

A paper of Marxist polemic and Marxist unity



weekly **worker**



**Theresa May has set up
the three Brexiteers to
fail in EU negotiations**

- Letters and debate
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Towards a Communist Party of the European Union

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Erdoğan's counter-coup coup

LETTERS



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

Enter left

Peter Manson's article, 'Defend Corbyn where it really matters' (July 14), is strong on moral rhetoric and very weak on practicalities. I get the impression that comrade Manson has no significant experience of 'entry' work, and that he has not made a study of historical precedents.

I did six years as an 'entrister' in a very different Labour Party in the 1960s and Manson's article leaves me with a lot of unanswered questions.

Manson states that our aim should be "to transform the Labour Party into a genuine instrument of the working class, one to which all working class organisations and left groups can affiliate". Well, yes. People have been trying to do that more or less since the Labour Party was founded; they have all failed. Indeed, the present-day Labour Party is considerably further from that model than it was in 1945-51. Does the CPGB have some magic formula that will enable it to succeed where all its predecessors have failed?

Joining the Labour Party may be comparatively easy for an organisation like the CPGB with a couple of dozen members. For slightly larger organisations, like the Socialist Party and the Socialist Workers Party, with up to a thousand members, it is a bit more of a problem. They may have no greater ability to actually influence the course of events than the CPGB, but they do have premises, publications and employees. Should they wind up their organisations completely, or should they maintain an open organisation alongside their entry work? (Perhaps *Socialist Worker* could change its name back to *Labour Worker*, as it was called in the 1960s, when I was briefly its editor.)

Let us imagine (somewhat fancifully) that the SWP central committee read Manson's article and are convinced. What happens next? The SWP leadership can fix almost anything, but even they would need a couple of internal bulletins and a special conference. By the time they had gone through that the leadership election would be over.

And perhaps Corbyn will be defeated. He will be facing a full mobilisation of the PLP right, and an onslaught from the mainstream press, with perhaps a bit of ballot-rigging thrown in. (The vernal journalists of *The Guardian*, concerned only to keep their jobs by sucking up to the vile Katharine Viner in her vendetta against Corbyn, will play their part.) So what then? Do we stay for the long haul? And it will be a very long haul. The right wing won't make the same mistake twice; the rule book will be revised to exclude the possibility of another Corbyn. Deselection, even if it could be achieved, would have no impact before 2020.

Certainly the thousands who joined the Labour Party to support Corbyn will not hang around. They didn't back Corbyn because of his programme (he doesn't really have one), but because he is an honest man - a rare and remarkable phenomenon among the corrupt time-servers and money-grubbers of the Parliamentary Labour Party. If he is ousted, thousands will be demoralised. Very, very few will flock to the banners of the SWP, the SP or the CPGB.

But perhaps Corbyn will win. If so the war of attrition will continue. The Labour right never accept democratic decisions if they are on the losing side. They will use any possible means to get rid of him. If they do not resort to physical assassination, it will not be from any moral scruple, but only because they wouldn't have the first idea how to go about it.

Perhaps the Labour Party will split. On the face of it this would be the best

scenario for the revolutionary left. Yet in reality this would probably mean a small left party with at best a handful of MPs, and the youthful followers of Corbyn increasingly alienated, as the various Marxist grouplets battle for control. Manson should have a look at the history of the French Workers' and Peasants' Socialist Party (PSOP) and Unified Socialist Party (PSU) and the Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity (PSIUP).

In fact, entrism would not be easy for the SWP or the SP. The SWP has a core of grey-haired activists, who for decades have been known (often to their credit) as SWP members in their unions and localities. Are they supposed to now publicly renounce their past and declare they are genuine converts to the Labour Party? Even if they did so, it is highly unlikely the Labour Party would admit them.

In the early 1950s the legendary Michel Pablo, who invented the concept of 'centrism *sui generis*', decided to enter the French Communist Party. Though his group had over a hundred members, just seven managed to enter the PCF.

The Labour Party is not quite as Stalinist as the PCF - but SWP members are more visible. It is unlikely that many would get into the Labour Party, which can still draw on the expertise of those who dealt with the Militant in the 1980s and the Socialist Labour League in the 1960s.

Of course, there are real criticisms to be made of my old comrades in the SWP. I think they combine political tailism with organisational sectarianism. They have made no detailed political critique of Corbyn (except on the European Union question), and they insist that their version of 'Leninism' is timeless.

But Manson's alternative remains on the level of abstract propaganda. To urge us to 'Join the Labour Party!' without any suggestion of how this might be done in practice is singularly useless.

Ian Birchall
email

Become active

A candidate has emerged. The Corbyn leadership will be challenged, but what will the points of contention be over the next nine weeks? The "unity candidate", as Owen Smith is wont to style himself, declared: "I am just as radical as Jeremy Corbyn."

If this is the case two questions are immediately begged. Firstly, why stand against the leader whose policies Smith claims to support and, secondly, how can he unify a party that has been fractured by its own MPs revolting against those same policies?

It might be claimed that it is only Corbyn himself they are against because he cannot lead them to election victory. Essentially, then, they'd be showing more concern for their own political careers than anything to do with policy or principle.

All those who declared "no confidence" in Corbyn would probably argue that the pressing need is to oppose the Tories and remove them from power at the earliest opportunity. But to what end? If, presently, the only way this can be achieved is by Labour being Tory-lite to attract votes, then they'd be better served defecting to the Lib Dems.

The problem is not who leads the Labour Party, not even this policy rather than that. Austerity - or 'good housekeeping', as the new prime minister would have it - is not the result of some fiendish Tory plot against the people. Whether Labour politicians like it or not, it is the economics of capitalism that is the source of gathering impoverishment. The assault on living standards and public services is being conducted internationally.

In Britain, it has been sustained by Tory and Labour governments since 1979. That is 40 years - almost two

generations - which has embedded neoliberalism deeply in the national, and international, psyche; it has become normal. There is not a wide conception of a viable alternative. There may be much grumbling about unfairness, the tax-dodging rich, self-interested politicians and so on, but relatively few believe things can be fundamentally changed for the better.

This is seen in the continuing vilification of the baby-boomers, perceived as grabbing for themselves when what they actually did was benefit from the rather more progressive policies followed after 1945. These were policies lauded by those who'd experienced the privations of the 30s. Baby-boomers, migrants, the Scots (if you're English) or the English (if you're Scottish), the north-south divide, the unions - whatever can be employed to turn people against each other has been and is being utilised to preserve the present ideological impasse.

Because there is this ideological agreement, the two main Westminster parties have become *internally* fractious. The EU referendum resulted from Tory dissent, while Labour's has manifested itself in the unedifying spectacle of mass disloyalty.

If the only ambition of Labour MPs is to get a firmer grip on the greasy pole to power, then perhaps they should ditch Corbyn and select an anodyne alternative. That way, they can continue to posture as the party of the people without the exceedingly demanding prospect of having to engage with overcoming the ideological block to progress.

Corbyn, Smith or whoever, electing a leader is all too easy and changes little unless people begin to develop a sense that things can be changed - and they start to become active in seeking such change. Even if Corbyn wins again, or if Smith wins and proves he is as radical (whatever that means), then that person will continue to be vilified and isolated by the media.

At the very least, though, Labour MPs should have shown some backbone and utilised their individual and collective energy to confront their opponents, not their own democratically elected leader.

Dave Alton
email

Labour issues

Mike Macnair states that to him as an academic lawyer it is "obviously" the case the incumbent leader of the Labour Party does not need nominating by 20% of the parliamentary party to stand again ('Don't rely on the courts', July 14).

Really? The very rule Mike quotes states that "any nomination" must be supported by 20%, which surely means any candidate. If it was intended to mean potential challengers only, it would surely have said that, and that the incumbent could go through automatically, if they chose to stand. In any case, the real and important issue is that it is ridiculous and unsustainable that a leader not just of the Labour Party, but of the Parliamentary Labour Party, cannot find 20% to support their candidacy or incumbency.

The whole point of the Labour Party was to fight for the interests of the trade unions of working people more generally in parliament. That is both its strength and limitation. It was created to fight and win elections. Without that capability, there is no real point to it. It was never going to fight for revolutionary socialism or a revolutionary transformation of power.

You just can't go into a general election with someone as leader who patently doesn't want to be prime minister and who would, if elected, be unable to fill the majority of posts in a new government. The new majority in the House of Commons would pretty quickly get rid of any such government.

Yes, we might have comments

about the composition of the current PLP. Yes, the Labour Party conference should be the sovereign body, the highest expression of the views of the membership and able to decide party strategy and policies. Yes, the national executive committee elected by the conference should be able to exercise day-to-day leadership and direction and should, for example, determine the party's election manifesto. Yes, all candidates for public office, MPs and councillors, should have to go through some form of reselection process to ensure they remain the best candidates available to do the job, and to exercise accountability to the membership.

The *Weekly Worker* in debates and discussions about other parties has consistently advocated delegate democracy, where conferences and aggregates elect executive and similar committees, and they then go on to elect officers and other functions, and are able to hold those office holders directly to account. So why shouldn't the leader of the PLP be elected either in part or in whole by the PLP? If you disagree with the composition of the PLP or the policies of the party, use the democratic processes of the party to argue, persuade and change. Most continental social democratic or socialist parties have both a parliamentary leader and an overall party leader, and maybe that would provide a way forward for today's Labour Party?

Corbyn was by far the best candidate in last year's leadership election and, despite what has been said recently, he has performed far better in the role as Labour leader than many of his detractors and opponents had predicted, and he has conducted himself with dignity, steadfastness and increasing confidence. Whether he could motivate and unify the Labour Party and then be projected as a potential national leader and alternative prime minister was a far more open question, but even so he was always a more compelling option than Kendall, Burnham or Cooper.

I wonder just who on earth has been whispering to Angela Eagle she could be a compelling and attractive leader. She gave one decent performance against George Osborne standing in at prime minister's questions. The second time she must have left her batteries at home. She gives car-crash media interviews one after the other. She either forgets her lines or gets stuck halfway through or shrills out the most excruciatingly embarrassing inanities possible.

I have been disappointed by the lack of policy progress by the Corbyn-McDonnell leadership, and the absence of a deeply compelling policy alternative to the Tories must explain part of its vulnerability to internal factional manoeuvring within the PLP. Just what have they done or achieved over the past number of months? Exceedingly vague references to being 'anti-austerity' and the need for 'investment' to counter recession and to 'grow' and 'rebalance' the economy are not good enough.

We needed much more concrete detail, setting out just how much progressive Labour would expand public spending and over what period, how much investment, how much would be funded from taxation and where from, how much from borrowing, and how much from increasing the money supply.

Any such alternative economic and financial strategy would need to be backed up by public investment; public ownership as the concomitant, democratically informed economic and social planning; and real industrial democracy, with workers, the public and the state working together to determine priorities. The Labour Party needs some really big, exciting and inspiring ideas if it is going to construct a new electoral coalition, including the majority of all

working people, in all the regions and the nations.

Owen Smith's leadership platform for a £200 billion investment programme in skills, housing, infrastructure, new technology and productivity is breathtaking and potentially one such big idea. Big ideas around universal, high-quality childcare and mothers' mental health could chime hard with wide sections of the population and also be transformative, both in the immediate future, and in opening up longer-term opportunities. Labour needs policies and a strategy that will carry a positive vision of a better life that the majority of people can feel part of, wherever they live, work or whatever their background.

Can Labour ever move beyond being better (or worse) managers of capitalism than the Tories? When Lenin referred to the unique organisational basis of the Labour Party, I don't think he was regarding that as 100% good or bad, just a statement of reality, when looking at social democracy across other advanced, western capitalist countries.

Chris Cutrone's absolutely excellent article, 'Sacrifice and redemption' (July 14), in the same issue, on Rosa Luxemburg, the workers' party and the goal of socialism, described both Luxemburg's and Lenin's argument that politics should command and determine economics. If politics flows from economics, it will always be limited and constrained by the latter. Luxemburg argued that the German Social Democratic Party "basing itself on the labour unions was a profound mistake", which after 1914 ultimately chose the preservation of the workers' social and economic organisations and cooperation with the state's war, betraying the international working class and the revolution.

In my personal view, we need a mass, democratic, socialist and republican party, bringing together the great majority of socialists, communists, trade unionists, and left social democrats and which projects the need for socialism to replace capitalism, and the strategy for achieving it.

A Labour Party which is effectively the political wing of the organised trade union movement is going to find it hard to make the necessary breaks with sectional and limited trade union consciousness. Witness Labour MPs voting to renew Trident and quoting the big unions in support.

Let the Labour Party get on with what it exists to do. To get elected to office and implement reforms which benefit working people. And to keep the Tories and Liberals out.

Andrew Northall
Kettering

Deferred

I would like to follow up on my articles, 'What was social democracy?' (July 7) and 'Sacrifice and redemption' (July 14), and comment on the question of social democracy and the need for a socialist political party today, especially in light of controversies around Jeremy Corbyn's leadership of the Labour Party and the challenge to the Democratic Party represented by the ostensibly social democratic - 'democratic socialist' - Bernie Sanders, as well as the crisis of the EU around Brexit and its social democratic parties, such as the collapse of Pasok and rise of Syriza in Greece, and the equivocal role of Portuguese, Spanish and French socialists.

What has been forgotten today is the essential lesson for Marxism in the failure of the 1848 revolutions, why petty bourgeois democracy is not only inadequate, but is actually blind to, and indeed an obstacle for, the political task of overcoming capitalism.

In its heyday, Marxism assumed that social democracy had as its active political constituent a working

class struggling for socialism. Today, social democracy treats the working class not as a subject as much as an object of government policy and civic philanthropy. Through social democracy as it exists today, the working class merely begs for good politicians and good capitalists. But it does not seek to take responsibility for society into its own hands. Without the struggle for socialism, the immediate goal of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the working class merely becomes a partner in production at best, and an economic interest group at worst.

This is what the liquidation into petty bourgeois democracy means: naturalising the framework of capital. International social democracy once signified the means for achieving the dictatorship of the proletariat. Without this as its goal, it has come to mean something entirely different. The working class has deferred to those it once sought to lead.

Chris Cutrone
Platypus Affiliated Society

Passion

As is common with what seems to be happening in many parts of the country, a number of excellently attended and dynamic meetings have taken place in south Wales over the past couple of weeks in support of Jeremy Corbyn and his battle to maintain his position as leader of the Labour Party.

Local press have reported on meetings in Swansea, and Momentum's political Facebook pages for the area highlight the passion with which Corbyn's support has flourished since the PLP rebellion and attempted leadership coup. My observations at those meetings I have attended have noted common themes - all of which relate to party democracy, justice and the need to ensure that those MPs responsible for engaging and participating in the anti-Corbyn rebellion are made accountable for their actions.

Fundamentally, there has been a clear statement of intent by grassroots Labour Party members in ward, constituency and at wider community levels. Motion upon motion has been passed overwhelmingly supporting Jeremy Corbyn. Their goal is clear: driven by anger and motivation, unconditional support for Corbyn and his political platform for discussion around principled and progressive politics is paramount over the coming couple of months. The passion for victory is unquestionable.

Bob Paul
South Wales

Racist

I read Ted Hankin's letter with shock and revulsion (July 14). I'm sure that other comrades will do a better job of rebutting his racist diatribe than I will, but I'd like to point out a few things.

Ted glibly comments that he is yet to witness any increased levels in hostility towards migrants, dismissing the words of an Iranian woman in the process. Might I suggest that Ted Hankin's name is a dead giveaway as to why he hasn't experienced any such hostility? This dismissive posturing is not only dangerous; it's petty.

Ted's questions about why comrade Yasmine Mather, and indeed other migrants, 'chose' to come to the UK are steeped in nationalism and chauvinism. Why indeed, Ted? Not for the company of people like you, that's for sure. These comments are deeply concerning and are an affront to communist solidarity. Communists support the free movement of labour without caveat. Workers, refugees, people seeking asylum have no responsibility of gratitude to the host nation.

Ted's closing comments about Islam are reminiscent of Žižek's recent capitulation and descent into racism. The conflation of Islamism with people of Muslim faith, many of whom are among the most displaced,

impoverished and affected by Islamist acts of violence, is not materialist or communist. It is racist.

Josh Guiry
email

Bogeyman

Is Ted Hankin aware that the events in Orlando had little to do with the bogeyman that is Islamic militancy and very much to do with sexual jealousy? Was he aware that the perpetrator was himself gay and jealous of his lover's infidelity? Why do people like Ted Hankin put two plus two together and always come up with Islam?

Ted Hankin needs to decide whether he is a propagandist or an historical materialist.

Maren Clarke
email

Criticisms

Whilst I continue to both support and applaud the principal positions of the *Weekly Worker*, I think it necessary to make the following quite urgent observations and strong criticisms.

Firstly, you are entirely wrong to interpret the Chilcot inquiry and eventual public report as *not* being the "whitewash" widely expected by many on the left ('Not a whitewash', July 14). Indeed, it is rather naive to the point of gullible on your part to be duped in this manner.

Whilst maybe not precisely a whitewash in any arrogantly obvious form, it certainly was a clever and necessary decontamination or detoxification by the establishment. In their own terms, that process had been made absolutely *essential* for the purposes of both deflating and diverting the widespread awareness that the Iraq war was 'illegal', not to mention in order to defuse the parallel moral outrage and abhorrence felt by many citizens - a very large element of whom were publicly calling for Tony Blair and George Bush to be prosecuted as 'war criminals', etc.

The British establishment realised it needed to address and counteract those absolutely correct perceptions, and in fact did so very subtly, but nonetheless highly efficiently, via Chilcot's little masterpiece of Oxbridge-styled waffle, plus opaque control.

I'd ask the following simple question. Where was the bit in Chilcot's report that revealed the categorically stated core purpose of both Blair and Bush to commandeer the oil resources of Iraq (albeit often under the guise of being self-appointed and self-serving 'globocops' of democracy and freedom)? It was buried away deep within the 2.7 million words of main text, thereafter being entirely neglected in Chilcot's own summary for media outlets, as well as subsequently by 99.99% of the mass/corporate media.

If those seven long years involved in the production of the Chilcot report plus the £10 million or more that it cost demonstrate anything whatsoever, it's the fact that the capitalists and their various elites will never become 'turkeys voting for Christmas'. To be more precise, capitalism will never willingly permit the uncontrolled, unvarnished, non-filtered facts - in other words, the actual and genuinely full truth - to be revealed about its activities to its citizens and populations. Certainly not anything that would expose the vicious, ruthless, devious, cynical and calculatingly exploitative nature of their system for running the world, let alone the corporate profiteering plus imperialist 'engine-room' that drives it all.

Secondly, it was extremely poor to the point of negligent that you didn't explain *far* more clearly your position on the EU referendum in advance. By which I mean differentiate between an 'active boycott' and, on the other hand, a 'passive abstention'. Quite a complex matter, I'd suggest.

Having said that, given the absence

of any real clout or muscle on the part of the CPGB (not to mention any other UK Marxist-Leninist/Trotskyist outfits, very sadly!), any such principled position on your part will have had very little practical effect out there in the real world. Consequently, your formal position was really rather spurious/largely notional. However, none of that should overshadow my overall observation about your failures or even negligence in this matter of the EU referendum vote, respectfully I maintain.

In any event, speaking for myself, as a result of that lack of clarity etc, quite incorrectly I regarded your official position as defeatist and indeed foolish, whereas (now that I grasp things more fulsomely) I consider it to have been precisely the *correct* one to have adopted.

Underlying this particular criticism is another and more general one: namely that you tend to write your articles as if it's all a relaxed and cosy in-joke chat between fully informed/fully engaged acolytes or disciples. Surely you need to bear in the forefront of your mind the fact that not all of your readers or supporters are graced with such fully informed insight and complete comprehension. Many of us have demanding lives, after all.

Bruno Kretzschmar
email

Cleaners' victory

Cleaners working in the City of London have won the London Living Wage after an unprecedented 43 days of continuous, all-out strike action.

The cleaners, who are members of the trade union, United Voices of the World, work at 100 Wood Street, an office building which is owned by the world's second richest man, Amancio Ortega. It is also home to financial giants such as JP Morgan and Schroders, and is managed by the real estate company, CBRE.

The cleaners had been on strike since June 8 and had vowed to continue until all their demands are met. They were calling for the reinstatement of unlawfully sacked colleagues, backdated payment of the London Living Wage to January 1 2016, union recognition, and a guarantee that they will receive the Living Wage at the new adjusted rate each year.

Petros Elia, UVW general secretary, said: "Yesterday's announcement represents a significant victory and it is no exaggeration to say that this is a historic moment: this is now the longest strike in the history of the City of London and it is the first strike to be led by an entirely Latin American workforce in the UK. The resilience and determination of our members is incredible to witness, and now it is bearing fruit.

"In its letter to the cleaners, Thames Cleaning claimed to have always intended to pay the living wage and said that savings elsewhere have now enabled them to do this. The claim is laughable: this is a company that was willing to pay in excess of £20,000 in legal fees to try and stop our members' lawful industrial action. Clearly they are not short of money.

"I urge Thames Cleaning to show its employees the dignity and respect they deserve and enter into meaningful negotiations over our reasonable demands."

Victor Manuel, one of the cleaners on strike said: "This is a great victory but we will continue to fight for our cause, until they reinstate our colleagues and recognise our union. We're not tired or afraid of anyone or anything. Unity brings victory and we will win. Thank you to our union, United Voices of the World"

UVW are seeking donations to support the strike fund and to help with legal costs incurred fighting the injunction taken out by Thames Cleaning to prevent effective picketing. Donations can be made online at: www.uvunion.org.uk/emergency-appeal.

Daniel Stone
UVW

ACTION

London Communist Forum

Sunday July 24, 5pm: Weekly political report from CPGB Provisional Central Committee, followed by open discussion and reading group. Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Road, London WC1. Study of Ralph Miliband's *Parliamentary socialism*. This meeting: chapter 6 ('The price of respectability'), section 3: 'The logic of endurance'. Organised by CPGB: www.cpgb.org.uk; Labour Party Marxists: www.labourpartymarxists.org.uk.

Talking Chilcot

Friday July 22, 6.30pm: Public meeting, University of Leeds Business School, Maurice Keyworth Building, Moorland Road, University of Leeds, Leeds LS6. Speakers include: professor Paul Rogers, Peter Brierley. Organised by Stop the War Coalition: www.stopwar.org.uk/index.php/events/local-stop-the-war-events/2071-22-july-leeds-chilcot-public-meeting.

Labour's democracy under attack

Saturday July 23, 4pm: Solidarity with Brighton & Hove District Labour Party, suspended on discredited grounds. The Shipwright's Arms, 88 Tooley St, London SE1 2TF (subject to change, if an accessible venue is found). Organised by Momentum London Region, info@peoplesmomentum.com.

Palestine solidarity

Saturday July 23, 11.30am: Rally, Grey's Monument, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1. Organised by Palestine Solidarity Campaign: www.facebook.com/newcastlepsc.

Keep Corbyn

Saturday July 23, 2pm: Meeting, Chalvey Community Centre, The Green, Slough SL1. With John McDonnell MP. Organised by People's Momentum: www.peoplesmomentum.com.

Corbyn shindig

Saturday July 23, 7pm: A night of music, speakers, Momentum and poetry. The Lab, 95-97 Charles Street, Northampton NN1. Organised by People's Momentum: www.peoplesmomentum.com.

Defend Council Housing

Saturday July 23, 1pm to 5pm: National meeting, Manchester Methodist Central Building, Oldham Street, Manchester M1. Planning the next steps in our campaign to defend existing and future council housing and resist the Housing and Planning Act. All supporters welcome. Organised by Defend Council Housing: www.defendcouncilhousing.org.uk/dch.

Talk Socialism

Monday July 25, 7pm: Workshop, Broadacre House, Market Street, Newcastle NE1. Organised by People's Momentum: www.peoplesmomentum.com.

Jeremy for leader

Tuesday July 26, 7pm: Meeting, St Mary's Centre, 82-90 Corporation Road, Middlesbrough TS1. Organised by People's Momentum: MomentumTeesside@gmail.com.

Garment workers' fightback

Thursday July 28, 5.30pm: Report by international trade unionists, Unison Northern, 140-150 Pilgrim Street, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1. Featuring an all-women panel of labour activists from China. Organised by Trades Union Congress: www.tuc.org.uk; and War on Want: www.waronwant.org.

Dance for Corbyn

Thursday July 28 and Friday July 29, 7pm: Music event, Amersham Arms, 388 New Cross Road, London SE14. Tickets: £3 to £10. Organised by People's Momentum: www.peoplesmomentum.com.

The new economics

Thursday July 28, 7.30pm: Public meeting, Orange Box, Thomas Street, Halifax HX1. Speaker: Rebecca Long Bailey MP, shadow chief secretary to the treasury. Organised by People's Momentum: www.peoplesmomentum.com.

Stop the Labour right

Thursday July 28, 7pm: Public meeting, Bromley Labour Party, St Mark's Road, Bromley BR2. **How to defend Jeremy Corbyn.** Speaker: TSSA general secretary Manuel Cortes. Organised by Bromley Momentum: www.peoplesmomentum.com.

Laugh for Jeremy

Friday July 29, 8.30pm: Comedy fundraiser, Cumberland Arms, James Place Street, Newcastle upon Tyne NE6. With The Suggestibles, Hal Branson, Catherine Scott, Mickey Cochrane and John Whales. Tickets: £10 (£6 concessions). Organised by People's Momentum: www.peoplesmomentum.com.

All out For Shenstone

Monday August 8, 12 noon: cyclists' demonstration, UAV Engines Factory, Lynn Lane, Shenstone, Litchfield. Protest against arms sales to Israel. Organised by the Big Ride for Palestine: www.redspokes.co.uk/thebigride.

Tories out!

Sunday October 2, 11.30am: Anti-austerity protest, Conservative Party conference, Victoria Square, Birmingham B1. Organised by People's Assembly: www.thepeoplesassembly.org.uk.

Stand Up To Racism

Saturday October 8, 10am to 4pm: Conference, Friends Meeting House, 173-177 Euston Road, London NW1. Organised by Stand Up To Racism: www.facebook.com/Stand-Up-To-Racism-485067858271721.

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.

TURKEY

Erdoğan's counter-coup coup

While a bloody military intervention has been defeated, that in itself is no reason to cheer, writes **Esen Uslu**



AKP supporters: quickly mobilised

When I was writing the following lines two years ago, I was almost able to see the smirk on the face of some of my comrades who would subsequently read them:

Traditionally in such impasses in Turkish politics the army has intervened. However, for the moment the military seems content with the more passive role assigned to it after the well-publicised trials involving its leading figures. That, of course, does not mean that a new military intervention is ruled out. So it seems to me that we are in for a bumpy ride.¹

'These Turks,' I could imagine them sighing, 'they always exaggerate!' Alas, last year almost to the day I was forced to write about the massacre in Suruç, which was just one of the cascading violent atrocities committed against the popular resistance in Turkey since then.² And now we have to analyse how the botched military intervention of last week came about, and what the consequences will be.

The two principal factions of political Islam in Turkey after the 1960 military intervention were the National Vision (Millî Görüş) movement and the Fethullah Gülen Jamaat, the principal offspring of the Nur Jamaat (Community of Holy Light). They cooperated in the formation of the AKP (Justice and Development Party) as the new bastion of political Islam in the face of military tutelage.

Erdoğan and his close allies, who cut their teeth in the National Vision movement, do not have the necessary finesse to gain credibility in the eyes of the west and, although Gülen Jamaat had no political cadre with a similar calibre and reputation, it had managed to train a highly skilled cadre that infiltrated some of the principal institutions of state.

So the first phase of the AKP - the cooperation between two sides - was mutually beneficial. And during that phase the AKP gained recognition from the top brass of the armed forces. However, since 2004 the new phase of the relationship between the two components was marked by a rift that appeared between them - and the gap gradually widened under the pressures of political reality. In 2013 the relationship became unsustainable, and there was a very public divorce.

The trials initiated against the nationalist military junta on the basis of evidence that had been concocted, allegedly by the operatives of Gülen movement within the armed forces, suddenly lost the support of Erdoğan,

and collapsed. The Gülen movement decided to counter this by publicising details of corruption and bribery involving Erdoğan's ministers and family members, and attempted to use its influence in the judiciary to ensure the prosecution of some very prominent figures.

Erdoğan distanced himself from the Gülen movement and started to demonise them. He sought support from the military top brass by letting them loose on the Kurds, and reversing the previous policy of seeking a solution to the 'Kurdish problem' through negotiations.

Kurdish war

The unexpected reversal of Erdoğan's Kurdish policy was so sudden that even some of his closest associates were wrong-footed. The long period of tacit ceasefire ended abruptly and the period of extended and elaborate negotiations - that had reached the stage where Kurdish MPs and members of the government held a joint press conference and issued a joint declaration - was abandoned. A massive attack on Kurdish towns and cities was launched, comparable to the most ruthless of Sri Lankan actions against the Tamil Tigers: that is, to exterminate the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), to the last guerrilla.

The atrocities committed were unspeakable. One by one, the poorest districts of Kurdish towns and cities were surrounded by a ring of steel, and large swathes of the urban areas were obliterated by artillery and aerial bombardment aimed at defeating the well-entrenched guerrillas, who responded with improvised explosive devices.

The mounting police and military casualties led the government to adopt even more vicious tactics, such as blowing up or burning down any structure suspected of harbouring guerrillas, instead of attempting to enter and clear out such buildings. As a result civilian casualties increased substantially. One after another, almost all the principal districts showing support for the freedom movement within the cities of Kurdistan were attacked - and demolished.

However, these atrocities failed to produce the 'victory' hoped for - the 'pacification' of Kurdistan was not achieved. The utter failure of the military campaign, despite all whitewashing attempts, became apparent to all, and the strain on the military and police began to tell.

When these strains began to become obvious, western commentators were full of foreboding.³ It was clear that the ongoing war in Kurdistan, as well

as Erdoğan's Syria policy, which got bogged down in the sticky mud surrounding Islamic State, would inevitably force his government to adopt more authoritarian measures at home.

The government hoped that a series of such measures put in place after the 1980 coup would prevent any repeat. These included:

- The paramilitary Special Operations Police force under the control of the ministry of interior was strengthened to such a degree that the government believed it would be able to fend off an insurrection and if necessary challenge the military. They had been battle-hardened by their role in the Kurdish campaign side by side with the commando forces of the gendarmerie.
- The Special Forces Command was created within the army as a brigade of highly skilled, well equipped and mobile soldiers detached from the chief of staff. In that way they were able to operate independently of other main branches of the armed forces.
- The SOP and SFC were based near Ankara, the capital, within self-sufficient compounds, and in numbers believed to be sufficient to meet any contingencies.
- The intelligence services were also separated into military and police units, and each was run under the close supervision of the government itself. The traditional control of the national intelligence agency by the military was broken, and a civilian management team occupied the top positions.
- Great emphasis was placed on developing signal and image intelligence capabilities independent of the US, and in 2011 military-dominated signal intelligence was placed under the control of the national intelligence agency.

Effective

Despite the feeble nature of previous measures taken to prevent a military coup, this time they proved to be effective. While the junta managed to maintain control of army, airforce and navy headquarters, they failed to take over the Special Forces Command.

On July 16 a lower rank officer shot and killed the general assigned by the top brass to take over the SFC after the general had declared his intentions. While he was killed there and then, that act created a chain reaction and the skeleton staff on night duty managed to fight back and hold on to their positions. That was one of the first failures of the night leading to the defeat of the coup.

The Special Operations Police had been recognised by the junta as a possible centre of resistance, so a stronger force attacked its main compound. One of the fiercest battles

was fought there and - despite massive casualties when helicopter gunships opened fire - the operational control of the police remained in the hands of the government. Then those police units were reorganised and employed to recover lost positions at military headquarters.

Of course, the first casualty of such infighting is the truth, so it was not easy to distinguish the facts from the many lies, but gradually it was possible to piece together what had happened. Initially surprise was expressed at the apparent lack of intelligence regarding such a massive junta preparation. But 48 hours later it was clear that the national intelligence agency had forewarned the chief of general staff and army - there was a discreet meeting from which a series of orders were issued to stop any military move. Why these were not promptly implemented to stop the coup attempt in its tracks will no doubt become clearer over the coming days, but a few guesses can be made.

The junta is formed around a core of Gülenist diehards, who believed - or had actually been informed - that they would be kicked out of their top posts, or expelled from the army altogether at the annual High Military Council meeting due to be held at the end of August. There were also rumours that the government could have acted even earlier to remove important Gülenist personnel following their involvement in an ongoing court case.

Around that core, other layers of the junta were gathered from among those who opposed to the regime being created by the Erdoğan government. And then there was a larger section consisting of those sitting on the fence, and waiting to jump according to the fortunes of the junta without fully committing themselves in advance.

When the government-controlled top brass ordered countermeasures, the junta acted prematurely, abandoning the prearranged timing, consequently losing the expected support of the fence-sitters. Most probably there were betrayals and self-preservation acts of 'repentance', which will become known later. In any case, when a small cabal of officers acted against the military hierarchy, and was unable to carry the topmost echelons with them whether by persuasion or coercion, it was almost inevitable they would try to cover up their lack of control by the harshness of their actions. As the diehards became desperate, the fight became brutal and the casualties mounted.

When the government felt confident enough to appeal to the

general population to block the units despatched by the junta to take over TV channels, municipal offices, police stations, and critical road junctions and bridges, the civilian casualties suddenly reached unheard-of levels.

Aftermath

Erdoğan could well have been aware of the junta's intentions, and there is a strong possibility that the government actually managed to flush it out prematurely to further its own agenda.

And, looking at the speed and effectiveness with which it mobilised its supporters, the utilisation of mosques under the control of the state religious affairs department with its strong Islamist bias, and the paralysis of the opposition parties in defending parliamentary democracy against military intervention, it seems likely that these government moves had been pre-planned.

Furthermore, Erdoğan was clearly better prepared for the aftermath than the junta. Thousands of military officers, including a third of all generals and admirals, have been detained; thousands and thousands of civil servants, including teachers, academics, prosecutors, judges and police officers have been sacked, while many have been arrested and charged.

Fifteen thousand teachers employed by the Ministry of National Education were sacked forthwith. The licences of 21,000 teachers working in the private education sector - a mainstay of the Gülen movement - have been revoked forthwith.

Almost 9,000 police officers were sacked, and 1,500 of them were detained and charged. Hundreds of health-sector employees were also dismissed, and some of them were also charged. It was the same with employees of the stock exchange and currency department. Even hundreds of imams, together with muftis employed by State Religious Affairs, were sacked. Top members of the judiciary were summarily removed without due legal process, and have also been charged.

Legal niceties were dispensed with, as the mobilised mass of Erdoğan supporters occupied the main squares - they created the appropriate background noise by calling for the restoration of capital punishment. Any oppositionist is to be dubbed a 'Gülenist terrorist', as the legal system of 'checks and balances' over executive power is set aside.

There is a strong possibility that a state of emergency rule or martial law will be declared so as to dispense with any parliamentary scrutiny. A referendum on a constitutional amendment to bring in presidential rule has been mooted.

The powers of the State Religious Affairs department look set to be extended to occupy a more prominent role within the state - SRA support was crucial, since throughout the night of the coup the imams continued to call people onto the streets, mixing their exhortations with ceaseless prayer conveyed over the sound systems of the mosques.

So where will it end? Things will become clearer over the coming days, but one thing is apparent: stopping the counter-coup of the Erdoğan government will require a prolonged fight. Are the forces of democracy and the working class up to the job? ●

Notes

1. 'On its last legs' *Weekly Worker* March 20 2014.
2. 'Solidarity targeted by IS bomber' *Weekly Worker* July 23 2015.
3. See, for example, *Newsweek* March 24 2016.

TERROR



More draconian measures will follow

Legacy of Bush and Blair

Yassamine Mather comments on the Nice massacre

There can be no words to describe the atrocities committed last week in Nice, when 84 people - citizens of dozens of countries, amongst them many Muslims - were massacred in a brutal, senseless attack.

Islamic State's cowardly action has, of course, been condemned by establishment politicians and the media, but Iraqis, Syrians and Iranians are amongst those who have commented that it is shame the western media only pay much attention to such IS mass killings when they occur in Europe or North America and the victims are predominantly westerners. Last week social media users were sharing an article from *Huffington Post* by Alexander C Kaufman, entitled 'A staggering reminder that car bombs are an epidemic in Baghdad'. This was accompanied by a map of the city, which is covered in red dots to indicate the location of every car bomb attack in Baghdad since 2003. The map is almost completely red.¹

In the last three weeks alone such car bombs have taken the lives of over 400 people. In early July, 280 Baghdad civilians were killed when a van parked outside a busy shopping complex blew up, as shoppers were preparing for the last day of Ramadan. Then, a few days later, an IS suicide bomber killed at least 40 people at a Shia event. Last week another 12 people were killed in the same way at a fruit and vegetable market in the Iraqi capital, and the next day yet another suicide car bombing took the lives of 10 people at a police checkpoint. As the relatives of those killed in the first bomb have said online and at funerals, no-one in the west seems to care much about the loss of life in Iraq.

In fact hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, Syrians, etc have died since the invasion of 2003 - which was, of

course, supposed to bring 'democracy' to the region, courtesy of the 'free market'. Not only is the region still characterised by corrupt, dictatorial regimes, but it has been engulfed by civil wars and 'failed states'. The two men most responsible for this regional disaster now spreading worldwide - George W Bush and Tony Blair - far from facing prosecution, are still lauded by sections of the establishment. Even after the damning condemnation of their record by the Chilcot report, they both keep telling us that the enforcement of 'regime change' through the 2003 invasion of Iraq was the right thing to do.

Their supporters in the mainstream parties hypocritically condemn this or that bombing and shed tears for some victims of the terror unleashed on the peoples of the world, without mentioning the source of all this: the Iraq war itself. The dominant narrative of this imperialist lobby, at times repeated parrot-fashion by sections of the left, is that the failure of the 'Arab spring' in Syria has led to the rise of IS - although declassified documents that were part of the Chilcot report tell a different story, in fact confirming what we already knew.

IS began life as al Qa'eda in Iraq and was led by a Jordanian jihadi, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. According to the assessment of UK's Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), included in the Chilcot report, the group's strength is mainly due to Islamist insurgencies launched in response to the invasion of Iraq: "Al Qa'eda has capitalised on the Iraq jihad." A further JIC assessment in June 2005 warned of what was to come:

The merger of al-Zarqawi's organisation with al Qa'eda ... has firmly placed it in a pre-eminent position in Iraq ... a unified jihadist command may

be emerging. Iraq is now seen by al Qa'eda as its main theatre of operations.²

Three years after the invasion, the JIC was, according to Chilcot, becoming concerned that the occupation was promoting extremism. And, of course, as time went by, the JIC's assessments got more alarming. By March 2007, the security services considered al Qa'eda in Iraq to be "the single largest Sunni insurgent network" in the country, having acknowledged as early as 2006 that Sunni nationalists and religious extremists shared "common aspirations" in wanting to expel coalition forces and impose Sunni power. As the report states, by the time UK military forces left Iraq, "deep sectarian divisions threatened both stability and unity. Those divisions were not created by the coalition, but they were exacerbated by its decisions."

The foreign office's political assessment is just as damning, with warnings such as this from 2003: "All the evidence from the region suggests that coalition forces will not be seen as liberators for long, if at all. Our motives are regarded with huge suspicion."

Let us not forget either that Iran's Islamic republic is not blameless in all this. Driven by ambitions of becoming a stronger regional power, it propped up a sectarian Shia government in Baghdad and ignored the threat of increased mobilisation of disenfranchised Sunnis in Iraq and later Syria.

Committed to Islam?

Of course, in the last few months military advances have been made against IS in Iraq and Syria. However, such military victories have seemingly been met by a new form of the barbarism displayed

by the jihadi group: the indoctrination of petty criminals and disturbed individuals, who are willing to end their lives committing an act of savagery, taking with them those of the maximum number of innocent people.

The perpetrator of the Nice massacre, Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel, had a history of threats, violence and petty crime. He had been sentenced to six months in prison in March 2016 for a road rage incident, but, by all accounts, the intelligence services had no record of him as a potential IS terrorist. According to many witnesses, he was not actually religious. His cousin is widely quoted as saying: "He did not go to the mosque, he did not pray, he did not observe Ramadan. He drank alcohol, ate pork and took drugs. This is all forbidden under Islam." Neighbours also recall him eating in public during day time in the month of Ramadan and he was once arrested for a drunken brawl outside a bar.

Although there are reports that some of his relatives had been convicted for Islamic extremism in Tunisia during the rule of the now deposed Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, police reports paint a different picture of Lahouaiej-Bouhlel. His mobile phone records show that the Bastille Day killer - described by IS as a "soldier of Islam" - regularly used dating sites to pick up both male and female lovers. He visited gyms and salsa bars regularly, and would also visit websites showing pictures of executions. IS has been reduced to recruiting anyone who will follow their sadistic orders, irrespective of whether they are practising Muslims, and irrespective of whether they are committed jihadists or mentally disturbed.

If reports that he wired \$84,000 to Tunisia earlier this month are true, then

it seems Lahouaiej-Bouhlel was an IS mercenary with little or no conviction. This new profile (in some ways similar to the mass murderer in Orleans) tells us what we need to know about Islamic State's new recruits in Europe: they are foot soldiers who are not necessarily religious, possibly petty criminals who have nothing to lose, or those who have been indoctrinated via the internet.

At a ceremony to commemorate the Nice victims, some in the crowd booed the French prime minister, Manuel Valls, for the incompetence of the government he headed in failing to prevent the massacre - although it is difficult to imagine such random attacks can be completely prevented. Having said that, however, apparently the police failed to check the 19-tonne vehicle used by Lahouaiej-Bouhlel as a weapon of mass murder - he told them he was an ice cream delivery man. But the real problem is not such lapses in 'security'. The French government is amongst those which fail to see the connection between selling arms to Saudi Arabia and the 'unofficial' support generated for IS.

A number of academics and social scientists have been wheeled out by the media to try and explain why France has had three terrorist attacks in as many years, while we have not seen a major incident in the UK. But no state should be self-congratulatory about having so far escaped Islamic State terror: many countries have fallen victim and more will do so in future ●

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Notes

1. See, for instance, www.theasian.asia/archives/95335.
2. www.iraqinquiry.org.uk/the-report.

LABOUR

No safe spaces for traitors

Jeremy Corbyn not only faces the nonentity, Owen Smith, but a legal challenge in the high court. **Jim Grant** of Labour Party Marxists says the left must toughen up

Writing on the Labour leadership crisis is no easy feat for a weekly paper, so full is the saga with twists and turns, so leavened is the story with unconfirmed, rapidly disproven and probably maliciously spread rumours, and - in reality - so desperate and chaotically conducted is the struggle on both sides.

Nevertheless, the overall shape of events is clear, and at the moment the picture is of a determined rearguard action by the right to minimise, by fair means and (mostly) foul, the chances of a second victory for Jeremy Corbyn.

Bureaucratic outrages

We begin with the quite astonishing vigour and almost endearing lack of shame with which the right attempted to stitch up the contest in its very mechanics. Readers will be aware of the broad outlines of the story: at the end of last week's crunch meeting of the national executive committee, after Corbyn's status on the ballot had been confirmed and one or two naive loyalists had left, the traitor bloc found itself with a narrow majority, and an item on the agenda before it called 'any other business'.

There, they took 'business' submitted to the meeting a whole 30 minutes before its beginning (according to NEC soft left Ann Black), the outcome of which was the wholesale disenfranchisement of a quarter of the party membership, the suspension of all meetings of constituency and ward branches, an eightfold increase in the registered supporter's fee, and the constriction of the period for registration for the latter to two days. All in all, an unusually productive meeting of the NEC... Since then, we have had the suspension of Brighton and Hove District Labour Party for (let us be honest about this) daring to replace a rightwing local executive with a leftwing one at its recent annual general meeting. Whatever will Iain 'Mugabe' McNicol think of next?

Again, what is striking about this is the sheer brazenness of the gerrymandering - so overt that it would shame 1950s Ulster Unionists or the Putin regime. Above all, it demonstrates that a substantial, dominant faction of the Labour Party apparatus has taken the side of the right in this whole farrago - something, of course, we already knew from the endless leaks of confidential data from the compliance unit to such friends of the labour movement as *The Daily Telegraph* and the Tory muckraker, Guido Fawkes.

Their opponents are: the bulk of the trade union bureaucracy, perhaps surprisingly (with the exception of the GMB, whose leadership is playing its usual scab role over Trident); and the hundreds of thousands of Labour members either attracted by Corbyn's campaign and victory last year or sick to the back teeth of the contempt in which Blairites, Brownites and the like held the rank and file, as its numbers dwindled to historic lows, and - evidently - all the more so now those members are getting assertive.

Choosing a 'leader'

The 'anyone but Corbyn' part of the coup has been proceeding with ruthless single-mindedness, in spite of the *probably* fatal setback of failing to keep the incumbent off the ballot - the latest legal challenge notwithstanding (see below). However, the 'who *exactly* other than Corbyn' part has been rather more tortuous. This is hardly surprising - it is,



Owen Smith: hardly radical

after all, a coup that has been launched on the principle of naked, apolitical careerism, the principle of *opposition* to principle.

Indeed, so far as the ridiculous Angela Eagle/Owen Smith business has been concerned, we have been here before, when both Andy Burnham and Yvette Cooper pitched themselves as the *only* reasonable challenger to Corbyn last summer, but were unable to resolve their differences, since only their national insurance numbers actually differed. (We note, parenthetically, that Burnham has rather remarkably taken the high road and refused to join in the coup, although this may be merely to enhance his chances of being selected as Labour's mayoral candidate in Greater Manchester.)

At least it is over now - Smith has the support of the Parliamentary Labour Party. His pitch was that he was the 'soft left', and that - being a relatively fresh face, having entered the Commons in 2010 - he would be better able to win over Jeremy Corbyn's supporters (translation: he is not tainted by the Iraq debacle as obviously as Eagle). Enough of his co-conspirators in the PLP agreed for him to get 25 more PLP nominations than Angela Eagle (18 more overall, including MEPs). Indeed, the fact that nobody had heard of him until a couple of weeks ago is a distinct advantage - especially given that he is on record (as of 2006) as having supported, in vague terms, "the tradition of leftwing engagement to remove dictators", while ducking the question of Iraq specifically (he voted for military action in Libya in 2011, however, which turned out *just great*); the carving off of parts of the NHS for the private sector; and PFI hospitals and academies.¹ He was also, before formal involvement in politics, a lobbyist for the pharmaceutical giant, Pfizer.

Of course, he now accepts he was wrong on most of these things - how could he not? Who would vote for some Blairite nonentity under these circumstances? In any case, we hope that voters in the coming election have the elementary intelligence to at least look the guy up on Wikipedia before

they take his assurances of honest 'soft leftism' as good coin. He is a *possibly* reformed Blairite - but a traitor like the rest of them.

Help! I'm being oppressed

The other tactic being deployed is the multiplication of accusations of 'bullying' and 'harassment'. The suspension of Brighton and Hove appears to be on the basis that the outgoing officials considered the manner and comprehensiveness of their defeat a form of harassment; the interdiction of CLP meetings and suchlike across the board is supposedly a preventative measure against the excessive rancour and bile-spitting of Jeremy's rabid Red Guards.

There are two explanations for this offensive: the first is that we are dealing with a flood of crocodile tears, the assiduous cultivation of a spurious victimhood, cynically designed to delegitimise wholly justified anger at the traitorous actions of the PLP majority. The second is, well, just the opposite: these people are genuinely put out by feeling a little pressure, and simply cannot *imagine* what they have done to deserve it. Both seem to be true, one way or the other; we cannot imagine Angela Eagle (who is, according to her own account, a 'tough' sort) is really in fear of her life. On the other hand, there is NEC nonentity Johanna Baxter, whose account of the Big Day collapsed into peals of sobbing at the memory of potentially being denied a secret ballot for NEC decisions. She looks for all the world like somebody in the midst of a breakdown, which, of course, was not enough to stop the media exploiting her misery to paint Corbyn supporters as - in the words of the *Mirror*'s Carole Malone - "Lenin-style bully boys who'd send women to the gulag".²

In reality, the 'honest' trauma of Baxter and (perhaps) other 'short-beaked pigeons' of the Blair generation is exactly the same as the fabricated fear of more serious politicians - in both cases, what is not accepted is *accountability*. Both Baxter and

Eagle, and Smith, and Hilary Benn, are conspirators against the clearly expressed will of their party. They have seized, as factional property, the principal means of disciplinary procedure. The *only* means available to ordinary members to hold their MPs to account are the very ones decried as 'intimidation' by the MPs - open ballots, verbal censure, and above all *deselection* and trigger ballots (of which we expect there would have been a good few, if CLP meetings had not been suspended).

Making omelettes, breaking eggs

This is, unfortunately, an acute *weak spot* of the left, which has become in the main consumed by fatuous victimology over the past few years. This paper has argued repeatedly that 'safe spaces' and the interpretation of everything through the prism of preventing harassment is in fact a form of politics ultimately in service of the bureaucracy as a caste in society at large. The illusion that is possible to 'do politics differently', for a definition of the same that means we are all going to be terribly nice to each other *or else*, is one promoted heavily by the likes of Momentum, as with almost all leftwing political movements that present themselves as 'new'.

In doing so, the leadership of the Corbyn movement has disarmed its rank and file, holding back on deselection, collapsing disgracefully over the fabricated 'anti-Semitism' scandal - need we go on? In truth, politics is war by peaceful means. Whatever else we may think of the traitors, they at least understand this: thus, their tactics are not constrained unduly by high-minded attention to moral principle, focusing merely on the effective application of force.

It had looked as though Corbyn would come out the other side of all this victorious. The plotters had lost the initiative, and had more or less been dragged, kicking and screaming, into an electoral contest, which the latest available data suggests they could lose by a demonstratively

punishing margin. But now, of course, there is the previously half-expected legal challenge to the NEC decision to include Corbyn on the ballot. This has been brought by former Labour parliamentary candidate Michael Foster, who subsequently became a substantial donor to party funds, and both McNicol and Corbyn himself will be the defendants.

Of course, it is useful for the PLP right that this challenge has been mounted by someone not directly involved in the battle. If it was successful then they could claim that they would have *preferred* Corbyn to have been defeated in a democratic ballot... But what can you do? However, *will* it be successful? That is very dubious, to say the least.³ So, assuming the challenge fails and Corbyn does indeed win the leadership contest, what will the right do then? Will Corbyn suddenly enjoy the confidence of Eagle, Smith, Benn and co, who have all hated him since day zero? What are they planning to do if he is re-elected?

The official policy of the Corbyn office in this whole period has been, in paraphrase, that "we need to unite, at this time of all times, when the Tories are in turmoil" - and, now that the Tories are no longer very much in turmoil, to fight a general election in the short term against a government with no mandate. We doubt there is much else an old-fashioned party leader's office can say at a time like this.

Yet it is plain that it presents a fantasy, at best of rhetorical value ('they started it') and the principal dynamic is towards a *split*, and thus an ugly battle over every inch of political territory from Cornwall to the Outer Hebrides. Unity between the PLP as it exists and the membership it holds in such hatred and contempt is, at this point, impossible. There is merely victory, if we are bold, or defeat, *if we allow ourselves to be disarmed* ●

Notes

1. www.walesonline.co.uk/news/politics/owen-smith-iraq-war-working-2338066.
2. *Daily Mirror* July 16.
3. See 'Don't rely on the courts' *Weekly Worker* July 14 2016.

Time for Corbyn to speak out

What does the right do when it loses an election? It voids the result! Tony Greenstein reports on the suspension of the largest local Labour unit

Brighton and Hove District Labour Party consists of three constituencies, all of which meet as one body. It is the largest single unit in the entire Labour Party, with 6,000 members, a figure which has tripled over the last year. Its annual general meeting had been called for Saturday July 9 at 4pm. It was a bright and sunny day and Momentum had called a rally for 2pm in the local Brighthelm Community Centre.

Brighthelm has a big hall which can accommodate about 300-350 people. We expected 100-200. Instead not only was the hall packed, but the cafe area behind it was standing room only - and then a couple of hundred were outside trying to get in. At least 800 people had come to what is the largest public meeting I can remember in Brighton.

It was not as if there were any headline speakers. We had not been able to get a leftwing MP, but still people turned up in droves - incensed at the antics of the Parliamentary Labour Party in trying to mount a coup against Jeremy Corbyn.

At about 3.30 most of those in attendance made their way to City College, where the AGM was booked to take place. Because of the incompetence of the outgoing executive a hall that would take a maximum of only about 200 people had been booked. The result was that the hustings had to be repeated three times in order that 600 people could vote. Nonetheless, despite a certain degree of chaos, everyone queued in an orderly fashion and voted without incident.

When the votes were counted, the candidates backed by Momentum had won all five officer positions and by the following Monday, Momentum candidates had won three of the five ordinary executive places, using a single transferable vote system. In other words, eight out of the 10 places were won by the left.

Mark Sandell, formerly president of West Sussex National Union of Teachers, was elected chair, beating Mark Jackson by 376 votes (62%) to 224. Claire Wadey of the Labour Representation Committee, a previous member of the executive, was the new treasurer, beating the previous secretary - the universally acknowledged incompetent, John Warmington - by 374 votes to 226. Greg Hadfield, who had previously edited the *Brighton and Hove Independent* newspaper, defeated Edward Crask by 393 votes to 213 to become secretary. Anne Pissaridou saw off the unpopular Nicky Easton, the previous vice-chair for campaigns, by 391-204. Easton had distinguished herself by opposing a resolution which supported the doctors' strike and which urged members to join the picket lines. Christine Robinson was elected unopposed as vice-chair for membership.¹

Of course, this was unacceptable to the right wing, in the form of local Progress MP Peter Kyle and Progress council leader Warren Morgan. When Kyle won Hove from the Conservatives at the 2015 general election, it was said that the most rightwing candidate had been elected. Kyle is a supporter of private company involvement in the NHS and opposes rail nationalisation.

False allegations

Almost immediately we began to hear false allegations of incidents which had allegedly occurred at the meeting. If the right were to be believed, the AGM was a maelstrom of shouting, intimidation and violence. Warren Morgan went



Jeremy Corbyn: conciliation does not work

into overdrive to manufacture out of thin air allegations of malpractice and intimidation. On twitter he invented an allegation of a spitting incident, even though there had been no complaint and, it seems, no victim. The security guard who was allegedly spat at, when asked later about the incident replied, "What incident?" The college has since confirmed that there has been no complaint, other than by the person who is alleged to have spat.

Warren Morgan also claimed that Peter Kyle MP was subject to abuse, which is the exact opposite of what happened. It was his supporters who engaged in abuse. Kyle was perhaps miffed that people saw him as a traitor to Corbyn and did not want to speak to him, but failure to engage someone in conversation does not constitute abuse.

In fact the only real incident that occurred was after the vote, when two Progress thugs, in full view of at least two Labour councillors, including the very rightwing Julie Cattell, approached London Momentum speaker Seema Chandwani and a friend, Michael Calderbank, in a pub, where they were eating, and allegedly told them to "get the fuck out of Brighton". In fact so incompetent were they that they approached another black person first, but the witch-hunters at Labour Party HQ have ignored this example of possible racial abuse, despite it having been reported in a national newspaper² - because, of course, it had been carried out by the right.

The names of the two individuals are

known. One of them is renowned for being an ardent Zionist. This incident, however, was not the subject of Warren Morgan's complaint.

The only formal complaint I know of made to Iain McNicol, Labour's general secretary, is *against* Warren Morgan - for making the false allegation of spitting. It is clear beyond doubt that the 'spitting incident' never occurred.³ The complaint was made an hour before notice was received by Greg Hadfield, the new secretary, of the suspension of the district party. As is normal now, news of the suspension was leaked to the press before party officers were officially informed and that is how Greg first learnt of it.

Apart from being the elected secretary of Brighton and Hove Labour Party, Greg Hadfield is a former Fleet Street journalist and a capable investigative reporter. Whereas the Labour Party witch-hunters have promised an 'investigation' which has not and will not materialise, Greg has been assiduous in seeking out information.

He has numerous testimonies from different individuals who attended the AGM, reporting that the proceedings were orderly and friendly and that no-one was intimidated. The right's false allegations are a blatant example of gerrymandering - on a par with banning 130,000 new Labour members from voting in the election for leader.

National Labour Party officers, led by McNicol, are willing to subvert the most basic norms of democracy in order

to help the right stay in power. He tried but failed last week to keep Corbyn off the ballot paper. In a fascinating letter from solicitors Howe and Co⁴ McNicol was accused of having gone to "great lengths to conceal your intentions from the leader and the shadow chancellor of the exchequer" when calling an NEC meeting, in an attempt to try and ensure that trade union delegates were not able to attend.

We have a situation in the Labour Party nationally where ordinary meetings are banned, 130,000 members have been prevented from voting in the leadership election, a £25 surcharge has been imposed on supporters who want to vote and now they are suspending local parties. There are believed to be two others also suspended, including Manchester Gorton.

And the national officers of the Labour Party were not content with merely cancelling a properly called and run AGM - it reinstated the old executive, despite the fact that its members were democratically voted out by a large majority. This is the 'democracy' that New Labour is trying to have signed nationally. Yet another reason why Jeremy Corbyn should drop his Trappist silence.

There is also a witch-hunt in the offing against at least two of the new elected officers. Allegations are being made against the new chairperson, Mark Sandell, and against Phil Clarke. Sandell is being targeted on the basis of having signed an Alliance for Workers' Liberty petition in 2011 (I suspect we can thank MI5 for this one!) and it is

alleged that he is an AWL member. Phil Clarke, who is general secretary of Brighton and Hove Trades Council and an NUT executive member, has been quite open about the fact that he has previously stood for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition in local elections. The local executive debated this and approved his membership when he first applied to join the Labour Party, but he is now being attacked on this account. Whereas New Labour is quite prepared to welcome into the fold ex-Tory and Ukip candidates, socialists who have in the past stood against Labour are condemned for an eternity.

The witch-hunt has been led in Brighton by the local rag, the *Brighton Argus*, which has given prominence to the most outlandish of claims by the Labour right. In one article it quoted an "anonymous former member [who] said he quit the party in recent months, disillusioned with the direction it was heading". Unsurprisingly it failed to question any of the thousands who had joined the party recently.⁵ The *Argus* cited a tweet from Warren Morgan, as though the council leader was simply restating uncontested facts. The tweet read: "I am sorry to hear that our local MP was subject to abuse by some of those attending, and that a member of venue staff unconnected with the meeting was spat on."⁶

It will be a test of Jeremy Corbyn's mettle as to whether he is prepared to speak out against this witch-hunt. Corbyn's appeasement of the Labour right is now in tatters. If he remains silent he will simply be aiding those who are doing their best to remove him. The fixing of elections that do not go the right's way is being carried out by Labour's civil service. Its permanent staff owe their loyalty not to the leader of the Party, but to Progress and the right. Unless Corbyn and the left are willing to engage in some bloodletting and remove McNicol, John Stolliday of the compliance unit and some of the other bureaucrats, then his expected re-election in the autumn will be a pyrrhic victory.

And Momentum under Jon Lansman has remained silent throughout the witch-hunt. Only when Jackie Walker, its vice-chair, was suspended did it raise its voice. It needs to take its gloves off and vigorously oppose the witch-hunt which began with anti-Zionists and supporters of the Palestinians, and is now spreading to the wider left in the party. The contempt of the right for basic party democracy is visible for all to see. On the basis of spurious and untested allegations, properly conducted election results are overturned on the say-so of one individual. The compliance unit and the national executive majority is willing to do the right's bidding. It is up to the left to exert maximum pressure - not least on some of those on the Grassroots Alliance NEC slate - to ensure that democracy in the Labour Party is defended ●

Notes

1. www.brightonandhoveindependent.co.uk/2016/07/10/corbyn-supporters-top-poll-for-key-posts-on-brighton-and-hove-labour-party-executive.
2. *Morning Star* July 11 2016.
3. See, for instance, *Brighton and Hove Independent* July 18 2016 (<http://brightonandhoveindependent.co.uk/brighton-hove-labour-spitting>); and *Brighton and Hove News* July 18 2016 (www.brightonandhoveindependent.co.uk/2016/07/18/brighton-labour-member-accused-of-spitting-at-party-meeting-makes-formal-complaint/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter).
4. www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/jul/12/legal-letter-to-nec-chief-over-labour-leadership-rules.
5. *The Argus* July 17 2016.
6. *The Argus* July 15 2016.

CPB

Which side are you on?

Why is the *Morning Star's* Communist Party of Britain willing to be an ally of the Labour thought police, asks **Dave Lynch**

We are in the middle of a war inside the Labour Party, with the party bureaucracy - inspired by the right and the majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party - busily seeking to trample its 'authority' over the rank and file. It is time to stand up, take sides with the left and defeat the Labour traitors.

If this is a statement of the bleeding obvious to make in a communist newspaper, we write it in order to make clear our disgust at the attitude of the *Morning Star's* Communist Party of Britain (CPB), and its general secretary, Robert Griffiths, to some of the issues at stake.

Griffiths has recently written to the Labour Party's general secretary, Iain McNicol, to assure him that the CPB "does not engage in entryism".¹ Griffiths writes:

According to reports in *The Guardian* and other media outlets, ... Labour Party staff have produced a research paper [that] links the Communist Party to 'entryism' in the Labour Party. In particular, that research paper cites a report made to our party's executive committee [that] on June 25 declared that "defending the socialist leadership of the Labour Party at all costs" should be a priority for communists. Nowhere in that executive committee report ... do we propose that our members join or register with the Labour Party. "At all costs" is a rhetorical flourish that cannot, obviously, be taken literally.²

So far, so dull and so pointless.

However, just so McNicol is clear how earnest the intentions of Griffiths are in this regard, the letter continues:

Should you or your staff have any evidence that Communist Party members have joined the Labour Party without renouncing their CP membership, or engaged in any similar subterfuge, please inform me, so that action can be taken against them for bringing our party into disrepute.³

So, let us be clear what is being proposed here: in the middle of a civil war, with the Labour Party rank and file struggling with the bureaucracy over who should be the arbiter of matters such as suitability for membership, Griffiths is prepared to stand shoulder to shoulder with McNicol and suggest that it is a Labour bureaucrat who is the final arbiter of any such issues; and, worse, is prepared to scab on any CPB member who has taken out Labour membership and do McNicol's job for him. This wretched attempt by Griffiths to put himself forward as junior cockroach monitor is one that should be met with widespread contempt by the Labour left. It is actually the business of the whole Labour membership to decide who is a member of the party - not the likes of McNicol or would-be Boy Scout helpers such as Griffiths.

Uncritical

How did things come to this pass? The seeds of such an approach are, of course, embedded in the undynamic and cautious manner in which the 'official' CPGB approached the Labour Party in the 1960s and 1970s. This was instantly apparent in October 2015, shortly after Corbyn's election as leader. The CPB wrote then:

Given the balance of forces in the Parliamentary Labour Party, and the requirements of Labour's cumbersome policy-making procedures, Corbyn is now constrained in terms of the political



Robert Griffiths: scab

positions he can adopt publicly. The need to compromise forced upon him and his supporters should not be used to spread cynicism, pessimism and defeatism or to call into question the significance of his victory. That can be left to the ultra-leftists, sectarians and anarchists. Criticism of the compromises in question should be firm, but temperate and mindful of realities.⁴

The CPB also instructed its members to "combat negativism, adventurism and defeatism".⁵ In practice, and in the context of a torpid and low-level political culture, this has merely translated into an empty display of solidarity with Corbyn. The CPB members we have encountered recently have simply turned themselves into uncritical cheerleaders - frankly useless for the battle raging inside the Labour Party. In this situation, with the CPB desperately concerned not to rock the boat, communists, even of the *Morning Star* variety, joining the Labour Party in any numbers and advocating the particular policies of this or that external body become an 'embarrassment' to Corbyn and therefore need to be expelled voluntarily by the CPB itself, kowtowing to the Labour right's definition of membership.

For an organisation that prides itself on somehow being the continuation of the 'official' CPGB, we can note in passing the huge gulf that separates the CPB from the CPGB of the 1920s. Whatever our many criticisms of the party back then, we can note with pride the militant manner in which the CPGB fought back against the bureaucracy that was hounding it out of the Labour Party, organising the National Left Wing Movement to fight against expulsions and the disaffiliation of branches. Unsurprisingly, no-one in the CPGB of the 1920s had the enterprising idea of expelling their own members and doing the Labour bureaucracy's dirty work for it. There was no question of the CPGB turning down Labour Party membership in the cause of not embarrassing the Labour left.

We can also read in Griffiths' letter an implied threat to those in the CPB thinking of decamping into the Labour Party and arguing for the CPB's politics. Back in September 2015, the CPB was already fielding concerns that "Jeremy Corbyn's victory and the left turn in the Labour Party might result in membership defections from the CP".⁶ While at this point the group noted "news has been received centrally of four or five such resignations - and there have no doubt been a few more unreported ones",⁷ we can be certain that there have been further membership defections (particular among those large numbers who just hold a CPB card and do no organised work for it) and that close CPB sympathisers will have signed up to the Labour Party in

large numbers. There was already a big drop in the CPB membership from December 2014 to December 2015, when it fell from 917 to 772. The CPB tries to explain away these figures by arguing that it has applied a more strict interpretation of rules in relation to arrears.⁸ However, some of this drop is undoubtedly accounted for by the falling away of membership in the wake of Corbyn's victory in 2015.

The CPB and the *Morning Star*, together with the CPB's forerunners in the Communist Campaign Group, do not have a particularly happy record in terms of even written support for those on the receiving end of witch-hunts in the Labour Party. When the purges against Militant were underway in 1986, the *Morning Star* took a rather ambiguous position on the matter. While it did not line itself up to support expulsions in the manner of the New Communist Party at the time, it refused to defend Militant and identified it as a problem.⁹ Even worse, before his death in 2013, the CPB used to give many political platforms to Jim Mortimer, the Labour Party's hapless former general secretary, who, despite some apparent reservations about expulsions, was prepared to front the initial purge on Militant in the most politically objectionable way. At the 1982 Labour Party conference, for example, Mortimer defined Militant, laughably, as the "ideological allies" of the "right wing of the Conservative Party".¹⁰ In terms of the CPB, by your former friends shall you be known. Left militants - particularly those from other political tendencies - should have no illusions whatsoever in the *Morning Star's* consistent and continued support in any witch-hunt.

Role

So what role does the CPB envision for itself, other than as a passive cheerleader for Corbyn and company, and being mindful of the "realities" and "compromises" that are part of maintaining a left-led Labour Party? The answer is in an echo of the 'movementism' that currently bedevils the Socialist Workers Party. The CPB executive committee thinks "it can serve as a bridge between the new and young left in the Labour Party and anti-austerity, peace and environmental campaigns on the one hand and the organised labour movement on the other".¹¹

This is nonsense on a number of levels. First, the CPB is simply too small to carry out this role. As we have seen above, the organisation's membership at the end of 2015 stood at the historically low level of 772, around half the total of its founding membership in 1988. In any case, these formal totals are relatively meaningless. The CPB has no more than around 150 members active at any level and is currently embarked on yet another 'renewal' process to desperately try and inspire its inactive membership into life.

As Griffiths himself put it in 2015, when asked about the CPB's rivals to the title of 'Communist Party', "We're 10 times [sic] bigger than all the others put together, but I won't make too much of that, because we're still pretty small."¹² Quite how a disorganised rubbish heap such as the CPB can take on a grand design of inspiring the new left in the Labour Party is, ahem, somewhat difficult to comprehend.

True, the CPB does have some advantages over its rivals. Unfortunately, it is still the ideas of the CPB's parliamentary programme, *Britain's road to socialism*, that forms the base of much of the left's strategic thinking inside the Labour Party (even though that relationship would be largely unconscious in all but a few cases). However attenuated, the idea of 'getting rid of the Tories', as a prelude to a succession of ever-leftward-moving governments working in a national silo, remains a predominant one that has its roots in the gradualist perspectives of 'official communism' in its dotage. Despite this, the CPB's blunt refusal to *organise* these perspectives in the Labour Party in the context of younger and more varied forces joining in numbers renders that influence problematic and more marginalised.

The CPB does also have its main 'inspiration' and animator, the *Morning Star*, to connect with the Labour left, with Corbyn and his circle being readers and supporters. However, even beyond the downward spiral in its print circulation since the 1980s (with some putting the daily *sale* down to around 2,000), the paper suffers from a major contradiction. The fact that it shares a political line with the CPB (despite the loose involvement

of some trade unions), means that it can never truly be seen as a broad left paper. Even though these are more agnostic times (in terms of the articles it produces and the attitude of some on the left), the *Morning Star* will never be anything other than a 'Stalinist rag' to a hardened group of politicians. For them, the paper is controversial by its very existence and the atrocious history of political prostitution (most notable more recently on its attitude to the Chinese workers' paradise) that its name implies. On the other hand, the fact that CPB members have to distribute a publication often containing lowest-common-denominator political bilge means that the paper plays little or no role in cohering their organisation as communists.

Add now into that toxic mix the absurd idea of this small group joining hands with the right to expel its own members from the Labour Party and we can only suggest that anyone looking to take the comradely advice of the CPB over the coming months would be engaged in an act of political suicide ●

Notes

1. <https://21centurymanifesto.wordpress.com/2016/07/12/communist-infiltration-of-labour>.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Party Line* October 14 2015.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. <http://search.electoralcommission.org.uk/Api/Accounts/Documents/17477>.
9. See 'The revenge of the living dead' *The Leninist* July 1 1986.
10. Cited in M Crick *The march of Militant* London 1986, p201.
11. *EC resolution for the 54th congress*, 2016.
12. www.newstatesman.com/2015/07/red-all-over-article.

Summer Offensive

Inner balance

With just over three weeks remaining before the end of the CPGB's annual fundraising drive, our Summer Offensive, we are - at long last - more than halfway there. Last week saw an extra £2,183 come into our coffers, taking the total so far raised to £16,195 towards our £30,000 target.

Among the big shakers this week were comrade PM, who supplied us with equipment to the tune of a brilliant £574; VP, who transferred £300 into the *Weekly Worker's* bank account; SK who donated a cool £230; and regular donor MM, who added another £75 to his personal SO total.

Then there was the cash raised at the CPGB stall at last Saturday's London demonstration, organised by the People's Assembly and Stand Up To Racism. Even though the numbers on the march were disappointing, dozens of demonstrators bought papers, books and - the big earner - our 'Defend Jeremy Corbyn' badges. A total of £343 was raised.

A more modest contributor was comrade TW, who provided us with an unusual reason for clicking on the *Weekly Worker's* PayPal button. He confessed to feeling a bit "grubby" after paying £25 to become a registered Labour supporter (no prizes for guessing who he's voting for!). However, "Offsetting this with an equal donation to the *Weekly Worker* has restored my inner

balance!" he tells us. Well, comrade, so long as your "inner balance" is restored! Our paper plays all sorts of roles, you know.

Another comrade with kind words to say about the *Weekly Worker* was TT, who donated a tenner via PayPal. "As always, I greatly value and enjoy reading the *Weekly Worker*," he wrote. "I feel that it treats the reader with respect and I like the fact that it challenges comrades to reflect and think critically about events and the most effective strategies for moving forward."

That's what we aim to do, comrade!

And that's one of the reasons why our Summer Offensive is so important. It helps us clear all those niggling IOUs that have mounted up during the year, not to mention allowing us to buy the sorely needed supplies for our office that we've had to do without.

All of that means we're in a better position to please our readers, including comrade TT - he was one of 3,451 internet readers last week, by the way.

Anyone else need their "inner balance" restored? ●

Peter Manson

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

ECONOMICS

Brexit, TTIP and TPP

Michael Roberts examines a possible effect of a British withdrawal from the European Union

One of the ironies of the Brexit vote by the British people (more exactly, the English and the Welsh, as the Scots voted to remain), is that the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, otherwise known as TTIP, has been crippled, possibly killed.

It looks as though any potential trade agreement with the US will be 'parked' by the European Union Commission until Britain's article 50 (Brexit) negotiations have been completed. Washington is also being forced to put TTIP on hold because Britain represents 16% of the EU market. Until the UK's relationship with the EU is finalised, there is no way to assess the nature and scale of the reduction in the EU's market, making it impossible to value. It is now possible that the deal will never be concluded.

Anyway, with article 50 unlikely to be invoked very quickly by the new Conservative government under Theresa May, there would seem to be insufficient time to conclude the negotiations before the end of the year, and many in Brussels now want to focus on obtaining the 'right Brexit' terms, pushing TTIP down the list of priorities. And, with next year's elections in France, Germany and Holland, EU leaders will try to avoid a weapon to be used by populist parties, who see TTIP as another attempt to impose measures of 'globalisation' on nation-states.

There has been much coverage about how TTIP, if implemented, will impose serious restrictions on the ability of democratic governments to carry out the wishes of their electorates. TTIP and its baby sister, CETA - the Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement, a similar trade deal that the EU has negotiated with Canada - enable corporations to sue governments in secret commercial Investor-State Dispute Settlement courts. This right of litigation exposes governments to lawsuits for any policy-induced losses suffered by a corporation through ISDS courts for up to 20 years.

But, aside from the issue of democratic governments being blocked and sued under these international trade treaties, there is the question of whether international trade agreements, bilateral or multilateral, are beneficial to labour or to capital. The specifically economic base of such a conception has been known since the first sentence of the first chapter of the founding work of scientific economics, Adam Smith's *The wealth of nations*: "The greatest improvement in the productive powers of labour [has] been the effects of the division of labour."

Mainstream economists are convinced that 'free trade' is beneficial to all. As Keynesian Paul Krugman put it,

The great majority of economists would argue that the gains from reducing trade protection still exceed the losses. However, it has become more important than before to make sure that the gains from international trade are widely spread.¹

How the latter is to be done is not explained. Greg Mankiw, the right-of-centre mainstream economist, who reckons that inequality of income is justified, is more honest:

... will trade make everyone better off? Probably not. In practice, compensation for the losers from international trade is rare. Without such compensation, opening up to international trade is a policy that expands the size of the



Free trade: not a two-way street

economic pie, while perhaps leaving some participants in the economy with a smaller slice.²

The idea that 'free trade' is beneficial to all countries and to all classes is a 'sacred tenet' of mainstream economics. In his new book, *Capitalism*, Anwar Shaikh analyses in detail the fallacious proposition that if each country concentrated on producing goods or services where it has a 'comparative advantage' over others (so its 'comparative costs' were lower) then all would benefit.³ Trading between countries would balance and wages and employment would be maximised.⁴

Shaikh shows that this is not only demonstrably untrue (countries run huge trade deficits and surpluses for long periods; have recurring currency crises; and workers lose jobs from competition from abroad without getting new ones from more competitive sectors). He also explains why: namely that it is not comparative advantage or costs that drives trade, but absolute costs. If Chinese labour costs are much lower than American companies' labour costs in any market, then China will gain in market share, even if America has some so-called 'comparative advantage'. What really decides is the productivity level and growth in an economy and the cost of labour: "free trade will lead to persistent trade surpluses for countries whose capitals have lower costs and persistent trade deficits for those whose capital has higher costs".⁵

Losers and winners

In the US, the big loser from the current wave of globalisation has been the working class, as Branko Milanović of the City University of New York details in his new book, *Global inequality*.⁶ Jobs will go, as more efficient economies take trade share from the less efficient and with open markets (no tariffs and special restriction or quotas).

And, of course, in the TTIP and TPP (Trans-Pacific) deals, nothing is done to help those who lose employment as a result. For example, the US Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program has a budget of about \$664 million,⁷ or roughly 0.004% of GDP; military and security spending used to preserve imperialist markets for the US costs 4,000 times more! Instead, just one dollar of every \$25,000 in income generated by the United States goes to help people here who have been hurt by globalisation. They do not receive the cash directly; they just have to hope that the programme - which offers retooling, retraining and relocation, among other services - will aid their transition to new jobs.

In reality, trade agreements like the TTIP and its pacific twin, TPP (already signed but not confirmed by national governments), are aimed at furthering the interests of the multinationals in world markets. The trade discussions are really a battle between the stronger and the weaker capitalist economies over whose companies get the best deal. This is the essence of 'regional' deals that have replaced the failed and defunct global arrangements that the World Trade Organisation has tried to achieve over the past 20 years.

In the case of the TPP, the agreement is specifically designed by the US and Japan to squeeze the ability of Chinese companies to build market share in Asia. The real character of the US TPP becomes clear immediately the fundamental economic data for its 12 intended signatory countries is examined. The potential signatories are dominated by the G7 economies of the US, Japan and Canada. These, together with Australia, constitute 90% of the GDP of those potential signatories. Participating developing economies - Mexico, Malaysia, Chile, Vietnam and Peru - make up only 8%.

In effect, the TTIP and TPP are really an attempt by the US to stop the decline

in global market share at others' expense, and also to counteract weakening economic growth and profitability at home. In 1985, economies in the proposed TPP countries accounted for 54% of world GDP; by 2014 this had dropped to 36%. From 1984 to 2014 the US share of world GDP fell from 34% to 23%, at current exchange rates. In the same period the US share of world merchandise trade dropped from 15% to 11%. So the TPP is not some great free-trade beneficence, but really an agreement by a group of advanced economies, with a 'fringe' of developing countries, whose share in world GDP has been significantly declining, in order to keep others out.

Indeed, it is very far away from the sacred idea of 'free trade'. As US economist Jeffrey Sachs noted of these TPP provisions,

Their common denominator is that they enshrine the power of corporate capital above all other parts of society, including ... even governments ... The most egregious parts of the agreement are the exorbitant investor powers implicit in the Investor-State Dispute Settlement system, as well as the unjustified expansion of copyright and patent coverage. We've seen this show before. Corporations are already using ISDS provisions in existing trade and investment agreements to harass governments in order to frustrate regulations and judicial decisions that negatively impact the companies' interests. The system proposed in the TPP is a dangerous and unnecessary ... blow to the judicial systems of all the signatory countries.

US supremacy

The TPP also gives legal protection to software companies, overwhelmingly US, to essentially spy on signatory states. Article 14.17 states: "No party shall require the transfer of, or access

to, source code of software owned by a person of another party, as a condition for the import, distribution, sale or use of such software, or of products containing such software, in its territory." While it is stated that this does not apply to "critical infrastructure", it does not exclude banks, commercial companies, etc. In short, the conception of the TPP is not to maximise prosperity for the Asia-Pacific Region, but to enshrine US supremacy. The TTIP does the same for the US in the European arena.

These deals are being negotiated in an environment where world trade is stagnating at best. Since the end of the great recession, world trade has grown no faster than the sluggish growth in world output - and that is unprecedented, in the post-war period,⁸ as trade has always grown faster than output. It is another indicator that we are in a long depression and not a normal boom and slump.⁹

So it would appear that 'globalisation' is stuttering and trade is offering no way out for capitalist economies in depression or stagnation.¹⁰ And that is not a rosy scenario for the British negotiators of a new trade deals outside the European Union ●

Author blogs at <https://thenextrecession.wordpress.com>

Notes

1. P Krugman, R Wells *Macroeconomics* New York 2012, p152.
2. See <https://thenextrecession.wordpress.com/2013/06/19/defending-the-indefensible>.
3. A Shaikh *Capitalism* Oxford 2016, chapter 11.
4. See also <http://glineq.blogspot.co.uk>
5. A Shaikh *Capitalism* Oxford 2016, p514.
6. B Milanovic *Global inequality* Harvard 2016. See also <http://glineq.blogspot.co.uk>
7. See www.doleta.gov/budget/docs/FY2016_BIB_ETI_Excerpts.pdf.
8. See www.globaltradealert.org/sites/default/files/GTA%2019%20-%20World%20Trade%20Plateaus_0.pdf.
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TORIES

Three Brexiteers set up to fail

When it comes to the EU, Theresa May has shown herself capable of thinking ahead for more than a week, writes **Eddie Ford**



David Davis, Boris Johnson and Liam Fox: reactionary swashbucklers

Theresa May's cabinet reshuffle, has been widely reported as a "ruthless" clearing out of the Camerons.¹ Obviously, George Osborne had to go - now a symbol of failure. Remember when he was a tactical genius? In fact, his entire austerity programme has been a complete failure. It has been abandoned, after the Brexit vote, in favour of some

sort of stimulus - an obvious move in an economic downturn, especially when interest rates are incredibly cheap, when the government can borrow money for next to nothing. But, no, when the Tories entered the coalition government in 2010, they embarked upon austerity. We do not know yet what exact economic package Osborne's replacement,

Phillip Hammond, will come up with - but the language of austerity is quickly dying. Something that made the July 18 People's Assembly/ Stand Up To Racism demonstration in London ('No austerity, no to racism') a slightly surreal event, as if Brexit had never happened.

In another unsurprising move, Michael 'psycho killer' Gove was

summarily sacked - he seemed to be regarded by *everyone* as a backstabbing traitor - and Dominic Raab, a strong Gove supporter, lost his job as civil liberties minister, no doubt in a case of guilt by association. Oliver Letwin, a key ally of Cameron going back years, also went. Michael Fallon kept his role as defence secretary and Sir Alan Duncan returned to

government, having been removed as junior international development minister in 2014 - now finding himself acting as a deputy to Boris Johnson only weeks after mocking him as "Silvio Berlusconi".² Maybe more a punishment than promotion. Amber Rudd took up May's former job as home secretary and Justine Greening became education secretary.

Access

The most significant appointments, it almost goes without saying, concern three figures strongly associated with the Brexit campaign - Boris Johnson, David Davis and Liam Fox. To much mirth, some of it perhaps unwarranted, Johnson was made foreign secretary, while Davis took up the newly created position of secretary of state for exiting the European Union (Brexit minister) and Fox heads the new department for international trade.

In the end, of the 22 full members of the cabinet and five who have the right to attend, only five retained the roles they held previously. When it comes to the 69 junior government and whips jobs, 15 went to women - a slightly lower proportion than the near third of female appointments in the cabinet. It is also worth noting that May made her longstanding policy advisor, "bearded Brummie" Nick Timothy, her joint chief-of-staff - alongside Fiona Hill, who was forced to resign in 2014 after a Downing Street inquiry found she had been the source of briefing against Gove over the 'Trojan Horse' fake scandal about Islamist 'infiltration' of schools in Birmingham. Much is made by the likes of the *Financial Times* as to Timothy's working class background in the Tile Cross district of Birmingham and his grammar school education - funny really, considering how we are all supposed to be middle class now.

Anyhow, he embraces the idea of state activism and his hero is not a Tory politician, but rather the former Liberal mayor of Birmingham, Joseph Chamberlain - who more than 100 years ago, in the words of Timothy, "believed that the state must remain small, capitalism must be preserved and private property protected, but working class children needed to be educated, workers protected from industrial injuries and unscrupulous bosses and the ownership of property extended to people of all classes".³ Hence his thinking is evident in the speech that May gave on the doorstep of Number 10, in which she promised to help Britons who felt their lives spinning "out of control" - and her attack on "unscrupulous bosses" during the leadership campaign. Not that Timothy is a bleeding-heart liberal, of course - he supported Brexit, is tough on immigration and favours a limited return of selective education.

Theresa May can actually think more than a week ahead - not an attribute you particularly associate with David Cameron. This was especially shown by her quick appointments of Johnson, Davis and Fox. In many respects, May is saying to the Brexit trio, 'You got us into this mess, so you can take the blame.' It is all but inevitable that they will fall out pretty quickly, and a Davis resignation seems almost certain when post-Brexit reality sinks in. Given that their declared intention is to retain access to the EU single market, while restricting in some way the free movement of people - something clearly unacceptable to EU leaders - the only conclusion you can draw is that they have been put up to fail,

What we fight for

which would be a pretty smart move. Let them take the flak, not May.

Indeed, May has moved well to cement Tory unity - when, being unelected by the party membership and a 'remainer', she could easily have become a divisive or resented figure. After all, if the referendum vote had gone the other way, you could readily imagine Cameron putting together such a unity cabinet. Underlining the point that May appears to have a slightly longer-term view of politics than we have been used to, her very first official act as prime minister was to meet Nicola Sturgeon in Edinburgh - she stressed that any Brexit terms have to have the agreement of *all* parts of the UK. Hence, another impossible hurdle for the three Brexiteers.

Sturgeon's spokesperson said May was "willing to listen to any proposal we bring forward to keeping Scotland's membership of the EU". In turn, a spokeswoman for the prime minister reiterated that she was committed to including the devolved Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish administrations in Brexit discussions - though in regard to a possible second referendum on Scottish independence, "the prime minister's view is that we have already had a referendum. It was legal, and fair, and the result was decisive."

Only a few weeks ago sections of the left, especially the Socialist Workers Party, were eagerly predicting that Brexit would shatter the Tories - the latest issue of *Socialist Worker* telling us that May is "presiding over a divided party with a tiny parliamentary majority" and anticipating that "her government will be a stormy one" (July 19). But this is obviously a wish-fulfilment fantasy on the part of the comrades: there is absolutely no evidence that the Tory Party is more divided than it has previously been, let alone about to split - quite the opposite. May so far is proving to be a steady pair of hands and the party looks very likely to unite behind her at least for the moment.

Success?

Theresa May said at her first cabinet meeting on July 19 that she could "make Brexit work for Britain" - adding that "Brexit means Brexit" and how it was "the duty" of every minister to "deliver success" on behalf of everyone in the country, "not just the privileged few". Furthermore, she said, her government will "not be defined by Brexit", but instead will "build the education, skills and social mobility" to "allow everyone to prosper from the opportunities of leaving the EU": social justice will be at heart of her administration, you see. We also learnt from May that "politics is not a game". Janan Ganesh of the *Financial Times*, however, was doubtlessly nearer the mark when he pointed out that "the process of extrication from the EU will, in all but the most fantastic scenarios, occupy ministerial and bureaucratic capacity for most of the rest of the parliament" (July 15).

May also revealed that she will personally take charge of the three new ministerial committees (on Brexit, the economy and social reform) to implement her "priorities" for government. Afterwards, No 10 hastily denied it was a move by the prime minister to keep tight control on the policy areas covered by Johnson, Davis and Fox. May then travelled the next day to Germany for talks with Angela Merkel, followed by discussions with François Hollande - these focussed on maintaining "good relations" in the wake of the Brexit vote, as well as opening discussions on how the process might proceed. Discussions about Brexit must be "frank and open", May declared - nor does she "underestimate the challenge" of the negotiations to come. Responding ahead of the visit, Merkel's spokesman, Steffen Seibert, stressed that "it's up to Britain to make clear how it wants to structure its

relationship with the EU in future" - ie, the onus was on the UK, not the EU, to make it work.

The prime minister told Merkel that Britain "needs time" to prepare for Brexit. Indeed, May has made it quite clear that she will not trigger article 50 until there is a clear "UK approach" - government lawyers confirming at the opening of the first legal challenge to the Brexit process on July 19 that May will not push the button (the nuclear button might be a different matter) which theoretically initiates the UK's departure from the EU before *at least* the end of this year.

But this immediately presents a problem. After some initial consolatory comments from Merkel, the EU leaders have toughened their stance: quite understandably from their point of view, they do not want to make it easy for countries to leave the EU - especially as both Merkel and Hollande face re-election next year and are under considerable domestic political pressure to drive a hard bargain. Meaning no special exceptions can be made for Britain in terms of continued access to the single market if the UK does not sign up to freedom of movement - no ifs, no buts.

Therefore, for the German and French governments, an exit request must be delivered as soon as possible - trigger article 50 now if you are serious. Only then can negotiations over the exit conditions begin. Contrary to what some argue, the EU leaders really mean this - hence the ban on any informal talks with Britain. Jean-Claude Juncker, the European Commission president, has even said that he will sack any staff caught informally discussing terms with Britain. Sure, Merkel remarked, the UK needs to "consider things for a while", but "we should not wait for a long time" - she was quoted by Reuters as saying, "We can't have a permanent impasse". Really ramming home the point, Brussels has also emphatically ruled out talks - informal or otherwise - on a possible trade deal before the UK triggers article 50, a diplomat commenting: "If they treat their referendum as a non-event, we will also treat their referendum as a non-event".

Not surprisingly, there are those who think article 50 will never be triggered because the relatively tight deadline for talks puts the state wishing to leave in a weak position - another EU diplomat stated that "the moment you push the button you're in a stupid negotiating position". Developing this theory, or suspicion, lawyer and writer David Allen Green, suggests:

... the longer article 50 notification is put off, the greater the chance it will never be made ... As long as the notification is not sent, the UK remains part of the EU. And there is currently no reason or evidence to believe that, regardless of the referendum result, the notification will be sent at all.⁴

And, of course, "so long as the article 50 notification is not made, the UK continues to be a full member of the EU, as it was before the referendum took place; indeed, as if the referendum never took place at all".⁵ In other words, there might well be a prolonged stand-off, which could last many years - perhaps for ever.

Regular *Weekly Worker* readers will know that we have speculated on numerous occasions about the possibility of a second referendum, which could still happen. All those opinion polls, articles and documentaries about people having second thoughts - the so-called 'regretters' - might have an eventual impact: after all, we have to listen to the 'concerns' of the British people, don't we?⁶ But, of course, a second referendum is by no means inevitable. Rather, just let things drag and drag, and people's memories are short

anyway - June 23 becoming more and more distant.

Theresa May can always blame Brexiteers like Johnson, Davis and Fox for not getting a deal that suits Britain's interests, when it comes to free movement and the single market - and that perfidious bluffer, Johnson, never really believed in Brexit in the first place. Come to think of it, why the hell should we be obligated by a legally non-binding referendum that took place years ago under very different circumstances?

Things are being set up to take a very long time. Brexit could end not with a bang, but a whimper - dying

from inertia and apathy ●

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Notes

1. Eg, 'More heads roll in next round of Theresa May's "ruthless" reshuffle' *The Guardian* July 16 2016.
2. www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/boris-johnson-alan-duncan-deputy-foreign-office-silvio-boriscioni-a7142086.html.
3. <https://next.ft.com/content/29fa0986-49cf-11e6-b387-64ab0a67014c>.
4. <http://jackofkent.com/2016/06/why-the-article-50-notification-is-important>.
5. "News and comment on law and policy, from a liberal and critical perspective".
6. <http://metro.co.uk/2016/06/26/more-than-a-million-people-regret-voting-leave-poll-shows-5968048>.

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

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■ 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.

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

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■ 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

**Break from
narrow
sectionalism**

Conniving with the Tories

The vote to renew Trident demonstrated that the Labour right will stop at nothing in their desire to be rid of Jeremy Corbyn, writes Peter Manson

On July 18 rightwing Labour MPs joined forces with the Tories in a blatant move to discredit their leader, Jeremy Corbyn. I am talking, of course, about the Commons vote to confirm the renewal of the Trident 'deterrent', by building four new submarines at an estimated cost of £205 billion.

From a practical point of view the vote was totally pointless. MPs were not being asked to authorise extra funding, but to endorse a renewal plan that was actually already in place. This led Tory MP Crispin Blunt to declare: "The truth is that this is a political weapon, effectively aimed against the Labour Party". Absolutely correct. Blunt was the only Conservative who opposed the July 18 government motion, maintaining that Trident is based on "the defence economics, the politics and the strategic situation of three decades ago" - in other words, before the collapse of the Soviet Union.

But for the political establishment, including the majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party, Britain's membership of the 'nuclear club' is not about 'defence' or 'deterrence' at all. It is about maintaining the UK's position in the global order - centrally as a key partner of the world hegemonic power, the United States. Accordingly, the government motion was carried overwhelmingly - by 472 votes to 117. Those in favour included no fewer than 140 Labour MPs - whose politics clearly have nothing whatsoever in common with the interests of the working class. They are, first and foremost, British nationalists, who favour British capital over and above that of its rivals.

To their credit, 47 Labour MPs voted against the motion, while a further 41 abstained. The abstainers were led by shadow foreign secretary Emily Thornberry and her defence counterpart, Clive Lewis, who are amongst the Labour MPs normally supporting Jeremy Corbyn. Labour should treat the government and the vote "with the contempt they deserve", they wrote, adding:

There is nothing new in this debate - a vote in principle was agreed in 2007 - and nothing whatsoever will happen as a result. It is being held simply to sow further divisions inside the Labour Party. The Tories know that those with strongly-held principles on either side of this debate will vote with their consciences, and the media will turn that into a fresh Labour crisis.¹

However, still attempting to play down Labour's internal divisions, the leadership under Corbyn and shadow chancellor John McDonnell decided to give their MPs a free vote. That allowed Corbyn himself to mount an attack against the obscenity of nuclear weaponry.

Indiscriminate WMD

But, according to newly elected Conservative Party leader and prime



Would kill tens of thousands in an instant

minister Theresa May, "We cannot abandon our ultimate safeguard out of misplaced idealism." So it is "misplaced idealism", is it, to be opposed to that obscenity? As Corbyn himself correctly described Trident during the debate, it is an "indiscriminate weapon of mass destruction". He added in his understated way: "I do not believe the threat of mass murder is an adequate way of dealing with international relations."

Many Labour MPs heckled Corbyn and the right queued up to denounce him afterwards. John Woodcock said the decision to give Labour MPs a free vote was a "terrible indictment of how far this once great party has fallen". Toby Perkins said his arguments were those of a "13-year-old". Yes, only a child would balk at launching a missile designed to kill tens of thousands of men, women and children at a single stroke.

Corbyn was accused by others of holding Labour members "in contempt" because the 2015 annual conference had voted for renewal. However, things are not that clear-cut. There was no specific vote on nuclear defence in Brighton, thanks to a behind-the-scenes agreement, but the

members did vote in favour of the new foreign policy statement, 'Britain in the world', which included the following sentence: "We remain committed to a minimum, credible, independent nuclear capability, delivered through a continuous at-sea deterrent."²

Even though there had been no conference debate on the 'nuclear deterrent' and no vote specifically about it, the rightwing Labour First immediately crowed in an email to its supporters: "If the rules are applied properly, this issue should not be considered by conference again until three years have elapsed!"

Showing his true colours, deputy leader Tom Watson, who had called for renewal, said afterwards that members of both Unite and the GMB who work in the nuclear industry would be "furious" with their union leaders for supporting Corbyn. In fact the GMB faces both ways on this issue - on the one hand, like most of the large TUC-affiliated unions, it is backing Corbyn; on the other, it favours Trident for no other reason that it is manufactured by its members.

In the words of GMB general

secretary Tim Roache: "It's not acceptable to play politics with our members' livelihoods." A good job the GMB did not organise concentration-camp guards in Nazi Germany - no doubt it would have condemned any move to close them down in the same terms.

But the GMB concentrated its fire on the Scottish National Party, whose 54 MPs voted unanimously against renewal - in fact all but one of the 59 Scottish parliamentary representatives were opposed to it. In a subsequent press release, Gary Cook, GMB regional officer and chair of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, said: "Just when we thought that thousands of good, high-value jobs were safe, the SNP and the Scottish political establishment show their utter contempt for Scottish workers and their families by putting their jobs on the line once again." He added:

The decision to commit to build and maintain the Trident successor programme has been taken following a fair, democratic vote and it's time

for the whole Scottish political establishment to accept this fact, take it on the chin and live with it, or else risk further alienating thousands of workers in Scotland, whose futures depend on defence manufacturing.³

Obviously, such statements are not driven by any desire to undermine the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn. They are driven by crude and narrow sectionalism - nothing more. Why should the future of those thousands of workers have to depend on "defence manufacturing" - ie, the production of WMD? Isn't brother Cook capable of thinking a little more broadly? How about introducing some politics, for instance?

And, as much as he would dispute it, his words play into the hands of not only the Labour right, but the Tories too ●

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Notes

1. www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jul/17/trident-vote-abstaining-nuclear-submarines.
2. www.labour.org.uk/manifesto/britain-in-the-world.
3. GMB press release, July 19.

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