

A paper of Marxist polemic and Marxist unity



weekly **worker**



**Trump's Jerusalem
announcement encourages
Israel's colonial expansion**

- Letters and debate
- ANC congress
- Potato revolution
- LAW polemic

No 1183 Thursday December 14 2017

Towards a Communist Party of the European Union

£1/€1.10



**THE
CRYPTOCURRENCY
CRAZE**

LETTERS

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

NCC 'fairness'

Keeping the law out of the internal affairs of the workers' movement is, in general, a sound socialist principle. Our movement grew through illegal struggles (Tolpuddle), despite damaging intervention by the capitalist courts (Taff Vale).

Nevertheless, Tony Greenstein's successful injunction hearing in the high court on December 7 exposed the appalling politically motivated unfairness and inflexibility in disciplinary matters, not only of Labour's unelected officials, acting - according to the party's rules - "under the instructions of the national executive committee", but also of the 11-person national constitutional committee elected annually by conference. Mr Justice Phillips found that the party has a contractual obligation to treat its members flexibly and fairly, but had rejected "brusquely and without real reasons" Tony's "eminently reasonable and fair" request to postpone his December 11 disciplinary hearing until January.

Ms Nathalie O'Connor, representing Labour general secretary Ian McNicol, claimed: "We have ensured fairness, because we specifically considered whether to extend time" - but decided not to. "The NCC does stick to fairly rigid time frames for hearings," she said, but it "cannot consider delays caused before the matter was put to the NCC". But this is untrue: it can.

The NCC - governed by chapter 1, clause IX of the Labour Party rule book - makes its own procedural guidelines and can vary them when it thinks fit: "The NCC or any panel thereof in hearing and determining charges against an individual shall have regard to *procedural guidelines as determined by the NCC*. The NCC shall have the power to supplement such guidelines from time to time and to modify its procedures in order to meet the circumstances of any particular case to ensure fairness..." (my emphasis).

Normally, under the guidelines adopted by the NCC, the first disciplinary letter to the "respondent" gives "about six weeks" notice of the hearing, and four weeks to submit a written response to the charges. But the NCC, in its pursuit of "fairness", is wilfully blind about "delays caused before the matter was put to the NCC". In this case, Tony was suspended on March 18 2016, attended an "investigatory hearing" (nothing to do with the NCC) two months later on May 30 2016, and waited to hear more for a further 17 months. Now under rule 1.IX.2 the NCC can only consider matters "presented to it by CLPs" or by "the officers of the party on the instructions of the NEC".

So when the "officers of the party" eventually "presented the matter", the NCC dutifully sprung into action with its November 2 2017 letter. In the light of its own normal time frame - six weeks notice of a disciplinary hearing and four weeks to prepare a written response, it should have dismissed the case as out of time. Rule 1.IX.5 states: "The NCC shall have the right to dismiss without full hearing or at any point any case presented to it which it or the panel appointed to hear the case considers by a majority vote to be frivolous, vexatious, an abuse of the processes of the NCC, or where it considers that no case to answer has been established."

The NCC is not a sub-committee of the NEC. It is elected separately by conference, precisely in order to act independently as a watchdog against abuse by the officers or the NEC. One of the demands of Labour Against the Witchhunt is to put a three-month time limit on disciplinary procedures. Justice delayed is justice denied.

Strangely, the real question here is not 'Why did the party's officers take so long?', but 'Why did the party's officers decide to end the delay when they did?'

They could have kept Tony in limbo indefinitely, for as long as the NEC allowed. The answer, of course, is political.

As is too often the case, news of what the party's officers are up to is first seen in the *Jewish Chronicle*. Moshé Machover, expelled from Labour on October 3 2017, was reinstated at the end of the month. The October 31 *JC* reporting his reinstatement also announced disciplinary proceedings against Tony Greenstein, Jackie Walker and Marc Wadsworth. Two days later, the NCC started its work on Tony. Marc's hearing is now set for January 24, Jackie's will come soon. But Labour Against the Witchhunt will be picketing the January 23 NEC meeting demanding it drop these cases.

Stan Keable
LAW secretary

Closed ears

Recent mainstream media reports have focused on the supposed takeover of Labour by Momentum. For example, in Haringey an outbreak of democracy voted out councillors supporting the Haringey Development Vehicle and voted in those opposed to it. This was characterised by those ousted as a ruthless purge, a coup, combined with fear and intimidation, using the same tropes that had been thrown at Militant in the 1980s. Any reasonable person looking at the facts on the ground would support what Momentum is trying to do despite the negative publicity.

In Manchester, for example, there is substantial ongoing house-building. But only 8% of the approvals that have gone through the planning stage in the past period are designated affordable housing. House prices are increasing and the situation is similar to London. So when the *Financial Times* touts Manchester as the place to invest, housing is the target with subsequent gentrification. The message by the *FT* to investment vehicles is clear: speculate. And this is the city where many of the famous landmarks that Engels wrote about in the *Condition of the working class* are paved over and overshadowed by towering blocks of concrete and glass.

However, in Manchester, there is an ongoing battle between Momentum and Corbyn supporters, on the one side, and the Labour right, Manchester establishment and Blairite MPs such as Lucy Powell, on the other. So, yes, by all means we will purge the right, we will be ruthless, we will be organised, we will inculcate fear into the right, who have had it easy for too long for supporting politics and policies that lost Labour the vote during the Blair years.

But the left have also to be prepared about what it does with the power, once it has it. Yet much of the left is woefully short of ideas. There are ideas for policies to put the Labour Party into government, but these are delusional. Currently, there are many battles to be won in opposition and many issues at local level. On a national level there is very little in the left press about what to expect from a Labour government when it does win a majority at the next election. Most of the left appear to support building a movement to keep up the pressure on the government and indirectly messaging the left in Labour to prevent any backsliding. For which at times Corbyn appears to have closed ears.

The left, including the Socialist Workers Party and Socialist Party, should be encouraged to join Labour to strengthen the forces inside Labour, but also to win the battles outside Labour.

Simon Wells
Manchester

Zionist Jewry

Some really have a mission to destroy Socialist Fight. They are bitterly disappointed their initiative to get us expelled from Labour Against the Witchhunt has failed, but they won't give up.

Back in 2010, the *Jerusalem Post* boasted that 51 of the 100 most powerful men in the world were Jewish. In the USA, 48 of the top 100 billionaires are Jewish.

Barring the odd exception like George Soros, a modern-day Parvus, they are Zionist champions of the crimes of the state of Israel against the Palestinians. Asserting that such wealth has no influence on US foreign policy as it effects Israel is apparent political naivety, but, in reality, a capitulation to the pressure of Zionist 'anti-Semitic' lying propaganda.

And it has nothing to do with the *Protocols of the elders of Zion*. Of course, when it comes to the fundamental interests of US imperialism, this is only a secondary issue. But, on the question of war on Iran and Jerusalem, as capital, for instance, they have defeated the Obama policy there. On other international issues, Israel and their international, powerful friends simply bolster US policy, or rather the policy of the far-right, Republican wing of the US ruling class.

Of course, there are many anti-Zionist Jews and many who are revolutionary socialists. But it is useless to deny that Zionism is the dominant ideology today amongst international Jewry, like support for British imperialism is the dominant ideology in Britain. Revolutionaries must recognise contemporary reality, whilst seeking the ways and means to fight it.

Dubbing this 'anti-Semitism' is nonsense. Sean Matgamna made a similar charge against the Workers Revolutionary Party back in the days of Brent East, Reg Freeson, Ken Livingstone and the BBC *Money programme* that alleged Gaddafi and other Arab powers funded the WRP.

Of course, there was some truth in that, but the attack from Matgamna was from a rightwing, pro-imperialist opponent of the Arab world in general and its foremost anti-imperialist champions in particular.

Apparently, every time you criticised Zionism, you really meant all Jews and you were a diehard, anti-Semitic bigot. And that is still the AWL line, developed back in the early 1980s.

We are confident we will defeat that political line in the labour movement.

Gerry Downing
Socialist Fight

Illegitimate

In the deluge of comments on Donald Trump's announcement on his decision to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital and move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to that city, one historical fact has largely been ignored.

The general international consensus regarding Jerusalem as not being part of Israel's sovereign territory is much older than the six-days war of June 1967, when Israel annexed the eastern part of Jerusalem. In fact the special status of Jerusalem as a whole (west and east) has survived as the last remaining element of the UN partition resolution of November 1947 (UN general assembly resolution 181).

According to that resolution, Jerusalem and the surrounding area, including Bethlehem, was not to be part of either of the two states into which Palestine was to be partitioned, but a *corpus separatum* (separate body) under an international regime. It is for this reason that Israel's claim to sovereignty over any part of Jerusalem - let alone its later annexation of the eastern part of the city - has not been internationally recognised. This is also the reason for the almost total international condemnation of Trump's announcement, including the closest camp followers of the US, the so-called 'international community'.

Since Israel often asserts that its international legitimacy stems from UNGA resolution 181, this recent purported unilateral change in the status of Jerusalem undermines Israel's own claim for international legitimacy.

Moshé Machover
email

Hand-waving

Paul Demarty's letter (December 7) criticising my critique of Rex Dunn ('Historical inaccuracies and theoretical overkill', November 30) is, of course, correct that

Levi-Strauss's structuralist anthropology was an appropriation of Ferdinand Saussure's structuralist linguistics via Roman Jakobson, with whom Levi-Strauss worked in New York in the 1940s.

This does not, however, push the matter much further back or escape the context, since it is reasonably clear that - as Paul says - what is involved is an emergence of *influence* of these ideas in the context of both the US academy and the French left in the 1950s-60s. Saussure opposed historical linguistics with structuralism; Levi-Strauss and Talcott Parsons appropriated the idea for anti-historicism in anthropology and in sociology; Althusser appropriated it for a form of anti-historicism, which could serve as anti-humanism.

Comrade Demarty's more substantive points are that "ideas are not very often pushed to their limits in the minds of those who hold them. Mike wonders how any anti-foundationalist epistemology could ever provide a basis for a political project of general emancipation, but that certainly has not stopped people from trying. Certainly there is more to the rise of identitarianism than decades-old fads among French bohemian intellectuals." These are broadly true.

In fact, my point is precisely that *in the US and UK* the identitarianism came first. It did so on the basis of the success of the US civil rights movement and of 'soft Maoist' political commitment to the people's front and to 'speaking bitterness'. It carried 'anti-foundationalist epistemologies' in its wake as a means of ontological-epistemological *closure* against substantive criticisms of this policy by advocates of a class orientation. (I should say that in my opinion 'anti-foundationalism' simply fails to achieve its nominal aim, merely creating a new set of - idealist - foundations.)

Comrade Dunn's letter in the same issue is less helpful, because it hardly responds substantively to any of my arguments. Rather, it largely repeats in slightly different terms what he said in his original article.

There is one big political issue here. He claims that my "view of 1968 echoed the French Communist Party's" and that Stalinism "smashed subsequent revolutions in 1936, 1944 and 1968". I agree in substance as to 1936 and 1944, but still maintain that comrade Dunn radically overestimates what was possible in 1968.

The issue is one of great political importance, because the modern western far left's idea of revolution is as something like 1968 - a large, purely spontaneous movement, in which a microscopic group could become mass and take power - but this time successfully. This idea is delusive. And it is one of the fundamental reasons why this left *fails to do what it could do* - that is, to create a serious minority party which aims to become a mass party-movement, and which really aims for workers' power. Instead, the far left endlessly tries to light the "single spark that lights the prairie fire" (Mao) through strikes, demos, flash-bash and broad-frontism.

Much less importantly, but again actually sort of responding to what I said, comrade Dunn comments that "Wearing spectacles cannot be compared with full transgenders". I agree. In fact, in my article I went on to say that "These are trivial compared to the tech used by people who need artificial limbs, or whatever. Closer to sex, women routinely use mechanical or hormonal technology to prevent conception..."

The underlying point here is that the telos or species-being of humanity is at least in part about *creativity*, and this creativity is as much about tech tinkering of one sort or another as it is about art. Indeed, the emergence of 'high art' as sharply distinct from artisan production and 'design' is an aspect of the alienation of labour in capitalism.

It is certainly not possible to make a case on the basis of species-being that our bodies should be excluded from all tech tinkering. I guess that it *might* be possible

to make a case that 'gender reassignment' is either an illusion because the tech doesn't really exist (Camille Paglia's argument) or a waste of resources. I don't myself see any need to make such an argument (there is so much *other* permanent use of drugs, *other* cosmetic surgery and *other* arguable wastes of resources). But such an argument certainly won't be made by simply referring to species-being, *telos* and the decline of capitalism, without much more careful specific analysis of the 'trans' issue. Here comrade Dunn is just hand-waving.

Mike Macnair
Oxford

Fluid

Like some other recent cultural phenomena (robot fiction), structuralism and identity politics have their roots in the period before World War II. It was in the 1930s that Claude Lévi-Strauss, initiator of structuralism, began his championing of 'diversity' - a reciprocal relation with the other - while doing anthropology among the indios of Brazil.

As Simon Clarke shows in *The foundations of structuralism: a critique*, recommended by Mike Macnair two issues ago, Lévi-Strauss began from the abstract individual and the structures of the mental unconscious within them. What set him off on this radical alternative to western civilisation and progress was, of course, the despondency of the 30s - the recognised failure of both capitalism in the depression and of its supposed adversary, the 'official' Communist Party. What he came up with was a world found in the past and among small traditional societies - that of the more reciprocal 'primitives'. In the face of both exhausted capitalism and limited socialism, this was an attempt at utopianism. In fact, it implied a framework of exchange, 'reciprocity' between selves who traded, which could only amount to the early capitalism that corporate capitalism had already built on and superseded.

However, this radical utopianism, along with existentialism, fermented through the 50s and 60s, joining borrowed Maoist practices of more personalised confrontation with bourgeois attitudes - 'speaking bitterness', 'self-criticism' - and finally issued in a radicalism, the major product of which was the sense that personal liberation within an interest group was the key to general liberation. No more concern with 'objective' structures and the alienation of commodity production, while the working class was dismissed as too inside the system - in fact conservative, like the Labour Party and Soviet Union. These self-radicals could be compared to those cults in pre-Christian Rome that rejected established religion.

In the late 1970s, the radicals graduated into local government and academia, taking up theory - structuralism and poststructuralism - as well as identity politics, not just to be fair to everyone in the present, but to imagine a diverse future of reciprocal others, as Lévi-Strauss had envisioned. But, instead of creating a movement at least united in its utopian liberalism, the project became fragmented and even antagonistic, as with the recent conflicts over free speech between feminists and trans activists.

Transgenderism does in fact show an actual 'instability of meaning' around the terms 'sex' and 'gender'. On the one hand, it's essentialist; on the other, anti-foundationalist - that is, 'fluid'. On the one hand, feeling you're in 'the wrong body' rejects the body as guide to your gender: gender can be fluid, opposed to one's born sex. At the same time, a desire is stated, a mental preference, for being either-or, either manly or womanly, so reinforcing the essentiality of being one or the other. No wonder it's a problem.

However, another word for this capacity to change is 'Darwinian'. Darwinism, like Marxism, observes change - fluidity if you like - in the world; it's not Aristotelian, where you are an either/or: ape or human, boy or girl, blue or

pink. As Rex Dunn points out in his letter last week, Marx avowed that humans must take “conscious control, collectively, of social production and reproduction”. Male and female then are biological, inherited from nature; masculine and feminine are social constructions. So, let us change gender, sex if you like, but let’s not make this too important in the long run, lest we reinforce concepts of masculine and feminine that are ideological and social constructs.

As for the personalist politics of the last few decades, we may not disagree on the end, but can dissent on the means - no platform and no debate is no solution. If we want to achieve something more communal, though no less diverse, the structures to be changed are economic and political. Freedom and agency will be lived and equality and reciprocity gained through a broader-based politics, not through assertion of a separatist ‘self’.

We may recognise the justice of their opposition to the politics of ‘official’ communism - that *cul-de-sac* where Marxist revolution was parked for so many years - where the movement ignored difference as such, but we may wish in turn to criticise personal radicalism for its dismissing of the movement: that is, the necessary movement of history and politics and of getting a changed world for more than a few.

Mike Belbin
email

Leave him alone

Like Pavlov’s dog, the mainstream media slobbers platitudes every time North Korea launches another test missile. Listening to the blather, one would think that once Kim Jong-un has a missile capable of reaching the United States, he is going to use it in an unprovoked nuclear attack on the US mainland killing millions of Americans.

For Kim to attack the US he would have to be insane, paranoid and suicidal. Top officials in the US intelligence agencies say he is not. Director of intelligence Dan Coats has said publicly that Kim is acting very rationally; secretary of state Rex Tillerson says that Kim is “not insane”. So we can rest with ease that Kim Jong-un is highly unlikely to wake up one morning and nuke America because he can.

North Korea is not an existential threat to US national security. Occasionally the mainstream media does tell the truth, but that does not sell news, or make the military-industrial-security-complex, neocons and others in the deep state happy. Instead they tell us about the latest war of words and weapon tests (usually instigated by the US, which the media does not tell us). The word-war is exacerbated every time the US threatens, insults and mocks Kim.

The US regularly practises nuclear attacks on North Korea by air, land and sea, which also get a propaganda response from Kim. North Korea has offered to stop testing nuclear bombs, if the US would stop playing nuclear war games on its border. The US has been threatening North Korea for over 70 years.

What should frighten the American people is the long history of US crazies who would start a nuclear war. Trump is not the first president that cannot be trusted with nuclear bombs. It is only by sheer luck that the world has escaped a nuclear war or a cataclysmic nuclear accident. There have been many close calls, and one day there will be one too many.

The US keeps gambling away with nuclear roulette anyway, threatening North Korea, Iran, Russia, and the enemy *du jour*. One of the favourite US verbal threats is to say that “all options are on the table”, which includes nuclear, but the diplomacy option is usually missing. The US has even used nuclear bombs twice against civilian populations in 1945, and according to many historians unnecessarily, because Japan had already offered to surrender.

Hundreds of thousands of Japanese died, mostly so that Harry Truman could try to impress Joseph Stalin with a show of US power.

Kim Jong-un has very good reasons to fear US threats. He knows that the US is ruthless enough to kill millions of his people and destroy his country, just as the US did in Iraq and Libya. Senator John McCain’s daughter, Meghan, even said on *Fox News* that the US should assassinate the “crazy fat kid”. Words like that, Trump’s insults, threats and nuclear war games are going to get bombastic verbal reactions by Kim Jong-un, and cause him to redouble his nuclear and missile programmes.

While the US constantly talks about a denuclearised Korean peninsula, it is the US that first nuclearised it, starting with Truman’s threats in 1951. Then in July 1957 president Dwight D Eisenhower unilaterally withdrew from section 13(d) of the 1953 Armistice Agreement, which made the introduction of any new weapon systems in the Korean peninsula forbidden to both sides. The US broke the promise so that it could “equip US forces in Korea with modern weapons” - ie, tactical nuclear weapons. During the rest of the cold war, the US stationed at least 950 nuclear weapons in South Korea. It may have withdrawn them in 1991, as it says, but it still has plenty in Guam and elsewhere that it uses to constantly threaten North Korea.

While the mainstream media ponders how to get North Korea to sit down at the negotiating table, it is the US that refuses to talk. North Korea has often offered to sign a permanent peace treaty and non-aggression agreement, but the US has consistently rebuffed the offers. The state department has repeatedly said in news conferences that it will not negotiate with North Korea unless they meet unspecified preconditions first. Incredibly, the US and the media constantly repeat that it is North Korea that refuses to talk!

Unless there is a diplomatic solution, Kim Jong-un is rationally following in his father’s footsteps by developing a credible nuclear deterrent against US aggression. The US has left him no choice other than to defend his country with the deterrent of nuclear weapons. Bush sabotaged the negotiated nuclear agreement that the US and North Korea had made under Clinton in the 1990s. That is what precipitated North Korea withdrawing from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and resuming its nuclear programme.

Korea’s historical philosophy is based on the principle of self-sufficiency and resistance against foreign domination, especially in the north. The North Koreans now call their historical philosophy ‘Juche’. North Korea is determined to follow the principle of Juche to the “realisation of independence in politics, self-sufficiency in the economy and self-reliance in national defence”.

In the 21st century the US has killed millions of defenceless people all over the world with wars of aggression, and by using excessive force and total war against civilian populations. The US uses food, water and medical supplies as psychological weapons of mass destruction. As Madeleine Albright said, 500,000 dead children is “worth it” to bring a country to its knees. That is what the US sanctions are now doing to North Korea. But, as Russian president Vladimir Putin said, “North Korea will ‘eat grass’ before giving up nukes”.

All Korea has ever wanted was to be left alone. During their 4,000-year history, Korea has not been an aggressive, expansionist country. To the contrary, Korea has often been invaded by China, Mongolia, Japan, Russia and the US. Historically, Korea has resisted contact with foreigners because foreigners had always brought invasions. Like his Korean ancestors, Kim Jong-un just wants North Korea to be left alone for the Korean people

to determine their own future.

David William Pear
Florida

20 years BC

Theresa May has given the EU everything that it wanted - in one case on the say-so of the DUP and in the other cases - well, just anyway. But it has taken her eight months to do so. And we are in for another four and a half years of this style of government, if ‘government’ be the word.

We need the negotiation of Brexit in the Welsh, northern and working class interests that delivers the result in its favour, including the extra £350 million per week for the national health service - something that needs to be written into the statute law. All the while rejoicing that the workers, and not the liberal bourgeoisie, were now the key swing voters who deserved direct representation on local public bodies, on national public bodies, in the media, and at the intersection of the public and media sectors in the parliamentary lobby, in the BBC, in any future structure of the Channel Four Television Corporation, in any arrangement that made possible Rupert Murdoch’s acquisition of the whole of Sky News, and so on.

If you want negotiation done properly, then you need trade unionists to do it. The government’s claim to want something like Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement with Canada, only even more so, will unite the Labour Party like nothing in years. There are people in Labour who want Brexit, and there are people who do not. But none of them wants this. Meanwhile, the wholesale capitulation of May and of John Major’s erstwhile Europe minister, David Davis, is being hailed as a triumph by the supposed Brexiteers on the Conservative benches. Those truly of that mind number barely the couple of dozen that opposed Maastricht, several of them are the same individuals, and none of them stands any more chance of becoming leader than Tony Marlow ever did. Indeed, are there even that many of them? It turns out that there may be precisely one: Philip Davies, who did not enter parliament until 2005. The likes of Iain Duncan Smith have queued up to agree with Ken Clarke and Anna Soubry.

There are half a dozen times that many Brexiteers on the Labour benches, just as there were three times as many anti-Maastricht Labour MPs as anti-Maastricht Conservatives. In any case, all Labour MPs will vote against ‘Canada plus, plus, plus’. By contrast, even the DUP is now signed up to a deal that is worse than staying in the single market and customs union would have been. But then, had the old man been dead a couple more years, then the DUP would have campaigned for ‘remain’. Are most of the DUP’s voters even in favour of Brexit? Majority opinion in Northern Ireland is to remain in both the United Kingdom and the EU, yet that is represented by precisely one out of 18 MPs - and Sylvia Hermon is an independent.

The entire Tory and Murdoch press has also rallied behind the white flag. With *The Guardian* about to axe Giles Fraser’s column, ‘leavers’ are left with only the *Morning Star*. And *The Word*, of course. This could be the making of *The Word*. I very much hope that large numbers of ‘leavers’ will become regular readers. They might then realise that the election of a Corbyn government is the only way to keep the economic and foreign policy debates open, whether or not you agree with Corbyn in any way on economic policy, in particular. Unless you want a return to the ‘centre ground’ of the 20 years BC (Before Corbyn), then you must vote Labour at the next general election, no matter what.

David Lindsay
County Durham

ACTION

London Communist Forum

Sunday December 17, 5pm: Weekly political report from CPGB Provisional Central Committee, followed by open discussion and reading group: study of August Nitz’s *Lenin’s electoral strategy from Marx and Engels through the revolution of 1905*. This meeting: chapter 3, ‘The “dress rehearsal” and the first duma’ (continued).

Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Road, London WC1.

Organised by CPGB: www.cpgb.org.uk;

and Labour Party Marxists: www.labourpartymarxists.org.uk.

Radical Anthropology Group

Tuesday December 19, 6.45pm: Series of talks on human origins, Anthropology Building, 14 Taviton Street, off Gordon Square, London WC1. This meeting: ‘Communism in motion: how hunter-gatherers make egalitarianism work’. Speaker: Morna Finnegan.

Organised by Radical Anthropology Group: <http://radicalanthropologygroup.org>.

Re-imagining Brexit Britain

Thursday December 14, 6.30pm: Discussion on immigration and asylum issues, Unity Centre, St Leonards Road, Rotherham S65.

Organised by The Monitoring Group (TMG): www.tmg-uk.org;

supported by South Yorkshire Migration and Asylum Action Group:

www.symaag.org.uk.

A great deal for Manchester?

Wednesday December 20, 10am to 1pm: Conference, Mechanics Centre, 103 Princess Street, Manchester M1. How can we win a ‘good employment charter’? Free entry for trade unionists.

Organised by TUC:

www.tuc.org.uk/events/great-jobs-and-good-employment-greater-manchester.

Labour Against the Witchhunt

Saturday January 6, 12noon-3pm: Organising meeting, Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Road WC1.

Organised by LAW: www.labouragainsthewitchhunt.org.

War, racism and Islamophobia

Thursday January 11, 7pm: Public meeting, Dallow Learning Community Centre, 234 Dallow Road, Luton LU1. With Lindsey German and Moazzem Begg.

Organised by Luton Stop the War Coalition:

<http://stopwar.org.uk/index.php/events/local-stop-the-war-events/2801-11-jan-luton-war-racism-islamophobia>.

Under threat of nuclear war

Wednesday January 24, 7.30pm: Meeting on North Korea, Jesus Lane Friends Meeting House, 12 Jesus Lane, Cambridge CB5. With Bruce Cumings, author of *The Korean war*.

Organised by Cambridge Stop the War Coalition:

<http://stopwar.org.uk/index.php/events/local-stop-the-war-events/2829-24-jan-cambridge-north-korea-living-under-threat-of-nuclear-war>.

Discrimination and the law

Friday January 26, 8.45am to 4pm: Conference, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1. For trade unions, law centres, etc.

Organised by TUC:

www.tuc.org.uk/events/tuceor-discrimination-law-conference-2018.

Palestine solidarity

Saturday January 27, 9.30am to 5pm: Palestine Solidarity Campaign AGM, London Irish Centre, 50-52 Camden Square, London NW1. Please register by January 20.

Organised by Palestine Solidarity Campaign:

www.palestinecampaign.org/events/psc-annual-general-meeting-2018.

Labour Against the Witchhunt

Tuesday January 30, 7pm: Public meeting, committee room 3, Council House, Birmingham B1. Speakers: Jackie Walker (LAW), Naomi Wimborne-Idrissi (Jewish Voices for Labour), Moshé Machover (reinstated Labour member).

Organised by LAW: www.labouragainsthewitchhunt.org.

Showtime from the front line

Tuesday January 30, 6.45pm: Political comedy with Mark Thomas, the Old Market, 11a Upper Market Street, Hove BN3.

Organised by the Old Market:

<http://theoldmarket.com/shows/mark-thomas-showtime-frontline>.

Trade unions, class and power

Tuesday January 30, 7pm: Political lecture and discussion, Marx Memorial Library, 37A Clerkenwell Green, London EC1. Part of a series of four classes delivered by Simon Renton. £20 waged; £12 unwaged.

Organised by Marx Memorial Library: www.marx-memorial-library.org.

Starting a co-op

Thursday, February 8, 1pm to 5pm: Information and education event, Cooperatives UK, Holyoake House, Hanover Street, Manchester M60. Free entry.

Organised by Cooperatives UK:

www.uk.coop/uniting-co-ops/events-calendar/is-a-co-op-right-for-you-manchester-08-02-18.

Britain’s housing crisis

Wednesday February 14, 7pm: Discussion, Marx Memorial Library, 37A Clerkenwell Green, London EC1. First in a three-part course. Waged: £15; unwaged: £9.

Organised by Marx Memorial Library: www.marx-memorial-library.org.

CPGB wills

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

MIDDLE EAST

False history and lip service

Far from aiding the 'peace process', writes **Yassamine Mather**, Trump's Jerusalem announcement will act as an encouragement to Israeli expansionism



Proud of his handwriting: Pence approves

The only positive thing to note about Donald Trump's public recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital is the fact that the US president succeeds in uniting everyone against him on a regular basis.

In the last few weeks alone we have seen his unilateral opposition to the Iran nuclear deal (a proposition that provoked opposition from the European Union, from pro-Brexiteers and 'remainers' in the UK, from Russia, China ...). Then there were the videos he retweeted from the far-right Britain First group, which united liberals, conservatives, the media and everyone else against him, and now we have not only the recognition of Jerusalem but the announcement of plans to move the US embassy there. The UN general assembly voted overwhelmingly against all this as part of six anti-Israel resolutions it approved on December 7. The vote was 151 in favour and six against, with nine abstentions - rarely has the UN been so united!

However, no-one should rejoice at this latest in a series of ineffective UN resolutions against Israeli expansionism - they are not worth the paper they are printed on. From 1967 to 1989 the security council adopted 131 resolutions directly addressing the Arab-Israeli conflict¹ - to no effect - and Israel has been condemned in 45 resolutions by the UN Human Rights Council. In fact since its creation the council had adopted almost as many resolutions condemning Israel as all other countries combined. Despite all this, not only is the world hegemon power still backing Israel, but the Trump presidency has given new impetus to the Washington-Tel Aviv axis.

The response from Trump's UN representative was predictable. Nikki Haley told the world:

Over many years the United Nations has outrageously been one of the

world's foremost centres of hostility towards Israel. The UN has done much more damage to the prospects of Middle East peace than to advance them. We will not be a party to that.

So the world is wrong and Trump is right.

Before Israel and its allies get too excited about the US president's declaration, let us remind them that this particular move has supporters amongst the worst enemies of the Jewish people. Those who know about the views of extreme rightwing Christians on Jerusalem have written about this aspect of Trump's decision. Amongst them is Diana Butler Bass, writing on the CNN website. She summarised the Bible-bashing, conservative Christian view by recounting her own upbringing in such circles:

For us, the Bible was not just a guide to piety. It also revealed god's plan for history. Through it, we learned how god had worked in the past and what god would do in the future.

Central to that plan was Jerusalem, the city of peace, and the dwelling place of god. It was special to the Jews because it was the home of Abraham and David. It was special to us because it was where Jesus had died and risen. We believed that ultimately Christ would return to Jerusalem to rule as its king. We longed for this outcome ... Whenever Israel gained more political territory, whenever Israel extended its boundaries, it was god's will, the end-times unfolding on the evening news.

Diana and her classmates were taught that

the Jews would experience a great religious rebirth and rebuild their temple in Jerusalem. This would spark a series of cataclysmic events that would culminate in the Battle of Armageddon - the last war of

humanity. But it would also cause the Jews to finally accept Jesus as their saviour. After all this occurred, Jesus would return in glory ... And it would begin in Jerusalem.

These ludicrous ideas are, of course, more Pence than Trump, but for Iranians like myself the whole saga has echoes of the views of Shia clerics on the end of the world and the promised return of the 12th Imam. Under president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, there was talk of building a motorway to "facilitate the Imam's landing"! After which the world as we know it would end. When they came out with such nonsense, they were labelled mad, ignorant and stupid, while Islam was dismissed as a backward religion. Yet, when Pence and then by extension Trump and Nicky Haley support similar ideas, we are told they want "world peace" and a guarantee of Israel's security.

Ecstatic

The reaction to Trump's announcement from Israeli prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu was ecstatic:

Jerusalem has been the capital of the Jewish people for 3,000 years. ... So it's rare to be able to speak of new and genuine milestones in the glorious history of this city, yet today's pronouncement by president Trump is such an occasion.²

Dismissing this false history, professor Hamid Dabbashi of Columbia University, responded on the *Al Jazeera* website:

The fanatical Zionists' delusional orotundity begins with the proposal that 'there was a temple on that site for nearly 1,000 years before the Roman destruction. That would mean that for about 3,000 years Jerusalem has been the centre of the Jewish people.' That is the oldest

and silliest trick in the Zionist bag: take a truism - a mere fragment of the whole truth - and flip it to your advantage. Not so fast, mister!

The deliberate diletantism of the Zionists into Middle East history is threadbare folly. Christians and Muslims too trace their archaeological history to thousands of years ago in the self-same Palestine. That does not entitle them to declare a Christian or Islamic republic in Palestine.

The idea of a 'Jewish state' in Palestine is as fraudulent as the proposition of a Christian empire or an Islamic republic in Palestine. Palestine was also ruled by Persian and Roman empires, but that does not entitle Italy or Iran to come and lay a claim on Palestine. We might as well send Berlusconi and Ahmadinejad to a ring to fight their claims over Palestine - the winner will take on Netanyahu. The problem with these Zionists is how utterly indifferent to their own stupidity they seem to be.³

The conspiracy theorists in the Middle East believe the declaration signals the adoption of a much more radical pro-Zionist position by the Trump administration. They refer to comments made by Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, who claimed that it marked the beginning of something big and implied that Netanyahu has some "far-reaching plans" for the Middle East. According to Al Monitor website, however, others doubt such claims and believe that, when it comes to Trump's policies, "every time there is a choice between sophisticated conspiracy and unprofessional populism, it's best to pick the latter option".⁴

One thing is for sure, though: anyone who thinks that moving Israel's capital to Jerusalem will help the 'peace process' between Israelis and Palestinians is living in cloud cuckoo land. After decades of injustice and occupation

the Palestinians face a truly bleak 2018 and it should be said that this is not just the fault of the west, Trump or the Israeli premier. Arab rulers, as well as successive Palestinian leaders in Fatah and Hamas, share the blame for the disastrous situation we face. They have been preoccupied with their own careers at the expense of the continued plight of the Palestinian people. As for Arab dictators, fearful of their own position, they have done no more than pay lip service to the Palestinian cause and have often been involved in secret or even open deals with the Zionist state.

Iran's Islamic republic - for all its public statements on the Palestinian cause and claims to be the main defender of the Palestinian people - has not done much better. The rhetoric has not matched the reality. Although we are led to believe that Iran supports Hamas, in fact in recent years the two have fallen out over Iran's support for Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad and Hamas's backing for elements in the Syrian opposition. As for Fatah, its open association with Saudi policies and support for the loony Iranian group, Mojahedin-e Khalq, has led to a good deal of animosity.

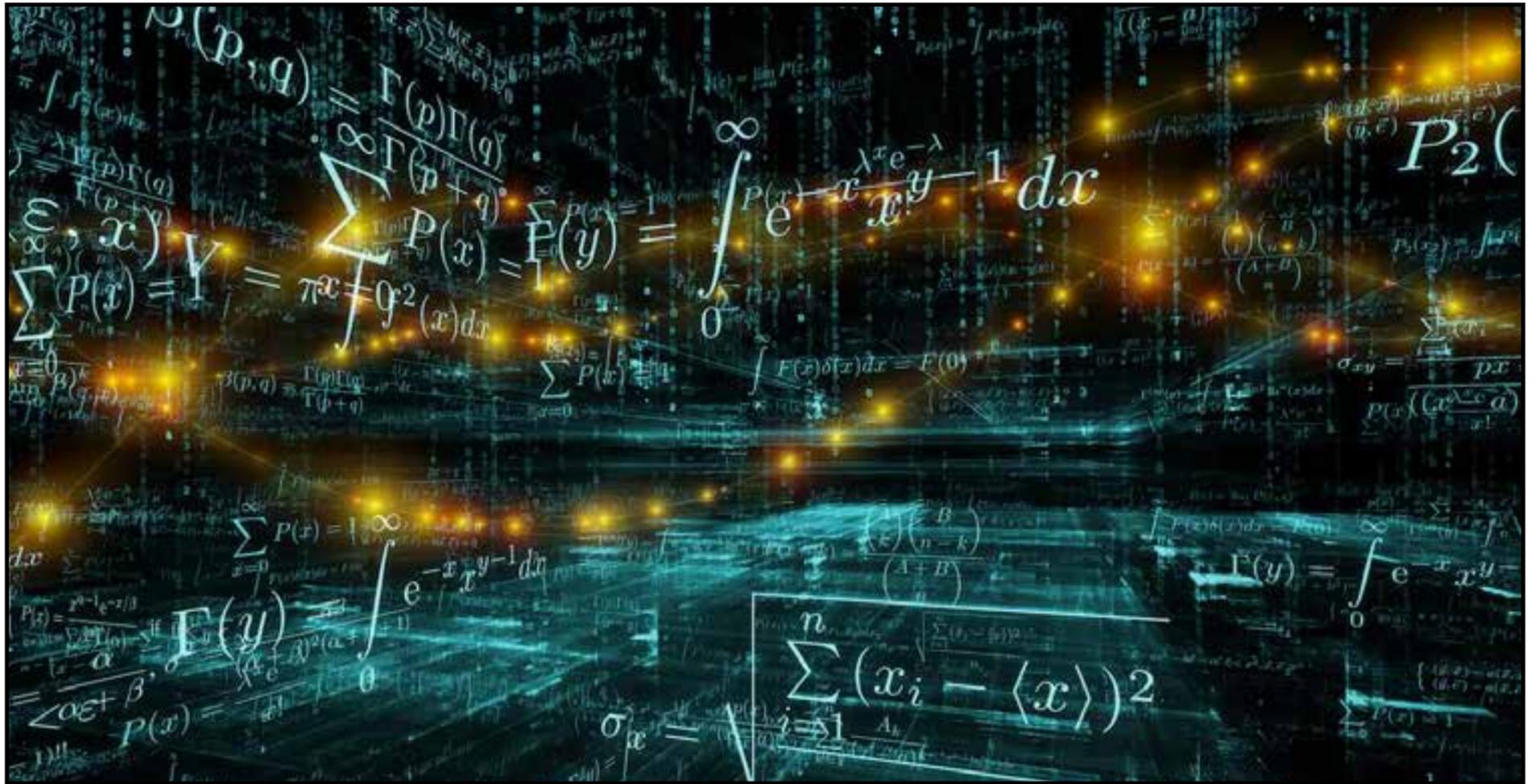
The smaller Palestinian groups supported by Tehran, such as Islamic Jihad, are too small and insignificant to make much difference - and, of course, when it comes to secret Iranian deals with Israel, we will probably only know if they exist many years down the line ●

yassamine.mather@weeklyworker.co.uk

Notes

- Listed at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_United_Nations_resolutions_concerning_Israel.
- www.haaretz.com/us-news/1.827338.
- www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/jerusalem-capital-settler-colony-171207100813811.html.
- www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/12/israel-us-donald-trump-benjamin-netanyahu-jerusalem-abbas.html#ixzz513zEQkrK.

ECONOMICS



The maths behind bitcoin

Cryptocurrency craze

Does bitcoin open the way to a world free from the control of global authorities? No chance, argues **Michael Roberts**

As I write, the price of a bitcoin has hit nearly \$17,000, which means that it has increased by 2,000% in one year. The rise in the 'value' of this digital currency is now more than the rise in the price of tulips experienced in the infamous tulip price bubble in Holland in the 1630s.

The history of financial markets is littered with asset price bubbles, from those tulips in the early 1600s to more recent examples, such as internet stocks in the late 1990s and US house prices before 2008. This looks like another. Or is there more to the rise in the bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies, as they are called?

Money in modern capitalism is no longer just a commodity like gold, as it was when capitalism began to emerge, but instead is now a 'fiat currency'. Such fiat currencies are accepted because they are printed and backed by governments and central banks and subject to regulation ('fiat'). The vast majority of fiat money is no longer in coin or notes, but in deposits or claims on banks. In the UK, notes and coin account for just 2.1% of the £2.2 trillion total money supply.

The driver of bitcoin and rival cryptocurrencies has been the internet and growth of internet-based trading and transactions. The internet has generated a requirement for low-cost, anonymous and rapidly verifiable transactions to be used for online barter, and fast settling money has emerged as a consequence.

Bitcoin - conceived by the anonymous and mysterious programmer, Satoshi Nakamoto, just nine years ago - is by far the most widely known cryptocurrency. It is not localised to a particular region or country, nor is it intended for use in a particular virtual economy. Because of its decentralised nature, its circulation is largely beyond the reach of direct regulation or monetary policy and oversight that has traditionally been

enforced in some manner with localised private monies and e-money.

Cryptocurrencies eliminate the need for financial intermediaries by offering direct peer-to-peer (P2P) online payments. The main technological innovation behind them has been the 'blockchain', a 'ledger' containing all transactions for every single unit of currency. It differs from existing (physical or digital) ledgers, in that it is decentralised: ie, there is no central authority verifying the validity of transactions. Instead, it employs verification based on cryptographic proof, where various members of the network verify 'blocks' of transactions approximately every 10 minutes. The incentive for this is compensation in the form of newly 'minted' cryptocurrency for the first member to provide the verification.

New world?

Now for technology enthusiasts and criminals - and also for those who want to build a world out of the control of state machines and regulatory authorities - this all sounds exciting. Maybe communities and people (and criminals) can make transactions without the diktats of corrupt governments and thus control their incomes and wealth away from the authorities - it might even be the embryo of a post-capitalist world without states.

But is this new technology of blockchains and cryptocurrencies really going to offer such a utopian new world? Like any technology it depends on whether it reduces labour time and raises the productivity of things and services (use-values) or, under capitalism, whether it will be another weapon for increasing value and surplus value. Can technology in and of itself - even a technology that apparently is outside the control of any company or government - really break people free from the law of value?

I think not. For a start, bitcoin is limited to people with internet

connections. That means billions are excluded from the process, even though mobile banking has grown in the villages and towns of 'emerging economies'. So far it is almost impossible to buy anything much with bitcoin. Globally, bitcoin transactions are at about three per second - compared to Visa credit at 9,000 a second. And setting up a 'wallet' to conduct transactions in bitcoin on the internet is still a difficult procedure.

More decisively, the question is whether bitcoin actually meets the criteria for money in modern economies. Money serves three functions under capitalism, where things and services are produced as commodities to sell on a market:

- Money has to be accepted as a medium of exchange.
 - It must be a unit of account with a fair degree of stability, so that we can compare the costs of goods and services over time and between merchants.
 - And it should also be a store of value that stays reasonably stable over time.
- If hyperinflation or spiralling deflation sets in, then a national currency soon loses its role, as 'trust' in the currency disappears. There are many examples in history of a national currency being replaced by another or by gold (even cigarettes), when 'trust' in its stability is lost.

The issue of trust is brought to a head with bitcoin, as it relies on 'miners' - members that contribute computational power to solve a complex cryptographic problem and verify the transactions that have occurred over a short period of time (10 minutes). These transactions are then published as a block, and the miner who had first published the proof receives a reward (currently 25 bitcoins). The maximum block size is 1MB, which corresponds to approximately seven transactions per second. In order to ensure that blocks are published

approximately every 10 minutes, the network automatically adjusts the difficulty of the cryptographic problem to be solved.

Bitcoin mining requires specialised equipment, as well as substantial electricity costs, and miners thus have to balance their technology and energy investment. That means increasingly bitcoin could only work as an alternative, replacement global currency if miners became large operations. And that means large companies down the road - in the hands of capitalist entities, which may well eventually be able to control the bitcoin market. Also if bitcoin were to become a viable tender to pay tax to governments, it would then require some form of price relationship with the existing fiat money supply. So governments will still be there.

Indeed, the most startling obstacle to bitcoin or any other cryptocurrency taking over is the energy consumption involved. Bitcoin mining is already consuming more energy for computer power than the annual consumption of Ireland. Temperatures near computer miner centres have rocketed. Maybe this heat could be ecologically used, but the non-profitability of such energy recycling may well 'block' such blockchain expansion.

And capitalism is not ignoring blockchain technology. Indeed, like every other innovation, it seeks to bring it under its control. Mutual distributed ledgers (MDLs) in blockchain technology provide an electronic public transaction record of integrity without central ownership. The ability to have a globally available, verifiable and untamperable source of data provides anyone wishing to provide trusted third-party services - ie, most financial services firms - the ability to do so cheaply and robustly. Indeed, that is the road that large banks and other financial institutions are going for. They are much more

interested in developing blockchain technology to save costs and control internet transactions.

Incorporation

All this suggests that blockchain technology will be incorporated into the drive for value, not need, if it becomes widely applied. Cryptocurrencies will become part of cryptofinance, not the medium of a new world of free and autonomous transactions. And bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies will remain on the micro-periphery of the spectrum of digital moneys - just as Esperanto has done as a universal global language, against the might of imperialist English, Spanish and Chinese.

Meanwhile the craze gathers pace. Only this week, futures markets for bitcoin have sprung up, enabling investors to 'short' the cryptocurrency - ie, gamble on its price falling. That raises its own dangers, as investors could now lose millions in betting on the currency falling - just as they did with tulips 400 years ago. As Keynes once said, "The market can stay irrational longer than you can stay solvent."

Banks are now launching investment vehicles called ETFs in bitcoin, so that the 'man in the street' can buy them without 'owning' them directly. So the crypto craze may well continue for a while longer, along with the spiralling international stock and bond markets globally, as capital searches for higher returns from financial speculation. The bitcoin price could rise to \$50,000 (after all, that is only 150% higher than the current one). But these crazy prices are the best confirmation that this is yet another speculative bubble that will eventually burst. The only winners will be those who got out early enough - and those who charged the fees for buying and selling ●

Michael Roberts blogs at <https://thenextrecession.wordpress.com>

ITALY

Renzi vs Grasso

The disastrous Sicilian election result of the Partito Democratico and its allies on November 5 forced PD leader Matteo Renzi into very reluctantly accepting the need for a national coalition of the 'centre-left'. The PD is clearly in no position to win the coming general election - widely expected to take place in March 2018 - without allies¹.

Only two Italian centre-left governments have gained office in the post-cold war period - the Ulivo of 1996 and the Unione of 2006, both led by Romani Prodi. However, given Renzi's obstinate refusal to make any major programmatic concessions that would reverse, or even dilute, either his neoliberal labour law - the Jobs Act - or his ultra-managerial education law - the so-called *Buona Scuola* ('Good School') - it seemed extremely unlikely that any conceivable 'centre-left' coalition would include forces that had taken serious (rather than merely rhetorical) exception to the neo-Blairite policies he pursued as premier.² Even Renzi realised he was not the best person within the PD to attempt to negotiate with any group claiming to be to its left, especially given the amount of personal and not just purely political abuse he had hurled at them, even after his Sicilian defeat.

Therefore, Piero Fassino, one-time leader of the ex-'official' communist Democratici di Sinistra (DS) and former mayor of Turin, was assigned the role of chief negotiator with the group considered to be to the left of the PD. This was a logical enough decision, since the social democratic Movimento Democratico e Progressista (MDP) was largely made up of former PD members, who had been in the DS before the PD's formation in 2008, whilst Campo Progressista leader Giuliano Pisapia, as a former centre-left mayor of Milan, would undoubtedly have had some real common ground with somebody like Fassino. Fassino seemed to have been genuinely disappointed by his failure to win the MDP round to this new 'centre-left' project, since, unlike Renzi, he had no personal animosity to the older leading MDP figures like Pierluigi Bersani and Massimo d'Alema, who had followed a similar trajectory to his own from the Partito Comunista Italiano via first the Partito Democratico della Sinistra (PDS) and then the DS to the PD, regarding them as fellow-members of what all this generation had colloquially called *La Dita* ('The Firm').

Needless to say, as far as Renzi was concerned, it was only a question of the PD going through the motions of a negotiation in order to subsequently brand the MDP as sectarians - he had no genuine desire to make peace even with the fairly amiable Bersani, let alone the much more aggressive d'Alema. Fassino seemed at first to have more luck with Pisapia and the Campo Progressista, but negotiations finally broke down on December 6. Fassino had imagined Pisapia might be satisfied with minor concessions in, say, the current budget. During the negotiations, Pisapia tried to veto the participation of foreign minister Angelino Alfano's Alternativa Popolare (AP) - formerly the Nuovo Centro Destra (NCD - New Centre Right) in the 'centre-left' electoral coalition,³ but even after AP's debacle in its Sicilian heartland on November 5, Renzi regarded AP as a more important ally than Pisapia, since he subscribes to the Blairite dogma that elections are always won in the centre ground.

Even in the absence of Pisapia and

It looks as though a 'centre-left' coalition headed by Matteo Renzi will be opposed by a leftwing bloc in the 2018 general election, writes **Toby Abse**



Matteo Renzi: praying that the centre ground holds

the now defunct Campo Progressista, Renzi will undoubtedly gain some very junior partners for his PD-led electoral coalition. Angelo Bonelli, the leader of the Greens, is personally willing to do a deal with Renzi, despite the appalling recent record of the PD on many environmental issues, such as drilling for oil off Italy's coast, or keeping open the notoriously unsafe and polluting Ilva steel plant at Taranto - apparently, the deal needs to be ratified by a referendum amongst

Green Party members. Initially, the Radicals - probably best characterised as the petty bourgeois civil libertarian party that has sometimes allied with Berlusconi and sometimes backed the centre-left - seemed the PD's most certain allies, but their best known living figure, Emma Bonnino - a former foreign minister and European commissioner - seems to be having second thoughts, and it is Bonnino herself whom Renzi wants to draw into the coalition: her colleagues are

political nonentities. There is also a recently constituted pro-European list, '+Europa', which seems to overlap with the Radicals to a very substantial extent - one is bound to assume that if in the end it gains sufficient signatures to run candidates, it will do so in alliance with the PD, despite Renzi's intermittent and demagogic criticism of the European Union Commission (and implicitly the European Central Bank because of its continuing feud with the Bank of Italy).

What remains of the Partito Socialista Italiano (PSI) - largely discredited by the huge corruption scandal associated with Bettino Craxi - also seeks an alliance with the PD. Recently, there has been talk of a 'left' list amalgamating Riccardo Nencini's PSI, Bonelli's Greens and some remnants of the right wings of the now defunct Campo Progressista and Sinistra Ecologia Libertà, under the leadership of Massimo Zedda, the mayor of Cagliari.

Presumably, the hope is that this mish-mash would overcome the 3% threshold needed to secure parliamentary representation, as each individual component would only score 1% or less. Obviously, some centrists will throw in their lot with Renzi, even if others return to the Berlusconi fold. (Renzi's coalition plans were further weakened by the unexpected decision of Angelino Alfano - former justice minister, interior minister and foreign minister - to withdraw from parliamentary politics, announced on December 6.)

Whilst a minimum of 3% is required to gain representation in the proportionally elected section of parliament, the PD can bribe smaller groups uncertain of breaking through the threshold with endorsements of prominent individuals as coalition candidates in allegedly safe seats in the 'first past the post', single-member constituencies.⁴ Furthermore, any votes gained by coalition allies that score between 1% and 3% in the proportional section count towards the coalition's overall total, and will be divided proportionally between the luckier coalition parties that exceed the 3% threshold, so even the votes gained by such micro groups will assist the PD in its struggle against its main competitor: namely the centre-right coalition led by Silvio Berlusconi and Beppe Grillo's right-populist Movimento 5 Stelle.⁵

Left coalition

The MDP rejected Fassino's overtures relatively quickly, and firmly committed itself to an electoral coalition with Nicola Fratoianni's Sinistra Italiana (SI - Italian Left) and Pippo Civati's Possibile - 1,500 delegates were elected to the coalition's founding assembly which took place in Rome on December 3.⁶ According to *La Repubblica* (November 28), the delegates were chosen by 158 provincial assemblies, in which roughly 42,000 people participated.

Whilst there was clearly an element of top-down decision-making by the party leaders - the MDP was allocated 50% of the delegates, SI 35% and Possibile 15% - the whole process was far more transparent and democratic than anything Pisapia's Campo Progressista had even been willing to engage in, although d'Alema's claim in *Corriere della Sera* (November 29) that "the greater part" of the participants "were not enrolled in any movement" seems a bit exaggerated.

The more horizontalist 'civic' movement led by Anna Falcone and Tomaso Montanari, which had originally been the fourth component of the new project - announced when the MDP finally lost patience with Pisapia's "soap opera"⁷ - broke with the MDP, SI and Possibile a few weeks ago. Falcone and Montanari cancelled at extremely short notice a large national gathering of their own supporters that was supposed to discuss the role the 'rank-and-file' groups would adopt in the new broader left formation. Whilst Falcone and Montanari seemed, albeit in rather opaque language, to



Left groups by themselves cannot overcome the three percent threshold

lame all three remaining participating organisations for their reliance on 'old-fashioned, top-down' organising methods, it was significant that the duo were equally critical of the Partito della Rifondazione Comunista (PRC - Communist Refoundation), which the mainstream press claimed had in reality provided the logistical infrastructure behind this apparently spontaneous nationwide movement.

However, the PRC is not joining the new formation. Whilst one can see that that it might find the current demands of groups like the MDP insufficiently radical⁸ or that its grudges against figures who treated them badly in the past (the most obvious example being d'Alema's underhand scheming during the 1998 crisis that brought down the first Prodi government and split Armando Cossutta's followers away from the PRC) are understandable, purist isolationism does not really square with the PRC's previous willingness to join electoral cartels like Rivoluzione Civile in the 2013 general election, the Lista Tsipras in the 2014 European election and indeed 'Cento Passi per La Sicilia' in last month's Sicilian election. Moreover, the general line of the European Left Party, in which the PRC still plays a prominent role despite its electoral decline, is to reach out to those sections of social democracy that are finally breaking with neoliberalism.⁹

The new formation has been given the slightly nebulous name 'Liberi e Uguali' (LeU - Free and Equal People) rather than the much more resounding 'Libertà e Uguaglianza' (Liberty and Equality), which, despite some support, was rejected a few days before the national assembly. Significantly, both the final choice of name and its main challenger harked back to the French Revolution of 1789 rather than the Russian Revolution of 1917, and there was even some ridiculous trepidation that the word 'Uguali' might be linked to Gracchus Babeuf's 'Conspiracy of the Equals' (1796) - the doomed coup against the Thermidorians that aimed to go beyond the Jacobins and introduce agrarian communism in late 18th century France.

A few days before the founding assembly, d'Alema explained to *Corriere della Sera* (November

29) that the name would not be 'La Sinistra' ('the Left' - a suggestion probably derived from an analogy with the German Die Linke), which had been discussed in the press, and had presumably been favoured by Sinistra Italiana members. Unfortunately, although the vast majority of LeU's members or supporters are clearly on the left - even if they are on the social democratic rather than communist left - there is the depressingly familiar tendency, expressed by d'Alema in this interview, to seek 'broadness' at all costs; to reach out to an almost fictitious right wing of socially aware former Christian Democrats.¹⁰

Repubblica (November 28) claimed that the organisation's symbol would be a red rose, explicitly borrowed from the British Labour Party, but so far there appears to have been no final decision on the matter. The same article claimed that a Labour delegation and a Podemos delegation would be sitting in the body of the hall next to the older generation of 'historic leaders' - Bersani, Basco Errani¹¹, Guglielmo Epifani¹², d'Alema and Nichi Vendola¹³. The most important Italian invited guest was Susanna Camusso, the secretary of Italy's largest and most leftwing trade union confederation, the CGIL.

It should be noted that the national assembly had originally been scheduled for Saturday December 2, and was only postponed until Sunday December 3 because of a CGIL 'day of action' on the Saturday. This had been called by Camusso in response to the Gentiloni government's refusal to postpone the raising of the pension age to 67, and the character of the budget as a whole - issues on which the MDP, SI and Possibile were in total accord with the CGIL.

Initially, there had been talk of a political general strike by the CGIL on December 2, but the action was later downgraded to a sectorial strike by its affiliate, Food and Agricultural Workers, along with five regional demonstrations in Rome, Turin, Bari, Palermo and Cagliari. Some tens of thousands of workers, pensioners and students, alongside many leading figures from the MDP and SI, participated in the Roman demonstration.¹⁴ Perhaps the CGIL lost its nerve about calling a general

strike in isolation from the other confederations, which might have exposed its increasing weakness among currently employed labour, as opposed to the pensioners, whom it has been remarkably successful in organising.

Another consideration in relation to the abandonment of the general strike may have been the fact that a number of CGIL leaders remain PD members, and are less enthusiastic about a head-on clash with a PD-led government than Camusso is. Although Camusso invoked the refusal of CGIL leader Di Vittorio to back the PCI over the invasion of Hungary in 1956 to support her claim (*Repubblica* November 24) that "the CGIL has always been too big to stay in one party", one suspects that the PD's continuing influence among CGIL apparatchiks is the main factor holding her back from total alignment with LeU.

However, returning to the December 3 assembly, keeping the older generation of 'historic leaders' on the floor of the hall was a conscious tactic. The three younger leaders, all in their 40s, who were the official secretaries of the MDP, SI and Possibile - Roberto Speranza, Nicola Fratoianni and Pippo Civati - shared the stage to dispel any idea that LeU is a collection of elderly dinosaurs, as Renzi's followers often try to make out. However, the new overall leader of LeU, Pietro Grasso, elected by acclamation at the founding assembly, is 72, slightly older than either Bersani or d'Alema.

Grasso, the current speaker of the Senate, resigned from the PD a few weeks ago, and, because of the politically neutral nature of his institutional role in the outgoing legislature, kept the media in suspense until the last minute over his willingness to front the new political formation as LeU's official leader and prime ministerial candidate. Grasso, as a retired magistrate renowned for his role in major Mafia trials, is widely believed to be able to extend LeU's electoral appeal beyond the supporters of its three founding organisations.

'Zombie Blairite'

In conclusion, it looks as though next year's general election will see a split between a PD-led 'centre-left' coalition and proponents of a left alternative

broadly comparable to Corbynite left social democracy. Whilst the PRC and other groups using the 'communist' label will probably stand too, they will not cross the 3% threshold needed to gain any parliamentary representation - in contrast to LeU, which is scoring between 6% and 10% in opinion polls.

The new electoral law - the *Rosatellum* - deliberately makes any kind of stand-down agreement of the sort the PD's predecessors and the PRC entered into on some occasions between 1994 and 2001 totally impossible. The *Rosatellum* explicitly prohibits voters from splitting their two votes in the way they can in the Greater London Authority or Scottish parliament elections (and could under previous electoral legislation in Italy between 1994 and 2001). Any voter for a 'centre-left' candidate in their FPTP constituency has to give their other vote (in the proportional section) to some part of the 'centre-left' coalition.

However, as the leaders of LeU point out, there seems no chance of the 'centre-left' winning a parliamentary majority anyway,¹⁵ and in the absence of a left alternative like LeU, its potential voters would either abstain or vote for rightwing populists (probably of the M5S variety) - given their total alienation from what UK observers might describe as the 'zombie Blairite' policies of Matteo Renzi ●

Notes

1. It is important to note that Renzi's initial irrational and narcissistic reaction to the Sicilian result was to dream of moving even further to the right and emulating Emanuel Macron by creating a new, personalised centrist formation. However, regardless of any support this crazy notion may have gathered amongst Renzi's notoriously sycophantic inner circle, justice minister Andrea Orlando, the principal leader of the PD's mildly social democratic left wing, and Dario Franceschini, representing the more thoughtful, older elements of the former Christian Democrats within the PD, were able to exert sufficient influence to prevent the reckless former premier from destroying his own (and their) party. Orlando and Franceschini were not alone in seeking to restrain Renzi. The so-called *padri nobili* (elder statesmen) of the PD - both former Premier Romano Prodi and the PD's founding leader, Walther Veltroni - also played a very important role in ensuring wider support for the Orlando/Franceschini line of a broader PD-led 'centre-left' coalition.

2. It is, of course, true that some, though not all, of those who left the PD in February 2017 had accepted party discipline and voted for these neoliberal measures at the time (2014-

16), whatever their personal reservations. It is also argued by the Partito della Rifondazione Comunista (PRC) and other left groups that Renzi was merely continuing - at a much faster pace and far more shamelessly - the general slow drift towards privatisation, deregulation, attacks on welfare provision and on the trade unions, that all those, such as Massimo d'Alema, who had liquidated the old Partito Comunista Italiano in 1991, had been complicit in for a quarter of a century.

3. The absurdity of including a group that was once very proud to adopt the 'New Centre Right' label in a 'centre-left' coalition is obvious.

4. 37% of the seats will be awarded to the victors in the FPTP constituencies, of which there are 232 in the Chamber of Deputies and 116 in the Senate.

5. Some of these rather bizarre rules are an obvious product of the unprincipled Renzi-Berlusconi lash-up that created the *Rosatellum*, the new electoral arrangements, which are deliberately weighted against M5S, which refuses to enter into electoral coalitions. Berlusconi's use of micro-groups is even more cynical: Michela Brambilla, until recently a Forza Italia parliamentarian, has set up the 'Movimento Animalista', linked to the centre-right coalition - presumably to win the votes of politically naive cat-lovers who are not already enthused by Berlusconi's poodle.

6. It was significant that it was described as an 'assembly' and not as a 'congress' - a word more reminiscent of the old PCI.

7. See my article, 'Pisapia's soap opera' (*Weekly Worker* October 19).

8. For example, there is a considerable gap between the PRC demand for a pension age of 60 across the EU and the MDP/SI last-ditch attempt in the current Italian parliament to persuade the PD to postpone raising the Italian pension age to 67.

9. This was repeatedly asserted in the speeches made and documents drawn up at the Marseille European Forum on November 10-11, which I attended - a number of delegates from the Corbyn wing of the Labour Party were given speaking rights at this gathering.

10. There are a handful of such characters who seem to be attracted to the project, just as there are a handful of former Craxi socialists who, for personal or political reasons, have fallen out with their PSI colleagues and are eager to join Renzi's 'centre-left' coalition. But LeU is essentially the 'cosa rossa' (red thing) that the mainstream press repeatedly label it as, even if its own timid leaders are so anxious to deny it.

11. An influential former PD regional president of Emilia Romagna.

12. A former CGIL union secretary and - briefly - former acting leader of the PD between Bersani's resignation and Renzi's first election as party leader in the 2013 primary.

13. The former leader of the now defunct SEL, whose left wing joined him in becoming the main component of SI.

14. The other main union confederations, the CISL and UIL, were ultimately satisfied by Gentiloni's limited concessions - exemptions from the increase in the pensionable age for certain categories of worker with particularly onerous jobs.

15. LeU candidates are likely to deprive the PD of 10 FPTP seats, but LeU's intervention is not the prime reason why the PD and its minor allies are nowhere near an overall majority, if the opinion polls are to be believed.

SOUTH AFRICA



Jacob Zuma: hundreds of corruption charges

Crisis set to continue

Peter Manson anticipates a fractious and bitter ANC congress, as candidates vie for power

Things are really hotting up within the African National Congress, which is about to elect a replacement for Jacob Zuma as ANC leader. He will remain South African president until 2019, when the new parliament will nominate his successor following a general election.

Ever since the ending of apartheid it was always inevitable that the new ANC president would also occupy the top job in the state, but suddenly that is no longer the case. Under Zuma's presidency the ANC's popularity has plummeted and it is now totally realistic to anticipate a hung parliament in 2019 - with the ANC having the greatest number of MPs under the country's system of proportional representation, but no overall majority. In such a situation it is conceivable that a coalition of opposition parties will vote against the ANC nominee.

That is why ANC activists all claim that it is essential that the upcoming congress - to be held in Soweto from December 16-20 - elects a leader who can regain some of the ground lost under Zuma's thoroughly corrupt administration (2019 will see the completion of his second five-year term of office, after which he is obliged under the constitution to step down).

Incredibly, no fewer than 783 counts of corruption are still hanging over Zuma's head. These relate to a multi-billion-dollar arms deal made by the government almost 20 years ago, but they were all dropped just after he took office for the first time in 2009, when the national prosecuting authority (NPA) claimed they were "politically motivated". This has now been challenged and Zuma was supposed to have submitted arguments as to why he should not be prosecuted by November 30.

But when he did not do so the NPA and its director of public prosecutions, Shaun Abrahams (appointed by Zuma), extended the deadline until January 31. That despite a high court ruling that Abrahams' appointment was itself "invalid" and should be "set aside", Zuma was "clearly conflicted", noted the high court - it is the DPP who in the last analysis will decide whether or

not the president should be prosecuted. But, as Zuma is to appeal against the court's ruling, Abrahams states that he will remain in office until the appeal is determined.

There are seven candidates still in the race to replace him, but only two - Cyril Ramaphosa and Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma - have any chance of winning. Ramaphosa has been nominated by 1,862 ANC branches, while 1,309 have backed Dlamini-Zuma.

It is, of course, not just coincidence that Dlamini-Zuma shares the current president's name - she was once his wife. But she is not a nobody. Between 1994, when she was appointed South Africa's first post-apartheid minister of health, until 2012, when she was Zuma's minister of home affairs, she served under every president, including as foreign minister. But she resigned from Zuma's cabinet to become chair of the African Union commission in that year.

However, Zuma is now banking everything on her election - unlike Ramaphosa she has not joined in the clamour for him to consider stepping down early. In fact she has condemned the various 'Zuma must fall' mobilisations that have taken place over the last couple of years.

But Ramaphosa is hardly a principled stalwart against corruption. Once a militant anti-apartheid activist and workers' leader - he was the National Union of Mineworkers' first general secretary - he is now one of South Africa's richest men. He has made good use of the connections that arose from the various senior ANC posts he has held to acquire top positions in several major companies.

The most notorious of these is Lonmin - the British-owned conglomerate which employed the 34 striking miners shot dead by police at Marikana in August 2012. In an email exchange with a senior Lonmin manager the day before the slaughter, Ramaphosa declared that it was essential to get the minister of police to "act in a more pointed way". The strike was "not a labour dispute", he wrote. The mineworkers' behaviour was "dastardly criminal and must be

characterised as such". So there must be "concomitant action to address the situation".

Yet despite all this he was elected ANC deputy president in December 2012 and after the 2014 general election was sworn in as the country's deputy president. Even worse - he has been publicly endorsed as Zuma's replacement not only by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), which is probably still the country's largest union federation, but also by the Young Communist League!

But what about the South African Communist Party itself? After all, it has been a key component of the ANC-led alliance. Well, for months it made no public pronouncement, but on December 3, following a meeting of its central committee, it declared:

The CC agreed that, while the ANC's December conference will, for better or for worse, have a major impact on the future viability of our alliance, it would be a mistake for the party to over-invest expectations in the conference. Contrary to much media reporting, the SACP is not supporting a particular slate or presidential candidate.¹

So what will ANC delegates who happen to be SACP members be arguing in Soweto? Apparently they will be "wishing delegates to the conference well" and urging them to "elect a leadership collective that will move the ANC out of its current leadership paralysis".

SACP v ANC

The problem for the SACP is that it is deeply divided itself over one key issue: should it continue to work for a "reconfigured alliance" or is it now time to give up on the ANC altogether? This division was highlighted by last month's extraordinary by-elections in the municipality of Metsimaholo in the Free State. For the first time ever, the SACP stood a full slate of candidates against the ANC, of whose alliance it is still a member.

The reason the ANC sceptics - led by

SACP deputy general secretary Solly Mapaila - were able to win the party to contest in Metsimaholo is because the ANC in the Free State, under premier Ace Magashule, is dubbed by the party as amongst the most corrupt, allegedly having succumbed to "state capture" by big business.

Last year the ANC lost control of Metsimaholo and an alliance to run the municipality was formed between the two main opposition parties - the rightwing Democratic Alliance and the 'left'-populist Economic Freedom Fighters. Unsurprisingly this alliance soon collapsed, and eventually new elections were called for November 29.

Even though the SACP decision to contest was taken late in the day, it stood in all 21 wards and emerged with just under 7% of the total vote. This was enough, however, to give it three councillors under South Africa's completely proportional electoral system. Half of the 42 councillors were elected in 'first past the post' contests, with the remainder allocated according to each party's share of the total vote. (This system, by the way, has in theory a lot to recommend it, as it combines the possibility of locally accountable representatives with complete proportionality.)

According to the CC,

While the SACP had hoped to achieve a marginally better result, winning three council seats after only campaigning for two weeks was a remarkable achievement. We also achieved this result in the face of considerable destabilisation efforts and threats emanating from Ace Magashule and his corporately captured Free State ANC faction.

It went on to claim:

In the course of campaigning the SACP encountered considerable anti-ANC hostility from working class communities. Notwithstanding this, the SACP did not run an anti-ANC electoral campaign - although this might well have won us considerably

more votes.

The SACP's decision to stand contributed significantly to a further fall in the ANC vote. It remains the largest party in Metsimaholo, just ahead of the DA, but its vote share is now down to a mere 29%, leaving it with only 16 of the 42 seats - down from 19 in 2016.

Despite this the SACP claimed before the election that it was standing "in support of the ANC as the political vehicle" - although deputy general secretary Mapaila added that the party was also attempting to "restore the values of our democratic movement". He claimed that the SACP had decided to contest because the membership in Metsimaholo had urged it to do so, and the result would help "inform" the party as to whether it continues to run its own election campaigns independently of the ANC.

As readers will readily understand, Metsimaholo is certain to add to the bitterness between the warring factions at the congress. No doubt we will see - particularly from the Zuma loyalists - moves to further demote the SACP within the alliance, or even calls for the party to be removed from the ANC altogether. And, whoever wins the leadership election, the factional divisions look set to intensify.

The central committee, however, insisted both on "the importance for the SACP of working for a serious reconfiguration of the alliance" and on prioritising "the simultaneous and related task of actively building a mobilised left progressive front".

In other words, for all its Marxist jargon, the SACP is continuing to renounce working class independence and still clings to the necessity of a cross-class popular front. The crisis within the ANC ought to provoke a serious rethink amongst party dissidents and what remains of the SACP left ●

peter.manson@weeklyworker.co.uk

Notes

1. www.politicsweb.co.za/politics/metsimaholos-elections-send-strong-signal-sacp.

OUR HISTORY

The potato revolution

Russia's revolution had a huge impact on the working class in Sweden. Labour historian Håkan Blomqvist examines the events of 1917

Perhaps it seems unexpected, but the influences of the February 1917 revolution in Russia first made their impact on Sweden. Together with the other Nordic countries, Sweden was neutral in World War I, but suffered from food shortages and other hardships due to the conflict in surrounding states. The conservative Swedish government of 1914 did not prioritise the country's food supply until it was too late. Meat, fat, livestock, potatoes and other crops, together with leather, clothes, shoes and everything needed by a war economy, were exported to Germany - with mounting profits for Swedish tradesmen and wealthy farmers.

From 1916 the food situation of the Swedish working class deteriorated and rationing was introduced through a complicated system of various state organs. As real wages had fallen since the outbreak of the war, strikes broke out among steelworkers and social unrest spread.

In January 1917 bread was rationed. Three months later the rations were cut, and the social protests exploded under the influence of the Russian Revolution. As in Petrograd, they began with working class women protesting in small towns with demands for more ration cards and lower prices for milk and potatoes in March. The protests spread to the larger cities and during the last two weeks of April more than a quarter of a million women and men participated in food protests all over Sweden - this in a population of 5.9 million, with 70% living in the countryside. These workers' protests were not only in the form of demonstrations and meetings. They were often followed by direct action through inventories of stores and storehouses, farms and other places where the protestors hoped to find food - first and foremost potatoes. A group of women would forcefully enter a grocery store insisting on their right to ensure no food was being kept hidden away by shopkeepers speculating on increased prices. If found, the women forced the keeper to sell the items at their posted prices. In some areas the inventories took the form of mass actions - such as when 5,000 sawmill workers and their families marched through the countryside in northern Ådalen to inspect farms and village shops and force the owners to sell what they had. In some places these investigations led to plundering.

Workers and soldiers

To the authorities things seemed to be getting out of hand, especially when conscript soldiers joined the hunger protests. In several of the garrison cities soldiers in uniform and in disciplined detachments, although disarmed by the officers, marched alongside the civilian protestors and participated in socialist-organised meetings discussing the Russian Revolution. During the spring of 1917 the reformist Social Democratic Party split - the left went on to form a new more revolutionary party, later to become the Swedish Communist Party. This new formation was supported by the mass social democratic youth movement. Together with the anarcho-syndicalists the new party formed a left minority flank within the Swedish labour movement. Inspired by developments in Russia, the youth movement formed an association named 'Soldiers and Workers' within the army, which aimed to fraternise with



Women took the lead in first protests

the workers under the slogan, "Don't fire on your class brothers!"

Fearing revolution and lacking confidence in the loyalty of conscript soldiers, the authorities in Stockholm decided to organise a clandestine guard of some thousands of armed civilians. When these plans were revealed, the socialist left called for the arming of the working class, and forced the authorities to back down.

This was a couple of days before May 1 and many feared a general and violent confrontation, as the labour movement mobilised its forces in preparation for the big day. The largest May Day demonstrations in Swedish history were, however, disciplined and peaceful, as thousands of worker guards defended the demonstrators and prevented looting and confrontation with the military.

Beneath the surface of protests, inventories and demonstrations, an important development of self-organisation was unfolding. To formulate their needs and put forward their demands to the authorities protestors in different parts of the country elected 'hunger committees', often as highly temporary organs of the mass movement. In some places, however, the committees turned into workers' councils of the same type as in Russia - as also happened in many other parts of the world.

The most famous example was the 'Workers' Committee of April 16' in the small industrial town of Västervik in southern Sweden. A committee of five delegates was elected at a mass meeting of striking and protesting workers, men and women, to supervise the city's food supply. It established worker's control over prices and profits, the quality of food and grain, issued export licences for the fishing industry and upheld law and order through a workers' militia. This was not done through violence, except for some initial incidents, and the local liberal mayor cooperated with the committee and rejected an offer of military support from higher authorities.

The manifesto from Västervik, which demanded guaranteed food supply, land to grow potatoes, an eight-hour working day and the release of all those arrested on hunger demonstrations, gained mass support throughout Sweden. Similar workers' committees were established in around 40 cities and towns - some with the participation of all the various currents within the labour movement, but others only with the support of the anarcho-syndicalists and the socialist left. In some places, like in the northern city of Härnösand and the region of Ådalen with their large sawmill populations, the workers' councils established local power similar to the experience of Västervik. In Härnösand even the local police elected delegates to the council.

Rightwing split

The movement was, however, soon to split. On May 7 the leaders of the social democratic party and the Swedish TUC proclaimed the founding of '1917 års Arbetarkommitte' (Labour Committee of 1917), which was supposed to provide a central leadership for all the local hunger and workers' committees. And local groups were instructed to abstain from illegal and direct action, instead concentrating on the forthcoming general elections in September. It was claimed that an election victory for social democracy, in alliance with liberals, would oust the conservative rightwing government, solve the food situation and establish universal suffrage. In 1917 most men could vote in elections to the second chamber in the Swedish *riksdag* (parliament), but the first chamber - which was elected indirectly through the municipalities, where the richest could have up to 40 votes - could veto laws passed in the *riksdag*. And, of course, women lacked voting rights.

These top-down measures provoked splits in the local committees, as the social democratic-led unions and labour communes withdrew. The left tried to counter this development through electing its own central leadership of

the mass movement and on June 6 the 'Arbetarnas landsråd' - the national council of workers - was elected at a mass meeting of 20,000 workers in Stockholm. This council has been referred to as the 'Petrograd soviet of Sweden', but, in contrast to the Russian central soviet, the Swedish version was not elected by local committees and councils, but was more like a front or campaigning organisation for leftwing forces.

It was formed the day after a serious confrontation took place in Stockholm between tens of thousands of workers protesting outside the *riksdag* and the police and military. While some thought that this was the prelude to a revolution like in Russia, it was in fact the last act of the Swedish hunger movement of 1917. During the month of May violent confrontations and riots had unfolded in several Swedish cities, as desperate women tried to get access to bread and potatoes and were met by mounted police and the military. The culmination of this spring of social unrest occurred when sawmill workers disarmed a military force on the island of Seskarö as far to the north in the Baltic sea as you can get.

During the summer and after the first harvest the food situation became better and in September social democrats and liberals won the elections and formed a coalition government. The liberal-socialist government was, however, prevented by the conservatives in the upper chamber from carrying through constitutional reforms, and, as the war continued, the food situation again deteriorated and became worse still in 1918. By then the hopes in the spreading of the Bolshevik revolution were gone - the Finnish civil war ended in a bloody defeat for the reds, with tens of thousands killed, wounded, imprisoned or disappeared.

The horrible year of 1918 saw the decline of the Swedish left and the workers' committees were generally reduced to a rump of small left unions and groups - in some places they were the organ of just the anarcho-syndicalists. Their activity centred around prices

and the quality of food, shoes and other necessities, but, since the anarcho-syndicalists abstained from 'politics' and refused to get involved in the struggle for universal suffrage and the contesting of elections, the committees became completely marginalised when the issue of democracy once again became a central issue.

Following the German revolution of November 1918, even Swedish social democracy threatened the conservatives of the upper chamber with revolution. Through a mass demonstration in Stockholm, which featured a thousand women workers at the front, they reminded the conservatives of the wave of hunger protests and the revolutionary climate of spring 1917. At the same time left socialists organised mass meetings for a Swedish socialist republic based on workers', soldiers' and peasants' councils. This imitation of the Bolshevik example certainly raised some fear within the Swedish bourgeoisie and monarchy. But in reality the movement of self-organisation from below was gone and the result of the political struggle was a compromise. What in Sweden is usually called the 'democratic breakthrough' ended with the conservatives accepting universal suffrage in exchange for the survival of the monarchy and a parliamentary system that did not leave room for any self-organised movement of workers' councils from below.

For the reformist Swedish social democracy this was the road to follow. For the left socialists becoming communists the problem of the councils of 1917 was the low consciousness of the workers. As a path to the dictatorship of the proletariat workers' councils were not seen as an expression of workers' self-organisation, but of the party's own consciousness and plans.

The high point seen during the struggles of 1917 would not be reached again ●

This article was first published in the US journal *Against the Current*.

LAW

Anti-Semites not welcome

Tony Greenstein explains why Socialist Fight must be excluded from Labour Against the Witchhunt



On December 2 a Labour Against the Witchhunt meeting was effectively ambushed by a small Trotskyist grouping, Socialist Fight. A series of close votes was taken, the result of which meant that the previous decision of the steering committee, that Socialist Fight should no longer participate in meetings of LAW, was overturned.

Stan Keable, the secretary of LAW, had written to inform SF that it was no longer welcome at our meetings, but despite this their comrades turned up. For various reasons - not least that most people were unaware of the full extent of the anti-Semitic positions of Socialist Fight - those present voted against the steering committee position.

It is now incumbent upon LAW to demonstrate clearly and unambiguously that it wants to have nothing to do with Socialist Fight. Not only because its positions are anti-Semitic, but because a campaign whose purpose is to reject the false anti-Semitism campaign of Iain McNicol, the compliance unit and the Zionist Jewish Labour Movement cannot retain any credibility if it includes a group whose positions are

anti-Semitic.

I was not aware, at the time of the last meeting, that Ian Donovan - a 'left' supporter of the overtly anti-Semitic Gilad Atzmon - had penned an obnoxious and anti-Semitic article the day before, entitled 'Third-camp Stalinoids bring witchhunt into Labour Against the Witchhunt'.¹

There is no future for Labour Against the Witchhunt if Socialist Fight and its members remain an integral part of the organisation. For that reason I believe that it is essential that the next meeting, on January 6 should overturn the previous decision. If my views do not prevail, then I will resign from the organisation - as I believe will Jackie Walker and Marc Wadsworth of Grassroots Black Left.

It may seem incongruous to have an anti-witchhunt group itself excluding people, but we have no choice. It is a fact that the Labour Party's witchhunt primarily takes the form of the weaponisation of anti-Semitism - the smearing of people as anti-Semitic for no other reason than their support for the Palestinians and opposition to Zionism.

It therefore flows, as night follows day, that LAW cannot include in its

ranks people who advocate politics which are anti-Semitic. To include Socialist Fight or its members within LAW, given their stated policies, would be to concede that the Zionist attack on the left as anti-Semitic has some substance. It would be political suicide.

It is extremely unfortunate that a socialist group believes that in the age of modern capitalism the Jewish question survives. It was primarily a question of the social and economic role in the feudal era of Jews as what Abram Leon termed a "people-class". It only survived politically in the capitalist era as a result of the memory of that role, combined with the delayed and arrested development of capitalism in eastern Europe.

It is noticeable that even today in countries like Poland and Hungary there is still considerable anti-Semitism because of their underdevelopment compared to western Europe. The Pew global attitudes survey² shows the difference in anti-Semitic attitudes very clearly between western Europe and eastern Europe (leaving aside Greece and Italy). In France, the Netherlands, Sweden, Germany and Britain, anti-Semitic attitudes can be found in 10%

Combating the slur that anti-Zionism does not equal anti-Semitism is hardly helped by those who preach what August Bebel called the 'socialism of fools'

Tony Greenstein: I and others will resign unless anti-Semites are shown the door



What we fight for

or less of the population.

Allegations

I want to make a few comments regarding Ian Donovan's allegations.

● I am not a member of the CPGB and cannot answer for its political positions. Yes, it is true that I disagree with Jack Conrad over the question of whether there is an Israeli Jewish nation and whether a right of self-determination can exist for that 'nation'. However, there is no disagreement between us over anti-Semitism.

● Ian Donovan asks: "if 'leftwing anti-Semitism' is a 'myth', how come Socialist Fight is being excluded on the basis of the same myth?" The Alliance for Workers' Liberty posits the idea that opposition to Israel as a Jewish state is exceptional; that, whereas we support all other nations' right to self-determination, we make an exception for the Jewish nation because of left anti-Semitism. Naturally I disagree, because there is no Jewish nation, but, even if there were an Israeli Jewish nation, then an oppressor nation does not have such a right. The right to national self-determination simply means the right to be free from national oppression and to form a state thereby. The Israeli settler nation is not oppressed: it is an oppressor. There is therefore nothing exceptional about opposing Israeli Jewish statehood and there is nothing that is anti-Semitic about such a position.

However, individuals and small groups may be on the left, but have anti-Semitic politics. People often have contradictory ideas residing inside their heads. SF is a good example, but there is no general phenomenon of left anti-Semitism, as the Zionists and AWL suggest.

● Ian Donovan speaks of the CPGB's "anathema against our analysis of the role of Jewish bourgeois in the diaspora in bolstering Israel's strength in the older imperialist countries ..." The very concept of a Jewish bourgeoisie is itself anti-Semitic. The western bourgeoisie is not divided by religion, caste or ethnicity.

● Ian Donovan states that "The reverse side" of the CPGB's "reluctance to defend the democratic rights of Arabs and Muslims oppressed by imperialism" is "their indulgence of Jewish sensibilities and 'left' forms of Jewish communalism". To speak of an "indulgence of Jewish sensibilities" is anti-Semitic. There is no collective Jew except in the minds of Zionism.

● Ian Donovan writes:

The CPGB's bloc with Bundist-influenced Jewish socialists such as Tony Greenstein and Moshé Machover, who have played initiating or supporting roles in various Jews-only political campaigns, such as Jews Against Zionism, Jews for Boycotting Israeli Goods (J-Big), etc, only underlines this philo-Semitic, Islamophobic bias ... by emphasising their Jewishness, to 'kosher' the Palestinian solidarity movement and parry the inevitable smears of anti-Semitism that Zionists throw at it.

These groups ... tacitly accept a key Zionist notion that is hegemonic in today's racist society: the notion of Jewish moral superiority; that anyone who opposes Israel's oppression of the Palestinians is guilty of anti-Semitism until proven innocent.

Leave aside the nonsense about "Bundist-influenced" - yes, the Bund is an example of Jewish workers' struggle against fascism and anti-Semitism, and Ian is following the example of Gilad Atzmon in his attacks on them. Jews Against Zionism/J-Big exist in order that the Zionist lie that all Jews support Zionism is negated. Palestinians welcome Jewish support for their struggle and I am happy about that. There is nothing "philo-Semitic" about such groups.

The idea that we are Islamophobic is rubbish. Ian Donovan combines anti-Semitism with a straightforward

lie. To speak about "Jewish moral superiority" is to ape the language of the National Front and the fascists. Certainly Zionism, like all colonial movements, believes that Jews are racially superior to the Palestinians, but to attribute this to all Jews is outrageous. The suggestion that I or any other Jewish anti-Zionist comrade accepts that "anyone who opposes Israel's oppression of the Palestinians is guilty of anti-Semitism until proven innocent" is also a lie. All of us work with non-Jewish comrades as equals.

Jewish component

● Ian Donovan writes:

It is factually demonstrable that there exists a Jewish component within the ruling classes of western countries that exceeds by many times over the proportion of Jews in the general population, and that this part of the ruling class is overwhelmingly loyal to Israel. This does not determine the bare existence of a western alliance with Israel.

What it does, however, is play an important role in transforming what would otherwise be a 'normal' relationship, similar to that of the US, UK, Germany, etc with each other as Nato allies, into a servile relationship ...

Again this is anti-Semitic. Yes, Jews are, for historical reasons, a privileged section of the white community in both the USA and Britain, but there are reasons for this. William Rubinstein, a past president of the Jewish Historical Society, wrote 35 years ago that London Jewry is

arguably more bourgeois now than at any time since the mid-19th century, and it is certainly more conservative ... The Jewish proletariat virtually disappeared in the post-war period and since the 1950s western Jewry has, as a whole, risen into the upper-middle class.³

Yes, Jews have climbed the socio-economic ladder. But there is no "Jewish component" of the ruling class. Jews do not operate hegemonically or as an identifiable component separate from non-Jews. ID says that they do not determine the "bare alliance with Israel", but they "play an important role" in creating a "servile relationship". In other words, the US is servile to Israel. That certainly is anti-Semitic. It is also completely unMarxist.

The United States support for Israel has nothing to do with Jews. It is no accident that the most anti-Semitic administration in the United States in modern times - that of Donald Trump - has also been the most pro-Zionist. It has had in it Breitbart anti-Semites like Steve Bannon who do not like "whining Jewish brats".⁴

● Ian Donovan informs us that this Jewish component of the ruling class "also gives Zionism a social power to persecute critics of Israel in western societies not possessed by any other allied state. Including in the British Labour Party ..." Really this is utter rubbish. If anything it is cynical non-Jews - the Theresa Mays and Eric Pickles - who use people's sensitivities over anti-Semitism to accuse opponents of Zionism of exactly that. Jews are the alibi for western imperialism and its interests, Israel included, in the Middle East. The same Pickles incidentally supported the Tories' link-up with the anti-Semitic Michał Kamiński of Poland. Today the genuine anti-Semites are quite open about what they call white Zionism. Ian Donovan needs to get real about anti-Semitism and Zionism and their relationship.

● Ian Donovan speaks of the support of "Israeli dissidents like the late Israel Shahak, and more recently Gilad Atzmon, to Marxists like ourselves, to ... Norman Finkelstein ... Even Charles Windsor once noticed it." Israel Shahak, who

was a liberal anti-Zionist in Israel, was never a supporter of the idea that rich Jews had an influence over US foreign policy. It is noticeable that Ian Donovan, a supporter of the overtly anti-Semitic Gilad Atzmon, elides Atzmon in with Shahak and Norman Finkelstein. The same Atzmon who is on record as saying, "I despise the Jew in me (whatever is left) and I absolutely detest the Jew in you." A man who believes that a Jewish conspiracy controls the world and that Zionism is the logical outcome of being Jewish. How any socialist worthy of the name can quote from this 'dissident' is beyond me. And, yes, Prince Charles' comments were also anti-Semitic - which is what one expects of the royals.

Amazing

● I find the statement that "Jews are the one people in the imperialist epoch that have comprehensively escaped from systematic oppression and joined the ranks of oppressor peoples in the imperialist world order" amazing. It treats all Jews as one amalgam. All of us - not those in Israel, where it would be appropriate - but all Jews in the diaspora are now amongst the "oppressor peoples". I suppose that includes all the supporters of Jewish Voices for Peace in the USA - over 100,000 of them - who have signed up to an organisation that is for boycott, divestment and sanctions. At the very time that increasing number of Jews in the USA in particular are breaking from Zionism, Ian Donovan and SF are intent on pushing them back towards Zionism. Most Jews are middle class professionals. They are no more an "oppressor people" - even if they did not belong to the British or French nation - than any other religious minority.

● It is not quite true that "at the October 21 meeting of Labour Against the Witchhunt, he and others voted down our amendment that would have had LAW define anti-Semitism as 'racist hostility to Jews as Jews'". I opposed the idea that anti-Semitism was simply hostility based on race. People can be hostile to Jews as Jews on the basis of their religion, their customs, etc. It is not necessarily racial.

● Ian Donovan says that "Greenstein is right that criticism of a state is not racist. Nor is criticism of a ruling class." True but Ian Donovan is not criticising a ruling class: he is *differentiating* between Jewish and non-Jewish members of the ruling class. That is certainly impermissible.

● Ian Donovan absurdly claims that "The Jewish-Zionist component of the US and other western ruling classes can be identified as having a material interest in the Israeli state by virtue of the Israeli Law of Return, which gives them citizenship rights in Israel." Here you see the utter bankruptcy of

Ian Donovan's grandly titled 'theses'. Their claim to have any connection with Marxism is entirely spurious. Apparently the materialist basis of the separate Jewish-Zionist component of the US/western ruling classes is the Israeli 'right of return'.

Perhaps I am also a member of this ruling class then. *Every Jewish person* has the 'right of return' - and not only every Jewish person, but the spouse or the children of a Jewish person. That is the basis of the racist nature of the Israeli settler-colonial state. Israel seeks Jewish settlers, just as South Africa used to seek white settlers. But this right is not a "materialist interest". If you are a member of the bourgeoisie, Jewish or non-Jewish, you will normally be able to access the citizenship of any state by virtue of your wealth and power. Many members of the ruling class - like Lord Ashcroft, who is a Belize citizen - do indeed take up foreign citizenship for purposes of tax avoidance. Israel is not a tax haven.

● Ian Donovan says that I concede that

the Zionist movement as it originated in the diaspora was an ethno-nationalist movement. Why then is it such a leap to describe the diaspora western Jewish bourgeoisie that benefits from Israel's Law of Return, and identifies with Israel, as driven by the same ethno-nationalism?

Ian Donovan demonstrates he understands little of the nature of Zionism. In the diaspora Zionism arose by virtue of anti-Semitism. It was a separatist reaction. In the Pale of Russia it was not an "ethno-nationalist" reaction, but a response - a reactionary response - to anti-Semitism. It was in Palestine that it became an ethno-nationalist movement. Quite obviously Jews outside Israel are not a separate ethno-nationalist group, but members of their own nations. Once again this is anti-Semitic.

Anyone who seriously believes that Socialist Fight can be part of Labour Against Witchhunt prioritises the rights of Socialist Fight above the fight against the witchhunt. If that is the case then Jackie Walker, Marc Wadsworth and myself will all be forced to walk away from LAW. It will not be of any help to our cases to be associated with Socialist Fight, however indirectly ●

Notes

1. <https://socialistfight.com/2017/12/01/third-camp-stalinoists-bring-witchhunt-into-labour-against-the-witchhunt>.
2. www.pewglobal.org/files/2016/07/Pew-Research-Center-EU-Refugees-and-National-Identity-Report-FINAL-July-11-2016.pdf.
3. W Rubinstein *The left, the right and the Jews* New York 1982, p51.
4. <https://forward.com/news/breaking-news/354334/steve-bannon-didnt-want-children-going-to-school-with-whiny-jews>.

Fighting fund

Round figure

Accompanying his cheque for £100, CT writes: "I thought I'd make it a nice round figure!" By that he means that he added an extra £40 to his £60 subscription - and gave our fighting fund a handy boost in the process. But there was no note enclosed with the £50 cheque from NT - money speaks louder than words!

On top of that there were four standing order donations - thanks to NH (£30), GD (£25), DV (£20) and SM (£10). Then there was another PayPal gift from ET - it was only last week he donated £25 - plus £7, also via PayPal, from DB.

A word of warning though - we're lagging a bit behind the going rate, as we attempt to reach our £1,750 target for December. With the best part of

two weeks already gone, we only have £574. After November's fantastic success it would be a shame if month 12 ended in disappointment. And, as I've mentioned before, the Christmas break, which is now looming large, does seem to result in fewer donations coming our way.

And I can tell it's that time of the year by the dip in online readers - only 2,616 last week. But I'm not crestfallen - I know those readers and all our supporters won't let us down. Please do your best to make sure we end 2017 on a high note ●

Robbie Rix

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The *Weekly Worker* is licensed by November Publications under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International Licence: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/legalcode>. ISSN 1351-0150.

weekly WORKER

**Irish border
deal - a
classic
fudge**

Back from the cliff edge

The last-minute deal between British and European negotiators has averted disaster for now - but settles very little, argues Paul Demarty

Time can be cruel to a weekly columnist. I last wrote amid the total chaos that followed the leak of a draft agreement on the post-Brexit Irish border to the press in the 26 counties, with the result that Theresa May appeared to have snatched calamity from the jaws of victory.

Last week's resulting front page - 'May's Europe negotiations end in chaos' - has therefore not aged well, and by the time the weekend rolled around a fresh deal had been struck, to fairly universal acclaim ... at least initially. 'It's not over until the fat lady sings,' goes the old cliché - in Britain today, it is not over until the avaricious bigots of the Democratic Unionist Party have extracted more concessions and imposed more humiliation on the Tory government they prop up.

The terms of this deal seem to be as follows: Britain will pay its 'divorce bill', and a method for calculating it is set out, albeit not a final sum. Something in the region of £50 billion is expected to be the outcome, in addition to which the UK will continue to pay into the European Union budget until 2021. UK citizens in Europe and vice versa will be permitted to stay in their new home countries, as will their children and partners in "durable relationships", whatever they are. As for the border itself, things are even more mysterious: there will be a 'frictionless' border with Ireland, but Britain will still leave the customs union, and any difference in the regulatory regime between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK will be subject to the veto of the Stormont assembly.

The initial blast of euphoria - "Rejoice! We're on our way", went the triumphant *Daily Mail* front page on December 10 - has inevitably given way to the chill winds of scepticism. I say 'inevitably', for, if there is one thing clear about this deal, it is its unclarity. An as yet unknown sum of money will change hands; as yet unspecified legal protections will exist for citizens left the 'wrong' side of the border; and one stretch of that border will be 'hard yet soft', like a Dime bar.

We expect that the final of the three 'agreements' will prove most fraught with danger down the road, since it appears to commit the partners of the negotiation to implementing a straightforward logical contradiction, as if they had agreed to sign the final deal on paper cut into the shape of a circular triangle. How on earth can you have an open border (and therefore no customs posts) with the UK outside the customs union? Perhaps by some lesser, specific treaty - but how could that not involve committing either Northern Ireland or the UK as a whole to close regulatory alignment (all that 'Brussels red tape' the gutter press has been moaning about for decades) for the foreseeable future?

As for goods, so for labour - while a 'frictionless Irish border' does not preclude illegalisation of migrants, deportations, detention, harassment and so on, it does preclude *physically*



Sinn Féin-led protest against hard border

keeping people out, which is what the more immigration-obsessed Brexit voters were presumably after. Sure, we will 'take back control' of our borders - except for a 300-odd mile stretch of the Emerald Isle ... Of course, physical control of the whole border is in any case a fantasy, in all but the smallest countries. Add it all up, and Brexit looks softer by the day.

Such a possibility is denied by the government, which remains on paper committed to a much cleaner break with EU membership than seems to be implied by the present course of events. David Davis rules out a Swiss or Norwegian 'semi-official hanger-on' status, instead calling for a 'Canada-plus-plus' arrangement. The reference is to the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the EU, which is very likely to be signed soon, after more than 13 years of arduous negotiations. Given that this deal eliminates nearly all tariff barriers between Canada and the EU, guarantees visa-free travel for all EU citizens in Canada and allows companies to sue governments for playing favourites with local companies, one wonders what is so very much more overweening about a Norwegian arrangement.

For now, the government seems to be holding together. A touted cabinet showdown has mysteriously failed to

materialise. Boris Johnson is otherwise engaged making a tit out of himself in negotiations with the Islamic regime in Tehran (the mullahs having told him to, ahem, go whistle). Davis himself is pretty well neutralised. 'Spreadsheet Phil' Hammond will be pleased at the direction of travel in the numbers on his screen. And from the diplomatic angle, it seems that what has been agreed is ultimately no more than that the two sides shall proceed to the real business of working out a trade agreement acceptable both to the various factions of Britain's dysfunctional body politic and to the 27 remaining member-states of the EU. Whether or not the Canadian precedent is accurate as to the content of a final deal, we cannot expect that things will proceed much faster - especially given the ill-will and frustration caused by the whole situation in the first place.

Political crisis

It is impossible, of course, to know with any certainty people's motivations in vast endeavours such as this. But let us propose a hypothesis anyway. We know that the British government is extremely weak at the current time, and might lack an effective parliamentary majority for *any* conceivable deal. The EU has chosen so far to take a hard line, but *in practice* the result has been endless delays, as May knows she does not have

a mandate for any kind of deal - or no kind of deal either. By agreeing this fudge, the two sides essentially place the overall negotiations in the hands of the gods, who may deliver a workable government in Westminster which is capable of getting the necessary capitulations through parliament. 'Something will come along.'

Perhaps. Things could get worse - the bourgeois press still considers a Jeremy Corbyn government to be a greater threat than even the roughest exit from Europe. There is also the question of the general political health of the capitalist world as a whole, and from that point of view things are hardly looking rosy either.

Recently, I was eating lunch with some colleagues, talking about some piece of British politics; and one such, who we will call Alan, confessed that he was starting to miss David Cameron. Alan is, so far as I can tell, a run-of-the-mill liberal with little in the way of Tory sympathies; he would hardly have been fond of Cameron when he was around. Yet like many others of his class position and political sympathies, he was horrified by the apparently mechanical progress of the country in its current state towards a break with Europe which is likely to be economically disastrous, in the name of principles inimical to the values of the 'citizens of nowhere'. Cameron was a

Tory, but at least he was a professional.

The trouble with this outlook is that it ignores the way in which a 'professional' Tory like Cameron might be responsible for outcomes which he despises. In the current case, there is the small matter that it was Cameron who called the referendum in the first place, and who is thus directly responsible for the current political crisis. Yet there is a more profound aspect to his guilt. Cameron got into number 10 off the back of the financial crisis a decade ago, conspiring with his chums in the media to promote the lie that Gordon Brown's fiscal irresponsibility had somehow caused a global financial crash. What had happened, in reality, was the collapse of the neoliberal growth model in its very heartlands. In response to this problem, David Cameron's answer was to change nothing, but rather use the crisis as an occasion for a further wave of privatisation, expropriation of municipal government and generalised attacks on the population: more of the same Thatcherite medicine.

As resentment grew, the Tories and their press backers strained every sinew to offload blame onto the usual array of enemies within (benefit scroungers) and without (immigrants, EU bureaucrats). So, when Cameron was trapped into calling his referendum, he did so, *having spent the past six years undermining his own side.*

But it is hardly the unique imbecility of Cameron to have brought forth this response. Europe is full of national-chauvinist governments. Japan's Shinzo Abe is a fanatical nationalist. There is also the small matter of the current occupant of the White House. With the final defeat of the Soviet Union in 1991, capitalist triumphalists believed they had killed socialism - by which they meant any alternative whatever to the naked rule of capital. Yet the problem with their system is ultimately that it *does not work*, that its contradictions are primarily internal. In view of the fact that they spent extraordinary efforts burying 'socialism', is it any wonder that capitalist crisis should find expression in national chauvinism (and, elsewhere, religious sectarianism)?

This political crisis is far from over - so much more excitement on the Brexit front is to be expected ●

paul.demarty@weeklyworker.co.uk

Subscribe			
	6m	1yr	Inst.
UK	£30/€35	£60/€70	£200/€220
Europe	£43/€50	£86/€100	£240/€264
Rest of world	£65/€75	£130/€150	£480/€528

New UK subscribers offer: 3 months for £10

UK subscribers: Pay by standing order and save £12 a year. Minimum £12 every 3 months... but please pay more if you can.

Send a cheque or postal order payable to 'Weekly Worker' at:
Weekly Worker, BCM Box 928,
London WC1N 3XX

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____

Email: _____

Sub: £/€ _____

Donation: £/€ _____

Standing order

To _____ Bank plc _____

Branch address _____

Post code _____ Account name _____

Sort code _____ Account No _____

Please pay to Weekly Worker, Lloyds A/C No 00744310 sort code 30-99-64, the sum of _____ every month*/3 months* until further notice, commencing on _____ This replaces any previous order from this account. (*delete)

Date _____

Signed _____ Name (PRINT) _____

Address _____