" one (in some ways) than in many other unions, so there is no explicitly "right-wing" candidate to the extent that there might in elections in, say, Unison or PCS. From a distance and to an outsider, the differences between candidates might be hard to identify.

The other candidates are Mick Cash, the Acting General Secretary who took over after Bob Crow's death in an interim capacity due to being Senior Assistant General Secretary; Steve Hedley, the second Assistant General Secretary and former London Transport Regional Organiser; Alex Gordon, former President; and Alan Pottage, the current head of the union's Organising Department.

Mick Cash is the most "conservative" (in RMT terms) of the candidates. Although his election material promises "a militant, member-led union", when Cash stood (unsuccessfully) against the young Bob



Crow for the Assistant General Secretary position in 1994, it was on the basis of criticising Crow for being strike-happy. In 2004, while representing the union on the Labour Party NEC, he voted with the Labour leaders — and against union policy — to defeat a motion opposing the Iraq war, and during the war itself moved that an NEC meeting move to next business to avoid an "embarrassing" debate about Iraq.

Steve Hedley has been a prominent figure in the London Transport region of the RMT for many years, and rose to more national prominence after beating incumbent Assistant General Secretary Pat Sikorski in 2012. Workers' Liberty members backed him in that election.

Hedley has been a figure of particular controversy on the labour-movement left since he was accused, in 2013, of domestic violence by a former partner — an accusation which he suggested, in an internal RMT investigation into the matter, was a conspiracy originating with Workers' Liberty member and then-RMT Executive member Janine Booth (a claim which has since been officially repudiated by a further RMT investigation).

We cannot know whether Hedley is guilty of the allegations. We believe his public response to them, which, accused his former partner of malicious intent in making the allegations and publicised details of her mental health, was offensive and inappropriate for a senior trade union official.

Alex Gordon was President of the union between 2010 and 2011. He has been one of the most outspoken advocates of the union's policy on the EU, promi-

nently supporting UK withdrawal and helping channel much of RMT's political activity into anti-EU initiatives. He is industrially militant, and on some other political issues, he has a respectable record, speaking out in the TUC against "boycott Israel" policies and for the then-RMT position of building solidarity with Israeli and Palestinian workers' organisations. He also helped organise solidarity between the RMT and the Iraqi workers' organisations which emerged after the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003.

Alan Pottage was appointed by Bob Crow to head the union's Organising Department in the early 2000s. A former Edinburgh railworker, Pottage was victimised at work and sacked. He has occupied various labour-movement positions since, working as an organiser for steel workers' unions. He spent time as a worker for Amnesty International. He has been an employed (not elected) official of the RMT since 2002.

Politically he is similar to Crow, and supported the "No2EU" initiative. He is a serious and effective organiser, with a genuine belief in real, combative trade unionism. Workers' Liberty members will be advocating a second preference vote for Pottage. However, we think it is problematic that RMT's constitution allows union employees — as well as members — to stand for office within the union.

The immense respect that Bob Crow commanded amongst RMT members, and the sudden and tragic nature of his death, give the election particular characteristics. No candidate wishes to be seen as a "change" candidate, arguing (justifiably, on the

whole) that there is little appetite amongst the membership for significant departures from the union's existing cultures and practices.

But there are areas where Workers' Liberty members believes the union can improve — more progressive attitudes and approaches towards equalities; a more radical and effective, and less demagogic, form of militancy; a thorough debate on political strategy; and more inclusive, democratic culture.

We believe John Leach is the candidate who can best take RMT forward.

Tube cleaners locked out

By Ollie Moore

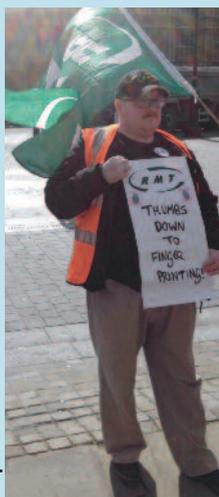
Since Monday 7 July, Tube cleaners in the RMT have been "locked out" by their employer, ISS, for refusing to use biometric fingerprinting machines to book on for work.

The machines are an insult to cleaners' dignity; ISS has admitted it will share data with the Home Office to be used as an immigration tool.

Cleaners say they are willing to work, they just don't want to hand over unique data to an untrustworthy employer. ISS has sent cleaners home without pay, and is desperately drafting in agency staff to cover the work.

The RMT is organising hardship funds for the cleaners. The union has also organised a number of demonstrations, outside Parliament, at London Underground headquarters, and at ISS's offices.

Cleaner activists say a strike may be necessary to force ISS to back down and agree to allow cleaners to book on using the existing, written, system.



Lambeth college: preparing for round two!

Union negotiators for lecturers at Lambeth college have failed to reach an agreement

Management has failed to show any movement on proposed new contracts which would see increases in hours, cuts in pay, reduced holidays and cuts in sickness entitlement.

However workers ended their strike on Wednesday 9 July, committed to working during enrolment, and have agreed to re-ballot for further industrial action in the autumn.

• lambethcollegestrike.wordpress.com



Defend our unions!



**By Maria Exall,
Communication
Workers Union**

The bleating from the bourgeois press about disruption on 10 July strike day has given Cameron an excuse to restate the Tories' intention to almost ban strikes in the public sector through changes to balloting laws.

It does not take much for UK employers and their political representatives in the Tory Party to demand further curbs on employees freedom to organise and take action in their own interests at work. It would be easy to forget that we already have the most anti-worker union laws in the richer capitalist countries. Laws put in during the Thatcher union-bashing years of the 1980s and scandalously kept in place dur-

ing the 13 years of a Labour Government.

At present the law is all on the employers side. CWU, RMT, Unite (and other unions) have all had overwhelming votes for strike action struck out by the courts.

Employers are able to get injunctions to stop action for increasing spurious reasons — including a handful of members not getting ballot papers, information on locations (based on management lists) being out of date, or even the union not giving notice of where the non-members are located!

Agency and casual workers have no legal right to take effective action. This fact can be used to undermine existing strikes.

There is no "natural justice" in this area. Our rights and freedoms at work are totally subsumed to the employers' right to run a busi-

ness. Forget any concept of liberty if you are a trade unionist in the UK

Yes, let's have reforms of balloting laws and other rights at work — but ones like this...

1. When the majority of union members vote for industrial action this democratic decision cannot be undermined by the employer, using court injunctions, if error in the administration of the balloting process would have not affected the result.

2. When people work for the same company (whatever their status, permanent, agency, casual) they all have the right to take action on matters which they have an interest in

3. Fairer trade union recognition legislation so that when a majority of employees want collective bargaining through a union this is granted

4. Workers should be granted employment rights from day one of employment — not the two years introduced by Cameron

5. Removal of the hefty fees for Employment Tribunals brought in by the Tories and a strengthening of the equalities legislation watered down by the Coalition Government

6. The legal right for reinstatement for employees who win Employment Tribunals against dismissal

These demands and many others form the basis of Keith Ewing and John Hendy's Manifesto for collective bargaining.

It argues for an extension of current union collective bargaining arrangements and an increase in the collective power of employees at the workplace.

Firefighters organise eight days of strikes

By Darren Bedford

Firefighters in England and Wales began strike action on eight consecutive days in mid-July, in an increasingly acrimonious and protracted battle over pensions.

The FBU has organised strikes from 6 until 8 in the morning and 5 and 7 in the evening from Monday to Thursday 14-17 July, and on Monday 21st. Friday 18th's strikes are 6-8am and then 11pm-1am. On Saturday 19th the strikes are 11am-1pm and 11pm-1am. On Sunday 20th they are 5-7pm. The union also commences action short of a strike from 7pm on 21 July.

The FBU said it called the extended action because the government is ploughing ahead on pensions, despite a recent academic report on firefighter fitness by the University of Bath, which showed that the fitness standard required for firefighting is exactly the level suggested by the FBU — and therefore too high for most people at 60.

The FBU has also pointed to the situation in Northern Ireland, whose government has accepted the arguments on fitness and offered firefighters a retirement age of 55. The union says this demonstrates that the Westminster government's position is not justified by evidence or affordability.

The dispute however is far from over and may escalate further. Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service threatened to lock out firefighters for entire shifts during this week's industrial action, posing serious questions about public safety.

The vindictive move by Bucks chief fire officer Mark Jones would have led to significantly reduced fire cover across the county. However the FBU forced the authority to back down.

