A crash waiting to happen: Left Unity’s constitution is not fit for purpose

Letters and debate
Middle East connection
Miners’ violence 1984-85
Spanish civil war

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Qui est Charlie?
Concrete

Chris Cutrone’s letter (January 9) raises three issues: the question of the term ‘Marxist’, the question of how it is defined, and which reiterates, and which I conclude, is straightforwardly false; and the questions of liberalism, its ‘problem’, and the idea of whether the dictatorship of the proletariat, socialism and communism, and Marxism, to some extent, can be equated with human emancipation. The third of these three issues, I concede with my initial critique, and I did not really deal with it in my initial reply; it is an important issue, and also will need too much space for a letter. I will reply separately on it, and discuss only method here.

Comrade Cutrone says in his letter: ‘The term ‘Marxist’, in the Marxist sense, can be quite peculiar, rather than colloquially’. This must be the peculiar case of any question of crisis, which I pointed to in my reply (January 18) as an example of different uses of Marxist jargon; the implication is that Marxism is, by definition, a question of crisis, which is the theory of ‘strict Marxism’. The boot is on the other foot: the quickest search on the Web shows that the use of the term ‘crisis’ is so widespread that it is worth therefore also the point of departure for Socialism and Communism: it is Marx’s practical method of work, knowledge and analysis. This is reflected in the term ‘return to the concrete’, in the form of study of recent empirical examples and of alternative theorisations, of the issue.

Contra method, in contrast, is to use the term ‘as it was said of his reasoning as a licence for not returning to the concrete, but instead in accordance with a ‘dialectical’ argument. Compare Marx to Engels on Lassalle, 1858: “He will discover them (the working class) by the truth of the conclusion that it is vulgar ‘Marx leads to totalitarianism’ stuff, much improved by being thrown onto the conveyor belt of French former left-wing ‘anti-totalitarian’ (Cornelius Castoriadis and Claude Lefort), combined with speculative, idealist (roughly, as the socialists in the first years of recent French and US history - and with low-grade Marxism, which takes no account of the implications of ‘Ham Det and Draper’ and others. There is no suggestion in my article of an ‘epistemological split’; so much less so the young and the ‘mature’ Marx (Castoriadis and developments and Marx’s ideas); rather, in my opinion Howard and Castoriadis, as he misreads the ‘mature’ Marx.

Mike Macan

Premature

Eddie Ford advises Syriza not to take power “prematurely” because it would “further the cause of the workers, but will end up applying austerity” (‘What is Syriza doing’, January 8).

But what is “prematurely”? Before a majority of workers in most countries would vote for socialism? If so (and I agree) then this applies to Lenin and the Bolsheviks. They got to power on the back of a revolutionary change in time (the future as the past) and not heeding Marx’s point about the revolution driven towards flying from the concrete to the abstract and not of abstract to the concrete; and therefore licenses arguments which are tautological (Marx’s comment on Engels’ ‘critique’ of his argument) or vacuously circular.

Marx commented in the Grundrisse that a crisis is because it is the concentration of the relations of production in the diverse. It appears in the process of thinking, therefore, as a process of concentration, as a result, not as a point of departure, even though it is therefore also the point of departure for observation and conception ... the ‘dialectical’-interactionist (readers of a reproduction of the concrete by way of thought.” (The whole section from which I quote is worth attention.)

A point is not “the point of departure in reality and hence also the point of departure for observation and conception” in Marx’s practical method of work, well illuminated by Rob Beamish and others. In Marxism and the Russian Revolution of labour (1992): Marx’s process of analysing and concluding, and repeated return to ‘the concrete’, in the form of study of recent empirical examples and of alternative theorisations, of the issue.

Eddie Ford’s method, in contrast, is to use the term ‘as it was said of his reasoning as a licence for not returning to the concrete, but instead in accordance with a ‘dialectical’ argument. Compare Marx to Engels on Lassalle, 1858: “He will discover them (the working class) by the truth of the conclusion that it is vulgar ‘Marx leads to totalitarianism’ stuff, much improved by being thrown onto the conveyor belt of French former left-wing ‘anti-totalitarian’ (Cornelius Castoriadis and Claude Lefort), combined with speculative, idealist (roughly, as the socialists in the first years of recent French and US history - and with low-grade Marxism, which takes no account of the implications of ‘Ham Det and Draper’ and others. There is no suggestion in my article of an ‘epistemological split’; so much less so the young and the ‘mature’ Marx (Castoriadis and developments and Marx’s ideas); rather, in my opinion Howard and Castoriadis, as he misreads the ‘mature’ Marx.

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Backfire

Eddie Ford’s article about the prospect of a Syriza election victory touches on debates that I have had over various hypothetical scenarios, one being what socialists would do if a party in a country that clearly does not have a working class throughout Europe to fight back and in Greece to respond to the Greek working class. Yes, this is precisely why we must all do well to build solidarity with Greek socialists against austerity - their struggle is our struggle, in an immediate, concrete way. In the case of Cutrone’s method, in contrast, you have to refrain from working on the terrain of austerity for the point of departure in “the concrete is concrete”...”

However, Eddie misses another issue. The SPGB has always refused to produce a minimum programme, because it recognises that many will vote for those immediate demands rather than in support of its socialist objective. We have argued that a genuine socialist party which advocated reforms would attract non-socialist elements, some of whom might be prepared to vote for some or some of the reform measures, and of course this, the logic is nonsensical. What evidence is there to suppose that it is the spurious hope of its voters that the party has no better element in the working class struggle with the Greek working class, but it is hard to fathom why you have no problem with this, while that its strategy is doomed to defeat if they try to take power, I would contend to the contrary - if the Greek working class don’t struggle to take power (and in that struggle reach out to the workers in the rest of Europe) they are doomed to the contrary. You are going to lose, as the Tories and MLs, “Don’t go on strike. The troika won’t back down - look how well that turned out) a” austerity for the last five years and is guaranteed, for sure, to backfire for the Portuguese people and Martov, who, too, recognised that the working class in Europe knows this. I have little doubt, however, that the working class in Greece deepens and reaches out to workers in the rest of Europe, and we will see the European ruling class make significant concessions to the European working class to forestall any further radicalisation. Of course, Eddie says he wants to build solidarity with the struggle of Greek socialists, but it is hard to fathom why you have no problem with this, while that its strategy is doomed to defeat if they try to take power, that is as if at the start of the miners’ strike in 1970, ‘Don’t try to produce a minimum programme, because it recognises that many will vote for those immediate demands rather than in support of its socialist objective. We have argued that a genuine socialist party which advocated reforms would attract non-socialist elements, some of whom might be prepared to vote for some or some of the reform measures, and of course this, the logic is nonsensical. 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as an output. Even the electoral reliability of the party on the 50-MP to 60-MP mark. But why, for the project still has to go; it would not have a mandate to govern without a majority of seats, and politics is the game. Perhaps they're immoral. But we should not be so naïve, and the saying of the right? Isn't the Labour Party our least-worst option? In essence: why accept a state that's just the illusion? Tom Monday

London

Spelt out

I quote Ian Donovan’s prompt response (Letters, January 8). My suggestion (Letters, December 19) is: ‘to show solidarity and give moral support to Keith in his struggle, which is on behalf of the entire trade union movement of solidarity. Sign the petition at http://bit.ly/hendersonten. We urge all rank-and-file trade unionists and socialists to express their support for Keith by writing to Paul Kenny, GMB general secretary, 2-6 Salisbury Square, London EC4Y 8AL (the nearest tube station is Blackfriars)’ - at 8.45am on Tuesday February 10 and to attend the hearing itself on February 10-12 to show solidarity and give moral and political support to Keith in his struggle, which is on behalf of the entire trade union movement of solidarity.

London Communist Forum

Sunday January 18, 5pm: Weekly political report from CPGB Provisional Central Committee, followed by open discussion and Capital reading group, Catharine Arms, 252 Granby Pier Road, London WC1. This meeting: Vol. 1, appendix: ‘Results of the immediate process of 1914-1918’. Organised by CPGB: www.cpgb.org.uk.

Radical Anthropology Group


Russian avant-garde


The sonny war 1914-2014


Palestine under occupation

Friday January 16, 7.15pm: Film screening, Carolina Rivás’s The Colonia Aurora, Centre for Popular Education, 89 Summerfield Road, Wolverhampton. Free admission. Organised by Wolverhampton UCU: www.wolverstuc.org.uk.

Public services emergency

Saturday January 17, 10am to 4pm: Summit, Thistle County Hotel, Neville Street, Newcastle NE1. Keynote speaker: Dave Prents (Unison). Organised by TUC: www.tuc.org.uk.

Can we breathe?


A new year of war?

Monday January 19, 6.30pm: Meeting, Boothby Room, Bridge Street, Nottingham. ‘From SAS to Veterans for Peace’. Speakers: Dave Douglass, Seanus Milne, Guardian columnist, Andrew Murray, Union. Hosted by Jeremy Corbyn MP. Supported by Stop the War Coalition: www.stopwar.org.uk.

Anarchist vision


Wear unTimed

Saturday January 24, 12noon: Demonstration, Assembly ministry of defence, Horse Guards Avenue, London SW1 for march to rally at Parliament Square, London SW1.

Organised by Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: www.cnduk.org.

Palestine solidarity

Saturday January 24, 8.30pm to 5pm: Annual general meeting of Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1. Organised by Palestine Solidarity Campaign: www.palestinesupport.org.uk.

Tusc and the 2015 elections

Saturday January 24: Tusc election conference, Student Central (formerly ULU), Malmaison Street, London WC1. £10 waged, £2 unwaged/low-waged. Registration form: www.tusc.org.uk/tuscleads.

Organised by Trade Union and Socialist Coalition: www.tusc.org.uk.

No to the war

Monday January 26, 7.30pm: Meeting, Friends Meeting House, 12 Jesus Lane, Cambridge CB5. Speakers include: Andrew Murray, Julian Huppert,邱学成 (Labour Party candidate - Chinese speaker). Organised by Stop the War Coalition: www.stopwar.org.uk.

From SAS to Veterans for Peace


CPGB wills

Return any 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.
United front of thegeoisie

Government leaders who gathered in Paris to express ‘solidarity’ with Charlie Hebdo are no friends of free speech, says Eddie Ford

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all know the basic facts by now. On January 7 two renegade officials of the French intelligence service, AK-47 assault rifles, a shotgun and an RPG (rocket-propelled grenade) found their way into the offices of the French satirical weekly newspaper, Charlie Hebdo. As the French media and the public know, the building was almost no media coverage at the event remained largely after being beaten unconscious.1 There was almost no media coverage at the event remained largely never be known: many of the terrorism in the deadliest act of quasi-military background may help to for a few months with AQAP. This and it seems that in 2011 Saïd trained others accused of “insulting Islam” - a ‘hit list’ that included Charbonnier and indeed, in March 2013 AQAP released an exercise with other French-Algerian brothers were known building, Saïd and Kouachi brothers were known mayhem - and 21 people were injured, mistake, grabbed a cartoonist leaving were stored) and, after realising their way into the Parisian offices of the newspaper, Saïd and after feeling the run - having fled to Syria via Turkey, it had actually heard of the magazine spelt or had any familiarity with its contents. Then on January 11 up to two million people took to the streets and protesters, including more than 50 government leaders and high-level officials from throughout the world, streamed into the heart of Paris for a rally designed to honour the 17 victims and defend "the values of the French republic" - however understood. In all, about 3.7 million people joined demonstrations nationwide, making it the largest public mobilisation in France since the end of World War II. A special 'survivors' issue of Charlie Hebdo produced from the offices of the Liberation newspaper went on sale on January 14 with an intended print run of three million copies rather than its typical 60,000 - but was immediately raised to five million after the issue sold out of stocks within minutes of it going on sale. Printed in 16 different languages, the French company (MLP) that distributes Charlie Hebdo did deals with several other press distribution groups in countries such as Switzerland and SGEL in Spain - to market and sell the edition, with the issue's cover showing the prophet shading a tree and holding up a sign reading, "Je suis Charlie" unchanged in the headline, Tout est pardonné (All is forgiven).

Rather ironically, this special edition may have saved the publication from bankruptcy - closure seemed to be looming. But now the mainstream French media have rallied to the cause to offer whatever help it needs and the French government is looking at ways of releasing public funds to bail out Charlie Hebdo, with several government agencies taking out subscriptions. Even banks have become subscribers. Yes, we are all Charlie now. Manuel Valls, the prime minister, dropped in on January 9 to lend his official support to the staff - who in the past have mercilessly lampooned him and other French politicians. Valls, of course, has a foul history of anti- Islamic rhetoric, but the fact that the Roma were "incapable" of integrating and therefore should be deported "to their origin" may help to continue Sarkozy's brutal policy of razing squatter camps. Now, in no way should communists dismiss the Je suis Charlie demonstrations - the mass turnout reflects the natural revolution at the brutal slaying of people at the hands of reactionary fanatics. But the fact is that the business is Charlie and must be able to continue to exist. Charlie and IS: exactly who provides the finance? Worried individuals in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states who have connections right up to the very top of these pro-ISIS dictatorships then there is the broader historical and geopolitical background. Organisations like Al Qa'eda and IS can draw deep from a wellspring of alienation arising from colonial and imperialist oppression, whether it be in French Algeria or the Middle East.

For this reason, it was a big mistake for the Communist Party of France and other left organisations, such as Gauche Révolutionnaire (Committee for a Workers’ International) to march on the official demonstration - it was a united front of the bourgeoisie, not a show of working class solidarity. Adding insult to injury, the ‘world leaders’ did not even march on the day - perhaps the thought. Instead, they took part in a staged photo shot well away from the main body of the demonstration and then the images were manipulated to make it look like they were marching about that, is there? A totally bogus Photoshopped ‘solidarity’.

Crackdown

With dreary predictability, the Paris killings are being used as a pretext to further crack down on free speech and democratic rights in general - Je suis Charlie until it comes, of course, to everything at home, where it is business as usual. For example, David Cameron has revived the authoritarian call for a ‘snoopers’ charter’ (or spooks charter) that was blocked last year by the Liberal Democrats, whereby the intelligence services would be given even greater new powers to read and store the online and mobile phone activity of everyone in the country. Or, in the words of Nick Clegg, one element of what Cameron was proposing would go much further and would involve “scoping up vast amounts of information on millions of people - children, grandparents and elderly people who do nothing more offensive than visiting gardening centre websites”. Nothing anti-democratic or sinister about it, in other words, is there? A state that is powerful enough to say or write something to a friend, boss, will overheat, then your right to free speech is deeply curtailed. But, remember, it’s not just freedom of association that Cameron is heavily suggesting that a re-elected Tory government would ban meetings in public that in theory allows users to send images and videos that ‘disappear’ seconds after being viewed. More than 700 million photos and videos are shared every day and the proposal could mean that companies that offer email services could be banned or required to hand over their encryption keys to the security services in order to trace communications such as terrorism or paedophile cases.

Of course, Andrew Parker, head of MI5, has in two pennies-worth in the immediate aftermath of the Paris attacks, warned last week that the heady pace of technological change meant there was an increasing number of “dark places” on the internet, from where “those who wish to harm us can plan and commit their acts. It is a place where privacy is so “absolute” and “sacrosanct” that terrorists and others can “confidently operate from behind those walls without fear of detection”, even though they may be doing so out of the perfect legitimacy to ensure their privacy. Naturally, Parker warned, the new laws are the ‘legal right to privacy’ now being used for what is effectively a ‘lie of the French President, François Hollande, alongside Angela Merkel, Binyamin Netanyahu, Mahmoud Abbas, etc

François Hollande alongside Angela Merkel, Binyamin Netanyahu, Mahmoud Abbas, etc
The last but one issue of Charlie Hebdo had a print run of 60,000. A satirical journal of niche interest within France and total obscurity without, however, has just published three million copies, in many languages, which is destined to sell out.

This has, of course, been achieved under the most morbid of circumstances. For once, Charlie Hebdo banks in notoriety not of its own making, but that of the Islamist militants who unleashed a massacre at an editorial conference and killed five others later. Apart from the bloody toll, the assault has changed Charlie Hebdo dramatically, for the time being at least; it has been turned into an unlikely cause célèbre for the global establishment.

Charlie Hebdo began as a monthly, Hara-kiri, in 1960, and already many of the features that would characterise its successor were in place: a fiercely iconoclastic tone and scant regard for bourgeois ‘good taste’, attacking politicians and priests with equal vigour. It revelled in the accusation that it was “bête et méchant” (“stupid and nasty”), adopting the slogan on its front page. It was banned for two brief periods in this incarnation. Hara-kiri ultimately lived up to its name in its own fashion. After the death of Charles de Gaulle, its front page lampooned the enormous media attention around the passing of the former hero of the French Resistance, on the one hand, and the close ties between his Socialist Workers Party, “has become a specialist in presenting provocative and racist attacks on Islam”.

To put it charitably, this statement is half-right – the magazine made attacks on Islam, which were provocative. The idea that it “specialised” in the same is simply confirmation bias; it is only attacks on Islam that make a moralistic SWP/anger, and crudely cartoons about the pope, senior rabbis, politicians and everyone else who feels the full force of the “bête et méchant” pens of Charlie Hebdo’s cartoonists slip by unnoticed.

More tiresomely regrettable still is the accusation of “racism”, which most notably in the Anglophone has become as empty a word as “terrorism” is in the months of our rulers. It seems that any group of oppressed people, whether or not they consider themselves a ‘race’, and whether or not bigots consider them to be one, can be remedied as such for the purposes of lazy liberal rhetoric. If you are black, you will almost certainly always be black, and thus subject to the hostility of anti-black racists. If you are a Muslim, you can become an atheist, or a Christian, or a Jew - and though none of these actions will necessarily spare you the tender images of Qu’ranic extraction. Whether this is the mission of Charlie Hebdo is another matter of course: it may be so for its contributors, but it has never been so for me to crop out the text in Sacco’s black caricature frame, post it on Twitter and get a lynch-mob up against organisations.

The problem with this reasoning goes like this: it would be easy enough for me to crop out the text in Sacco’s black caricature frame, post it on Twitter and get a lynch-mob up against him within five minutes. And I would be doing no more than the SWP and Sacco, and many others, have done to Charlie Hebdo - ripping bits out of context for convenience of condemnation.

The missing context is, first of all, that the protests of Charlie editors are quite true - they issue provocations against religious fundamentalists of all religions, and not the run-of-the-mill faithful as such. The first Mohammed cartoon Charlie Hebdo published saw the prophet lamenting the fact that some of his followers were “jerks”; the most recent is, of course, this week’s, where he holds up a Je suis Charlie placard under the slogan, “All is forgiven”. Observant Muslims may object to the portrayal of Mohammed at all, of course, but it is unreasonable to expect non-Muslims to forgive and by the same token, to observe bans on graven images of Qu’ranic extraction.

The wider context is the sharp antagonism in French history between the kors in the republican tradition, on the one hand, and the close ties between the right and far right and the church, on the other. In the whole history spanning the dying days of the ancien régime to the present, the French left, in its myriad guises, has had the tendency to extreme anti-religious sentiment. It is encapsulated in the quote attributed to the apostate priest, Jean Meslier - “I would like the last of the kings to be strangled by the guts of the last priest” - and rewritten many times since. This attitude is understandable, given the history of Catholicism and its support for monarchism, and later for the emergence of proto-fascist religious organisations.

Charlie Hebdo is in that tradition. It is not a ‘racist’ tradition, but a lefthand one. That is hardly to say it is beyond criticism. Aggressive revolutionary attacks on religion have met with, shall we say, mixed success. We want to convince people to abandon religion for a materialist outlook, in which humanity is the province of an agency; insults and mockery do not always achieve this effectivity.

This is hardly surprising, from a Marxist perspective: possibly the best known line of Marx’s writings is the characterisation of religion as the “opium of the people”. The point, of course, is not to seize the painkiller, but remove the source of pain; and convince the people at large that they must do this themselves.

Whether this is the mission of Charlie Hebdo is another matter, of course: it may be so for its contributors, but the magazine is rude, crude, stupid and nasty - and proud, perhaps more prouder than ever. In the future, we hope they give Hollande, Cameron, Obama and so many reasons to regret declaring that they were Charlie...
**Did outrage caused by the provocations of an irreverent magazine provoke the Paris attacks? Yassamine Mather looks beyond this simplistic myth**

On Sunday January 11, according to France's ministry of interior, at least 3.7 million people marched across France to support the freedom of the press. As many on the left have pointed out, the demonstrations in Paris was in response to one of the most appalling political leaders in the world - some of them war criminals, others responsible for a long list of crimes against humanity, others authors of legislation against freedom of speech in their own country. But all were apparently united by their desire to defend freedom of the press, following last week's horrific attacks in Paris.

In their right mind can believe that that the attacks were simply the result of Islamists' reaction to the cartoons printed by the Charlie Hebdo authors, yet the bourgeois media have devoted the attention to the headlines that millions of people throughout the world, including many on the 'left': are under the impression this was simply an issue of 'freedom of the press'. Rarely in recent years have we seen such oversimplification and indeed misrepresentation of facts, leading to mass hysteria.

Don't get me wrong: there was no conspiracy here. The misrepresentation which led to the headlines that millions of people throughout the world, including many on the 'left': are under the impression this was simply an issue of 'freedom of the press'. Rarely in recent years have we seen such oversimplification and indeed misrepresentation of facts, leading to mass hysteria.

For them it was a military operation - this was confirmed by comments made to hostages they took in both the Charlie Hebdo offices and the print works where they later took refuge. The two brothers told a salesman that they did not kill civilians! According to an interview given by the manager of the print works, "I brought them the coffee and they were very respectful, calling me monsieur, like gentlemen." For all their barbarism all three believed themselves to be soldiers of Islam. The younger brother, Chérif, had a long history of jihadism and anti-Semitism, according to documents obtained by CNN. In a 400-page court record, he is described as wanting to go to Iraq through Syria "to fight the Americans... I was ready to go and die in battle," he said in a deposition. "I got this idea when I saw the injustices shown by television... I am speaking about the torture that the Americans have inflicted on the Iraqis.

In France, as elsewhere in Europe, the preferred target of the jihadists was the US embassy. However, the three knew that they would get nowhere near the well fortified US building in Paris. To a lesser extent the same argument is valid in terms of targeting major government ministries and offices - although, as many leftwing commentators have pointed out, why target a government whose agencies had until recently supported Islamic groups? France was promoting the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi of Libya, long before the United States got involved and supported anyone who fought Bashar al-Assad in Syria (both are countries with a history of French colonial intervention). So the jihadists were looking for an easy target - a building where there was no security, easy to access and easy to escape from.

The Kouachi brothers were indeed politicised by the war in Iraq, by atrocities in Abu Ghraib, by the carpet bombing of Fallujah. At a time when anti-war movements had fizzled out or been rendered useless by soft politics, and in the absence of a revolutionary left, they signed up to the Islamists. Nothing justifies the horrific crimes committed in Paris and elsewhere, but the 'international community' and to a certain extent we on the international left must take a share of the blame. Where were the demonstrations when Fallujah and other Iraqi cities were being bombed? What have we done about war crimes in Iraq? In Afghanistan? So far only the whistleblowers - those who exposed the torture - are in jail, while war criminals from Bush and Blair to the CIA directors in charge of that torture remain at large. There is no justice for the victims of Abu Ghraib or for the survivors of Fallujah.

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The Kouachi brothers were indeed politicised by the war in Iraq, by atrocities in Abu Ghraib, by the carpet bombing of Fallujah. At a time when anti-war movements had fizzled out or been rendered useless by soft politics, and in the absence of a revolutionary left, they signed up to the Islamists. Nothing justifies the horrific crimes committed in Paris and elsewhere, but the 'international community' and to a certain extent we on the international left must take a share of the blame. Where were the demonstrations when Fallujah and other Iraqi cities were being bombed? What have we done about war crimes in Iraq? In Afghanistan? So far only the whistleblowers - those who exposed the torture - are in jail, while war criminals from Bush and Blair to the CIA directors in charge of that torture remain at large. There is no justice for the victims of Abu Ghraib or for the survivors of Fallujah.

Rabbi Michael Lerner, writing in the Huffington Post, sums it up: And when the horrific assassinations of 12 media people and the the
wounding of another 12 media workers resulted in justifiable outrage around the world, did you ever wonder why there wasn’t an equal outrage at the tens of thousands of innocent civilians killed by the American intervention in Iraq or the over a million civilians killed by the US in Vietnam, or why president Obama refused to bring in justicethe CIA torturers of mostly Muslim prisoners, thereby de facto giving future torturers the message that they need not even be sorry for their deeds (indeed, former vice-

The reality is that capitalism has created this atomised world, where the life of a European or American is valued more than that of hundreds of victims of the war on terror in the Middle East, Afghanistan and north Africa.

Media role
A significant contributor to this situation is the mass media and the way they report war, terrorism and murder, which has a crucial role in the subsequent mobilisation of public opinion. Early in the Arab invasion, the BBC tried to express a slightly more balanced view of Tony Blair’s reasons for wanting to go to war, by having a special correspondent prepared by Alistair Campbell - let us remember what happened to that exercise. Alistair Campbell was forced to resign, the broadcasters involved were replaced, the journalists sidelined. The Husrat Al Jazeera was commissioned this novel way of dealing with the issue of freedom of the press. No, we have instead seen a wave of attacks on those who dare to ask any investigative journalism from that quarter. As I have often told Iranian commentators, I believe that there is no need for censorship of the media, nor for a conscious self-censorship guarantees their compliance with the status quo.

Of course, in the Middle East the official and unofficial media have their own problems of state and religious interference, in the absence of a media outlet trusted by the majority of the population, exaggerated news of massacres and torture found on social media or jihadi websites substitue for facts. Whatever the number of those killed in Kabul, or most recently in Egyptian, Jordanians, etc believe to be 10 times more. Most of us have had to look away when the horrific images from Abu Ghraib torture chambers have appeared. However, none of those images were the developed versions that went viral in social media, the photos that have been manipulated, exaggerated news of massacres and torture found on social media or jihadi websites substitute for facts. Whatever the number of those killed in Kabul, or most recently in Egyptian, Jordanians, etc believe to be 10 times more: they need not even be sorry for their deeds (indeed, former vice-

Islam and violence
The Taliban, in Paris as well as the well publicised beheading of western prisoners by IS, has initiated a sharper edge that deepens the violent nature of Islam. If you read recent comments on this subject, you will find that it is not Muslims that are ‘left’, you might come to the interesting conclusion that violence is a genetic characteristic among Muslims, irrespective of their nationality.

As a lifelong communist opponent of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I have no sympathy with political Islam. However, it would be a mistake to claim that Islam is more violent than other religions. Muslims who look at contemporary precedents. One can easily trace Al Qaeda’s later take over by IS, to the Afghan war of the 1980s and in this respect there is no more respectable source than the former US Senator Bob Dole, who issued a joint statement in December 2011 that admitted that the US government contributed to the rise of Al Qaeda in order to fight the Soviet Union.11

According to Joe Stephens and David Berndt, their 2002 book The CIA’s War against Terrorism, many books depicting violent images have played a role in recruiting, covert attempts to spur resistance to the Soviet occupation. The primers, which were filled with talk of jihad and featured drawings of guns, bullets, soldiers and mines, have served since then as the Afghan school system’s core curriculum. Every year in that period shows a resistance fighter with a bundler and a Kalashnikov slogan "don’t let your children become soldiers”. The soldier’s head is missing. Above the soldier is a verse from the Koran which says "the heathen will not be killed unless they accept the message". The religious zealot’s message that of hundreds of victims of the war on terror in the Middle East, Afghanistan and north Africa.

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CHARLIE HEBDO

Has the Left really taken up the Paris slaughter? Peter Manson takes a look

A s far as I know, every single group that has condemned the Charlie Hebdo and kosher supermarket killings, but has condemned them dramatically, has also declared that the attitude of the left in France, before and after, is the key to the situation on the main groups in Britain. This is why, for example, the 'official' communists' Parti Communiste Français - until very recently an organisation that enjoyed a healthy mass support. But its various statements demonstrated once again that it has now constituted itself as the left wing of the French establishment, although formally its claim to enjoy that role on that ruling order. Its first statement was headlined: "We are Charlie. Defend freedom, democracy and the right to express yourself." On the eve of the officially organised demonstration on January 11, PCF national secretary Pierre Laurent called for the "greatest unity", in the spirit of an "organic solidarity" that "reflects the unity of the masses who followed those Laurens. French workers have already, the reaction of hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens of all political persuasions, been one of extreme unity." The PCF also said that it was going to stage a rally in the gardens of the Palais Royal, and it said that "people: “Let’s march with dignity and clarity, in honour of all the victims. This March will be a march of solidarity about the participation of French and international workers against the deadly war and the politics of shaping the outlines of the unitary of the masses who followed those Laurens. French workers have already, the reaction of hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens of all political persuasions, been one of extreme unity.

The PCF website also gave a nod to the influence of the Gauche Révolutionnaire comrades, who had been prominent in the call. The front-page article said that "Gauche Révolutionnaire was the main group in Britain. Take the "national unity" position, when it was a progressive rather than a black bloc, when it was a movement for the rights of workers, when it was a movement to fight against the threats that are dominated by 'sacred union' out of hand: "Just as it is currently applied:"

So what is WP saying? It is only legitimising the right of all journalists to do their job without fear of threats, intimidating the press to be cowed, and actually urging us to "stand together with governments" in the face of "terrorism", that is clearly true that the AWL has no target, but that does not delegate criticism to the left itself. And its terms are associated with a particular establishment.

WP claims: "We defend the freedom to criticise religion and in Iraq. In the name of the war on terrorism, we generate the barbarism they claim to be fighting."

Finally, let me end with the statements from the Union of Journalists general secretary, Kate Hudson, who read in its entirety:

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In France, secularism and satirising religious ideas and practices have long had a tradition rooted in the great revolutionary movements of the 19th and 20th centuries. At that time, the target was still the "sacred union" of the Catholic church, which backed the Establishment, but the target today is the threat of extremist Islam as a religion. So, in reality, WP is not doing just the killing, but they are doing what this fact was "essential background".

As Paul Demarty points out (see p.23) WP is not a "left-wing newspaper that has been anti-racist. Its targets have prominently included religious leaders and religious institutions, especially of Islam, but it is simply inane to dub the result racist. However, if the WP statement was bad enough, that of Workers Power was appalling. While it concludes without equivocation the Charlie Hebdo attacks, it claimed that "while it is certain that Islamophobia is not even considered when the AWL is recognised as "vital" to its strategy of "the right to offend religious sensibilities" (particularly if they are held by Muslims) as a "right" - at least in principle. But it did usefully point out the falseness of accusations of Islamophobia being "in the public interest". It claims that "the right of all journalists to do their job without fear of threats, intimidating the press to be cowed, and actually urging us to "stand together with governments" in the face of "terrorism", that is clearly true that the AWL has no target, but that does not delegate criticism to the left itself. And its terms are associated with a particular establishment.

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A crash waiting to happen

Jack Conrad shows that the LU constitution internalises trade union defeats and contains self-defeating time bombs.

Jack Conrad

Since Left Unity’s last national council (November 15-16 2014) and the recognition that our constitution is not fit for purpose, I deduced it needs reform limits and sets back the work of LU committees, branches and members. Unless we change it, it will not come up with something much better, there is a danger that Left Unity will come to grief.

Already, the party is on the back foot. The party was first mooted, has been lost. Instead we have seen a stream of bad-tempered resignation statements by officials - a fruitless dispute between branches and largely unanswered calls for action for the sake of action.

At over 6,000 words, the constitution is long - far too long. And that count leaves out the two integral, appendixes, including the hellishly rambling, endlessly redrafted and deeply incomprehensible ‘code of conduct’ (appendix one). The ‘profundity of fools’ (clause 13a).

The constitution is long - far too long. And that count leaves out the two, integral, appendixes, including the hellishly rambling, endlessly redrafted and deeply incomprehensible ‘code of conduct’ (appendix one). The ‘profundity of fools’. 2 Likewise in today’s China ‘leading personnel in government departments’ are obliged to rotate every five years. The aim was to reduce corruption. Businesses too sometimes rotate managerial teams. That way, some degree of roundness is gained. And doubtless the same arguments which have been plied against vote

Notes

1. E.g., the late Mike Mansfield condemned Blair’s “internalisation of Thatcherism” in the Labour Party conference. Blair’s conference manoeuvres, such as the “plenary mound ballot” (ultimately informed but not binding) were a key decision into a sort of loyalty to the leadership. Blair’s leadership, perhaps.


10. VI Lenin CW Vol 5, Moscow 1977, p462."
By any means necessary!

T he miners’ strike is undoubtedly the most historic of its kind, in a period when the outcome hangs the balance of fate between capital and labour class in the period ahead. Its strategic importance is well recognised by a state which has thrown into the struggle the full power of its courts, its police force, and its mind-bending media machine. And such has been the effectiveness of the state forces to secure victory that they have been prepared to see the social peace which has characterised Britain since World War II shattered in their efforts to crush the miners.

Unusual means of violence

When the capitalist state established a new national police force, the usual methods of trade union struggle have proved woefully inadequate. Even the militant flying picket tactics, first developed by the miners themselves in 1972, have come to mean nothing against the dogs, batons, riot shields, cavalry charges, the organised national police force.

As a result of this the miners have been forced to seek new tactics – and they have even had the temerity to reply to state terrorism through organisations of their own. Violence, including guerrilla actions. And how they have, not just the leader of the working class – above all Kinnock and Wilson – but workers themselves. These lovers of death in Wales, and their petty pariahs these purses of class-collaboration, these lackeys of the bosses, who have utterly failed to deliver the promises of solidarity passed so resoundingly at the Trades Union Congresses; these who at conference, now have the gall to sit in pompous judgement over the miners, as they desperately and alone fight for their jobs, communities and indeed the entire working class.

The killing of taxi driver David Wilkie provided both the bosses’ media as an opportunity for a new propaganda assault on the militant miners and the Kinocks and the Willises with a new justification for state terrorism in the back. Because of this some revolutionaries, so-called champions of the rank and file, the so-called “industrial militants” the Labour Party, have come out against what they metaphorically call “individual attacks”. They declare that fire-bombing, beating up scabs on their way to work or in their homes, and the dropping of the three-foot concrete block onto Wilkie’s taxi, is out of order. The Labour Party is the hook when it comes to delivering genuine solidarity.

But do these Labourites need an excuse to scab? The truth is that the Labour Party carries out the same policies when in office as the Tories. Remember In place of strife! and Labour’s attempt to chain the unions – the social contract, which saw workers’ wages fall by an unprecedented extent this century; and how they deployed troops to break the miners’ strike.

And what about foreign policy? As with the Tories, Labour has largely undermined the interests of British imperialism: from calling British workers to kill their German brothers in the streets of Flanders and Verdon to sending troops into the Six Counties in August 1969. And didn’t they back Thatcher’s Falklands/Malvinas war and celebrate British imperialism’s victory? So it’s Neil and the Labour Party tops who play “Maggie’s game”, not the miners. No wonder militant miners have been tearing up their Labour Party cards in disgust, no wonder tens of thousands are looking for a revolutionary alternative to the Eurocommunists’ favourite Labourite.

In class war, as in war between nations, there can be deaths. Innocent victims we regret. But, as to death or injury amongst the enemy - the bourgeoisie, the kords of finance capital and their mercenary army of hirelings - we shall use no less. Let’s be brutally frank. Taxi driver David Wilkie regularly drove scabs. He supported them, he knew the risks and was well paid for taking them. Those wholangish in gaol accused of his “murder” are soldiers of the class war. Far from distancing themselves from them, condemning them, treating them like pariahs, the working class has a sacred duty to give them full moral and material solidarity. Not to do so is to commit a contemptible act of cowardice.

In past we praised Arthur Scargill for what we said was his “refusal to condemn miners’ violence”. Unfortunately this can now no longer be said. Under pressure of a sanctimonious Kinnock, a virulent anti-revolutionary media campaign, a TUC which could starve the NVM of vital cash, and perhaps in order to court the bishops, he caved in and “disassociated the NVM” from the guerrilla action which killed Wilkie. This is as much a folly as it is unforgivable.

Scargill, having failed to organise workers’ defence corps to protect miners’ picketing lines and mining communities from police terror, forced militant miners to take matters into their own hands and organise hit squads against the riot police to defend themselves. Of course, this has had its cost. Violence is inevitably misdirected, blunt, uncoordinated. But the fault for this must, cannot, be placed at the feet of the militant miners. The fault lies at the top! And not just with Arthur Scargill! In January 1985, Marlon, Peter Heathfield, those who falsely claim to be the leadership of the proletariat.

The executive committee of the Communist Party stands exposed. They have made no move, no call, to organise miners’ counter-violence. And what goes for them goes for the petty bourgeois pretenders like the already mentioned SWP, no less than the Trotskyite entrists into the Labour Party like Militant and Socialist Action. And hasn’t Scargill for what we said was his “cowardice.”

Wilkie’s widow.

But this front page of The Leninist from January 1985, when the state makes clear, it is not simply outright traitors such as Kinnock who feel politically uneasy in the aftermath of Wilkie’s death.

Mark Fischer

Notes

1. An exception was the Workers Power group, many of whose tactical demands in the strike were pressed out on their own. And thus, ironically enough, given Trotskyist orthodoxy about “betrayal”, with those of the CPGB in the 1970s strike. One party’s record in 1920 was an important source of inspiration for ours in 1984-85. 2. See The Times December 1 1984.

3. The 1972 deposing case - was the first official miners’ strike since 1926 although there had been unofficial strikes. On this occasion, the miners were injured and their homes and Wilkie’s death.

4. The 1975 “social contract” was an attempt by Harold Wilson’s Labour government to control the miners’ strike by appealing not to working class traditions but to “moral” considerations.

Jack Conrad
The artist must take sides

Exhibition: Conscience and conflict: British artists and the Spanish Civil War
Pallant House Gallery, Chichester until February 15, 2015; then Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, from March 7 to June 7

Pablo Picasso: red period

The Spanish Civil War 1936-39 was the opening chapter of World War II. Central themes of the inter-war artists' conflict were acted out in Spain: democracy versus dictatorship, socialism versus fascism, enlightenment values versus obscurantism, internationalism versus xenophobic nationalism.

This war was fought, on the one hand, by forces loyal to the democratically elected republic and, on the other, by nationalist rebels led in a pact by general Francisco Franco. Quickly, the French and British governments announced their non-interventionist policies and embargoed any voluntary choice by their citizens to join the republican forces. Hitler and Mussolini had no such qualms. Around 75,000 of their troops served with Franco's fascists as ground troops, as well as in the Luftwaffe and in Mussolini's navy.

Forty thousand volunteers from 53 countries flocked to the other side and, despite the British ban, 2,500 left the UK to join in the struggle, becoming part of the legendary International Brigades. UK volunteers were organised by the Communist Party of Great Britain and consisted largely of working class men and women. Additional participation came from middle-class artists and writers, poets and writers: eg, W H Auden, John Cornford and George Orwell, scientists such as JBS Haldane and even aristocrats like Winston Churchill’s communist nephew, Esmond Romilly, who left for Spain with his companion, Jessica Mitford, one of celebrated Mitford sisters. John, Stanley Spencer, Eric Gill, Jacob Epstein were prevented from going by the British government.

Whether or not artists made the journey, they became active in the struggle, creating posters, weaving banners and offering artworks for sale in benefit exhibitions and auctions. Artists went out to Spain not only to fight, but also to record Spain’s artistic heritage, vital at a time when nationalist propaganda was claiming that the republican government was selling off artworks from the Prado Museum or religious icons from churches - lies on a Goebbels scale.

Artists helped arrange for a London exhibition of Goya’s etching series, Disasters of war, at the Victoria and Albert. Even though the etchings were produced at the beginning of the 19th century, their London showing angered Franco and the nationalists, while the puritanical British government prevaricated before authorising the exhibition to go on show.

An important development was the involvement of the Artists International Association, formed in 1933 in view of the rise of German Nazism and Italian fascism. Their declared aim was to mobilise the “international unity of artists against imperial and fascistic war on the Soviet Union, fascism and imperial oppression”. By the outbreak of the civil war, the association had 600 members, including Augustus John, Stanley Spencer, Eric Gill, Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant. Younger artists were Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, John Piper and Ben Nicholson. Core members of the association were communists and this led, in due course, to some disputes with artists who were more interested in the task, than in academic or socialist realism.

The main dispute was with the surrealists, whose first exhibition in Britain in 1936 coincided with the outbreak of the civil war and who, as a group, strongly identified with the republican cause. The British surrealist group issued a number of proclamations and declarations to counter the charge that they were pro-fascist intellectual collaborators. The energetic Roland Penrose now pulled off a master-stroke: he invited Picasso and convinced the artist to allow his epic painting Guernica to be brought over to England.

In 1937, the German bombing of the Basque town of Guernica was the first European aerial attack on a purely civilian target. It so shocked world opinion that the nationalists tried to dismiss authorship and put the blame on the republicans, to no avail. Catalysed by the bombing, Picasso worked tirelessly to produce a large painting which became a totemic emblem of the suffering caused by the bombing. Guernica was the centrepiece of the Spanish Pavilion at the 1937 Paris World’s Fair. Although the Spanish finance minister, Juan Negrin, wrote that “in terms of propaganda, the presence of the mural painted by Picasso is equal to a military victory on the front”, many artists in the AIA believed that cubism was ill-suited to conveying a political message. One who joined in the criticism was the art historian, Anthony Blunt, who voiced his opposition in The Spectator, only to reverse his opinion after the war. As a result of the bombing and further menacing attacks from the nationalists, the Basque government asked countries to give temporary asylum to its refugee children. The British government refused, citing its non-interventionist position, but volunteer associations, sympathetic organisations, authorities, who reluctantly gave ground and warned that not a penny contribution would be made from the treasury. In all 40,000 children arrived in Britain. With her husband serving as surgeon at the front, the communist photographer, Edith Tudor-Hart, visited the children’s camps and during that summer took a series of memorable photographic documents of their new life. Meanwhile, Fenwick and the bringing Guernica to London would convince many of its importance, and this is what happened. In 1938 it was exhibited, along with 67 preliminary studies, at the New Burlington Galleries, which in 1936 had been the venue for the international surrealist exhibition. Sales of the catalogue were donated to the National Committee for Spanish Relief, whose patrons and supporters included writers such as James Joyce, T S Eliot, Forster, filmmaker Humphrey Jennings and CPGB leader Harry Pollitt. The preliminary studies were then exhibited in Oxford, a show organised by the future Labour MP Denis Healey, before returning to London to be reunited with Guernica at the Whitechapel Gallery. Here the exhibition was opened by leader of the opposition, Clement Attlee, who had the Nol International Brigades battalion named after him. The Whitechapel attracted 15,000 visitors, many of them from the industrial East End working class, and raised considerable sums for a food ship, as well as large quantities of working men’s boots (the price of admission), which were sent to the Spanish front. Finally, in 1939 Guernica travelled to Manchester and was exhibited in a church show, then again, after being shown in Leeds.

At the time Picasso was painting Guernica, a large gathering was held at the Royal Albert Hall in London and the programme featured a preliminary sketch for the mural. This fundraiser was addressed by the African-American actor and singer, Paul Robeson, who was due to broadcast from Moscow, but instead decided to come in person. His appearance was a sensation and in his speech, he made telling points: “The artist must take sides… the liberation of Spain from the oppression of fascist reactionaries is not a private matter for the Spaniards, but the common cause of all advanced and progressive humanity.”

As Europe slid towards a greater armed conflict, it is fitting to learn that so many artists sided against fascism as soon as it erupted in conflict on Spanish soil. Unsurprisingly Britain and other imperialist powers tried to wish the problem away. For the 1938 London May Day procession, artist FE McWilliam fashioned papier-mâché masks of Neville Chamberlain, which were then worn by surrealist artists as a protest against non-intervention. One artist, the German émigré Walter Nesper, clearly understood the danger: his painting, Prometheus 1937, uncannily depicted a bombed London around St Paul’s, three years before the event.

Rémi Gimpel
Building the union is no lottery

The Public and Commercial Services leadership is under severe pressure to come up with an answer to a Tory attempt to smash the union. The Conservatives invited government departments to consider removing the automatic deduction from wages of trade union subscriptions and this is already being implemented.

This comes in parallel with proposals to further restrict the right of public-sector unions to strike. If the Tories win an outright majority, they will ban strikes in the health, education, transport and fire services unless the unions win support for action from 40% of the workers concerned and present some unions would be pleased if the turnout in a ballot reached 40% and only around a quarter of recent strikes in the sectors concerned would have been legal under the proposals. For example, according to Transport for London, only 10% of those entitled to vote actually cross against "yes" in a recent bus drivers' action.

This has been coming for some time - almost since the beginning of the current electoral cycle. The Tories knew they would face a significant challenge in the current cycle. This has been true in parallel with proposals to further restrict the right of the unions to strike. Under such circumstances, the unions would be far less likely to have the support of the workers concerned, the on the one hand, and, media propaganda, on the other.

A much more effective - and perhaps more democratic - method of decision-making would involve debating the options at workplace meetings before a decision is taken. This would allow question to be raised about, for instance, the likely length of the strike, its objectives and the "bottom line" of all settlements. Under such circumstances, doubt would be far less likely to scab - they have, after all, actually participated in the debate and would be more likely to understand the arguments. This would vastly increase membership participation in the process and be hugely more democratic.

However, the problem stems back to proposals first put forward in the 1969 Labour white paper, "In place of strike", and subsequently implemented by the Tories, for all strikes to be subject to a secret ballot. This resulted in union members receiving a ballot paper through the post asking them to vote "yes" or "no" to industrial action proposals, upon which they must decide as atomised individuals. The only "discussion" of the proposals for many members would be the union's collection recommendation, on the one hand, and, media propaganda, on the other.

Turning now to the situation in the civil service, the PCS has been thrown into crisis by the decision to end the deduction of union subscriptions at source - the "check-off" system. The practice originated with the Labour government in the 1970s. Under Harold Wilson’s "social contract", a compromise was agreed between the Labour government and the trade union bureaucracy to tame the power of the shop stewards - following the withdrawal of in place of strike. The collection of dues through the employer rather than the shop steward was seen as an indirect means of weakening the latter’s power. It was the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions and shop-steward power that defeated In place of strike and then saw off Edward Heath’s Industrial Relations Act. The intention of the social contract was to undermine shop-steward power and leave the union bureaucracy more firmly in control.

As a result unions became more and more atomised: the union tops became complacent and the membership was left passive and atomised. In this situation the ending of the check-off system has meant that union revenue has dried up overnight. Not that the change came out of the blue - this has been just one among many attacks on trade unions in the civil service, including cuts in the time union representatives have to represent their members. But what has come out of the blue - for the rank and file, that is - has been the decision of the PCS leadership to curb union democracy. It was just before Christmas that the union announced it was suspending elections. This was one of the "bold financial decisions" that are being taken by the NEC to ensure the union’s survival. However, it was carried out to safeguard the survival of the union.

A subsequent item on the PCS website, responding to questions about the suspension of elections, informed the membership that the union "found this a heavy responsibility", but no other choice could be made. However, the decision will be subject to confirmation at the annual delegate conference in May, thus ensuring, the union says, that the decision will be fully accountable according to the democratic process of the union. So the people who made the decision are going to determine the agenda, and the time for debate on this important decision. PCS union members will already be aware that the duration of the annual delegate conference was reduced by one day in 2014 - also to save money.

Cliff edge

The rationale for the decisions of the national executive came to light when a confidential report to the NEC for its meeting of December 18 was published on the internet. This revealed that negotiations had been ongoing about the disposal of the Chappam Junction headquarters, with the NEC authorising the sale for £25 million to a real estate fund. The report also reveals the parlous state of the union's finances - substantial pension liabilities that cannot be met, loss of income due to both job cuts and especially the ending of check-off, and a poor response by members to the union's appeal to sign up to a direct debit campaign - elections can be suspended.

This is disastrous. The NEC should have insisted that the election go ahead and use it to inspire the membership by laying out what can be achieved by a strong, financially secure union with a committed leadership and fighting membership. Instead it has literally turned the issue into a lottery. If you sign up to direct debit you will be entered into a draw, where the first prize is £1,200. Instead of patronising the membership, why not try to direct their anger against a government that is out to break the union. This struggle should be politicised, not turned into a cheap version of the lottery.

Simon Wells

How the PCS is trying to get members paying again

The cancellation of these elections contravenes the union's own rules stipulating that they must be held annually. Of course, there is a get-out clause stating that "in exceptional circumstances" the leadership can vary the time span. Now, I do not know what this means in plain English, but what the union goes on to say is that for reasons of what it calls "force majeure", or circumstances beyond its control - in this case the need to direct all its full-time staff into the direct debit campaign - elections can be suspended.

This is disastrous. The NEC should have insisted that the election go ahead and use it to inspire the membership by laying out what can be achieved by a strong, financially secure union with a committed leadership and fighting membership. Instead it has literally turned the issue into a lottery. If you sign up to direct debit you will be entered into a draw, where the first prize is £1,200. Instead of patronising the membership, why not try to direct their anger against a government that is out to break the union. This struggle should be politicised, not turned into a cheap version of the lottery.