

A paper of Marxist polemic and Marxist unity



# weekly worker



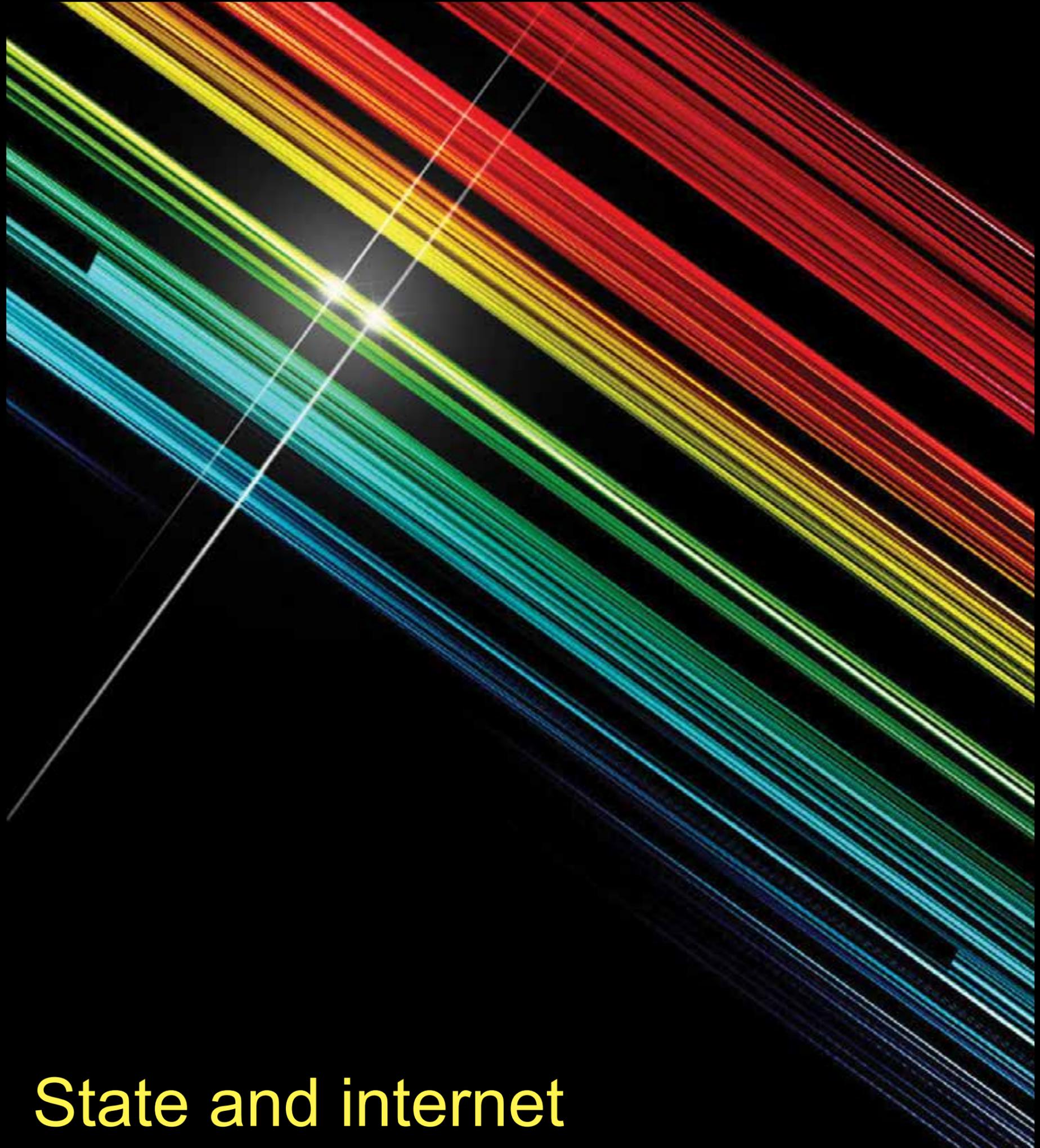
**Democrats divided:  
should the left support  
Bernie Sanders?**

- Left Unity's future
- China UK visit
- South Africa students
- Netanyahu and the mufti

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State and internet

# LETTERS



Letters may have been shortened because of space. Some names may have been changed

## Time-limited

I was relieved to read Eddie Ford's acknowledgment that his "take the power" formulation regarding Syriza was "plain wrong" (Letters, October 22). Urging socialists never to take office under any circumstances is not quite what Eddie was saying, but it's good that any confusion on that score has been cleared up.

Naturally I agree with Eddie that the dangers of assuming office without power are real. My own comrades in *Labour Briefing* these days don't seem too keen to dwell on such questions, so I am glad the *Weekly Worker* is being more courageous here. It's our duty to tell the truth.

Unless we go the whole way, a Corbyn-led Labour government will rapidly become an agent of austerity, no matter what its original intentions may have been. In Britain, the consequences might well be even more tragic than they are now proving in Greece, not least because it's now clear that a military coup might be on the cards. The armed services in this country swear allegiance not to parliament, but to the person of the queen. The Tories, the generals and the intelligence services have warned us that, in their eyes, Jeremy Corbyn is a security threat. They could conceivably declare a state of emergency on those grounds.

Let's proceed, then, with our eyes wide open. "Another world is possible", as John McDonnell beautifully puts it, but we must follow through the logic of that idea. Even in the event of a landslide Labour victory at the polls, it would be insufficient to rely on the British working class to confront the state, dismantle its institutions and translate office into power. There can be no socialism in a single country - our aim must be, to quote Eddie one last time, "a movement for power across the whole continent as a minimum".

So my question is this: when do we start? I would like to know what practical steps are now being planned by *Weekly Worker* comrades to link up across Europe and start making things happen. What about, say, an all-European labour movement conference? What about centenary celebrations of February 1917? I would like to know whether any dates, times or places have been fixed. Is anything planned? If not, why not? I am probably not the only reader to be feeling anxious. We're supposed to be communists. We don't have an unlimited amount of time.

**Chris Knight**  
email

## Steps

Jeremy Corbyn fell into line at the queen's banquet. He questioned the unelected Chinese president on China's dodgy human rights record and then sat down to a dinner with him and the unelected UK monarch, where champagne costing up to £1,400 a bottle was served.

This was one of those occasions where Jezza could have held a press conference and explained that, while benefits are being cut, he would refuse to attend such a lavish dinner. But he put on an ill-fitting suit and basically bowed down to the establishment.

In an earlier letter I said that the election of Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party was a big step in the right direction. However, I have to say I was wrong; it is a big step in the 'same old same old' direction.

**Tony Roberts**  
email

## No Marx

In reply to Tom Munday's letter of October 22, I did not argue that the Labour Party cannot be won over to Marxism (Letters, October 15). Rather, I made it clear that I disagree with those who seek to win Labour over to 'Marxism'. I suggested, instead, that the left should seek to win the Labour Party over to the vision of a

democratic socialist society. I argued that seeking to win Labour over to Marxism was a sectarian and dated project. I am sure there are others who share this view.

I did not criticise Labour Party Marxists for being in the party and fighting to democratise the party. Indeed I support Marxists in the party who seek to do this. You don't have to be a Marxist to support any progressive cause Marxists are fighting for.

What I argue is that Marxism has misled communists into believing that modern capitalism was made possible by the circulation of money - or M-C-M, as Marx called it. It is necessary to point out that all the money and labour in the world would not result in a modern industrial society without the energy content available in fossil fuels. The 19th century, money-centred view on the development of capitalism, which is shared by Marxism, is obsolete from a scientific perspective. This does not mean that Marx's analysis of the circulation process was not brilliant.

As for the question of the democratic rule of the people on the basis of socialism, why call this rule a dictatorship, as Marx did - incorrectly, in my view? There is no such thing as a dictatorship without a dictator and, as Lenin pointed out, this means rule unrestrained by any law. And we all know where this can lead.

Certainly, rightwing critics attempt to dismiss Marx. My theme is that Marxism undermines the struggle for socialism.

**Tony Clark**  
Labour supporter

## Left turn

Left Unity faces a stark choice that will show if it has a political future. It has to decide between making a right turn to embrace the Labour Party or a left turn and build an alliance with Rise - the new party being launched in Scotland. Given the spirit of the 1945 Labour government provided much inspiration for Left Unity, then the impact of the Corbyn movement is obviously pulling LU rightwards into a liquidationist whirlpool.

Jack Conrad was reported in the *Weekly Worker* as saying that Left Unity's prospects "had been negatively affected by the changes in Labour. Instead of joining a left organisation built around left Labour politics, people could now choose the real thing - and were doing so in droves" ('Left Unity and its future', October 22). So far, so good. But this is exactly the problem and the CPGB's answer is to go back to 1920. Jack wants Left Unity to become the Communist Party of Great Britain ("adopt principled Marxist politics") and follow Lenin's advice of seeking affiliation to the Labour Party.

Left Unity was set up as a united front of social democrats (or democratic socialists) and communists - the name is a recognition of this. It became no more than an embryonic version of a new type of party, a militant party of the working class. It was never intended to be a 'broad church' party, like Labour, or a revolutionary 'Stalinist-Trotskyist' party, like the CPGB, Workers Revolutionary Party, Socialist Party or Socialist Workers Party.

Left Unity had a political choice: either adopt the ideology of Labourism or republican socialism; and hence the programme of the social monarchy or the social republic. It was a forgone conclusion that LU would embrace the default position of the left in England, captured in Ken Loach's *Spirit of 45*. In the epoch of New Labour this seemed like common sense. Yet adopting Labourism as glue for this kind of party was always a flawed perspective.

Before dismissing Left Unity, we should recognise that it was, in the face of New Labour politics, a light in the dark night, a hope in a time of despair. Now the sun has come up and nobody will see this candle, when sunglasses seem more appropriate. But it has shown that a social democratic-communist party is possible, not least because it has an openly declared and constitutionally legitimate Communist

Platform. All this is in danger of being blown away unless LU makes a strategic 'left turn'.

Two events have exposed the fundamental flaws at the heart of Left Unity. First the Scottish referendum saw LU hopelessly divided between left unionism and anti-unionism. Adopting the abstention position in the face of a serious confrontation between the British crown led by the Cameron government and backed by the Tories, Liberal Democrats, Labour and Ukip showed something was seriously wrong with LU. Second, the rise of Corbo-Labour has pulled the rug from under Left Unity's feet.

Politics is shifting to the left. It is not simply the election of Corbyn which signals a left turn in the Labour Party. The Tory conference saw Cameron and Osborne adopting 'left' rhetoric. Having killed off the Mili-Blair in the general election, they began stealing the dead man's clothes. The Tories declared themselves the party of working people and promised to deliver a 'living wage'. At a stroke the north-south divide was replaced by a northern powerhouse. Osborne declared his admiration for Chinese state capitalism and invited the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party to take a share in the British nuclear power industry!

Nobody will have any illusions in the Tories' left rhetoric. But, taken with the shift in the Labour Party, it requires Left Unity to make its own left turn. If Left Unity is going to continue and become stronger, it has to make a strategic shift to the left, throwing out the Labour bathwater and keeping the baby. Left Unity has to be rebuilt on a different basis, which will give it a cutting edge with Corbo-republicanism and the next round in the changing relationship between the Scottish and English working class.

This is the perspective which the Republican Socialist Tendency put forward inside Left Unity and was explained in the Republican Socialist general election campaign in Bermondsey. Left Unity must realign itself with Rise in Scotland and support anti-unionism against Labour's left unionism and social monarchism. And against the Tories' 'devolution revolution' we must put forward a programme of democratic revolution. Left Unity members can signal a shift by supporting resolution 69 on LU's response to Corbyn; and the anti-unionist resolution (68) on self-determination for Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

The CPGB are opposed to both and are unfortunately part of the problem, not the solution.

**Steve Freeman**  
LU republican socialist

## Before or after

It seems Roy Wall thinks that the way to combat austerity imposed by the EU troika was for Syriza to implement its own austerity programme upon the working class, which would have been the inevitable consequence of practising a siege economy if Roy's recommended economic policy had been accepted by Syriza (Letters, October 22).

Tsipras and his government were between a rock and a hard place where, as Eddie Ford rightly pointed out, a national solution was not possible. They were outgunned, but Roy thinks they should have gone down with all guns blazing, regardless of the repercussions of all those stray bullets upon fellow workers.

However, Roy then compounds his error by choosing to include some theory, quoting Lenin on Marx, in which Lenin confuses the two separate issues of breaking up the old bureaucratic state machine and how the working class could come to win control of that machine.

Lenin distorts Marx's statements about the need to break up Napoleon's bureaucratic state machine *after* the workers had won power to make it read that Marx was referring to the state generally. This made Marx appear to say that the state should be smashed by the

working class *before* they could win, or *while* they were winning power. Engels made it quite clear that Marx meant 'after' when specifically asked about this passage: "It is simply a question of showing that the *victorious* proletariat must first refashion the old bureaucratic, administratively centralised state power before it can use it for its own purposes" (Letter to Bernstein, January 1 1884).

But why take my word for it? Lenin himself cites Engels talking about what the workers should do after, rather than before, they had won power: "From the very outset the Commune was compelled to recognise that the working class, *once come to power*, could not go on managing with the old state machine; that ... this working class must ... do away with all the old repressive machinery previously used against it itself."

And, just for added measure, Lenin quotes Engels again: "... the state is nothing but a machine for the suppression of one class by another ... and at best an evil inherited by the proletariat *after its victorious struggle for class supremacy*, whose worst sides the victorious proletariat, just like the Commune, cannot avoid having to lop off at once as much as possible" (all italicisation is my emphasis).

This is not nit-picking or some proof-reading correction. Lenin and Roy are reformulating Marx's theory of the state.

**Alan Johnstone**  
email

## War slogans

The Wakefield Socialist History Group's October 17 meeting on the fall of Saigon began with some interesting talks from the speakers named in Alan Stewart's letter (October 22). His letter also refers to a "lively discussion" following the talks but, unfortunately, neglected to say what it was about.

The focus on, and primacy of, guest speakers in left meetings today (with usual rights to reply, often at length) apes bourgeois academia. The purpose of discussions within the workers' movement is to develop a theoretical understanding of the objective truth of world events through the active encouragement of discussion and debate by the chair to test the various positions in public and determine which best reflects reality. The role of speakers is to stimulate the discussion and, once it is underway, to take their turn as equal participants. The outcomes of the discussion then become the focus of any reports, not the initial contributions.

The main contributions from the floor at this discussion came from the *Economic and Philosophic Science Review*. The labelling of post-war Vietnam as 'state capitalist' and an assertion that building a workers' state "would not have been possible" were challenged. The victory of the Viet Cong and the humiliating defeat of US imperialism was a titanic victory that ensured the establishment of a workers' state across the whole of Vietnam. Greater use of capitalist market mechanisms alongside the maintenance of its proletarian dictatorship after the unnecessary liquidation of the Soviet Union in 1989 has helped ensured the survival of the Vietnamese workers' state, albeit with Stalinist revisionism's weaknesses and illusions.

Further discussion was had on the slogan 'Victory to the NLF', which was a correct position to take given that the National Liberation Front, or Viet Cong, were fighting to overthrow capitalism and build a workers' state. This was not the same as arguing for a 'Victory for Iraq' slogan during the Gulf War, as was suggested, because Saddam's Iraq was a bourgeois nationalist state, as is Assad's Syria today. Arguing for the victory of such capitalist states, even those with some anti-imperialist form, is wrong, because it gives illusions that they represent progress and are the way forward. Better to call for a 'defeat for imperialism', because the impact of such defeats makes it easier to fight for revolution at home. Pacifist arguments for 'Stop the war' or 'Bring the

troops home' slogans in order to build the broadest anti-war movement possible, as was argued at the meeting, are a cop-out, because they do not encourage the debate about what is necessary.

**Phil Waincliffe**  
EPSR supporter, Leeds

## Fishy

In her latest attack on dialectics, I was glad to find Rosa Lichtenstein taking time out to praise historical materialism: that is, the application of dialectical thinking to "economics, history and politics" (Letters, October 22). In a world that needs historical and global analysis rather than defensiveness, we can agree that Marxism's few basic guidelines are not beyond supplement and debate. Even a theory like natural selection was substantially incomplete until the 20th century.

I suppose we must continue to disagree over whether change in the atoms of a structure is the only change worth bothering about. For example, Darwin did indeed labour hard to support a theory of qualitative change in a certain kind of mammal (*The descent of man*), but this creature still lacks the structure to fly like a bird or swim like a fish.

**Mike Belbin**  
email

## Opportunity

The delaying or derailing of the Tory plans to cut tax credits represents a moment to stop and reverse all public spending cuts, including those planned for welfare.

It feels strange welcoming decisions by the unelected House of Lords, a body that has no place in a modern democracy. But, in this instance, the end justifies the means. Tax credits have become an essential part of the income of low wage-earners, a means by which those on low wages can make sure their children don't go without essentials. Too many bosses pay poverty wages, and will continue to do so.

If tax credits had been cut, hundreds of thousands of people, despite already struggling to make ends meet, would have been thrown into acute poverty overnight through no fault of their own. It is simply untrue that the introduction of the 'living wage' and increases in personal tax allowance would offset the effects of tax credit cuts - if they did, how would the proposed cuts to tax credits reduce welfare spending by the £4 billion demanded by the chancellor?

During the discussions leading up to the parliamentary votes on the issue, politicians from all the main parties were suggesting there must be 'better' ways to find these cuts. Those of us in the anti-cuts movement have been saying for years that there is no need for any public spending cuts at all. To cut public spending is a political decision made by Tory, Labour, Lib-Dem, Ukip and Green politicians, when there are other ways to deal with the country's economic deficit, which don't hurt the poor and the vulnerable. These alternatives include:

- A 5% wealth tax on the richest 10%, which, alone, would resolve the country's debt.
- Reclaiming the £120 billion per year of unpaid tax that is avoided or evaded.
- Nationalising the banks, building societies and financial institutions, with profits used to maintain and improve our public services.

The defeat by the Lords of the Tories' immediate plans to cut tax credits should be used as an opportunity to reopen the whole debate on whether public spending cuts are necessary or wanted. Anti-austerity parties have been gaining ground across Europe, and we feel that there is no better time than the present to finally nail the myth that workers want to see any cuts at all in their public services or welfare benefits.

**Pete McLaren**  
Rugby Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition

## LEFT UNITY

# No to business as usual

We need to take Labour seriously, argues LU national council member Sarah McDonald

Two short years ago, Left Unity was launched with all the familiar promise of a new party of the left. Having quickly signed up about 2,000 members, it would soon climb to the giddy heights, filling the void on the left of British politics and attracting all those 'ordinary people' who had been turned off by the sectarian old left.

"Doing politics differently" often feels all too familiar. True, LU was different from the Socialist Alliance, Respect, Scottish Socialist Party and Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, in as much as it was not the brainchild of any of the Trot groups (in fact both the Socialist Workers Party and Socialist Party in England and Wales remain outside), but was more inspired by European left parties, such as Syriza (with its origins in the 'official communist' movement) and Podemos.

But there is a groundhog element to all these unity projects in terms of their political method. LU has based itself on the same false premise of mythologising a golden age of the Labour Party that it seeks to recreate (in this case, sparked by Ken Loach's film, *Spirit of 45*), but unlike the aforementioned unity projects, it gives less prominence to terms such as 'working class' or 'socialism' within its daily parlance. Left Unity is in many ways more akin politically to the Eurocommunists of the CPGB in the 1980s. The focus is very often on sectional interests: feminism, LGBTQ rights, etc, as opposed to class politics. It is ironic, then, that LU's existential challenge comes not in the form of an internal split, the ditching of this party project for another, or even the self-righteous tensions between the intersectionalists, but from the Labour Party itself.

So the news that Left Unity has lost 400 members (and as a result its office in Islington) is not entirely unexpected, given developments within Labour. Some of those who are no longer members will simply be people who signed up in 2013 and had not gotten round to cancelling their fiver subs. Many - and, if LU fails to adopt a principled approach to Labour, many more - will leave to join Jeremy Corbyn's party. Several prominent LU members have already done so and there are reports from branches of more peeling off week by week. And can we blame them? LU is facing a real political crisis. With thousands joining Labour on the basis of the same soft-left, Keynesian politics that the revolutionary left likes to espouse when wanting to appear sensible, what is the point of LU? Some of its less canny members actually articulated their opposition to supporting the Corbyn campaign on the grounds that his victory would make the LU project seem pretty pointless.

What members need to ask themselves is, what is the point of Corbynism outside the Labour Party? What Left Unity needs to do, if it is to have any political credibility, is to take the Labour Party - and, more specifically, the question of affiliation - seriously. We are not saying that this will be easy. We must actively campaign against the bans that prohibit leftwing organisations from affiliating: for example, clause II (5a) of the Labour Party rule book:

Political organisations not affiliated or associated under a national agreement with the party, having their own programme, principles and policy, or distinctive and



Not waving, but drowning (Bob Trotman's *Installation*)

separate propaganda, or possessing branches in the constituencies, or engaged in the promotion of parliamentary or local government candidates, or having allegiance to any political organisation situated abroad, shall be ineligible for affiliation to the party.

Despite this, we in the Communist Platform advocate that Left Unity adopt a *strategy* precisely of affiliation - not simply of members signing up to join as individuals. LU also needs to do so with a vision beyond simply supporting Corbyn (which it ought to do, but critically). It needs to attempt to affiliate with a view to transforming the Labour Party from something that seeks to manage capitalism (including through unworkable Keynesian 'solutions') into a permanent united front of the working class. A force that can act as an instrument of socialism in Britain and across Europe.

We have already witnessed moves against Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell from the right within the Labour Party, not to mention the onslaught from the media. We have seen a certain accommodation on the part of the new leadership to some of this nonsense. Corbyn's focus is on the 2020 general election. Ours is not. Between now and then we can expect him to tailor his politics to win over sections of the media, avoid splits in the Parliamentary Labour Party, etc. The job of the left within the Labour Party - hopefully one day including Left Unity - will be to fight for principled politics and the interests of the working class. It is not our job to foster illusions in a left Labour government that could so easily be forced to administer capitalist austerity.

### Curveball

There can be no doubt that politics in this country is changing. If the Corbyn victory, or mass protests in defence of migrants was not enough to convince you, then watching the floundering spasms of Resisting Socialism - oops, Socialist Resistance - ought to do the trick. If there is a populist movement, you can guarantee our comrades in SR are quick to run after it - be it greenism, Syriza or Scottish nationalism, they'll be there with bells on. So the Corbyn movement flummoxed them (as it did many on the left). In a way, that is understandable, given the lack of any genuine mass movement on the left for 30 years - and any serious attempt to understand the nature of the Labour Party. The current state of

affairs threw the left a curveball.

We have moved on from the situation where it was difficult to get a motion in support of Corbyn passed a few months ago in some LU branches - SR comrades were among those opposing such motions. Then, the line was that the Corbyn movement was dangerous because it fosters illusions in the Labour Party and is a distraction from Left Unity. Now SR's Terry Conway has submitted an amendment to a motion from Haringey branch calling for affiliation and singing the praises of Momentum. The change in policy is welcome, but where is the analysis, the self-criticism?

The left approach of tailing movements simply because they exist is all too familiar. Take the Labour Party. Large sections of the left had, until the Corbyn campaign really got going, considered it a thoroughly bourgeois party that was not worth engaging with - the most notorious example being SPEW, of course. Yet suddenly Labour's left wing is in the leadership. Likewise there was the notion that Syriza could take office in Greece and implement the manifesto on which it was elected. In the event, it unsurprisingly capitulated to the demands of the institutions. (What was the other option? Military 'state socialism'?) These are just two very recent examples of unexplained, untheorised about-turns that the cadre of SR, the SWP, SPEW, etc are forced to defend. Surely this can only breed stupidity - or cynicism.

With this in mind, we ask the question, where now for Left Unity? It is vital that we get the politics right. We will argue that if LU is to become a worthwhile project, it must take the Labour Party seriously, in terms of both how we understand it and how we engage with it. Therefore we are proposing that the first day of Left Unity's November 21-22 conference is dedicated solely to this topic. We will argue that LU needs to take *itself* seriously.

Currently its constitution is a work of madness. It is crucial that the second day's agenda should remain devoted to the LU constitution, no matter how much comrades want to pass their worthy motions on other topics. Business as usual will lead to LU's withering away, and rightly so.

These are different times. Left Unity's moment of crisis is borne of something positive: not egos, petty splits, TERF wars or a myriad of potential farces, but a left revival within the Labour Party. How we respond will be the acid test ●

## ACTION

### CPGB podcasts

CPGB podcasts

Every Monday we upload a podcast commenting on the current political situation. In addition, the site features voice files of public meetings and other events: <http://cpgb.org.uk/home/podcasts>.

### London Communist Forum

**Sunday November 1, 5pm:** 'Two decades after apartheid: the struggle for working class independence'. Speaker: South African socialist writer Terry Bell.

Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Road, London WC1.

Organised by CPGB: [www.cpgb.org.uk](http://www.cpgb.org.uk).

### Radical Anthropology Group

An introduction to human origins

**Tuesday November 3, 6.45pm:** 'The origins and evolution of Homo sapiens'. Speaker: Chris Stringer. Daryll Forde seminar room, Anthropology Building, 14 Taverton Street (off Gordon Square), London WC1 (nearest tube: Euston). Talks are free, all welcome.

Organised by Radical Anthropology Group: [radicalanthropologygroup.org](http://radicalanthropologygroup.org).

### Against the arms trade

**Saturday October 31, 11:15am to 3.30pm:** Discussion and workshops, St Cuthbert's Parish Church, 5 Lothian Road, Edinburgh EH1. Vegetarian lunch included.

Organised by Campaign Against the Arms Trade: [www.caat.org.uk](http://www.caat.org.uk).

### March for Palestine

**Saturday October 31, 11am:** Protest against Israeli attacks on Palestine. Assemble Ayresome Gardens, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, for march to rally outside Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, Grange Road.

Organised by Teesside Palestine Solidarity Campaign: [www.palestinecampaign.org](http://www.palestinecampaign.org).

### Right to strike

**Saturday October 31, 12 noon:** National campaign meeting, The Wellington, 37 Bennetts Hill, Birmingham B2.

Organised by Right to Strike campaign: <http://righttostrike.co.uk>.

### Bread and Roses week

**Saturday October 31 to Thursday November 5:** Week of events and talks hosted by leftwing bookshop, Friends Meeting House, Clarendon Street, Nottingham and Five Leaves Bookshop, 14a Long Row, Nottingham. Includes discussions on: protest in Palestine, George Orwell, Woody Guthrie, Corbyn's election and many more.

Organised by Five Leaves Bookshop: [www.fiveleavesbookshop.co.uk](http://www.fiveleavesbookshop.co.uk).

### Protect the right to strike

**Monday November 2, 1pm:** Lobby of parliaments in opposition to anti-union legislation, followed by rally, Central Hall, Storey's Gate, London SW1.

Organised by Trades Union Congress:

[www.tuc.org.uk/events/lobby-and-rally-protect-right-strike](http://www.tuc.org.uk/events/lobby-and-rally-protect-right-strike).

### United we stand

**Monday November 2 to Saturday November 14, 7.30pm:** New play, CLF Art Cafe, 133 Rye Lane, London SE15. The story of the 1972 builders' strike and the Shrewsbury 24.

Organised by Townsend Productions: [www.townsendproductions.org.uk](http://www.townsendproductions.org.uk).

### After the TUC lobby

**Tuesday November 3, 7pm, Manchester:** Meeting, Britons Protection, 50 Great Bridgewater Street, Manchester M1. 'How can we fight the Tories' anti-union laws?'

**Tuesday November 3, 7.30pm, Liverpool:** Meeting, Casa pub, 29 Hope Street, Liverpool L1.

Organised by National Shop Stewards Network: <http://shopstewards.net>.

### Poet and revolutionary

**Tuesday November 3, 7pm:** Book launch, Keats House, 10 Keats Grove, Hampstead, London NW3. Biography of Percy Shelley by playwright and activist Jacqueline Mulhallen.

Hosted by Pluto Press: [www.facebook.com/PlutoPress](http://www.facebook.com/PlutoPress).

### No to Trident

**Wednesday November 4, 1pm:** Lobby of parliament, London SW1.

Organised by Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: [www.cnduk.org](http://www.cnduk.org).

### For free education

**Wednesday November 4, 12 noon:** Student demo. Assemble Malet Street, London WC1.

Organised by National Campaign against Fees and Cuts: <http://anticuts.com>.

### Greece: frontline of austerity

**Monday November 9, 7.15pm:** Public meeting, Room 9, Partick Burgh Hall, 9 Burgh Hall Street, Glasgow G11. Speaker: Savvas Michael Matsas (Workers Revolutionary Party, Greece).

Organised by Greece Solidarity Glasgow and Left Unity Glasgow South:

[www.facebook.com/greecesolidarityglasgow](http://www.facebook.com/greecesolidarityglasgow).

### Clara Zetkin

**Wednesday November 11, 6.30pm:** Launch of the latest issue of *Revolutionary History* devoted to Clara Zetkin. 1 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1.

Organised by Revolutionary History: [www.revolutionary-history.co.uk](http://www.revolutionary-history.co.uk).

### Health through peace

**Friday November 13 to Saturday November 14, 10am to 4pm:** Meeting, Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London, NW1. Discussing the impact of war on healthcare.

Organised by Medact: [www.medact.org](http://www.medact.org).

### CPGB wills

Remember the CPGB and keep the struggle going. Put our party's name and address, together with the amount you wish to leave, in your will. If you need further help, do not hesitate to contact us.

**LEFT UNITY****Policies of other organisations**

Within the limits of principle everyone in Left Unity must have the right to put forward their own politics, writes Tina Becker

In the run-up to Left Unity's national conference, it is worth taking a closer look at motion 17 from Leeds North and East. Thanks to the well-meaning, but impractical, "priorities ballot", which asks all branches to nominate the five motions they would most like to be discussed, this "witch-hunters' charter"<sup>1</sup> might not make it to the floor on November 21-22.

Nevertheless, the sectarian ideas within it need to be challenged and thoroughly defeated if the left ever wants to be able to convince the majority of the working class that real socialism equates not to Stalinism (and witch-hunts), but transparency, openness and democracy.

The motion is misleadingly entitled 'Code of conduct', but it is far removed from what, for example, the Communist Platform is putting forward and which aims to deal with real disputes in LU. The Leeds motion, on the other hand, is designed to create problems where they really do not exist - apart from in the minds of the motion's main sponsor, Matthew Caygill, and a few other people in his LU branch.

LU Leeds North and East was borne out of a sectarian split orchestrated by Caygill and his co-thinker, Nick Jones, in 2013. They found it "intolerable" to continue working alongside a handful of local members from Workers Power and split the Leeds branch in two. Utterly irresponsible, seeing as the city has less than 50 LU members - with the majority being merely paper members, of course, as in all other branches.

There has been no attempt to produce evidence of any wrongdoing by the WP comrades. Presumably because there is no such evidence - just a general feeling that "we don't like it" when members of an organised group turn up in a branch and start to behave, well, like members of an organised group: ie, arguing for the same things in a more or less coherent manner. We had the same non-complaint in Sheffield and we hear similar stories from other branches. But Leeds is the only branch where the right has gone so far as to organise a split on purely political grounds.

Caygill and co have since rejected various 'mediation' attempts by the LU leadership to reunite the two branches. Unfortunately, the LU executive has now accepted a stalemate of sorts (with the naive idea that the branches will be redefined geographically and new members allocated accordingly).<sup>2</sup> Probably feeling sufficiently bolstered by this recent cave-in by the leadership, Caygill now wants to put motion 17 to conference (see below). It is very similar to one he presented to a recent Leeds aggregate where it was not discussed on the insistence of the chairs of the day, national secretary Kate Hudson and membership officer Simon Hardy.

If accepted by conference, it could be used against *any* LU member who is also a member of another organisation. In reality, of course, Caygill does not have the rightwing Socialist Resistance or even Nick Wrack's semi-detached Independent Socialist Network in mind. The motion is mainly aimed at his local adversaries in Workers Power and annoying revolutionaries like the Communist Platform. Both failed, to his dismay, to uncritically cheer Syriza's victory in the Greek elections and instead pointed out the dangers of taking office and they did not call on LU to opportunistically copy the dubious 'expanding circle' method



**Needs to avoid witch-hunting**

used by the rightward-galloping, strangely apolitical Podemos in Spain. Needless to say, their status as much-celebrated 'sister parties' of Left Unity has now quietly been dropped. But Caygill and his ilk have not given up so easily.

While begrudgingly admitting that Left Unity's "constitution does not exclude party members from membership of other organisations", the movers of the motion complain that "other models of organisation (eg, what is usually called 'democratic centralism') at times conflict with the 'one member, one vote' democratic mandate of our broad socialist party".

Matthew Caygill and co want to "help" members of those other

organisations "to participate honestly in Left Unity" by establishing a "code of conduct, separate from, but supported by the safe spaces policy". As an aside: what a brilliant attempt to bring the much-derided 'safe spaces' policy in through the back door, when it has already been voted down twice at LU conference. It is not even down for debate at the forthcoming conference, as Felicity Dowling apparently forgot to find a seconder for her very strange motions on the topic.

The Leeds North and East motion demands that, "when engaging in Left Unity activity (in branches, in public and in open social media), members do not promote the policies and practices of another political organisation or

party or seek to represent their policies as the policies of Left Unity. Left Unity meetings, stalls and activities are not to be mistaken for vehicles for the promotion of the politics or materials of other political parties or organisations."

What contradictory nonsense. On the one hand, he says his motion wants to aid "honesty" in Left Unity, but on the other, he demands that LU members are forbidden to 'honestly' circulate the materials of any other organisations they are involved in. Presumably that does not include materials distributed by the "members of various social movements and civil society organisations", whose LU membership "we welcome" (whoever those people might be).

Those with a minority viewpoint have the absolute right to "promote" their own politics and principles, while engaged in LU activity "in public, in branches, in the social media". As long as it does not disrupt an agreed action, what is the problem with handing out the *Weekly Worker* at a branch meeting or displaying *Workers Power* on a stall? (It goes without saying that they must not be presented as official LU publications). Surely, this is part and parcel of a key aspect of a democratic organisation: that the minority is allowed to fight to become the majority.

Having said that, of course the *Weekly Worker* and *Workers Power* does not only contain material that is critical of the official positions of Left Unity. Quite the opposite: the majority of articles deal with matters on which LU does not even *have* a position. So, what if somebody comes up to a LU stall and wants to talk, for example, about Corbynomics. Should we not be allowed to refer to the various, wide-ranging articles that have appeared in the *Weekly Worker*? Especially as Left Unity does not even have a regular publication.

Caygill and his local co-thinkers constitute a small minority in LU themselves, of course. They are to the

right of most of the leadership and the members, but have not managed to cohere around a proper programme (though some of them are members of the Podemos Tendency). They are united mainly in their hatred of the organised left, as previously constituted. In truth, this motion is aimed at protecting the likes of themselves from the much better organised and coherent left within LU - by weakening and disempowering the revolutionaries. If we on the right can't manage to organise in LU, we'd better try and stop the left from organising.

Of course, this sectarian method must fail. If not in the run-up to or on the floor of conference, then on the ground. Rather tellingly, the motion does not propose any sanctions against those who might break the proposed 'rules' on dual membership. That is because they would be unenforceable - without changing the whole nature of Left Unity (there's a clue in the name).

The Communist Platform will, of course, continue to circulate its materials at Left Unity meetings. And, no, we "do not seek" to present our "policies as the policies of Left Unity". We presume that comrades in Workers Power do not do so either.

And, unlike members of Socialist Resistance, for example, we always "declare these connections publicly when making representation to and for Left Unity" and "participate in open tendencies inside our party": ie, the Communist Platform. In fact, there tend to be plenty of raised eyebrows when we state our CP membership before making interventions, when we vote together at conference or branch meetings and then openly report about such matters in the *Weekly Worker*.

Oh wait, that is a bit *too much* honesty for comrade Caygill, who has called our paper "an instrument for the bully"<sup>3</sup> and even managed to convince the LU executive committee to pass a motion criticising the *Weekly Worker* for a "personalised attack" on him (our crime was to openly report the shenanigans in Leeds and his role within it)<sup>4</sup>.

Caygill is quite well known to our organisation. For years, he was something of a - loosely connected - fellow traveller, attending many of our events. In 2006 he spoke at our Communist University North<sup>5</sup>, in 2004 he supported the appeal against our exclusion from the organising group of the European Social Forum,<sup>6</sup> an exclusion initiated by Socialist Action and the Socialist Workers Party in response to our open reportage of their backroom deals in the *Weekly Worker*. And in 2002 he supported the CPGB's call for a Socialist Alliance paper<sup>7</sup> - which was, of course, based on our "dual membership" of the SA and CPGB.

But he is no Tony Benn. Sadly, in every new organisation where we have encountered him, he has moved further to the right ●

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**Notes**

1. See 'Anatomy of a conference' *Weekly Worker* October 15.
2. For more background on this sorry affair, see 'Sectarian anti-sectarianism' *Weekly Worker* July 23 2015.
3. See <http://communistplatform.org.uk/candidates-give-their-answers-to-our-7-questions/#matthew-caygill-national-council>.
4. 'Politics without the personal is non-politics' *Weekly Worker* September 10 2015.
5. See 'Communist University North' *Weekly Worker* May 3 2006.
6. See 'Urgent appeal' *Weekly Worker* July 7 2004.
7. 'Call for SA paper' *Weekly Worker* May 1 2002.

**Motion 17. Code of conduct**

**1.** Left Unity welcomes the participation of members of other organisations drawn from across the political spectrum on the left. In particular we welcome the membership of members of various social movements and civil society organisations, who want to take their place in a party of the broad left.

**2.** The Left Unity constitution specifies a 'one member, one vote' basis for participation in the party, in contrast to a coalition of different parties and groups. However, the constitution does not exclude party members from membership of other organisations.

**3.** Nonetheless, problems can arise where members hold 'dual membership' with other political organisations or parties with aims and directives that go beyond or diverge from those of Left Unity. Other models of organisation (eg, what is usually called 'democratic centralism') at times conflict with the 'one member, one vote' democratic mandate of our broad socialist party. Left Unity does not

want to proscribe such members, but wants to see all members abide by the spirit as well as the letter of our constitution.

**4.** To help members of other organisations to participate honestly in Left Unity we shall establish a code of conduct, separate from, but supported by, the safe spaces policy. It is agreed that, when engaging in Left Unity activity (in branches, in public and in open social media), members do not promote the policies and practices of another political organisation or party or seek to represent their policies as the policies of Left Unity. Left Unity meetings, stalls and activities are not to be mistaken for vehicles for the promotion of the politics or materials of other political parties or organisations.

**5.** Those holding membership of other political organisations and parties are asked to declare these connections publicly when making representation to and for Left Unity. One way to respect the democratic norms of Left Unity is to participate in open tendencies inside our party ●

POLITICS

# Royal pomp and Hollandisation

President Xi's visit highlights what seems to be a changing strategic orientation of British imperialism, says Eddie Ford

Naturally, the British establishment laid out the reddest of red carpets for Xi Jinping during his October 20-24 visit to the UK. Xi, of course, is president of China, general secretary of the Communist Party of China, chairman of the central military commission and "paramount leader" - quite a job description.

His was the first official state visit from China in a decade and follows on from George Osborne's high-profile jaunt to Beijing last month. Xi attended lavish banquets at the Guildhall and Buckingham Palace (and was also taken by David Cameron for fish and chips and a pint at a pub near Chequers). Going slightly overboard, the media have talked incessantly about the new "golden era" of cooperation between China and the UK.

Prior to the visit, there was some alarm in official circles that Jeremy Corbyn might rather spoil the show by violating dress code and - perhaps worse - bringing up "contentious issues": ie, 'human rights'. Presumably this acts as yet more evidence for his extremist, far-left tendencies - leading to the mischievous headline in *The Sunday Telegraph*: "Jeremy Corbyn should 'know how to behave' when he meets China's president" (October 18). The article quotes Liu Xiaoming, China's ambassador to Britain, as saying that Xi was "not here for a debate" on human rights. After all, Liu added, we all know that China and the UK "differ very much" because they are at a "different stage of development" - in his country, "we care more about rights to better life, to better job, to better housing" than all that stuff about democracy. The foreign office had already made clear regarding the visit that 'human rights' were "not one of the top priorities" for the government: rather the Tory "prosperity agenda" was "further up the list" of areas on which it was concentrating.<sup>1</sup>

In the end though, both Xi and the British establishment breathed a collective sigh of relief when Corbyn conformed to sartorial protocol at the royal banquet<sup>2</sup> and - just like David Cameron and George Osborne before him - raised the contentious issue in a "private" 30-minute meeting with Xi. Afterwards, a Labour Party spokesperson said the two had "cordial and constructive" discussions on the "history of links between the UK, the Labour Party and China" - particularly the "huge contribution and sacrifice of the Chinese people in the struggle against fascism" during World War II.

William Hague risibly declared in 2011, when he was still foreign secretary, that it was "not in the British character", or national interest, to have a "foreign policy without a conscience". What astounding hypocrisy. One easy example will suffice. Who is Britain's closest Arab ally in the Middle East? No, it is not a trick question - *Saudi Arabia*, of course. A tyrannical theocracy that will not even allow women to drive and is about to behead and crucify (in that order) Ali Mohammed Baqir al-Nimr, arrested three years ago when he was 17, because - in the words of the court judgement - he "encouraged pro-democracy protests [using] a BlackBerry". So far we have had a near deafening silence from the British government about this case and many others.

## Silk Road

So forget all the guff about human rights. The Xi visit is about one thing only - *business*. China now represents the UK's sixth-biggest export market,



George Osborne: main architect

taking 3.6% of its goods and services. In a joint statement, Cameron and Xi said they were committed to creating a "global, comprehensive strategic partnership for the 21st century" and exploiting to the full China's 'one belt, one road' policy that aims to turn the old Silk Road into a modern trade route across Asia to the Middle East and Europe. Cameron also hailed the "up to £40 billion"-worth of trade and investment deals.

Many such deals are in the pipeline - too many to be listed here. More controversially, we have Hinkley Point C nuclear power station. Left in the lurch two years ago when Centrica pulled out, the £24.5 billion project run by EDF will now be part-funded by the China National Nuclear Corporation and the China General Nuclear Power Group.

Then there is the "pitch book" handed out by Osborne last month in China: a catalogue of £24 billion-worth of British projects desperately seeking foreign investors. Projects for sale include a £200 million orbital road in Leeds, a £325 million slice of the Alderley science park in Cheshire, and a £400 million gas storage site. High Speed 2 was also offered, even though it has not yet got the green light from parliament. The UK's TV production industry have struck deals worth more than £225 million, including BBC Worldwide's co-production deal with the Shanghai Media Group to make the sequel to the massive 2007 hit, *Earth*. Other deals include co-production agreements to make a Chinese version of the popular BBC series, *Coast*, and Chinese online video company LeTV has picked up the broadcast rights to *Poldark* - while this year's *Sherlock* Christmas special will transfer to cinemas across China.

Beijing's hopes of the renminbi becoming an international currency received a boost during the trip when China's central bank made its first ever sale of debt - a yuan-denominated sovereign bond issue - on London's markets last week, drawing orders of more than 30 billion yuan (£3 billion).<sup>3</sup> The move is mutually beneficial, as it assists China in its ambitions for the yuan, whilst consolidating London's position as a global financial centre. At the same time, the Chicago Mercantile Exchange announced that its London trading centre would offer offshore yuan futures, allowing financiers to trade and hedge on movements in China's currency (a practice that was previously conducted through Hong

Kong only). In the opinion of one senior analyst from Standard Chartered, we are now seeing the "internationalisation of Chinese renminbi growing at a pretty brisk pace" - he even speculated the "end of US dominance".

Nor can we forget the nonsense about the 'northern powerhouse', Osborne's pet project. Xi has announced the beginning of direct flights from Manchester to Beijing. The Beijing Construction Engineering Group is a 20% joint equity partner in Manchester's 'Airport City', working with former Manchester United stars Gary Neville and Ryan Giggs to build a £200 million scheme including offices, bars, restaurants, apartments and a five-star hotel. Yet like almost everything to do with the amorphous 'northern powerhouse', there is a lot of talk but little in the way of action. According to

the *FT*, just £4 million of new cash has actually been pledged as a result of the Xi visit.

## Intermediary?

Frankly, you cannot blame anyone for being extremely sceptical about the media hype concerning the new "golden era".

Then again, having said that, there is something significant going on here - as highlighted by the nuclear deal and, perhaps even more importantly, the fact that the UK government recently broke ranks with its European and US allies and signed up to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. This is a Chinese initiative launched last year and regarded by many as a potential *rival* to the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.<sup>4</sup> That is certainly how the US views it.

## Star apologetics

On October 21 the 'official communist' *Morning Star* published an article by Jenny Clegg entitled 'When Jeremy Corbyn meets Xi Jinping'. In it we are informed that "building a constructive relationship with China is vital for the future of our economy", requiring "pragmatism as well as idealism". After all, China is "near to overtaking" the US as the world's largest economy and will grow at two to three times the US rate in "coming years".

True, Xi's crackdown on dissidents is "clearly unpalatable for Labour" - but judgements should be "balanced". Providing us with a litany of wonders, the article recounts how China has "lifted over 728 million people out of poverty since 1981, contributing over 70% of the millennium development 2015 goal of halving world poverty". What is more, China "does not drop bombs on other people". Unlike other nuclear states, China is committed to "no first use" and supports a "nuclear weapons convention" - just like Jeremy. Think of the amazing things we could do together - "Why not open discussion on a Britain-China mutual nuclear weapons non-targeting agreement?"

The article also seeks to vindicate Corbynomics - and left

Keynesianism in general - in the policies adopted by the CPC. You see, in 2009 China pumped £600 billion "directly into its economy" - producing "double-digit growth" for the following three years, and so "preventing the world financial crisis and recession from turning into a world depression". All thanks to China - "If this isn't an example of 'people's QE,' what is?" As for Corbyn's much touted plans for a national investment bank, he "might draw on the experience" of the Chinese government - which "controls all the country's major banks" and has "invested heavily", especially in "infrastructure to promote growth".

In fact, why stop there? China's "state-owned enterprises experimenting in employee share ownership" should provide "exciting opportunities" for Beijing to "exchange ideas" with John McDonnell and his call for "modern alternative public, cooperative, worker-controlled and genuinely mutual forms of ownership".

A lot of hype, but, as per usual, no mention that China has embraced the market with a vengeance and is now an integral part of the world *capitalist* system - where state and private capital are inextricably interweaved ●

Hence its displeasure with the British government: it is loudly complaining that the decision - part of Britain's "constant accommodation" of China - was taken after "no consultation" with the US.

There are various explanations for this shift. One is the fairly straightforward reason that Osborne is clearly looking forward to becoming prime minister and is meanwhile banking on China. This is quite a gamble, as the US is still the dominant world power, economically and - crucially - *diplomatically and militarily*, and all the signs are that it will remain so for very many years to come. China cannot replace it for the foreseeable future. From the Chinese point of view, its capitalist class and state capitalist bureaucracy is using London (or, rather, the City) as a financial base from which to invest around the world.

Noting this strategic reorientation, a recent article in the *Financial Times* (October 23) describes it as another example of the "Hollandisation" of Britain - meaning the gradual abandonment of the pursuit of power, as the UK spends less on defence and reduces its role on the international stage - something that increasingly worries the US. Remember, however, that Holland used to be the world *hegemon* in the 17th century, with its east Asian empire and control over the Cape sea route - it eclipsed Portuguese dominance over the spice trade with the East Indies, and as a result became super-rich. Holland itself underwent a process of rapid industrialisation. Luxury goods were exported to other European markets. But after 1730 it lost its position as world hegemon, with the rise of France and in particular Britain. Meanwhile, capitalists in Holland increasingly turned away from local manufacturing to speculation and overseas investments. Amsterdam became the banking capital of Europe. However, the 1780-84 Anglo-Dutch war saw the country defeated and to all intents and purposes reduced to a British dependency.

Britain has undergone the same sort of process since the late 19th century. From 1945 it was certainly reduced to a US dependency, albeit as a junior partner in the new post-World War II order. Banking long ago eclipsed industry and with the 1986 big bang the City of London became a key, if not the premier, financial centre of global capital - its only rival being New York. The retraction of the UK's global position can be seen in the steady decline of its armed forces, now a pathetic rump compared with its former glory days. Attempts to meet Nato's 2% spending target are just smoke-and-mirrors accounting.

Hence the possible change in strategic orientation. Britain seems to be seriously tempted by the prospect of swapping its position as loyal number two to the US for something more of an *intermediary* between a rising China and US imperialism - obviously existing within the entirely US-dominated world order, but playing the particular role of reaching out to China, the second largest economic power in the world, through the medium of the City ●

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## Notes

1. *Financial Times* October 23.
2. Even if his "suit was rather too large and his tie askew", disapprovingly noted *The Daily Telegraph* (October 21).
3. The distinction between the terms 'renminbi' and 'yuan' is similar to that between 'sterling' and 'pound'.
4. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian\\_Infrastructure\\_Investment\\_Bank](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_Infrastructure_Investment_Bank).

## TALKTALK



Stella wind: spying program

# State and internet

The hacking of TalkTalk has reminded us of the risks and compromises associated with the web, writes Yasmine Mather

On Thursday October 22 a hacker managed to bring down the website of the mobile/internet provider, TalkTalk and the company started informing its four million customers that some of their personal details (including bank accounts and credit cards) may have been accessed. A criminal investigation was launched and, according to the company's CEO, a ransom was demanded. It is claimed that this was the work of a 15-year-old from Northern Ireland.

So how did the attack happen? And had the company failed to detect the severity of the initial attack on its website, on October 21? By all accounts its website came under a DDOS (distributed denial of service) attack on that day. DDOS attacks happen when the bandwidth of a webserver or a public-facing application software server is flooded by requests from a number of servers or individual users. Commercial web-servers use a variety of technologies and scripts (computer codes), all constantly responding to customers' and viewers' online requests. When a DDOS attack takes place, the traffic caused by the volume of hacker requests creates such a bottleneck that legitimate customers/viewers are denied service. In other words, the website or application server is so busy that its resources, such as memory and bandwidth, cannot cope with legitimate requests and the site appears to be down.

This is different from other forms of computer intrusion, when the attacker hides their activities in order

to collect sensitive information: for example, snooping software used to establish long-term connectivity to a database or scientific/financial computer code. DDOS attacks are highly visible and so are a method favoured by cyberactivists, who often want to advertise their presence.

Originally, experts contacted by the *Financial Times* claimed the DDOS attack was "a distraction to enact a more specific data breach". According to Rick Fergusson of Trend Micro, quoted in the *FT*, "It's like setting a fire in the front yard, while coming in at the back door".<sup>1</sup> Apparently, such hackers are not after publicity: rather they want to access data held in what should be a secure database, where all the data should be encrypted (unreadable unless you have the key to the encryption) and where strict firewall rules apply, so that only servers or APIs (application program interfaces) with solid authentication and secure, non-public-facing internet protocol (IP) addresses can access the database.

So how did this one individual bring down the website of a major mobile/internet provider? He, like most hackers, would not have owned infrastructure big enough to do so, and most probably used a 'botnet', made up of zombie computers infected by a Trojan virus, allowing these compromised systems to be controlled by the attacker logging in remotely. This collection of zombies is then used to create the high traffic flow necessary to create a DDOS attack.

In comparison with company

espionage or state hacking, this is an insignificant attack. However, the fact that it threatened the personal accounts of four million customers meant the media have paid far more attention to this incident than to the Stuxnet or state-on-state hackings.

Before dealing with those incidents let us review how the website or app works from a user's point of view. We all use browsers - and, increasingly, mobile and tablet applications - where we enter details of credit or debit cards, bank accounts, and so on. This data should not be kept by the browser, app server or the API. It should travel through the server and go to the provider's main database.

In accordance with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard, most financial companies, banks and insurance companies do not hold this data for longer than a few seconds, passing it with authentication to a safer data server or vault, which is in a private network or intranet (a network whose IPs are not broadcast in the way web and app servers are and protected behind an internet firewall, which is supposed to stop suspicious and illegitimate traffic).

Typically the webserver might keep some record (logs) of the transaction beyond the few seconds it is passing the data on. However, any data kept in such logs must comply with both PCI and data protection regulations: for example, masking 12 of the 16 numbers of a credit card entered by a customer; any other information should be encrypted. Instead of keeping a full address, only

some characters should be kept for monitoring and reconciliation of data between various sources.

According to the same *Financial Times* article, it is still unclear whether TalkTalk's database had been encrypted and what protections were put in place.

## Internet of things

The potential for abuse of the data held on computers and servers is endless. Yet capital is under constant pressure to keep personal information about us - advertising and marketing have entered a new era of personalised campaigns. Campaigns that are directed at patterns of behaviour: recent purchases, and so on. In the last few years we have seen how information regarding past online purchases or enquiries pops up on unrelated web pages when we are sending email, viewing social media or even reading the latest news.

Although some of this information is out of date and irrelevant (if I booked a flight to New York last week, it is unlikely I want to buy a similar flight today), the fact that servers from one company passed this information to Google means my travel plans have been shared. Of course, most companies are now looking at a more intelligent use of this data, so that instead of sending me irrelevant adverts for the same flight, a profile of my behaviour is kept - how many journeys I make, what clothes I buy online, who my friends are on social media, what my social status is. This allows company X to send me slightly more relevant adverts.

However, there are many ways this data can be abused - not just by companies and criminals, but also by the state. Those who follow news about the 'internet of things' tell us that it will manage the intersection of gathering data, and its usage. Billions of sensors, apps, mobile devices and computers will gather information, although this data is not worth very much unless there is an infrastructure in place to analyse it in real time (instantaneously).

This is particularly significant when you take into account the number of web users. The year 2008 was significant because the number of connected devices rose above the number of people on our planet when it approached seven billion. In 2015 that figure is 7.6 billion items, with the most popular projection for 2020 hitting 50 billion connected devices (and each device could have many intelligent and internet-connected parts/ sensors).

The 'internet of things' revolves around constant machine-to-machine communication, in real time. It uses cloud computing, networks and virtual networks of data-gathering sensors; it is mobile and uses instantaneous connection; and they say it is going to make everything 'smart'. Smart heating, smart ports, smart cities ... Of course, it becomes a more serious issue if instead of a phone company losing our personal details, a computer network controlling a smart bridge, which is supposed to identify its own structural faults, is hacked, putting lives at risk.

The concept of a 'smart bridge' was prompted by the collapse of a structure

in Minnesota in 2007, killing many people, because the steel plates used were inadequate to handle the bridge's load. In response to this, 'smart cement' - equipped with sensors to monitor stresses, cracks and warpages - used in the structure of bridges became a real project. These sensors connect to a computer and the internet connects the computer to the world. The same technology can be used on railways, roads, buildings... indeed any structure.

If there is ice on the bridge or road, the same sensors in the concrete will detect it and communicate the information via the wireless internet to a satellite, which then informs the GPS (global positioning system) device in your car. Once your car knows there is a hazard ahead, it can slow down (if it is auto-piloted) or inform the driver to do so. So the internet is not just about the exchange of information: increasingly it is playing a significant role in every aspect of our lives. Rather than just browsers and apps, sensor-to-machine and machine-to-machine communication will become part of daily life, involving the conversion of information into action. Sensors on the bridge connect to machines in the car: we turn information into action.

When we hand over data to a company, most people realise there is a value exchange involved. The company gets to learn more about us for possible future sales, but in return they are able to deliver our shopping, let us know if there is a problem with delivery or keep us up to date with promotions and special offers. We are constantly told this is to our advantage and our data is safe. Of course, there are some data collection guidelines that companies and public bodies must abide by. However, it is a different ball game when it comes to 'things' collecting data.

For businesses, governments and consumers alike the internet of things brings with it a great deal to look forward to: better healthcare through remote sensors, and better ways of targeting customers. However, there are concerns that, once machines start monitoring both us and the environment we operate in, we are handing over a lot of data without perhaps realising it and, despite the long list of watchdogs and regulators, there is growing concern about how data is collected: our personal details, spending patterns and social media interaction (what is called our 'internet footprint') can be used or abused.

No doubt smart energy meters, advertised as a great way of reducing energy bills, have their benefits. However, not only the police in your own country, but secret agents from Russia, North Korea or - dare I say it? - Iran can potentially invade the energy company's internet link and at any time know where you are, when you will get home and how warm you want your house to be.

In London or New York they will tell you that the danger occurs when that data starts crossing state boundaries: different countries might fail to adhere to the same security and privacy standards applied in the European Union or United States. Even in terms of its own interests capitalism is not using the existing data obtained from sensors very efficiently. The pursuit of immediate benefit (in the cases of most companies, increased revenue) often takes priority, but there can be no doubt that the connection between sensors, servers and applications will impact upon ever more aspects of our lives. The question is, who will control the data, how will it be used and who will benefit from these technological advances?

## The cloud

These days most CEOs might tell you that their company is in 'the cloud'. But if you asked them how it works or even what it actually is, few would

know. So what is 'the cloud' and why is it important?

Cloud-based applications are the key to using data gathered by sensors and systems. The internet of things will not function without cloud-based applications to interpret and transmit the data coming from all these sensors. The cloud is what enables the apps to work for you any time, anywhere. It is what allows you to access Facebook on your mobile phone. In simple terms, cloud computing means storing and accessing data and programs over the internet instead of on your computer's hard drive or the server in your company's building.

When companies talk of the cloud they usually mean choosing to implement 'software as a service' (SaaS), where the business subscribes to an application it accesses over the internet. There is also 'platform as a service' (PaaS), where a business can create its own custom applications for use by all in the company, not forgetting the mighty 'infrastructure as a service' (IaaS), where players like Amazon, Microsoft, Google and Rackspace provide a backbone of servers that can be 'rented out' by other companies (for example, Netflix is a customer of Amazon's cloud services rather than running its own servers). These companies use huge data-gathering data sets which are so complex that traditional data processing applications are inadequate. Challenges include analysis, capture, data curation, search, sharing, storage, transfer, visualisation - and, of course, information privacy.

All this is referred to as 'big data'. The term often refers simply to the use of predictive analytics, or certain advanced methods to extract value from data, and seldom to a particular size or data set. Accuracy in big data may lead to more confident decision-making and better decisions can mean greater operational efficiency, cost reduction and reduced risk.

'Big data' usually includes datasets with sizes beyond the ability of commonly used software tools to capture, curate, manage and process data within a tolerable elapsed time. Analysis of datasets can find new correlations, to "spot business trends, prevent diseases, combat crime and so on".<sup>2</sup> Scientists, business executives, practitioners of media and advertising and governments alike regularly meet difficulties with large datasets in areas including internet search, finance and business informatics. And there are certainly limitations in e-science for meteorologists, physicists, environmentalists and many others.

The growth in the size of datasets has in part arisen because they are increasingly gathered by cheap and numerous information-sensing mobile devices: aerial (remote sensing), software logs, cameras, microphones, radio-frequency identification readers and wireless sensor networks. The world's technological per-capita capacity to store information has roughly doubled every 40 months since the 1980s; the challenge for large enterprises is determining who should own big data initiatives that straddle the entire organisation. All this will have to rely on new software which is constantly evolving and becoming more automated.

## Privacy

Last year, employees of a software company in Sweden implanted chips in their wrists, which included a pin code used to activate the company photocopier. Undergoing minor surgery instead of just remembering a four-digit pin is a pretty daft idea - you would have to be quite a tech enthusiast to want to do it. After all, we know how often such pins can be changed ...

But, as *The Guardian* reporter pointed out, "this news story

wasn't just about privacy and new technologies, and how 'we'll all soon be doing it'. This story was about power: who has it, who doesn't, how it is used. And the internet of things, too, is about power".<sup>3</sup>

Most of the 'things' in the 'internet of things' are focused on supply chains and on machine and system performance, not on consumers. If we are looking at a world where in less than five years time, 100 billion devices are connected to private networks or to the internet, the data they collect and deploy, the way this data is manipulated by complex algorithms, how systems interpret and use this data will affect everything we do, how economies function, how states operate and maybe how warfare will be waged.

On one end of the scale we have sensor networks, proprietary and open-source protocols and standards, and the competition of IT giants like Apple, Google, Cisco, Oracle, SAP and GE. The idea that social media and the internet will guarantee freedom or help political activism is naive and based on limited understanding of these corporations.

As in the case of robots, new hardware, software and platforms shooting up around the internet of things have the potential to do good, but the way they are used will depend on who controls the internet and who controls the root servers. The internet of things will be part of an unequal society: markets will dominate and revenue will decide how it is used. The internet of things promoted by major companies is aimed at increasing revenue, gathering data for long-term profit. Its goal is to have a full profile of everything we do, to reduce the time we spend searching and thus allowing us to quickly identify commodities. Time and time again we will choose to sacrifice our own privacy for the sake of convenience or the myth of bargains. At the end of the day, we are complicit in much of the data-gathering performed on us.

In addition to being faced with pages of legal terms and conditions, where opting out means not buying the airline ticket, the service or commodity you want, US researchers found that individuals accept online and physical tracking by businesses because they believe that if they refuse it will happen anyway:

... people feel they cannot do anything to seriously manage their personal information the way they want. Moreover, they feel they would face significant social and economic penalties if they were to opt out of all the services of a modern economy that rely on an exchange of content for data. So they have slid into resignation.<sup>4</sup>

## Social media

In January 2010 Facebook announced plans to build its own datacentres, beginning with a facility in Prineville, Oregon. It currently leases space in different datacentres in the US - typically using between 2.25 and 6 megawatts of power capacity and between 10,000 and 35,000 square feet of space.

Earlier this year, Facebook was talking with six major media companies about a deal allowing it publish their content directly on FB users' social media pages: in other words to avoid the link-clicking we all do when a 'friend' shares an item with us. So, as the internet gets busier and speed becomes more important, the no-wait links of major media outlets will enjoy an advantage over the 'alternative' of social media.

Uber, the world's largest taxi company, owns no vehicles; Facebook, the world's most popular social medium, owns no content (although

now it wants to host content from other media); Alibaba, the world's most valuable retailer, has no inventory and Airbnb, the world's largest provider of accommodation, owns no real estate.

Some would say that the online travel agents who dominate travel sales but own no airlines, no hotels, etc will also have no concerns about passenger security, plane maintenance, airport fees and so on. Since they make profits on fixed capital owned by others, one could say they are true examples of parasitic capital, and to a certain extent they are growing.

As I wrote earlier, we should have limited expectations of social media and other forms of mass communication playing a long-term role in terms of mobilisation or organisation. As soon as such media become a threat, switching them off will take milliseconds. But it is worth noting the example of the well-known Anonymous, a loose association of computer 'hacktivists' who support Wikileaks and the Occupy movement. In February 2015, following the attack on *Charlie Hebdo's* offices in Paris, Anonymous brought down Islamic State's main website. They were also responsible for temporarily closing down the websites of the Church of Scientology, the Brazilian government and sponsors of the 2014 football World Cup, as well as government websites in the United States, Israel, Tunisia, and Uganda. They have targeted copyright protection agencies and major corporations including MasterCard, Visa, PayPal, and Sony.

## States

Most people using Facebook to post status updates, chat with friends and share photos would never imagine they could be the target of government spying.

Yet earlier this week Facebook announced it will alert users if it believes governments and their agencies - whether the US National Security Agency or the People's Liberation Army in China - are actively spying on their profiles: "We will notify you if we believe your account has been targeted or compromised by an attacker suspected of working on behalf of a nation state," said Alex Stamos, chief security officer. "We do this because

these types of attack tend to be more advanced and dangerous than others, and we strongly encourage affected people to take the actions necessary to secure all their online accounts."<sup>5</sup>

In some respect what was predicted in some science fiction novels has become reality, and we have already witnessed cyberwarfare, albeit limited, in the use of the Stuxnet worm and similar endeavours. The unmanned war planes and drones used extensively in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan rely on internet communications and automated weapon release ... If a hacker diverts the route or destination of one of these drones, the consequences will be far worse than the current situation, where mistakes by automated measuring devices and misinterpretation of intelligence gathered by satellites causes 'collateral damage' (civilians mistaken for, say, jihadists).

States are therefore obsessed with cybersecurity, especially at a time when we know (thanks to Wikileaks) that the NSA gathers as much information about the USA's European 'allies' as it does about 'rogue states'. In the current situation a number of states have the capability of infiltrating and if necessary attacking other countries' websites and internet infrastructure. Worldwide there are only 13 root DNS servers - the address books of the internet - which could each shut down a big chunk of the web.

The traditional military and nuclear industry safety rule is to make sure sensitive servers and controllers are not connected to the internet. However, as the Stuxnet attack on Iran's Natanz nuclear installation showed, that in itself is no protection - the virus which infected and compromised computers at Iran's nuclear plants was introduced on a USB stick! ●

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## Notes

1. *Financial Times* October 23 2015.
2. [www.relevategroup.com/bigdata](http://www.relevategroup.com/bigdata).
3. *The Guardian* August 14 2015.
4. [www.upenn.edu/pennnews/news/penn-americans-give-personal-data-discounts-because-they-believe-marketers-will-get-it-anyway](http://www.upenn.edu/pennnews/news/penn-americans-give-personal-data-discounts-because-they-believe-marketers-will-get-it-anyway).
5. [www.facebook.com/notes/facebook-security/notifications-for-targeted-attacks/10153092994615766](https://www.facebook.com/notes/facebook-security/notifications-for-targeted-attacks/10153092994615766).

## Fighting fund

# Time and work

Like many of our supporters, Lcomrade OG has provided us with some advice as well as a donation (£20 added to her subscription).

She writes: "Before you start thinking about more pages and colour, would it not be a better idea to build up a bit of surplus against the times when the fund is a little short of its target?" Well, actually, when we went full colour on our front and back pages, that had the effect of drawing in more donations. True, we put up the fighting fund target, but comrades responded positively because they liked what they saw.

The trouble with the idea of a surplus is that we never seem to have very much of it! This month is a bit of an exception with that very large donation at the start of the month, but the money raised is always put to good use pretty quickly. And when we talk about extra pages we're not thinking about going for a 16-pager every week right now. But that's not really a question of money - it's more to do with the extra regular

time and work it would require.

Anyway, OG's donation helped make up the total of £342 we received this week. Hers was the only cheque, but there were three PayPal contributions from among our 3,294 online readers - thank you, TB (£30), PM and JW (£5 each) - plus eight standing order contributions, varying from JM's £10 to JT's £75 and PM's £100. Meanwhile, comrade TB, an overseas reader on a visit to the UK, handed a nice, crisp £10 to our editor.

So the total for October now stands at £2,736, with two days to go - yes, we are actually going to exceed our £1,750 target by a cool thousand! Look out for extra supplements and colour pages pretty soon!

Our pre-Christmas issue might be a good time for the next one, come to think of it ●

Robbie Rix

Fill in a standing order form (back page), donate via our website, or send cheques, payable to *Weekly Worker*

**SOUTH AFRICA****Students force ANC retreat**

The climbdown on university fees has left the SACP general secretary looking thoroughly compromised, reports **Peter Manson**

**A** week of militant student protests has culminated in an astonishing retreat for the African National Congress government and, even more pertinently, the further exposure of the reactionary role of the ANC's main cheerleader, the South African Communist Party.

The students were up in arms about the proposed 10.6% rise in university tuition fees for next year, even though the rate of inflation is just under 5%. It goes without saying that such a system, in conjunction with student loans, results in even greater obstacles than it does in Britain - if you are among the millions who live in a shack, you are hardly going to be encouraged to take up further education if it means you are going to be saddled with a huge debt.

In view of this, the main slogan of the protests was "Fees must fall" - ie, they must be scrapped altogether. So what was the response of Blade Nzimande, the minister of higher education and training, who just happens to be general secretary of the South African Communist Party? Well, he proposed a cap of 6% on the 2016 fees increase - only just a little above inflation!

Moreover, as students mobilised in their tens of thousands, there were several incidents of police brutality, including the firing of stun grenades. But the protests seemed to draw in all factions among students - everyone from the ANC's own student group to those of opposition parties: not just the left-nationalist Economic Freedom Fighters, but the rightwing Democratic Alliance, a direct descendant of the apartheid National Party.

It was the EFF which led the opposition to the increase within parliament on October 21, when ANC finance minister Nhlanhla Nene delivered his medium-term budget speech: there was to be no new money for universities, he said, and in view of the current economic difficulties student protests were "unconstructive". The EFF's noisy protests led to several of its MPs being ejected.

Nzimande himself was shouted down by protestors outside parliament when he tried to explain why student demands were "unrealistic", but on October 23 tens of thousands gathered outside the presidential offices in Pretoria. And, faced with such a united opposition to the fees hike, president Jacob Zuma announced that the

proposals would be withdrawn.

Remarkably, the ANC issued a statement praising the protestors to high heaven:

Today, young people of South Africa once again made history. Emulating the courageous and fearless generation of 1976, they stood as a united force and presented to government their unequivocal demands for accessible, quality education ... We therefore celebrate the victory of the disciplined and gallant campaign waged by students.<sup>1</sup>

Zuma said he would try to ensure that arrested students would not be charged and pledged that "transformation" - ie, steps towards real racial equality - would be speeded up.

This left the ministry for higher education - and Nzimande himself - carrying the can. The SACP general secretary, together by implication with the party he heads, had been a target of criticism from the ANC Youth League for several weeks and now leading ANCYL figures were openly calling for his resignation. ANCYL president Collen Maine said:

We need an indication from him as a minister whether he can clearly render issues of higher education or not. If he cannot he must say that to the president and then the president must assist students of this country by placing somebody who will do that.

**Fees and 'the poor'**

The attacks on Nzimande focussed on the revelation that in 2013 his Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Funding of Universities had found that "the amount of government funding is not sufficient to meet the needs of the public university system". The committee concluded that "Government should increase the funding for higher education, to be more in line with international levels

of expenditure." Therefore, a study should be undertaken to "determine the actual cost of introducing fee-free university education for poor people" and for this purpose there should be "a working definition of poor people in South Africa".

But Nzimande had refused to release the study, because the policy's implementation was turned down by the government due to "inadequate revenue from the national fiscus". He did not want to publicise the fact that the treasury would not fund it and in an attempt to justify the decision not to release the review a ministry spokesperson stated: "It is a public document, but due to the nature of the report, we decided not to make it public ..."

Meanwhile, the SACP itself continued to back the idea of "fee-free university education for poor people" - as opposed to the demand embraced by the movement as a whole for free further education for all. For example, this gem comes from a contributor to the Young Communist League's email discussion list (no doubt from someone whose age might stretch the definition of 'young' somewhat):

The notion for universal free education is a wholesale approach which ... will perpetuate class inequality, as the descendants of those that accumulated under the racial economic dispensation will also benefit unduly from it.

... the inherent class struggle should converge to come up with a proper higher education funding framework and model to ensure that the children of the aforementioned groups and other well-off households are charged, and charged correctly, for their education, whilst free education is dispensed for designated groups.

So much for the idea of services like education being funded collectively, by society as a whole, in the interests of all. Does that apply to the future socialist society too? After all, the SACP never ceases reassuring us that what we are witnessing under the leadership of the ANC is the "national democratic revolution", which, as everyone knows, is "the most direct route to socialism in South Africa".

In response to statements from the like of the EFF in favour of "free, quality higher education", Nzimande's line has been to dishonestly argue that the Freedom Charter, adopted by the ANC in its struggle against apartheid in 1955, does not call for free higher education. Well, OK, but it does call for what amounts to the same thing, albeit using slightly different phrasing:

Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children; higher education and

technical training shall be opened to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit.<sup>2</sup>

In a speech delivered on October 15, in which he also condemned "student violence", Nzimande proudly boasted:

The proportion of African students in universities has increased dramatically from 49% in 1995 and is estimated to 72% at present, and shows steady and considerable progress since 1994 towards something closer to the demographics of the country.<sup>3</sup>

And, following the climbdown, Nzimande claimed on October 25: "At one level we are victims of our own successes as the ANC government, because the university sector has really grown. It has doubled since 1994 and it's now majority black and majority women."

**Shift to left**

However, he also came out with the new, publicly expressed SACP line, representing a slight shift to the left in the wake of the protests:

... we should look at all these proposals being made to get more money, whether you use the wealth tax, or you raise the skills levies, but it's very clear that money will also have to be gotten from the private sector, because they are the principal beneficiaries from the graduates that we produce from our universities.<sup>4</sup>

But Nzimande was coming under fire not only from students, but from the likes of mainstream commentator Eusebius McKaiser, who on October 19 had complained of the "absence of effective leadership in the tertiary education sector".<sup>5</sup> This provoked an absurd response from the SACP in Gauteng province, whose leadership issued a statement the following day:

Mr McKaiser's venom and vicious slander of comrade Blade borders on liberal neo-fascism ... the liberal neo-fascist lumpenism advocated by McKaiser, definitely leaning on the shoulders of monopoly capital, seeks to drive a wedge between student leaders and their revolutionary government.<sup>6</sup>

Earlier, Gauteng provincial secretary Jacob Mamabolo had actually condemned the student demonstration of October 21:

The attempt to besiege parliament yesterday is a deeply worrying, alien phenomenon. It corresponds only to the frenzied wishes of elements that are irreconcilably hostile to the SACP, its general secretary, comrade Nzimande, and the working class

struggle for socialism.<sup>7</sup>

The party's national leadership was more restrained, however, pointing to "the deep-rooted, historical, structural and systemic nature of the fundamental problem - which goes far beyond the mandate of a single government unit, the department of higher education and training, and comrade Blade Nzimande as the minister".

Its statement continued:

... the SACP will streamline the issue of student funding and the goal of free, quality higher education, technical and vocation training in its financial sector campaign. This campaign will now include a series of actions to the doorsteps of capital to fund post-school education and training for the children of the workers and the poor ...

The SACP will, in addition, push for a wealth tax in this regard. Capital privately controls the largest stake of the wealth produced in our country and is the single largest consumer of our education and skills. Capital's consumption of education and skills is by far disproportionate compared to its contribution - which is found wanting. This is a key issue for us as the SACP.<sup>8</sup>

Despite an ANC statement standing by its minister of higher education, the SACP correctly insists that attacks on Nzimande are emanating from inside the alliance just as much as from outside. The party condemns such attacks as "sectionalism", but in this regard it is quite capable of giving as good as it gets. The current factionalism is connected to the jockeying for position ahead of the ANC's 2017 elective conference, which will choose the likely replacement for Zuma, who will be 77 when his current term as president is complete in 2019.

It was the SACP that was central to the campaign to force Thabo Mbeki to step down in 2008 and get Zuma elected in his place, but it remains to be seen who the party will back as Zuma's successor. No doubt the recipient of SACP support will continue Zuma's 'good work' of "deepening and consolidating the national democratic revolution" and advancing the cause of "socialism in South Africa" ●

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**Notes**

1. ANC press statement, October 23.
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3. www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2015/10/15/Minister-Nzimande-denounces-campus-racism%E2%80%9A-tells-students-violence-is-unAfrican.
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**Protesting students target SACP leader**



## Two decades after apartheid The struggle for working class independence

### London Communist Forum

Despite the split in the unions, the grip of the South African Communist Party remains strong.

Cape Town-based socialist writer **Terry Bell** examines the state of the working class movement.

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# HOLOCAUST

## Palestinians provoked final solution?

Tony Greenstein debunks Netanyahu's claims about the grand mufti of Jerusalem

Addressing the 37th World Zionist Organisation Congress in Jerusalem on October 20, Israeli prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu made the remarkable claim that the idea for the 'final solution' came from the grand mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini.

Apparently Hitler was talked into carrying out the extermination of Europe's Jews by the leader of the Palestinian Arabs at their meeting on the November 28 1941. Hitler had previously only been in favour of expelling the Jews from Europe (the Madagascar plan). It is a claim that will be grist to the mill for holocaust deniers.

When I first heard Netanyahu's statement, I immediately thought of a similar claim made by pastor John Hagee, the president of Christians United for Israel. Hagee, a virulent anti-Semite, had stated in a sermon that Hitler was a "hunter" sent by God to drive the Jews to Israel.<sup>1</sup> But now it would appear that Hitler was in fact an agent of the mufti, not God!

This would, of course, entail a massive change in our understanding of the holocaust - the industrial murder of between five and six million Jews between 1941 and 1945. Gone at a stroke are those debates between historians over intentionalism vs functionalism. Questions such as 'Did the Nazis intend from the start to kill the Jews or was it a product of a bureaucratic fascist state, wedded to anti-Semitism and engaged in an imperialist war?' have been rendered irrelevant at a stroke.

Netanyahu claimed in his speech that the Mufti "had a central role in fomenting the final solution":

He flew to Berlin. Hitler didn't want to exterminate the Jews at the time: he wanted to expel the Jews. And Haj Amin al-Husseini went to Hitler and said, "If you expel them, they'll all come here." "So what should I do with them?" he asked. He said, "Burn them."

Netanyahu's thesis is very convenient, since it explains both the current Palestinian uprising, the resistance to Israel's army of occupation and the settlers, and the historic opposition of the Palestinians to Zionism and Israel. It is not the lack of even the most basic democratic control over their daily lives or a myriad of other impositions and humiliations that motivates Palestinian opposition. Good gracious, no. Everything is explicable by one simple fact: the Arabs are psychopathic Jew-haters, anti-Semitic to the core. It is in their blood and a part of their psyche. This is why they refuse to accept Israel as a Jewish state and their youth, carrying on the tradition, insist on stabbing anyone who is remotely Jewish.

Like all colonisers, Israel's settler Jewish population sees itself as the victim of blind, irrational hatred on the part of the indigenous population. This was as true of the Amerindian and Aboriginal populations as it was of South African blacks. Settler violence was normative, part of a legitimate state violence that was not even seen as violent. It was law and order, and those who offered resistance were criminals. Opposition to the state is seen as abnormal, rabid and the action of terrorists. In Israel even peaceful opposition - for example, the activities of the non-violent International Solidarity Movement, whose member, Rachel Corrie, was killed by an Israeli military bulldozer when trying to prevent a house demolition - is characterised as 'terrorism'. Hunger strikes by Palestinian prisoners are also a form of terrorism. Security minister Gilad Erdan, when proposing the force-



Grand mufti and Hitler meet in 1941

feeding of prisoners, told the Knesset that hunger strikes are "a new type of suicide terrorist attack, through which they will threaten the state of Israel".<sup>2</sup>

Norman Finkelstein's explanation for Netanyahu's outburst - that he is "a certifiable maniac"<sup>3</sup> - does not explain the background to or the purpose of his speech. Netanyahu has simply taken the long-standing campaign to paint the mufti as a major war criminal, second only to Hitler himself, to its logical conclusion, with the Palestinian Arabs motivated by nothing more than an irrational anti-Semitic hatred.

Peter Novick has suggested that claims of Palestinian complicity in the extermination of the Jews was a defensive strategy, "a pre-emptive response to the Palestinian complaint that, if Israel was recompensed for the holocaust, it was unjust that Palestinian Muslims should pick up the bill for the crimes of European Christians". The editors of the *Encyclopaedia of the holocaust* gave him a starring role.<sup>4</sup> The article on the mufti was more than twice as long as the articles on Goebbels and Göring, longer than the articles on Himmler and Heydrich combined, longer than the article on Eichmann and only just exceeded in length by the entry for Hitler.<sup>5</sup>

### Mufti's role

The only evidence for the mufti's involvement in the 'final solution' is hearsay. It came from a member of Eichmann's *Judenkommando*, SS-Hauptsturmführer Dieter Wisliceny. Wisliceny had a bloody record, having presided over the first countrywide deportation of Jews, from Slovakia, to the extermination camps from March to October 1942, and then the liquidation of the Greek and Hungarian Jewish communities. He was hanged in Bratislava in 1948 despite the attempts of Rudolf Kasztner, former leader of Hungarian Zionism and later at the centre of what became known in Israel as the Kasztner trial, to save him.

At the Nuremberg trials, Wisliceny alleged that the mufti had actively encouraged the extermination of European Jews, and that he had met with Eichmann in his office to discuss the implementation of the "solution of the Jewish question in Europe". The allegation is dismissed by virtually all holocaust historians. Even Yehuda Bauer, the most loyal of all Zionist holocaust historians (he was based at the Yad Vashem holocaust propaganda museum in Jerusalem), stated:

After the war, they caught [Wisliceny] and tried him at Nuremberg, where he tried to eschew all responsibility, saying: 'It wasn't Hitler, it wasn't me: it was the mufti' ... It's clear that

his account is untrue.<sup>6</sup>

An affidavit from Kasztner stated that Wisliceny told him that he had overheard Husseini say he had visited Auschwitz in Eichmann's company. Eichmann denied this at his trial in Jerusalem in 1961, stating that he had only been introduced to al-Husseini during an official reception. Nonetheless the Eichmann court judges accepted Wisliceny's testimony and found as proven that al-Husseini had aimed to implement the 'final solution'. Clearly this was a political decision, as there was no evidentiary basis for it. Hannah Arendt, who was covering the trial for the *New Yorker*, concluded that the evidence for an Eichmann-al-Husseini connection was based on rumour and unfounded.<sup>7</sup>

Idith Zertal, one of Israel's revisionist historians, describes how Zionist ideologues have endeavoured to superimpose the holocaust in Europe onto the conflict with the Palestinians. The result of this forced marriage has been to reinforce the siege mentality of Israel's Jewish settlers and to create "a false sense of the imminent danger of mass destruction". In the process it has also distorted the image of the holocaust, "dwarfing the magnitude of the atrocities committed by the Nazis, trivialising the unique agony of the victims and the survivors, and utterly demonising the Arabs and their leaders".<sup>8</sup>

This transference of the holocaust from Europe to Israel was one of the key aims of David Ben-Gurion and Israel's leaders when they staged the Eichmann trial in 1961. This was done in two ways: first, by making links between the Arab and Nazi leaders - for example, the presence of Nazi German scientists in the Arab countries; and, second, by reference to the mufti of Jerusalem's connections with the Nazi regime and Eichmann in particular. The mufti was "depicted as a prominent designer of the final solution and a major Nazi criminal. The deeds of Eichmann and other Nazi criminals were rarely mentioned without addition of the Arab-Nazi dimension."<sup>9</sup>

Yad Vashem has played a full part in this. As Israeli historian Tom Segev has noted, the only image of a Palestinian in Yad Vashem is "a photo featured prominently on a wall depicting the mufti sieg heiling a group of Nazi stormtroopers". Its purpose to ensure that "the visitor is left to conclude that there is much in common between the Nazis' plan to destroy the Jews and the Arabs' enmity to Israel".<sup>10</sup>

The mufti was a minor war criminal and like many nationalist leaders - for example, Subhas Chandra Bose of the Indian National Army - saw the enemy of their colonial enemy as their friend. So obviously the idea that the mufti

instigated the 'final solution' is absurd. If anyone was a major war criminal, it was Walter Rauff, who invented the mobile gas trucks - first used in the T4 'Euthanasia' programme and then the Chelmno extermination camp. Rauff had the blood of 100,000 Jews on his hands and tried, when the Nazis occupied Tunisia in 1943, to build an extermination camp at the city of Kairouan to murder its Jews. This did not prevent him becoming an Israeli agent after the war. Israel later helped him to escape to South America.<sup>11</sup>

The Mufti was responsible for recruiting three Muslim Waffen SS divisions in Bosnia - Kama, Handschar and Skandenberg - but they were primarily concerned with fighting the Serb Chetniks. They committed many atrocities against the Serbs, but had no involvement in the Jewish deportations, bar handing over 210 Jews from Kosova to the SS. Indeed such was their attitude to the Jewish question that they were sent for retraining to France, where some of them tried to desert to the resistance (!) - the only example of a rebellion within the ranks of the SS.<sup>12</sup>

What Netanyahu did not mention was the three declarations issued by senior Muslim clerics in Bosnia in opposition to Croat-Nazi measures against the Jews and Serbs in Mostar, Banja Luka and Sarajevo in 1941. Nor was he interested in the fact that Muslim Albania was the only Nazi-occupied country in Europe where the number of Jews at the end (2,000) was greater than the number at the beginning (200). Not one Jew was deported from Albania under Nazi occupation.

### Collaborator

An examination of the transcript of the mufti's meeting with Hitler, on November 28 1941, contains no mention of him urging Hitler to exterminate the Jews. He was only informed of the final solution in the summer of 1943 by Himmler.<sup>13</sup>

The mufti was concerned that Germany make a declaration that it supported the independence of Syria, Iraq and Palestine. Hitler refused to do this, because it would be seen as a threat to the French empire. In reality he had no intention of supporting Arab independence and upsetting Mussolini. If Germany had conquered the Arab countries, it would simply have supplanted Britain and France as the imperialist power.

By the time the mufti met with Hitler, the 'final solution' had already begun, following the invasion of Russia (Operation Barbarossa) on June 22 1941. The Einsatzgruppen and Einsatzkommando killing squads, which operated in the rear of the Wehrmacht in Byelorussia and Ukraine,

murdered some one million Jews in mass shootings. Over 33,000 Jews had been murdered just in Babi Yar, outside Kiev, by the end of September 1941.

The irony though is that it was the Zionists who were responsible for Haj al Amin Husseini's elevation. British high commissioner and devoted Zionist, Sir Herbert Samuel, who had been instrumental in lobbying for the Balfour declaration, appointed him grand mufti, despite him having come fourth in the election to the post in 1921.<sup>14</sup> The Palestinians considered the mufti a collaborator with the British after the failure of the Arab revolt of 1936-39. At no stage had the Palestinians elected Haj al-Amin Husseini. He had been imposed on them by the British and the Zionists.

And the Nazis needed no encouragement to commit genocide. In December 1941, Goebbels wrote in his diaries:

With regard to the Jewish question, the Führer is determined to make a clean sweep. He prophesied that if they brought about another world war, they would experience their annihilation. This was no empty talk. The world war is here. The annihilation of the Jews must be the necessary consequence.<sup>15</sup>

In *Mein Kampf* Hitler had claimed that the "sacrifice of millions at the front" in World War I would have been prevented if "12 or 15 thousand of these Hebrew corrupters of the people had been held under poison gas". And in his 'Prophecy' speech on January 30 1939, he spoke explicitly about annihilating the Jewish race:

Today I will once more be a prophet. If the international Jewish financiers inside and outside Europe should again succeed in plunging the nations into a world war, the result will not be the Bolshevisation of the earth and thus the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race throughout Europe.<sup>16</sup>

It is no surprise that Zionism, a Jewish movement that welcomed the Nazis to power and then collaborated with them, should seek to rewrite the history of the holocaust.<sup>17</sup>

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**USA**

Meeting and greeting

# Democrats divided

There should be no support for Bernie Sanders, argues **Jim Creegan**

**F**ive contenders appeared onstage in Las Vegas on October 13 for the first of six scheduled Democratic presidential candidates' debates. The eyes of the 15-million television audience, however, were fixed on only two - Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders.

The other three candidates - Martin O'Malley, former governor of Maryland; Jim Webb former senator from Virginia; and Lincoln Chafee, former governor of Rhode Island (the last two have since quit the race) - could probably not even be identified by most rank-and-file Democrats. And before the campaign season got underway, the same could be said of the senator from Vermont, Bernie Sanders, widely dismissed as a fringe candidate. Yet, with his impassioned denunciations of growing income inequality and the capture of government by a handful of billionaires, Sanders had until recently been outpolling Hillary Clinton in the two key early primary states of Iowa and New Hampshire.

In addition, the former secretary of state, who had been dubbed the 'inevitable' nominee by much of the media, is dogged by an ongoing FBI investigation into her alleged inclusion of classified documents in her personal emails during her tenure as president Barack Obama's foreign-policy chief - a violation of 'national security' laws. She is also the subject of a continuing Republican-engineered Congressional probe over the killing of the US ambassador to Libya during a 2012 attack by Islamic militants on the American embassy in Benghazi.

The media commentariat were near unanimous in their praise for Clinton's agility in the debate, concluding that she had come out on top and succeeded in re-establishing her position as the party's frontrunner. Subsequent

polls of Democratic voters seem to confirm their verdict. Clinton's resulting bounce in popularity no doubt weighed heavily in the decision of vice-president Joe Biden not to enter the race as a back-up candidate of the party establishment, should Clinton's difficulties have deepened. Clinton also stood up well under an eight-hour grilling before the Benghazi committee of the House of Representatives, which one prominent Republican admitted had been created by the 'Grand Old Party' majority for the purpose of discrediting her.

Yet Sanders too turned in a solid performance in the debate. While losing some ground to Clinton in New Hampshire and Iowa, he has by no means been eliminated as a major factor in the contest. Even if his chances of becoming the Democratic standard-bearer in 2016 remain close to zero, Sanders' presence has gone a long way toward shaping the politics of the campaign.

For example, a subject came up during the debate that has almost never been broached in recent presidential politics: the worthiness of American-style capitalism. Queried by the moderator about his self-characterisation as a socialist, Sanders invoked the strong welfare-state policies of Denmark as an alternative to this country's *capitalisme sauvage*. While Clinton then leapt to the defence of the free-enterprise spirit that created the American middle class, even she hastened to add that one purpose of government was "to save capitalism from itself". Meanwhile, Martin O'Malley has billed himself as a slightly less 'extreme' version of his Vermont rival.

Sanders has also forced Clinton to talk a little more out of the left side of her mouth. Over the summer,

she unveiled an economic plan that emphasised reducing inequality; a higher minimum wage, employee profit-sharing, paid family leave for childbirth, pre-kindergarten for all children, student debt relief and tougher regulations on big banks are among her proposals. These are in the same vein as measures advocated by Sanders - only more 'moderate' by several degrees. She also seeks to burnish her 'progressive' credentials by emphasising what she claims is her strong record on women's rights. She even tried to out-left Sanders in the debate, criticising his less than wholehearted support of gun control legislation - a highly charged issue in the wake of several recent mass shootings. (Sanders represents a rural state, in which restrictions on firearms are unpopular.)

## Transparent

Yet Clinton's attempts to rebrand herself as a 'progressive' are belied by her past. Citizens of what Gore Vidal christened the 'United States of Amnesia' may indeed have forgotten Hillary's stint in the Rose Law Firm, which represents some of the leading corporations in Arkansas, when her husband was governor of that state during the 1980s; or that, representing utility companies on that firm's behalf, she argued in court against a bill intended to reduce the rates they charged customers on the grounds that such legislation represented a 'public taking': ie, infringement of the company's property rights by the government. Her winning arguments in that case became a template for future corporate attempts to resist government price controls.

The public may also forget that Clinton sat, during the same period, on the board of directors of the Arkansas-

based Wal-Mart corporation, the country's largest employer, infamous for its fanatical resistance to trade unionisation, or that she went out of her way to cultivate Rupert Murdoch during her two terms as senator from New York.

But liberally inclined voters will have a slightly harder time forgetting Hillary's role during the eight years (1993-2001) in which her husband occupied the White House. She hardly functioned at that time as a dutiful presidential wife, but rather as a central player on Bill's political team, and cannot avoid responsibility for its actions, much as she may now try to wax feminist by asserting her right to be judged independently of Bill. Then, the Clintons presided over the birth of the Democratic Leadership Council, a grouping within the party formed for the purpose of moving it to the right by getting it to adopt positions less friendly to unions and minorities and more accommodating to big business. The DLC was the pioneer of the 'third way' politics, from which Tony Blair later took inspiration.

Nor can she wipe out the memory of the concrete actions of the Clinton administration in furtherance of this rightward course: abolition of welfare payments for poor mothers with children; stiffer prison sentences for a whole range of offences; and the expanded use of the death penalty. On the economic front, the Clinton administration abrogated the depression-era Glass-Steagall Act, which restricted speculative activity on the part of commercial banks, and pulled out all stops to push through Congress the North American Free Trade Act, facilitating the offshoring of jobs and the ruin of much of Latin American agriculture amid a flood of cheap American imports - a pact that

led to increased production of cocaine and rising rates of immigration to the US.

The Clintons left the country a far more rightwing place than the one that existed when Bill came into office. The fact that the couple now enjoy a combined net worth of over \$100 million, or that Hillary can now command a speaker's fee \$275,000 per appearance, are surely not unrelated to services performed on behalf of the ruling class. The Clintons' use of politics for relentless social climbing is not a fact that even the famously forgetful American electorate can easily ignore. It was perhaps with her newly unveiled populist pose in mind that the first word respondents thought of at the mention of her name in a recent free-association poll was 'liar'.

Even harder to square with any 'progressive' image is Hillary's militarism in foreign policy. She now says her vote as a senator for the 2002 Iraq war powers resolution was a "mistake", based upon the "faulty" (read: fabricated) information about Saddam Hussein's 'weapons of mass destruction' that had been supplied by Bush (to which Bernie Sanders retorts that the same information did not prevent him from voting against the war). But in the Senate she not only went along with Bush, but loudly trumpeted his WMD accusations. As Obama's secretary of state, Clinton fully supported the sending of more troops to Afghanistan, as well as the intervention in Libya, and enthusiastically backed the 2014 Israeli massacre in the Gaza Strip. She was said to be even more hawkish on these issues than the Bush-appointed secretary of defence, Robert Gates.

Even in the present campaign, Clinton is posturing to Obama's right on foreign policy. She says she would

# What we fight for

'do more' about Russian 'aggression' in Ukraine, and would have armed US-friendly Syrian rebels earlier than the president. Clinton supports the Iranian nuclear deal, but says that, as president, she would do everything in her power to repair the American relationship with Israeli prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu, implicitly blaming Obama for the tensions that appeared in the US-Israel alliance as a result of negotiations with the Islamic Republic. She misses no opportunity to proclaim her support for Israel, and to promise that she would arm its military machine with the last word in weapons technology.

Hillary now says she has come to oppose the Trans-Pacific Partnership, universally assailed by unions and the Democratic Party left. Yet, as secretary of state, she was a champion of Obama's 'pivot towards Asia' (read: anti-China policies), even travelling to far-eastern countries to promote the trade deal. This is only the latest example of an opportunism so transparent over the years that growing numbers of voters now see Clinton for what she is: a worshipper of wealth and imperial power, who stands for next to nothing in principle, and is willing to change positions more often than hairdos to achieve her long-cherished life ambition of succeeding her husband to the presidency.

But she will probably get the nomination anyway, due to her gigantic war chest and wide-ranging political connections, and voters will probably choose her in the general election in preference to whichever reactionary zealot the Republicans choose to put up. Hillary Clinton has been quite successful in subsisting on the outer margins of lesser evilism.

## Bernie's challenge

Bernie Sanders, on the other hand, is a politician of a different kind. Ever since he first held political office as mayor of Burlington, Vermont's largest city, in the early 80s, Sanders has pursued a coherent leftist agenda.

He absorbed from an early age the left-to-liberal values of the Brooklyn Jewish community in which he was born 73 years ago. The distinct inflections of that neighbourhood are still strong in his speech, despite decades in Vermont, where he resettled in the 70s as part of a migration of alienated east-coast urban youth in search of rustic tranquillity. Sanders emphasises that he never was a hippie himself. But, although he may never have belonged to a commune or tended an organic garden, it was among counter-cultural refugees that Sanders first built his political base, gradually expanding it to include the poorer farmers who mainly comprise the older, non-granola and green tea population of the state.

In his pre-Vermont days, Sanders was a member of the youth group of the Socialist Party, and a participant in the civil rights and anti-Vietnam war movements of the 60s. Before he entered electoral politics in his adopted state, he wrote for one of its 'alternative' newspapers, and went around to schools peddling a crude documentary he had put together on the life of the man he claims as his hero - Eugene Debs, the pioneer of American socialism. As mayor of Burlington, Sanders invited Noam Chomsky to speak at a municipal gathering, introducing him to the audience with effusive praise. He travelled to Nicaragua as a guest of the Sandinistas at the height of the Reagan-backed contra war in 1985, and made Burlington the sister city of the Nicaraguan town of Puerto Cabezas in solidarity.

As he climbed the political ladder to the House of Representatives in 1991, and then to the Senate in 2007, Sanders always stood for election as an independent, never, until now, as a Democrat, and continues to call

himself a socialist. Unlike Hillary Clinton, whose campaign is awash in super-political action committee dollars (half of which, in total donations to both parties, comes, according to the *New York Times*, from 158 billionaire families), Sanders has no PAC or super-PAC at his disposal. His campaign is sustained by small individual donations averaging \$44. Astonishingly, he has been able to raise as much thus far as has Hillary, with all her gilded friends.

The Sanders campaign sounds a single passionate note: opposition to growing inequality in the United States and the destruction of democracy at the hands of a multi-billionaire minority. Sanders, who has been flogging this theme throughout his political career, has deteriorating economic conditions and the Occupy movement of 2011 largely to thank for its unexpected current resonance. To packed meeting halls throughout the country, the Vermont senator is calling for a "political revolution" that will require "millions of people in the streets".

Concretely, he proposes public works to alleviate unemployment, stronger protection for unions, a big rise in the federal minimum wage (now at a pathetic \$7.25 per hour), lower university tuitions and universal medical care. He aims to pay for these programmes by cracking down on corporate tax dodging and raising the tax rate to 90% from the current 39.6% on all income above \$413,000 a year - a restoration of post-World War II upper-bracket levels. He advocates breaking up banks that are "too big to fail". In today's political climate, these measures sound radical indeed.

## Sanders scrutinised

All but the most naive know that Sanders stands no real chance of actually winning the Democratic nomination. He would face the opposition of a formidable party machine, which would be abetted by the major media, and whose financial resources would ultimately dwarf his, despite early fundraising success. Moreover, Sanders' base consists mainly of students and white liberals, similar to those who form his Vermont constituency. Even if he could win the February Iowa and New Hampshire primaries, in which such voters are strong, he would still have to face 'super Tuesday' in the following month.

These primaries include several populous southern states, in which big chunks of Democratic voters are black. The Sanders campaign was slow to emphasise the issues of police brutality and mass incarceration that are now riling black communities across the country. In response to pressure from the Black Lives Matter movement, which disrupted several of his early rallies, Sanders has taken a strong stand against police brutality. But this may be too little, too late for most black voters, many of whom have never heard of Sanders, and who are said to favour Clinton.

Neither does Sanders enjoy strong union support. Several of the bigger AFL-CIO national unions have already plumped for Clinton, and more will no doubt follow, given the bureaucracy's slavish loyalty to the Democratic establishment. Only one national union - the largest health worker association in the country - has endorsed Sanders, in addition to a few New Hampshire local branches of other unions.

Yet, despite the inevitability of its defeat, many lefts and socialists have been swept up in the enthusiasm of the Sanders campaign. They argue that, even if he cannot succeed, Sanders has injected issues of class into the electoral arena in a way not seen in recent times, and pushed the entire debate to the left. They add that his

retention of the label 'socialist' helps to rehabilitate the term in popular discourse, and tend to view his entering the primaries as a Democrat as a shrewd tactical move, which gives him a platform he would not have had as an independent.

Socialist Alternative, the US affiliate of the Committee for a Workers' International, is glowing in its coverage of the Sanders campaign, and Seattle City Council member Kshama Sawant, the country's only elected socialist official, has appeared on the platform at a Sanders rally. They take as good coin his claim to be a socialist, urging only that he break from the Democrats and run independently. They also express the hope that the momentum Sanders has generated can be harnessed to build an independent left party in the future.

There can be no doubt that the Sanders campaign reflects a growing anger over stagnant wages, soaring profits and a ruling class political monopoly more blatant than at any time since the Gilded Age at the end of the 19th century. So does the growing interest in socialism registered in opinion samplings. It reflects these things, however, on the pond surface of bourgeois politics. What the new-born Sandernistas forget is that the historic function of the Democratic Party has been to exploit real discontents - ultimately only to divert them into support for a capitalist-vetted 'lesser evil' contender. And Bernie Sanders has pledged his support in advance to whomever wins the Democratic nomination. Thus, despite his best intentions, he serves as the illusory left face of a party thoroughly committed to profits and empire.

Bernie Sanders is no Jeremy Corbyn. Reformist though he be, Corbyn has made clear his opposition to militarism and Britain's role as the American empire's junior partner. Sanders, on the other hand, has throughout his Congressional career caucused with the Democrats, voted with them 98% of the time and remained on the inner margins of the permissible. Among Congressional Democrats, populist rhetoric and criticism of foreign policy mistakes is one thing, but principled opposition to militarism and US foreign intervention are sure to land one on the outside in short order. And, while Sanders has certainly never been one of the most enthusiastic war hawks in Congress, he has consistently voted for military appropriations and supported military projects in his home state.

He did, it is true, vote against the Iraq war, but supported the bombing of Yugoslavia under Clinton, the invasion of Afghanistan under Bush, and the use of drone strikes, saying only that they should be more "selective". Neither is Sanders one of the most ardent Zionists in Congress. He did not vote for a resolution in support of Israel's Operation Protective Edge in Gaza. But, when pushed, his pronouncements are hardly distinguishable from the standard US government line: support of a two-state solution, and, while deploring Israeli 'excesses', supporting the right of the Zionist state to 'defend itself' from terrorist attacks and rockets launched from Gaza.

Sanders is more of a maverick when it comes to home policy, but can buckle when the pressure is on, as he did in 1994, when he voted for Bill Clinton's Omnibus Crime Bill, which inaugurated the era of mass incarceration. One has the impression that the Vermont senator's accommodations to imperialism and 'law and order' are made more out of opportunism than deep conviction. But is not the desire to be re-elected at any cost one reason why even the rare bourgeois politician who is uninterested in lining his pockets nevertheless plays by the rules of the game?

Furthermore, while Sanders may denounce the subservience of politicians to big money in general, he conspicuously avoids any exposure of the specific corporate ties of his Congressional colleagues, such as those of his present rival, Hillary Clinton, detailed above. This avoidance derives not from the fact that Sanders, as he would have us believe, is too high-minded to engage in 'negative campaigning', but from the fact that politicians like Clinton are the ones with whom he must stay on good terms and do business, when all is said and done. Hopes that he will break with the Democrats any time soon are quixotic at best; the notion that his followers will somehow spontaneously exit the Democratic Party is delusional.

Lastly, it is to Sanders' credit that he refuses, perhaps as a point of personal honour, to trade in the label of socialist for the far more amorphous American appellation, 'progressive', even though he has been continually baited for this choice of political tag. But in an upcoming speech he is now planning for the purpose of explaining what he means by the term, he will no doubt confirm what he has been saying all along: that the "democratic socialism" (read: social democracy) he espouses is defined quite differently than it was by the figure from whom he claims inspiration: namely, Eugene V Debs, who said in a famous 1918 speech from the dock:

I believe, ... in common with all socialists, that this nation ought to own and control its own industries. I believe, as all socialists do, that all things that are jointly needed and used ought to be jointly owned - that industry, the basis of our social life, instead of being the private property of a few and operated for their enrichment, ought to be the common property of all, democratically administered in the interest of all (*A treasury of the world's great speeches* New York 1965, p723).

The 'socialism' of Sanders, on the other hand, means something quite different: the strong welfare state provisions and regulations on private capital he believes to be in force in Scandinavian countries, whose economies are still for the most part privately owned: ie, capitalist. Sanders may indeed be injecting the s-word into American politics, but only by redefining it as a state-regulated capitalism that no self-respecting 'progressive' Democrat would have any trouble supporting.

Bernie Sanders is clearly a man of certain egalitarian convictions that set him apart from the run-of-the-mill venal and prevaricating American politician. He is not, like Hillary Clinton, merely mouthing a leftist-sounding line with the intention of abandoning it the minute he is elected to office. But it is she, not he, who will probably be elected, and whom Sanders will ultimately support. Seasoned politicians can use sincere individuals, as well as seductive phrases, for their purposes. Because he is loyal to a party that is basically bought and paid for by the capitalist class, he cannot avoid performing a function similar to a demagogue's disingenuous left rhetoric: channelling the discontent of rebellious and system-weary voters into support for a presidential candidate who is the blood and bone of the existing order.

Revolutionary socialists can extend critical support to reformist candidates, when their campaigns promise to move the working class further along the road to struggle in their own name. But independence from any major capitalist party must be the minimal criterion for such support. For all his heartfelt talk about social justice, Bernie Sanders fails to meet that criterion ●

■ Without organisation the working class is nothing; with the highest form of organisation it is everything.

■ There exists no real Communist Party today. There are many so-called 'parties' on the left. In reality they are confessional sects. Members who disagree with the prescribed 'line' are expected to gag themselves in public. Either that or face expulsion.

■ Communists operate according to the principles of democratic centralism. Through ongoing debate we seek to achieve unity in action and a common world outlook. As long as they support agreed actions, members should have the right to speak openly and form temporary or permanent factions.

■ Communists oppose all imperialist wars and occupations but constantly strive to bring to the fore the fundamental question - ending war is bound up with ending capitalism.

■ Communists are internationalists. Everywhere we strive for the closest unity and agreement of working class and progressive parties of all countries. We oppose every manifestation of national sectionalism. It is an internationalist duty to uphold the principle, 'One state, one party'.

■ The working class must be organised globally. Without a global Communist Party, a Communist International, the struggle against capital is weakened and lacks coordination.

■ Communists have no interest apart from the working class as a whole. They differ only in recognising the importance of Marxism as a guide to practice. That theory is no dogma, but must be constantly added to and enriched.

■ Capitalism in its ceaseless search for profit puts the future of humanity at risk. Capitalism is synonymous with war, pollution, exploitation and crisis. As a global system capitalism can only be superseded globally.

■ The capitalist class will never willingly allow their wealth and power to be taken away by a parliamentary vote.

■ We will use the most militant methods objective circumstances allow to achieve a federal republic of England, Scotland and Wales, a united, federal Ireland and a United States of Europe.

■ Communists favour industrial unions. Bureaucracy and class compromise must be fought and the trade unions transformed into schools for communism.

■ Communists are champions of the oppressed. Women's oppression, combating racism and chauvinism, and the struggle for peace and ecological sustainability are just as much working class questions as pay, trade union rights and demands for high-quality health, housing and education.

■ Socialism represents victory in the battle for democracy. It is the rule of the working class. Socialism is either democratic or, as with Stalin's Soviet Union, it turns into its opposite.

■ Socialism is the first stage of the worldwide transition to communism - a system which knows neither wars, exploitation, money, classes, states nor nations. Communism is general freedom and the real beginning of human history.

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# weekly worker

**Labour right  
organises  
and rebrands**

## Nice guys finish last

Battle lines are being drawn in the Labour Party, writes Paul Demarty

According to the old cliché, a week is a long time in politics - and in Britain over the last few months there have been a lot of very long weeks.

Jeremy Corbyn made his long march from no-hope outsider to conquering hero of all those alienated by the cosy neoliberal consensus; the extant Labour right wing was thereby exposed as an exhausted force, unable to defeat an insurgency of naive youths and old Labour-left veterans so confidently described as 'dinosaurs' by a generation of triumphant rightists.

We are barely six weeks into the new era; but those naive youths - and the old Labour lefts, who have proven themselves rather suckers for punishment over the decades - must surely all be disabused of any notion that their victory was final. The right is reorganising, the left fumbling to build almost from scratch. Open warfare is unavoidable; and it is coming fast.

### Right on the march

We have wondered often, in these recent months, what is to replace Progress. The late Denis Healey is reputed to have told the 'Gang of Four' that they should vote for him to defeat Tony Benn, because they had "nowhere else to go" - something even truer at this new nadir of British capital-L Liberalism. They therefore need some fighting formation to replace the declining Progress.

The latter organisation served its myriad purposes well for more than a decade. Funded by Lord Sainsbury, it functioned as an all-purpose organisational nexus for the Labour Party hard right. It corralled wonks and academics into an intellectual phalanx around Tony Blair. It drove government policy.

Perhaps most importantly, it fostered a new generation of careerist politicians, schooling them in the necessary skills of the trade: seeming to say something when actually just dribbling out inanities, sneering with contempt at one's core vote, remembering one's place in the chain of command. A somewhat Jesuitical organisation, its motto might have been 'Give me the first-year undergraduate, and I shall show you the sycophantic junior minister'.

Of course, it bred only mediocrities, capable of mimicking Tony's soundbites and tics, but failing to achieve either Blair's stern grasp over the party or his authority in the bourgeois media, failing to understand either that the Labour core vote and activist base cannot absorb unlimited punishment or that the affections of the bourgeoisie are not always up for tender. You could call it cargo-cult Blairism. The election of Jeremy Corbyn to the leadership is, in substance, Progress's epitaph. Its name is muck from Aberdeen to St Austell. Labour Party rightists look upon its works and despair.

An early contender for replacement

was Labour First, a long-running rightwing pressure group, now run by hack blogger Luke Akehurst - perhaps too early, however, having emerged from a long period of relative obscurity to put itself up as the headquarters of the 'Anyone But Corbyn' faction during the leadership contest itself. 'Anyone but Akehurst', replied 60% of the Labour electorate.

Now there is Labour Together, which looks a little more like it. It has the nicey-nicey, 'modern' branding; it is open to everyone (of course); it praises the Corbyn campaign for re-energising people and so forth. Behind it, we have some familiar faces: Jon Cruddas, the centrist gadfly (he of Compass, then of Blue Labour) and eccentric intellectual Maurice Glasman (Blue Labour again) seem to motivate its vaguely defined ideological agenda (decentralisation, 'returning power to communities' - that type of thing).

There is, naturally, another agenda at work here - among the high-profile supporters of LT are Chuka Umunna and Tristram Hunt - both Blairites of a somewhat more sophisticated stripe; they were, at least, smart enough not to run, in the end, for the leadership this year. Umunna wants Progress formally wound up - it has served its purpose. Hunt, equally, is capable of boxing clever.

Within parliament, both are members of the PLP-only Labour for the Common Good: the mailed fist in Labour Together's velvet glove. They are fond of calling themselves 'the resistance'. That ought to tell you all you need to know. Apparently unconnected, the vile Rochdale MP, Simon Danczuk, has openly put himself forward as a 'stalking horse': should the opportunity arise, he will stand to unseat Corbyn, thereby opening the door for more suitable candidates.

On the ground, too, the Labour right are on the march. Having created a McCarthyite atmosphere of paranoia about infiltrators, these people are looking around for people to purge. They have found four members of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty - some of whom have been Labour members for years - and summarily terminated their memberships at the constituency level.

Now we at this paper have no end of criticisms of the AWL, for its economism, sectarianism and most egregiously its soft, equivocal attitude to US imperialism. These problems, however, will not be foremost in the

minds of the persecutors of the 'AWL four' - rather it is their association with an avowedly Trotskyist organisation, with a long (if somewhat inconsistent) record of Labour Party activity. All partisans of the left should defend them - and indeed the right of all avowed supporters of the working class socialist cause to organise openly in the Labour Party, provided they do not currently support other candidates.

### Organising the left

In the Corbyn camp, meanwhile, there are at least signs that people are coping on to the level of hostility they face among the Labour establishment.

We may mention, first of all, the appointment of Seumas Milne as the Corbyn office's "director of strategy and communications". In this role, he is the distant inheritor of Alastair Campbell, with whom he presents an illuminating contrast. Both, of course, are press people - but Campbell was a tabloid man to his bone-marrow, whereas Milne has been the leftwing face of *The Guardian's* comment pages, which he helps edit, for more than a decade.

And, while Campbell had no serious involvement in politics before working for Blair, Milne has - shall we say - a colourful history. He was, for many years, business manager for *Straight Left*, a 'Labour movement paper' that in reality fronted an opposition faction in the Communist Party of Great Britain. You wouldn't know unless you knew; although the back-page editorials by Fergus Nicholson (under the name 'Harry Steel' - after Pollitt and Stalin respectively) might have clued you in a little.

*Straight Left's* line was virulently pro-Soviet, and it was largest and longest-lived opposition grouping of its type in the party. Its ranks incubated a whole generation of CPGB dissidents, though for the most part they were hamstrung by an utterly uncritical attitude to the 'socialist countries'; its name was a not entirely healthy rebuke to the Eurocommunists' obsessions with 'trendy' matters such as gay liberation.

Milne is hardly the only Labour figure to have a communist history, of course: Blair's clique was riddled with ex-Euros, and not a few 'tankies' to boot. "I used to be a communist," sneered John Reid in the late noughties; "I used to believe in Santa

Claus." The difference with Milne is that he seems not to have budged an inch from his Straight Leftism over the years. We can, at least, commend his stamina.

Indeed, we can go with him at least part-way on most issues of day-to-day politics: his trenchant and consistent opposition to western imperialism has made him almost unique among mainstream journalists. He has a habit of pointing out that atrocities like the July 7 bombings - horrendous crimes, as he acknowledges they are - are exceptional in the imperialist heartlands, but a matter of everyday life in the failed states manufactured by the past decade and a half of perpetual imperialist war in the Middle East. He catches his share of flak for that, and he should be proud of it. In any case, his appointment is much like that of John McDonnell as shadow chancellor - a polite 'fuck you' to the right wing, who have clearly taken it that way. *Good.*

### Keeping up the momentum

With Milne reporting for duty at the top, there is the matter of how things are looking at the rank-and-file level. The left's organisation here - for the time being at least - is Momentum, the official successor to the Corbyn leadership campaign.

It is telling that Momentum's right to exist has been disputed on the most fatuous grounds by the right since its inception. It is unusual, apparently, for a leadership campaign to maintain itself even after victory; but why should that be the case? Political parties do not dissolve between elections. Leaders invariably represent distinct *tendencies* within their parties; so scattered and demoralised was the Labour left before Corbyn's campaign, an awful lot of energy is going into forming the faction that should have existed beforehand, but, apart from that, there is nothing new here.

The right fears that Momentum will be a vehicle for witch-hunting - by this, it means the holding of MPs to account and, most of all, the dreaded *mandatory reselection*: the renewal of Labour Party endorsement of MPs every so often. From this we learn only what we already knew: Labour rightists view their seats as *their property*, perhaps grudgingly subject to approval by the electorate twice a decade, but never to the control of the

party that got them elected in the first place.

Our worry is rather that mandatory reselection is being *evaded* as a demand by Momentum, despite the fact that one of its leading lights, Jon Lansman, has spent most of his political career fighting for it, even briefly achieving it at the height of Bennism. A campaign for mandatory reselection is all the more urgent, given the sort of degenerates currently infesting the Labour benches, but it is in any case an *elementary democratic principle*: no, sunshine, you do not 'own' your Labour Party nomination. It belongs to *your CLP*.

More insidious problems exist, too. The aforementioned Labour Together seems to be pitching itself as the non-Corbynite Momentum. Like the latter, it wants to go out into communities and 'do something'. It is starry-eyed about grassroots campaigns, as the likes of Cruddas and Glasman always - in a peculiar sort of way - have been.

And, though it is a sort of rhetoric we are more used to from the left, it is hardly the first time the right has latched onto it. David Miliband, before his defeat to brother Ed last time around, had the bright idea of setting up just such a grassroots campaigning organisation. You see, the 2010 election showed that the Labour Party had lost touch with communities and voters, etc, etc. Stop me if you've heard this one before.

It failed for the same reason LT will almost certainly fail: *democracy*. Can you imagine David Miliband's little do-gooding organisation breaking ranks with its progenitor's bland Blairism? Of course not: people like him, and Cruddas and Glasman, can run a mean press office; but the self-activity of broad masses is alien to them. It is a *threat*.

This is the final danger facing Momentum: that it, too, in the name of being collegiate and thus shying away from open breaches with the right, suppresses any life emerging at the base, where its people - away from the Westminster bubble - *will* be cracking skulls with their local party rightwingers, whether they like it or not. What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander: keeping everyone on message means killing democracy, and thus killing the organisation.

The right is gearing up for war; is Momentum willing to fight? ●

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