



# weekly worker



**Working class independence:  
oppose People's Vote and  
calls for second referendum**

- Letters and debate
- Stan Keable
- Intersectionality
- Irish unity

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Towards a Communist Party of the European Union

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## Heathrow hell: stop the third runway



## LETTERS



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

## Reinstate Marc

It is fantastic news that at the Unite conference in Brighton delegates are debating a motion calling for the reinstatement of Marc Wadsworth to the Labour Party. After the required 49 delegates supported it, the standing orders committee accepted the motion onto the agenda. As I write, the vote has not yet taken place, but we very much presume delegates will overwhelmingly support the move to overturn his ridiculous and unjust expulsion from the party.

This follows on from the recent RMT conference and over 20 Constituency Labour Parties backing similar motions. Of course, all socialists should fight for Wadsworth to be let back into the party, as part of a campaign against all unjust expulsions and suspensions, such as pursued by Labour Against the Witchhunt.

While pressure from below is very important, we fear, however, that neither of these motions will make much of a difference. As long as Jeremy Corbyn and his allies at the top of the Labour Party continue in their doomed efforts to placate the right, they simply cannot afford to let Wadsworth back in. Thanks to a successful smear campaign in the media, much has been made of the fact that Ruth Smeeth - the MP that Marc publicly criticised - is Jewish (even though he didn't know she was), and this has been neatly slotted into the campaign to equate any criticism of the state of Israel with anti-Semitism. So keen is Jeremy Corbyn to prove that he is no anti-Semite and no friend of anybody accused of anti-Semitism that he has failed to put an end to the continuing witch-hunt in the Labour Party. And by not standing up against the right for his own supporters, he has allowed this witch-hunt to fester, grow and take on ridiculous proportions.

Jared O'Mara MP might have just been reinstated to full membership after Tuesday's meeting of the disciplinary panel of Labour's national executive committee (now chaired by Jon Lansman ally Claudia Webbe). That is good news. Jared talked an awful lot of crap, 15 years ago. But people can and do change - clearly, that must be our basic understanding of the human psyche; otherwise we can give up on any socialist future. The panel was less understanding and forgiving about many of the other 70(!) cases it was dealing with at their meeting. As NEC member Darren Williams reports on Facebook, the meeting consists of "39 people rushing through a couple of paragraphs on each case" and "the majority of the NEC are still readier than I would like to refer some cases to the national constitutional committee for probable expulsion, rather than offer warnings and/or training instead". There is no doubt in my mind that Jared's case would have been sent to the NCC for expulsion if there had been even the slightest critical comment about Israel among his misogynist gibberish 15 years ago.

Of course, you can just imagine the media shitstorm that would hit Labour, should Marc Wadsworth be reinstated. Having gone this far and having even sacrificed Ken Livingstone, Corbyn cannot be seen to renege on his pledge to show "zero tolerance" when it comes to charges of anti-Semitism - no matter how ridiculous those charges are

or how impossible and undesirable the implementation of this policy actually is. Such a rule belongs to a police state, not a democratic party with lots of different views. Clearly education, debate and discussion are the only effective way to tackle prejudice - not a policy of 'one strike and you're out'.

Letting Wadsworth back in would also potentially open the floodgates to all the other comrades who have been unjustly expelled or suspended without due process or natural justice. The case of Jackie Walker is still to be heard, for example, and could be influenced by any such 'leniency'.

A Unite conference motion would, of course, send a strong political signal against the entire witch-hunt in the party. But then, last year, Unite delegates voted for mandatory reselection of all parliamentary candidates in the Labour Party - an eminently democratic demand that would do away with the highly undemocratic trigger ballot, which disproportionately favours the sitting MP. However, Jeremy Corbyn has made clear that he is not supporting such moves - again out of fear of upsetting the right (many of whom would not be reselected under any truly democratic system).

Of course, in the long struggle for human liberation, our movement sometimes has to make adjustments to our tactics. But if you start sacrificing the basic democratic principles of the workers' movement your whole long-term strategy starts to change - and so do you too.

To make matters worse, Corbyn's strategy of appeasement is based on a serious misconception: that at some stage the right will surely give up in their campaign against him and go along with the transformation of the Labour Party. They will not. In fact, should Corbyn really become prime minister, he will see a whole different level of shitstorm hitting him. He'd better start growing a political backbone soon.

**Carla Roberts**  
London

## Zionism

I have tried to avoid commenting so far on Ian Donovan's contributions, not least because I didn't want to provoke yet further outpourings (Letters, June 21)! However, I imagine that nothing I do or say will reduce his output.

What Ian demonstrates, with his and Socialist Fight's suggestion that there is anything politically interesting or remarkable about Jewish "overrepresentation" in the US ruling class is that he doesn't understand Zionism, either politically or historically. He is beguiled by Zionism's Jewishness - much like his mentor, Gilad Atzmon. What is most remarkable about the period that we are living in is that there is a slow divorce taking place between the Jewish diaspora, Zionism and the Israeli state.

Objectively the interests of Jews outside Israel are not served by the Israeli state, which is a source of anti-Semitism. This is because Israel claims that it represents all Jews when it perpetrates its war crimes. It is becoming clear to ever larger sections of American Jewry that Israel's tie-up with Donald Trump is inimical to their interests. Donald Trump was propelled to power by riding the tiger of white supremacy and it is universally acknowledged that the Trump presidential campaign was the most anti-Semitic there has been.

White supremacy is not in the interests of American Jews, who are among the most liberal section of

the white population. When the neo-Nazis of Charlottesville marched, with the blessing of Trump and his alt-right, and chanted "The Jews will not replace us", a tremor went down the spine of American Jewry. Yet Netanyahu felt unable to reprimand Trump for his comments that there were "fine people" amongst the marchers.

The reasons that US imperialism supports Israel have absolutely nothing to do with Jewish numerical representation in the US government. It is blindingly obvious that it is the most hawkish and rightwing sections of the US political establishment, regardless of religion, that are also the most vociferous supporters of the Israeli state: people like ex-Trump advisors Sebastian Gorka and Steve Bannon - people who combine anti-Semitism and ardent Zionism. The founder of the alt-right, Richard Spencer, who also believes Jews are "overrepresented" in the US government, describes himself as a white Zionist. Jewish people serve as a cover, a camouflage, for support for Israel and Zionism. They are not its motivators. If any community bears this responsibility, it is the Christian evangelicals.

Moshé Machover has dealt well with the nonsense about Jewish-only groups being evidence of 'semi-Bundism' (Letters, June 28). I suggest that this is an inheritance from the ideological nonsense of Atzmon. For Atzmon, Jews and Zionists were one and the same. Jews who were political, even as anti-Zionists, were in fact Zionists: hence his term, 'anti-Zionist Zionist'. Atzmon was therefore firmly opposed to all-Jewish groups, because to him they were simply Zionist fronts. Thus ludicrously Jews for Boycotting Israeli Goods was a Zionist front, even though Atzmon himself was anti-BDS!

The question is entirely tactical. Ian Donovan refers to whether white anti-apartheid groups would have been acceptable. Yes, if they had grown up in South Africa - my understanding is that there was an all-white anti-conscription group in South Africa. In this country no-one pretended that the apartheid regime represented all whites, so the question never arose. Israel does claim it represents all Jews and that is why Palestinians above all welcome Jewish groups opposed to Zionism. It has, of course, nothing to do with the Bundist claim that they represented all Jews in the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party.

In his crude polemics about Jewish numbers - as if ethnicities determine politics - and what he has termed the 'Jewish question', Ian Donovan has missed the *real* Jewish question. There is no doubt that in this country the interests of British Jews and Zionism have been conflated. It is claimed that most British Jews support Zionism and the Israeli state. In fact surveys have shown that British Jews are much more liberal than the Zionist Board of Deputies that claims to represent them.

However, just suppose that it were true that most Jews supported Israel's actions and that they voted accordingly - what then? This is the blackmail that people like Jonathan Freedland have indulged in. Their argument is that most Jews support Israel and therefore it is anti-Semitic to be anti-Zionist. We should not be afraid of confronting this argument. Even were it true that most Jews identified with Israel, it would not be anti-Semitic to oppose Zionism and Israel. Opposing an identity can

never be racist, just as criticising a religion, as opposed to its adherents, is also not racist.

For example, just suppose a majority of Africans supported female genital mutilation. Would it be racist to oppose FGM? Or just suppose the majority of Afghans support women wearing the burqa. Would it be racist to oppose the wearing of the burqa?

Finally on the question of racism. Yes, racism is more than hate or hostility. For example, it encompasses the idea that Jews are powerful or are part of an international conspiracy. Philo-Semitism is also anti-Semitic. When Owen Smith was asked in a debate what he most admired about Jews, he said their entrepreneurial and business talents! That too is anti-Semitic.

Where I have my doubts is concerning Peter Manson's thesis that the state is ideologically anti-racist (Letters, June 28). I think it is quite clear that, although there is a superficial anti-racism, the operations and practices of the state itself are deeply racist, as Grenfell, Windrush and the behaviour of the police demonstrate. The anti-racism of the state is skin-deep. In many ways its ideology runs counter to its practices.

**Tony Greenstein**  
Brighton

## White privilege

Readers of the *Weekly Worker* might be interested in what is going on in South Africa when it comes to race, racism and equality.

Ever since Democratic Alliance leader Mmusi Maimane made his perfectly logical comment about the continued existence of white privilege in South Africa the media has been responding with a stream of self-denying nonsense. Most comments come from within the smug 'We and our families never voted for the National Party' ranks of the 'traditional DA' supporters, but also from the more extreme ethnic nationalists clinging to the coat-tails of white liberals.

To deny that those individuals and families classified as 'white' under apartheid were privileged is so obviously ridiculous that it should require no response. Merely look to the plethora of discriminatory apartheid laws, let alone a history over more than 300 years.

And to imagine that centuries of discrimination against 'natives' in favour of 'Europeans' - which morphed, in its final phase, into the rigid social engineering of apartheid - has left no legacy is severely delusional. The decades of apartheid set out deliberately to cripple - academically, intellectually and financially - the bulk of the 'non-white' population.

The privileged position of those classified 'white' - especially following the dominance of Afrikaner nationalism in 1948 - gave every single individual, so classified, a massive advantage over their fellow citizens in the various 'non-white' categories. This applied as much to those called Afrikaners as to the so-called 'English'.

I was born into this system, the son of a railway worker, an English speaker in an almost exclusively Afrikaans neighbourhood. But, while the legacy of the Anglo-Boer war continued to be fought out among ourselves as children, we shared common privileges: subsidised, three-bedroom housing, a 'free pass' on the rail network for annual holidays and schools that were generally well equipped and

staffed.

We paid almost no school fees and, at primary level - apparently just in case our parents were remiss - were given free milk in the mornings to ensure healthy growth. Books and writing materials were also free and, for the few families who, despite all the advantages, still had difficulty coping, there were safety nets in school and church groups to supply any shortfalls.

At the same time every house, however humble, had its maid (usually a woman who lived in the 'khaya' - a room in the backyard without water and often without electricity, who cooked, cleaned and cared for the employing family). Her own family, even if she had young children, were 'looked after elsewhere'. Among those 'looked after' children would almost certainly have been the parents of the children who finally rose up in 1976. They argued that their parents had for too long acquiesced in their subjugation.

What it boiled down to was that, from birth to death, the child classified 'white' would be privileged, granted extraordinary advantages to progress, academically, intellectually and financially. Many did. Most enjoyed a lifestyle they and their families would never have achieved in a generally non-racial society.

What these 'white' families accumulated was physical, academic and intellectual wealth. It was then, with obvious exceptions, passed down through the generations. And there always existed, certainly under apartheid, a 'bottom level', beyond which no white family could fall. So to claim now that 'My son/daughter was born after 1994 and was therefore not privileged' is clearly nonsense. White privilege is a reality that continues as a legacy of apartheid and the discriminatory centuries that preceded it.

That I chose, at the age of 18, not to take full advantage of such privilege and to challenge the system instead, does not make my background any less privileged. The lifestyle I led - even the police and prison cells that I briefly inhabited at different times - reflected that privilege: two felt mats on the floor for whites; a single coir mat for 'others'.

My background - not so much the schooling I received - also prepared me for a career that I could pursue even in exile. As in all such cases, it is the advantages of the parents that accrue to the children, and to the children of those children. Nothing much changes unless there is a major restructuring and reorganisation of society.

This never happened in South Africa: the 'rainbow transition' merely perpetuated the residential and economic realities of the past. The geography - the spatial reality - of apartheid persists as the most glaring physical example. Just because some, perhaps naive or even hypocritical, politicians and commentators declared that post-1994 meant that an 'even playing field' had been created didn't make it so. Far from it. But this myth suited the privileged - as, for example, they moved their children to ever more expensive private schools and perhaps plotted packing for Perth.

Better perhaps that they should deal with reality, and use the advantages they have both had and inherited, to join others in an attempt to construct a genuinely democratic and anti-racist society.

**Terry Bell**  
Cape Town

**LAW**

# Gaining momentum

I am grateful to Brent trades union council for backing my campaign for reinstatement to my housing enforcement job at Hammersmith and Fulham council, which I believe is a first step in mobilising wider trade union support.

However, although the trades council motion was carried with no votes against, comrades have told

me that *Morning Star* supporters (Communist Party of Britain members) among the delegates were unable to vote for the motion, and actually abstained. If this is true, the CPBers should explain themselves and, hopefully, think again. I can only guess that perhaps, like Corbyn, they want to downplay the witch-hunt rather than confront it. I prefer 'straight-talking politics'

and solidarity. An injury to one is an injury to all.

Brent TUC carried the model motion proposed by Labour Against the Witchhunt and decided to affiliate to LAW - the RMT's Carol Foster will be the delegate. It has donated £25 to my legal defence fund. Finally it has written this excellent letter ●

**Stan Keable**

**To: Councillor Stephen Cowan leader of Hammersmith and Fulham council**

Brent Trade Union Council at its meeting on June 27 resolved to send you and the Labour group this letter urging the reinstatement of Stan Keable. You have sacked Stan for stating in a private discussion that the Zionist movement collaborated with the Nazi regime - a well-documented historical fact.

On March 26 the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Jewish Leadership Council organised a demonstration in Parliament Square to protest against anti-Semitism in the Labour Party. Stan was part of a counter-demonstration organised by Jewish Voice for Labour and others. As Stan went around handing out leaflets, he got into a conversation about the holocaust with a Zionist and explained that it was not only caused by anti-Semitism (it is obvious that this is correct - it began with the extermination of the disabled, for instance). Stan also explained that Zionism held the view that Jews did not belong in the countries of their birth and because of that the Zionist movement had collaborated with the Nazis, who also wanted them out of Germany.

BBC *Newsnight* editor David Grossman secretly recorded the conversation and the result of this quite innocuous conversation was headlines in papers like the *Evening Standard*, *Jewish Chronicle* and the *Daily Mail*. The next day local Tory MP Greg Hands sent out a tweet demanding action against Stan and he followed this up with a letter to Steve Cowan, leader of Hammersmith and Fulham Council, Stan's employer, demanding action.

David Ben-Gurion, the most prominent founder of the state of Israel and its first prime minister, famously said in a speech to Mapai's central committee on December 9 1938:

If I knew that it would be possible to save all the children in Germany by bringing them over to England, and only half of them by transporting them to Eretz Yisrael, then I would opt for the second alternative. For we must weigh not only the life of these children, but also the history of the people of Israel.

On August 10 1933 the German Zionist Federation and the Palestinian Jewish Agency signed an economic trade agreement, Ha'avara, with the Nazi state, that helped destroy the Jewish-led international boycott of Nazi Germany.

The allegation contained in Hammersmith and Fulham's disciplinary investigation was that Stan had breached the Equality Act 2010. It is difficult to believe that trained 'human resources' professional lawyers could come to such a conclusion with legal advice. The suggestion that debating an issue such as Zionism is a breach of the Equality Act is wrong. The introduction to the act is quite clear. Its purpose is:

to reform and harmonise equality law ... to prohibit victimisation in certain circumstances; to require

the exercise of certain functions to be with regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and other prohibited conduct ... to increase equality of opportunity; to amend the law relating to rights and responsibilities in family relationships; and for connected purposes.

There is nothing in the act about restricting freedom of speech or disciplining people who have views which are unpopular with Britain's rightwing mass media. The key paragraph in the charges against Stan stated:

The question as to whether or not Stan Keable's comments breach the Equality Act may hinge on an interpretation of what constitutes 'belief' under the terms of the act ... One of these [protected] characteristics is "religion and belief". Zionism is not a religion, although it is closely related to Judaism, but it is a belief in the right of the Jewish people to have a nation-state in the 'Holy Land', their original homeland. Legal advice, obtained as part of this investigation, states that case law has established that the definition of belief can extend to political beliefs. If Zionism constitutes a 'belief' under the terms of the Equality Act then the statements by Stan Keable that the Zionist movement collaborated with the Nazis and that it accepted that 'Jews are not acceptable here' might be deemed to have breached the Equality Act.

It is nonsense to claim Israel/Palestine is the "original homeland" back in 135AD, with the crushing of the Bar Kokhba revolt by the Romans, when Judea lost its name. Zionism may be a philosophical belief under section 10 of the Equality Act. But then so is anti-Zionism. However, it is not the protected characteristics of those Stan was arguing with which are relevant, but those of Stan! Stan is not their employer! Just because someone might be classified as having a protected characteristic in certain situations - mainly employment - does not mean that if you disagree with, for example, a gay person you are therefore guilty of discrimination!

'Protected characteristics' are not a free-floating cause of action: they are tied to specific acts, such as direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The definition of direct discrimination (section 13.1) says: "(i) A person (A) discriminates against another (B) if, because of a protected characteristic, A treats B less favourably than A treats or would treat others."

It should be obvious to anyone - though clearly not to those leading Hammersmith and Fulham's investigation - that debating a topic in a public space does not infringe his adversaries' protected characteristics. Put bluntly, debate is not discrimination. No-one is being discriminated against when it is stated that the Nazis and Zionists collaborated. Neither was Stan in any con-

tractual or employment relationship with his adversaries.

However, in suspending and seeking to dismiss Stan, the council is almost certainly breaching the Equality Act, because it is Stan whom they are discriminating against on the grounds of his belief. The failure to understand this simple but obvious point is quite staggering.

The council's investigation report (paragraph 5.6) stated:

in attending the counter-demonstration at Westminster on March 26 and in making the comments that subsequently appeared on social media, Mr Keable has failed to avoid any conduct outside of work which may discredit himself and the council.

In other words, Stan's offence was, in part at least, attending a demonstration! Under 'recommendations' (paragraph 7.1) we get:

That, in attending a counter-demonstration outside the Houses of Parliament on March 26 2018, Stan Keable knowingly increased the possibility of being challenged about his views and subsequently proceeded to express views that were in breach of the council's equality, diversity and inclusion policy and the council's code of conduct ('Working with integrity' and 'Working with the media').

This is an outrageous infringement of Stan's civil liberties in attending a demonstration. Stan "knowingly increased the possibility of being challenged about his views ..."! Stan's sacking means mere attendance at a demonstration will be a potential breach of one's employment contract.

Article 10 (European Convention on Human Rights), 'Freedom of expression', states:

Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers.

Article 11, 'Freedom of assembly and association', begins: "Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests." Closely allied to these is article 9 on 'Freedom of thought, conscience and religion'.

There is little doubt that Stan will win his legal case, because not even the most conformist and timid tribunal will accept that attending a demonstration and airing one's views in public constitute a breach of the Equality Act or one's contract. H&F Labour Council should now call a halt to these proceedings by reinstating Stan Keable.

**Roger Cox**  
Secretary, Brent Trade Union Council

## ACTION

**London Communist Forum**

**Sunday July 8, 5pm:** Weekly political report from CPGB Provisional Central Committee, followed by open discussion and reading group: study of August Nimtz's *Lenin's electoral strategy from Marx and Engels through the revolution of 1905*. This meeting: chapter 4, 'From revolution to "coup d'etat": the second duma' (final section). Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Road, London WC1.

Organised by CPGB: [www.cpgb.org.uk](http://www.cpgb.org.uk); and Labour Party Marxists: [www.labourpartymarxists.org.uk](http://www.labourpartymarxists.org.uk).

**Marxism festival**

**Thursday July 5, 12.30pm to 5.30pm, Friday July 6/Saturday July 7, 10am to 8.30pm, Sunday July 8, 10am to 5pm:** Socialist Workers Party summer school, various venues, central London. Full details at <https://marxismfestival.org.uk>.

Organised by SWP: [www.swp.org.uk](http://www.swp.org.uk).

**National Shop Stewards Network**

**Saturday July 7, 11am to 4.30pm:** Annual conference, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1. Entry: £6 - open to all trade union and anti-cuts campaigners.

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

**Not welcome here**

**Saturday July 7, 12.30pm:** Counterdemonstration, Leeds Town Hall, The Headrow, Leeds LS1. No to Tommy Robinson and the Football Lads Alliance.

Organised by Stand Up To Racism: [www.standuptoracism.org.uk](http://www.standuptoracism.org.uk)

**Artists against Trump and war**

**Sunday July 8, 6.30pm:** Art, entertainment and protest, Shaw Theatre, 100-110 Euston Road, London NW1.

Organised by Stop the War Coalition: [www.stopwar.org.uk](http://www.stopwar.org.uk).

**War and the special relationship**

**Sunday July 8, 3pm:** Meeting, The Cornerhouse, 4-8 City Road, Chester CH1.

Organised by Stop the War Coalition: [www.stopwar.org.uk](http://www.stopwar.org.uk).

**People, Pits and Politics**

**Thursday July 12, 12 noon to Friday July 13, 10pm:** Festival, Town Hall, Market Place, Durham DH1. Film, comedy and music, plus training sessions and workshops. Speakers include: John McDonnell, Paul Mason, Billy Bragg, Mark Steel, Ken Loach.

Organised by People, Pits and Politics: <https://pppfestival.com>.

**Demonstrate against Trump**

**London, Friday July 13, 2pm:** Assemble BBC, Portland Place, London W1 for march to Trafalgar Square.

Organised by Together Against Trump:

[www.facebook.com/events/176581893155207](https://www.facebook.com/events/176581893155207).

**Saturday July 14, 12 noon:** Assemble Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh EH1.

Organised by Scotland United Against Trump: <https://www.facebook.com/events/628616174183456/>

**The Big Meeting**

**Saturday July 14, 8.30am to evening:** Durham Miners Gala, various venues, Durham.

Organised by Durham Miners Gala: [www.durhamminers.org/gala](http://www.durhamminers.org/gala).

**Oppose the far right**

**Saturday July 14, 1pm:** Assemble at Old Palace Yard, Westminster, London SW1, then march to Whitehall. No to Trump, Tommy Robinson and the FLA.

Organised by Unite Against Fascism: <http://uaf.org.uk>.

**Momentum Big Summer Gathering**

**Sunday July 15, 10am to 4pm:** National membership conference, Town Hall, Market Place, Durham DH1.

Tickets from [www.tickettailor.com/events/pppfestival/168995](http://www.tickettailor.com/events/pppfestival/168995).

Organised by Momentum: <https://peoplesmomentum.com>.

**Labour Against the Witchhunt**

**Hammersmith, Monday July 16, 5pm to 7.15pm:** Lobby of Hammersmith and Fulham Council meeting, Hammersmith Town Hall, King Street, London W6. Reinstatement Stan Keable! Expressing an anti-Zionist opinion at a political event is not a disciplinary offence!

**Tuesday July 17, 11am:** Lobby and protest at Labour's NEC, Southside, 105 Victoria Street, London SW1.

Organised by Labour Against the Witchhunt: [www.labouragainsthewitchhunt.org](http://www.labouragainsthewitchhunt.org).

**Tolpuddle Festival**

**Friday July 20, 12 noon to Sunday July 22, 6pm:** Annual commemoration, Tolpuddle Martyrs Museum, Dorchester Road, Tolpuddle., Dorset DT2.

Organised by Tolpuddle Martyrs: [www.tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk](http://www.tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk).

**China's global impact**

**Wednesday July 25, 7pm:** Educational meeting, first floor function room, The Wellington, 37 Bennetts Hill, Birmingham B2. Speaker: Jenny Clegg (advisor to CND and Stop the War).

Organised by Birmingham Socialist Forum: [ser14@btinternet.com](mailto:ser14@btinternet.com).

**Arise: Labour left ideas**

**Friday July 27 to Saturday July 28:** Two-day political festival and conferences, various central London venues.

Organised by Jeremy4PM: [www.facebook.com/events/226915667862647](https://www.facebook.com/events/226915667862647).

**The dead end of intersectionality**

**Sunday July 29, 5pm:** London Communist Forum, Calthorpe Arms, Gray's Inn Road, London WC1. Speaker: Mike Macnair.

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

**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.

**HEATHROW**

# No future for London

The third runway is not inevitable. It must be stopped, argues **Paul Demarty**



**More planes, more cars, more pollution**

There is plenty to say about last week's parliamentary vote on the expansion of Heathrow airport - none of it good.

For Marxists looking at the back and forth of bourgeois politics, there are two sorts of 'bad decisions'. In the first sort, we face the successful operations of our enemies. Perhaps an imperialist war is decided upon, which has a good chance of aiding the interests of 'our' state in some unfortunate target country. A splendid recent example, in the sphere of domestic policy, would be Michael Gove's tenure as education secretary, which was so harmful precisely because he was so *successful* in his agenda; and now politically accountable, purely public education is more or less at an end.

As environment secretary, however, Gove is the man who was left standing when the music stopped on the third runway. And that is a 'bad decision' of the other sort - an Iraq-war sort of decision: a predictable disaster, whose wrongness has a sort of fractal quality to it. It is wrong at a macro level, wrong in its broad implementation, and then wrong in almost every individual detail. The next time he starts talking like an eco-warrior about plastic bags, recall that Gove discreetly voted for this, in an act - at best - of total cowardice.

This decision has been hanging over successive governments for over a decade now. London-based readers might remember the duelling billboard adverts from Gatwick and Heathrow that colonised the tube for a few months before Heathrow went forward as the preferred scheme; as well as other ideas (like the laughable 'Boris Island' scheme to float a new airport in the Thames estuary and the crazy idea that extra airport capacity might go *somewhere other than London*). The contrast between the two campaigns was mildly interesting. The Gatwick ads barraged you with 'facts' about congestion, air quality and so on, with the implication that

Heathrow would be an awful choice. This was plainly misleading - it was as if planes were silent over Crawley but not over Twickenham - but one almost has to applaud the effort.

The other side advertised purely on the basis of smug incumbency. The substantive arguments - such as they are - focused on, firstly, the ambition of making London a 'hub city', to which we will return in due course, and secondly on the proximity of the 'M4 corridor' - a JG Ballard-esque hellscape of flyovers and corporate office blocks that blights the final western approach to the capital by road. Nothing like a little taste of Merrie England as you're passing through ... Of course, Team Heathrow's *blasé* sense of entitlement was well justified. To their cause attached the largest sums of lobbying money. To them belonged the greater proportion of business class flights and executive lounges, unlike the oik-infested alternatives elsewhere. So Heathrow gets its absurd boondoggle.

## Climate change

The other major theme of all this is the small matter of looming climate disaster. Donald Trump caught a lot of flak for pulling the United States out of the Paris climate accord, but, looking at the decision to build a third runway, he must really wonder why he bothered. If anything, this is an even greater insult - it is one thing to abandon a commitment, but quite another to affirm it in words but then shit all over it in deeds. All climate-change concerns have been hand-waved between one government department and the next, nobody wanting to be seen taking responsibility for what is a flagrant act of irresponsibility to the Earth's ecosystem. (Refusing to take responsibility for disasters is getting to be a habit for the mouth-breathing transport secretary, Chris Grayling, whose mismanagement of the railways has earned him the undying enmity of commuters, and whose bright idea to

privatise parts of the probation service when he was justice secretary are currently collapsing. The man is not fit to run a shoe-shine stand.)

Building a third runway will, at typical levels of utilisation, increase British carbon emissions by 73 million tonnes a year, more than is produced by Cyprus. On top of that, nitrogen oxide emissions increase the amount of ozone in the upper troposphere, at which level it too contributes to warming (albeit locally, rather than globally).

The usually cited figures tell us that meeting the Paris targets will require reducing aviation emissions, and therefore - excepting some extraordinary technological breakthrough - passenger miles, to 2005 levels. In a useful op-ed for *The Independent*, Clive Lewis, the quasi-Corbynite shadow treasury minister, does the maths:

[The Airport Commission] concluded that big restrictions on traffic at regional airports would be needed in order to square expansion with climate targets. So either regional airports, who've been told this will mean more business for them, have been sold a pup or we're going to drive a jumbo jet through our climate-change obligations. The government's position to date? It doesn't have one. That, they say, is all to come "in due course".

In other words, this is the sort of short-termism which actually prevails, giving the lie to the pious noises about climate change on the part of our rulers.

For what? Lewis is right to point out that this is a class issue - a subsidy to wealthy frequent flyers to be paid for by those unable to avoid the effects of climate change. There is another aspect to this, however, which has to do with this 'hub city' guff. The idea is that London should become a major layover point on

the international flight map. It is in a good spot, after all, on one edge of the Atlantic, give or take a few hundred miles. It already has a vast, sprawling, self-satisfied airport.

The economic benefits of this, even from a capitalist point of view, are very dubious indeed. Such travellers will spend any money they do in duty-free. The exchequer will get whatever it can grasp from the bored till jockeys on a minimum wage selling them giant Toblerones and aftershave.

It is, however, a nice complement to a prolonged post-imperial dotage as an offshore centre. Note that the greatest hub city of them all is Dubai. Such is clearly the glorious future envisaged by cracked Brexiteers like Daniel Hannan. We can't wait.

The third runway is, in fact, an ideal illustration of the contradictions of this sort of offshore-metropolis model of urban prosperity. It requires a city, after a fashion, to service such an airport, but not a terrifically exciting one - perhaps they went with Heathrow over Gatwick because to choose the latter would be to reveal that sleepy Crawley would be just as good for it as the ancient seat of power in this country. A 'hub city' is a city that is grateful to be noticed at all - thus London might outlive its exhausted imperial past, just as Dubai has survived the exhaustion of its oil wells. And what better synecdoche for the whole world of tax-efficient financial skulduggery than the duty-free shop, surely the industry most likely to boom after Brexit?

In return, Londoners - at least on the western edges of the city - need only subject themselves to further interminable jet noise, and choke down a few more toxic particulates with each grubby lungful of air. What a future for the capital's 10 million residents - an increasingly hollow city, with its luxury flats empty, as they circulate as tokens of wealth among the global elite; its actual population squeezed down

the Thames and up the M4, its air unbreathable - a comprehensive picture of the inhuman terminus of capitalist social life.

## Labour alternative?

Opposing all this ought to be a no-brainer for the left and labour movement, and indeed Labour policy was officially one of opposition to expansion, but, of course, that is not how it turned out on the day, with a free vote permitted and 119 rebel Labour MPs making for a huge majority in favour.

Partly this is a matter of the treason of the pro-capitalist right, who will always be trapped by capitalism's purely quantitative measures of progress, according to which more is always better, so long as somebody is making more *money*. But it is also, unfortunately, a reflection of the sort of trade union sectionalism that sees only another quantity at issue - that of jobs created.

This gives a farcical aspect to Clive Lewis's rousing promise: "The next Labour government is going to break with the tired dogma of growth for growth's sake, consequences be damned." Two problems present themselves: first of all, that slightly less than half of Labour's sitting MPs are clearly happy to vote for "growth for growth's sake".

The other, of course, is the small matter of what exactly those consequences are that are scoffed at by our defiant eco-warrior. The 'dogma' of growth for growth's sake, to push the metaphor a little further, is less like the dogma of transubstantiation - a matter for intramural squabbles of religious pedants - but rather like the dogma of the divine right of kings, emerging from the fundamental relations of society. To get rid of it - really get rid of it - would be to get rid of capitalism entirely. Capital multiplies or it dies; and not only do capitalist firms compete: so do capitalist states, for the success of their economies. It is these two concentric realities that drive the assumption that 200,000 more flights in and out of London is a great boon. We hope, but do not expect, that this is what our shadow treasury minister has in mind.

As capitalism declines, a particular contradiction opens up further - planning is ever more extensive, both at the level of the individual firm and of the state in its coordinating capacity; yet anarchy reigns ever more imperiously. So we propose, instead, the sort of planning we do not get under capitalism - the democratic socialist planning that would allow us to work where we live, to travel by clean and efficient mass transit systems, and to fly for a holiday long enough to bother with in one of the millions of seats no longer needed by jet-setting financiers for afternoon meetings in New York.

There is no place for a third Heathrow runway in such a world - and it is not built yet. Let us stop this madness ●

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## Notes

1. [www.lrb.co.uk/blog/2018/06/29/maya-goodfellow/the-third-runway](http://www.lrb.co.uk/blog/2018/06/29/maya-goodfellow/the-third-runway).
2. [www.independent.co.uk/voices/heathrow-third-runway-building-environment-class-divides-boris-johnson-vote-a8414251.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/heathrow-third-runway-building-environment-class-divides-boris-johnson-vote-a8414251.html).
3. Lewis points out *inter alia* that better communication technology has already obviated the need for these extraordinary wasteful passenger-miles, and business travel is already in decline. Together with the rapid-fire city breaks of exhausted yuppies, we get the salient fact that 70% of all flights are taken by 15% of the population - and no prizes for guessing where they are in terms of income distribution.

**PALESTINE**

# Ethnic cleansing continues

Israel is moving Palestinians into bleak and desolate townships located next to rubbish dumps, writes **Tony Greenstein**

**K**han al-Ahmar is a Palestinian village located between the Israeli settlements of Ma'ale Adumim, a city of nearly 40,000 settlers, and Kfar Adumim, to the east of Jerusalem. About 200 people live there with a school that is attended by about 150 children from around the area. Israel wants to evict the entire population with the aim of creating a continuous belt of settlements from Jerusalem. The West Bank will be divided in two.

The Jahalin Bedouin people of Khan al-Ahmar were expelled from the Negev in 1952 by the Israeli army and the following year they ended up on the West Bank. In the late 1970s the villagers found themselves incorporated into lands that were assigned to what became the Ma'ale Adumim settlement. The village is one of the only remaining Palestinian areas within the 'E1 zone', which is strategically significant because it connects the north and south of the West Bank.

The village has suffered from continual harassment and attacks by the Israeli army and settlers. In 2015, solar panels were donated to provide the village with electricity, but these were confiscated by the 'Civil Administration' (run by the military), together with one which had already been in the village for several years. Under Israel's colonial regime Palestinians do not require electricity, it seems. Israel also limits the water supply, so in the hot months they do not have running water every day.

On May 24 this year, Israel's supreme court unanimously ruled that from June the Israeli army could carry out the demolition and eviction of Khan al-Ahmar, moving the villagers to a different location. Justices Noam Solberg, Yael Willner and Anat Baron approved the expulsion of the population and the razing of their homes.

Willner has a brother and sister who live in Kfar Adumim. Nevertheless, she did not offer to recuse herself from hearing the case - the court rejected a request by attorney Shlomo Lecker to that effect. As for Solberg, who presided over the court hearing, he himself is a resident of an illegal Israeli settlement - Alon Shvut in the Gush Etzion bloc. Sohlberg wrote that the grounds for deciding to reject the villagers' petition for a stay in the order was that the residents had unlawfully engaged in building both the school and housing, and that it in any case was not within the court's remit to meddle in the execution of Israeli state laws.

The reason why the buildings are illegal is because Israel's colonial administration refused to issue permits for such basic requirements as a school and housing. The supreme court, however, was not interested in asking why permits are not granted to Palestinians - that might come perilously close to examining the legitimacy of the occupation itself. A colonial court such as this can only concern itself with procedural questions. Of course, Israeli settlements are not troubled by such legal niceties, since their authorisation is virtually automatic.

In fact the villagers have been in their current location since before the settlement of Kfar Adumim was established. Despite this, the state refused to include them in the master plans it prepared for the settlers. Consequently, the buildings that the justices deemed illegal were all built without permits.

The role of the supreme court is to



**School built without permission**

put a legal gloss on the occupation. Whenever there is a conflict between Israeli and international law, the former prevails. As Hagai El-Ad, director of the Israeli human rights NGO, B'Tselem, noted:

For decades, the supreme court justices have granted legitimacy to practically any injustice that Israel wishes to cause to the Palestinians: demolishing their homes, administrative arrests, revoking residency rights, seizing land, constraining their movement. Still, it isn't every day that ... supreme court justices sign off on rulings on the fate of Palestinian subjects that boil down to approving crimes.

David Zonsheine, executive director of B'Tselem, explained that Israel had refused to connect the township to water, power and sewerage services, and that the villagers had built without permits because Israeli policy is such that it dissuades Palestinian villagers from even trying to obtain licences for such work - a claim repeated by Human Rights Watch. The effect of the dismantling and evictions, he added, will be to bisect the West Bank from north to south.

As Peace Now's Hagit Ofran observed, "They're destroying Khan al-Ahmar because they didn't give them building permits." However, "It turns out that the Israeli government has no problem with issuing permits for this land - just not to Palestinians."

## Demolish and expel

Judge Solberg stated: "The question at stake is not whether the path the state plans meets the requirements of the law, but whether carrying out the demolition orders meets the requirements of the law." The "inarguable point of departure" was that the buildings in question were "illegal".

Why the building of a school was illegal was not something that the court was concerned about. But it did note that "the village school doesn't have a yard that meets standards" and it did not even meet "acoustic standards"! You might ask why the court did not order the owners to install soundproofing or build a yard of sufficient size. But that would be to miss the point entirely. This is Israel and these are Palestinians. The only solution that the court was prepared to agree to was to demolish and expel.

However, every cloud has a silver lining. Even though the Bedouin village of Khan al-Ahmar is going to be demolished and its inhabitants expelled, the Civil Administration is set to approve the construction of 92 buildings in Kfar Adumim, which is less than a mile away from Khan al-Ahmar - for Jewish settlers! The plan covers an area of around 30 acres, which in turn is part of a larger plan, comprising 322 new homes, called Nofei Bereishit. This passed the first stage of the approval process in February 2017.

The funds for this development will come from the World Zionist Organisation settlement division. The Jewish Labour Movement, which, as we all know, is terribly concerned about 'anti-Semitism', is affiliated to the WZO. So, although the JLM is formally a supporter of a two-states solution, it is affiliated to a body responsible for providing funds to build settlements designed to prevent that solution! Such is the hypocrisy of labour Zionism.

The state intends to move the residents of Khan al Ahmar to the village of Al Jabel, an area near the Abu Dis garbage dump that the state has allocated for the permanent settlement of the Jahalin Bedouin - refugees from the Negev who have lived in the area since before 1967. It has already become a slum, but now the shepherds will have to give up their flocks, with the consequent increase in unemployment.

The waste disposal site, the largest in the West Bank, which also serves Ma'ale Adumim, attracts throngs of flies and mice, no doubt symbolising the Israeli authorities' contempt. The sewage drains frequently overflow and this is one of the residents' main grievances: if the land had been prepared for construction, why is there no proper sewage system?

In the late 90s, Israel expelled around 150 families from about 10 Bedouin communities and sent them to the new site. One of those families is the Salailas, and Hamda Salaila has spoken passionately about the women's committee she set up two years ago that meets regularly. She and a few other local women run all the activities, which consist of courses for women, project-management training, and games and tutoring for children.

Now bulldozers from the Civil Administration have flattened a few lots, on which the forced evacuees are

supposed to build their own houses. The new plots are very near one another - a tight cluster of houses and families alien to the Bedouin way of life.

Hamda said:

Today woman have a lot of free time. In the past they took part in the work - economically, a man couldn't make it without his wife.

Today the woman is only at home with no work opportunities. The man goes out, works in settlements and doesn't let his wife go out. If she hasn't studied, she's even more a captive in her own house. Once, when we lived in the encampment, women also met and talked to each other. That custom has been lost.

The women now have electricity, running water, and shelter from nature's hazards. But, deprived of the chance to work for a living, they've lost the reason to move around.

"We're imprisoned at home," Bedouin women told researchers from the group Bimkom, which last year wrote a report about the expulsion's negative effect on women at al-Jabal and 'Arab al-Rashayida, south-east of Bethlehem. When they must leave home, they wear a niqab - a covering that was not customary when they lived in the open. Twenty years after the forced relocation, most of them have suffered damaged self-esteem.

To make a living, not a few families have split. Some of their members look after the flocks and still live outdoors in tents. Some make a living doing jobs in nearby settlements. But, according to a member of the neighbourhood's projects committee, Abu Ali Abu Ghalia, unemployment among the men is very high:

Some basic conditions must be kept when you move from a life of herding to an urban environment. A water and electricity infrastructure isn't enough. You have to give the people training to change their profession so we can live in the new conditions. A man can't turn overnight from a shepherd into a driver or a teacher.

## Imminent

The new lots are to be allocated at 300 square meters per family - less than what was allocated for the

previous waves of expellees. No pasture land has been allotted.

This week Civil Administration employees accompanied by policemen entered Khan al-Ahmar to take measurements. Since the demolition was approved last month, police, army and Civil Administration representatives have been coming to the site periodically to survey the area and the houses to determine the best points of entry for the heavy vehicles and bulldozers. This time, however, the surveying raised concerns that the demolition and eviction were imminent.

Ahmad Abu Dahuk, a village resident, told the *Ha'aretz* newspaper that the Civil Administration representatives, accompanied by security personnel, were seen five times at the entrance to the village. The sixth time, he said, they entered the village, walked near the school and counted the sheep. He said the children who were in the school fled in panic.

According to B'Tselem, residents have said that a police officer told them they would be moved by force if they did not leave "willingly". One villager told *Ha'aretz*: "We are afraid to sleep, in case they come at night and destroy our homes, and we are afraid when we wake up, in case they come then to destroy them." But no doubt Sohlberg, Baron and Willner will sleep easily in their beds.

Thus Israel's ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians continues apace. After having concentrated the Bedouin in the new township, the next phase will undoubtedly be expulsion from the country altogether ●

## Notes

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khan\\_al-Ahmar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khan_al-Ahmar).
- [www.haaretz.com/israel-news/premium-israel-to-demolish-entire-west-bank-bedouin-village-1.6116488](http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/premium-israel-to-demolish-entire-west-bank-bedouin-village-1.6116488).
- See [www.middleeasteye.net/columns/how-israel-s-supreme-court-reinforces-discriminatory-status-quo-1678693361](http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/how-israel-s-supreme-court-reinforces-discriminatory-status-quo-1678693361).
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## EUROPE

# Oppose siren calls

Some on the 'left' insist on running with People's Vote and its call for a second EU referendum. Once again **Jack Conrad** argues that Marxists ought to condemn referendums. We favour representative democracy and working class political independence

There is a many-headed, highly-coordinated, well-financed campaign designed to secure a second referendum and stop Britain leaving the European Union. Ultimately the whole elaborate operation serves the interests of big capital.

Launched in April 2018 by MPs Chuka Umunna (Labour), Anna Soubry (Tory), Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat) and Caroline Lucas (Green), People's Vote calls for a referendum on Theresa May's final deal. On June 23 - the second anniversary of David Cameron's referendum - People's Vote marched a purported 100,000 people all the way down Whitehall from Trafalgar Square to Parliament Square. Speakers included Tony Robinson, Gina Millar, Vince Cable, David Lammy, Caroline Lucas and Anna Soubry.

With impeccable timing, just the day before, Airbus issued its anti-Brexit statement. The multinational company, which directly employs 14,000 across 25 sites in Britain, and indirectly employs a further 110,000, threatened to shift the manufacture of aircraft wings to "China, the US or elsewhere in Europe". BMW and Siemens AG quickly followed suit with their own dire warnings. And, speaking for the "business community", the Confederation of British Industry, Institute of Directors, Engineering Employers Federation, British Chambers of Commerce and Federation of Small Businesses once again joined together to urge the government to avoid a hard Brexit.

People's Vote is one of many similar front organisations. Others include Best for Britain, Best for Europe, European Movement UK, In Facts, Open Britain, Our Future Our Choice, Scientists for EU and Wales for Europe. They work closely together under the overall direction of the Grassroots Coordinating Group - Chuka Umunna is the official leader. The campaign boasts offices in Millbank Tower and there are said to be 150 local groups and 500,000 supporters. George Soros's Open Society Foundation has donated more than £800,000 to such anti-Brexit causes (including £400,000 to Best for Britain, £182,000 to European Movement UK and £35,000 to Scientists for EU).

We are breathlessly informed by the In Facts website that the "latest leftwing group to join the campaign" is Labour for a People's Vote. This "grassroots campaign is led by several former Momentum figures, as well as several trade union leaders. It has the support of more than 60 constituency Labour parties." On closer inspection, however, the "former Momentum figures" turns out to be Michael Chessum, a fellow traveller of the social-imperialist Alliance for Workers' Liberty. The "several trade union leaders" turns out to be TSSA's Manuel Cortes. The "support of more than 60" CLPs turns out to be "members in 60 CLPs".

Showing all the signs of a carefully choreographed PR operation, the 'remainer' press has been carrying one such hyped-up story after another - all with the aim of breaking Jeremy Corbyn's position of 'studied ambiguity'.



Long march: from Trafalgar Square to Parliament Square

Step one: the 'Stop backing Brexit' banner, raised in the crowd at the June 16 Labour Live festival, while Corbyn was speaking. It garnered instant, widespread and generous publicity. Step two: the presence of a "Labour Party" contingent on the June 23 People's Vote march (it was eagerly reported, along with the "Where's Jeremy Corbyn?" chants). Step three: a #StopToryBrexit petition was launched in Momentum. It seeks the 4,000 signatures required under Momentum's constitution to trigger a full membership ballot. By such methods People's Vote hopes to build an unstoppable tide of opinion in the labour movement. Hence step four: the YouGov poll - sponsored by People's Vote - of Unite members. The 'you give us the money and we'll give you the result' pollsters reportedly found that "57%" of the union's 1.4 million members back a referendum vote on the final Brexit deal (34% were said to oppose the idea, while 9% were put down as 'don't know'). Nonsense, yet given headline treatment.

BBC Radio 4 then, on the basis of this poll 'result', sneakily asked Len McCluskey what he would do if Unite's Brighton policy conference voted for a second referendum. He innocently replied that as a democrat he would abide by the vote. Cue this headline in *The Independent*: "Len McCluskey will use his 'influence' to campaign for new Brexit referendum if Unite members want one". The fact that McCluskey vigorously opposes a second referendum rates hardly a mention. Nor does the likelihood that Labour would, if it adopted the call, stand in danger of losing the bulk of its northern working class vote. But, of course, avoiding Brexit and a much reduced Labour Party is the dream scenario for big capital.

Unsurprisingly, Unite's delegates overwhelmingly voted for the executive's fudge: Unite remains "open to the possibility" of another referendum, "depending on political circumstances". McCluskey, needless to say, wants Unite to continue its backing for the policy

of 'studied ambiguity' ... and that is exactly what it will continue to do.

## Junior partners

Clearly no-one on the principled left should have anything to do with People's Vote. To march alongside the Lib Dems, the Labour hard right, Tory rebels and Green naives on June 23 was to march in the interests of big capital. Ditto, to set up and promote subsidiary organisations, eg, Labour for a People's Vote, is to act as the junior partner of big capital.

But, of course, that is exactly what the AWL and its *Clarion* allies and outriders have done. They marched down Whitehall on June 23 and they work hand in glove with People's Vote. Indeed the AWL is busy promoting a national speaking tour that goes under the title of 'The left against Brexit'. *The Independent* helpfully listed the venues and told its readers that the purpose of the tour was to "convince Jeremy Corbyn to block Brexit". Equally sympathetically *The Guardian* reported the initiative as being the work of a "grassroots group of Jeremy Corbyn supporters and trade unions".

However, the list of speakers reveals a hodgepodge of charity-mongers, liberal reformers, Greens, soft lefts, trade union functionaries and do-gooders. Nick Dearden is the "public face" of Global Justice Now and Mohammed Ateek runs the Syrian Solidarity Campaign - it champions the "Syrian revolution". Caroline Lucas is leader of the Green Party and Maggie Chapman is joint convenor of the Scottish Green Party. Joan Pons Laplana has been shortlisted as an "emerging leader" for the NHS Midlands awards; John Palmer contributes to *Red Pepper* and Michael Chessum is national organiser of Another Europe is Possible. Ann Pettifor is a Keynesian economist; Mary Kaldor CBE is an academic; Marina Prentoulis lectures in media and politics - she was UK spokesperson for Syriza. TSSA's Manuel Cortes is a career trade union official and Billy Hayes is former

general secretary of the CWU. Zoe Williams and Gary Younge are *Guardian* journalists. Then there are Labour MEPs Julie Ward, Seb Dance and Lucy Anderson and the Labour MP Catharine West - sacked from the Labour front bench in June 2017, she went on to form the All-Party Group on UK-EU Relations.

## Adjunct

Leave aside the AWL's notorious role in excusing the US-UK wars of intervention in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, and its egging on the 'Anti-Zionism equals anti-Semitism' witch-hunt in the Labour Party. When it comes to Brexit, the AWL acts as an adjunct of the Labour right.

Take a recent lead article in *Solidarity*. 'For a workers' Europe' freely admits that it shares many of the same arguments as Tony Blair, Peter Mandelson, Chuka Umunna, Chris Leslie and Liz Kendall. When it comes to Britain "staying in the single market", the Labour right is apparently motivated by "smoother supply chains for industry" (really!). Nonetheless - or so we are told - their "conclusion is right".

The reasoning employed in 'For a workers' Europe' stands fully in the rotten tradition of bourgeois socialism. Open borders in Europe - benefits the working class. Fewer fences and less barbed wire - benefits the working class. Mass migration - benefits the working class. A second referendum - benefits the working class. Staying in the EU - benefits the working class.

'For a workers' Europe' comes unsigned and is, one presumes, authoritative (the work of either editor Cathy Nugent alone or the entire editorial board: ie, Cathy Nugent plus Michael Elms, Simon Nelson, Gemma Short and Martin Thomas). Either way, we are assured that "public services" cannot "afford a reduction in the number of migrant workers". Nor apparently can the labour movement. Government statistics supposedly prove it. *Solidarity* says that some 200,000

people from the EU 27 countries work in health and care services, including around 10% of doctors in England. Without them the NHS would doubtless face a huge crisis (not that the Tory government is proposing the mass expulsion of migrants - indeed it has recently eased restrictions on migrant workers for the NHS).

Funding for pensions and benefits likewise depends on migrants: after all, migrants from the 10 "new" EU states "pay about 12% more (£5 billion) in taxes that they get in benefits and services". Other migrants from the EU "pay in 64% more than they get out (£25 billion)." In other words EU migrants coming to Britain are a vital source of exploitable labour-power and tax revenue.

If Britain gains from net migration, logically, that should mean that Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, etc, lose out. After all, for every Polish nurse who makes the wrenching move to Britain, there is one less nurse available for Poland's health system. The narrow focus on British interests certainly belies the AWL's claim to stand for "global solidarity".

Painting migration as being for the benefit of the working class is also to overlook the salient fact that an influx of people coming from other countries - many of them desperate for any kind of employment, hence willing to work for longer hours and for less pay - increases competition amongst workers and tends therefore to drive down the price of labour-power. Yet, fully in the spirit bourgeois socialism, the AWL denies the laws of supply and demand when it comes to the labour market: "Researchers at LSE and elsewhere" conclude, it says, that "increased migration has tended more to raise pay rates." In fact, "Countries with high migration are generally more dynamic ... than those with low migration."

A classic case of arse-about-face reasoning. Dynamic countries - ie, countries with a high rate of capital accumulation - will have a high demand for labour. Under those circumstances workers find

themselves in a good position to bargain for increased wages and better conditions. Wages tend to go up. However, capitalists respond to any threat to their profits by introducing labour-saving machinery ... and by importing labour.

Note, over the last decade net migration has been running at around 250,000 per year and simultaneously, of course, the British economy has been noticeably undynamic. Around 1% GDP growth year on year. No less to the point, *real* wages have stagnated or fallen. And there has not just been a “small downward pressure in the lowest wage bands”, as reassuringly argued by the AWL. No, the wages of virtually every section of the working class have stagnated or fallen. And in October 2017 the Resolution Foundation predicted that the “average pay packet in Britain in five years’ time will still be more than £20 lower than it was before the start of the financial crisis”. In point of fact, over the last 10 years we have seen “the biggest squeeze on wages since the end of the Napoleonic wars”. This has not been due to the introduction of new technology. Productivity growth rates have been extraordinarily weak. Basically it appears to have been flatlining. Indeed what seems to have happened is that capitalists have substituted cheap labour for machinery. Eg, once there used to be drive-in car washers, but now the job is done by gangs of poorly paid workers.

In the short term, a growth of anti-migrant sentiments of the type that produced the Brexit result in 2016 is almost inevitable. And branding such sentiments as a manifestation of ingrained racism or being the result of poor educational attainment is smug, easy ... and politically useless. In fact, in the absence of a viable left alternative to capitalist rule, what we see is a deflected form of the class struggle.

No, Marxists consider open borders - and not only within Europe - as *objectively* progressive not because we wish to boost capital accumulation in Britain, or increase the government’s tax revenues. Open borders allow workers from different countries to mix, overcome national parochialisms, organise together in strong trade unions and eventually come to recognise the common interest in the fight for global communism.

## Trap

It is highly unlikely that there will be a second referendum. Theresa May will not go for it ... though she would be exceedingly glad if Jeremy Corbyn fell into that trap. But imagine for one moment that People’s Vote succeeds, what would the result be? *Solidarity* loyally peddles the story that there is a 68%-19% majority of Labour voters wanting a second referendum. We are told in the exact same dumb spirit that there is a 50%-34% majority of the “whole electorate” who would support a referendum before any deal can go ahead. By fielding the ‘right’ question, you can, of course, always be guaranteed to get their desired result.

Yet despite the AWL’s implied claim that public opinion is swinging against Brexit, there are good reasons to view that contention with some considerable scepticism. David Cameron’s 2016 referendum campaign began the year with a 53%-47% ‘remain’ opinion poll lead. However, he ended up with a 51.89%-48.1% ‘leave’ vote where it counts: in the ballot box. And, frankly, in terms of where we are today, there is no compelling reason to believe that a second referendum would go the way of the ‘remain’ers’. Polls show that the gap between those who think the UK took the ‘wrong’ decision and those who think it was ‘right’ to be incredibly narrow. On February 27 2018, YouGov reported 44% opting

for ‘right’ and 45% for ‘wrong’. On June 26, four months later, the same pollsters reported 46% opting for ‘wrong’, while those opting for ‘right’ had nudged down to 43%. Given Theresa May’s tenuous hold over her cabinet, Boris Johnson’s “Fuck business” outburst, Jacob Rees-Mogg’s “insolence” and David Davis’s abject failure to progress negotiations with the EU 27, such a result is unsurprising, but it is hardly decisive.

Of course, as we have repeatedly stated, our objection to a second EU referendum is exactly the same as our objection to the first. And it has nothing to do with opinion polls. Referendums are by their very nature undemocratic. They bypass representative institutions and serve, in general, to fool enough of the people, enough of the time. And yet referendums have the great virtue of appearing to be the epitome of democracy. That is exactly why Harold Wilson, Tony Blair and David Cameron used them, when it came to dealing with controversial constitutional issues. Complex questions are simplified, drained of nuance, reduced to a binary choice that cuts across previous class solidarities and therefore produces radically false alignments. Hence, one half of the working class finds itself siding with Boris Johnson, Nigel Farage and Jacob Rees-Mogg. The other half with Chuka Umunna, Tony Blair and Vince Cable.

## Theory and history

It is surely in the nature of things that human beings will have disagreements. Assuming that there is a straightforwardly ‘right thing to do’, it is rarely obvious what it is. Very frequently, there is not only a choice to be made between option 1 or 2, but from options 1 to 7 and within these, 1 (a) (i), 1 (a) (ii), 1 (b) ... and so on. To reach a decision, then, it is necessary to reduce the range of options. That is, of course, why British governments have a vast civil service producing green papers, white papers and bills, and why there are three parliamentary readings, a committee stage, numerous amendments and hours of debate before a final vote. The ruling class knows that such a drawn-out process is vital: ‘act in haste; repent at leisure’. For the same reasons, before the Blair ascendancy, Labour Party rules recognised: (1) the right of CLPs to introduce amendments to proposed motions, (2) compositing procedures, and (3) even then, discussion at conference before the vote was taken. Without such basic democratic rights being restored (and radically extended), the probability is that what we will get is yet more manipulation, backroom fixes, demagoguery and the reliance on a personality cult around this or that leader.

We did not conclude that referendums were undemocratic, fraudulent, and a means of mass deception because of sour grapes over the *result* of the 2016 Brexit vote. We called for an active boycott of Cameron’s referendum. His objective was not to give power to the mass of the people. On the contrary, he calculated on outflanking Ukip, wrong-footing Labour, satisfying his Europhobes ... and hanging on as prime minister. There was no reason for the authentic left to give him any support whatsoever.

Our objections to referendums are principled and long-standing. We opposed the Bonapartist operation in relation to the ‘Vote for the crook, not for the fascist’ presidential election in France in 2002. Before that we urged an active boycott of Tony Blair’s 1997 referendum in Scotland. Then the 1998 Good Friday referendum in Ireland, and the Scottish independence referendum of 2014. All offered a bogus choice.

Not that this position is a CPGB novelty. Victor Hugo condemned referendums as a means to “smother men’s minds”. In the same democratic vein, George Sand (Amantine Lucile Aurore Dupin), damned them as “an infamous snare”. And by the turn of the 20th century Labour politicians were more or less uniformly opposed to referendums. In 1911 Ramsay MacDonald, to be Labour’s first prime minister, dismissed referendums as “a clumsy and ineffective weapon, which the reaction can always use more effectively than democracy, because it, being the power to say ‘no’, is far more useful to the few than the many”. The background to such forthright positions unmistakably lies with the resistible rise of Louis Bonaparte (directly elected as French president for 1848-52 and then elevated to emperor over the years 1852-70). His 1851 anti-parliamentary coup was endorsed by a rapidly called referendum, followed by a second in 1852, which made him emperor.

Needless to say, Marxists condemned this ‘democratic despotism’. And Marx and his co-thinkers - Jules Guesde, Paul Lafargue and Frederick Engels - presented their alternative in the minimum section of the *Programme of the Parti Ouvrier*. Here it was argued that the creation of a workers’ party “must be pursued by all the means the proletariat has at its disposal, including universal suffrage, which will thus be transformed from the instrument of deception that it has been until now into an instrument of emancipation”. The emperor constitution had to be abolished and in its place there had to be universal suffrage and representative democracy.

Similarly, social democrats (ie, Marxists) in the United States took it for granted in the 1890s that they had to “abolish the presidency” (and the Senate). The only question was the ‘how’. Engels countenanced comrades in America standing presidential and senatorial candidates ... provided they were committed to abolishing the post of president and the Senate.

Karl Kautsky’s *Parliamentarism, direct legislation by the people and social democracy* (1893) is particularly worth commenting upon here. Kautsky skilfully outlines the Marxist case against legislation by referendum going into some considerable detail.

In an age of class-based parties, it is, he said, from the standpoint of revolutionary change, far preferable for the population to think about, organise around and vote for competing party outlooks for society *as a whole*. Referendums serve to blur and override the fundamental dividing lines between classes and their respective parties: precisely the *opposite* of what any Marxist wants to see.

Usefully, Kautsky makes a more general point about direct democracy in the form of referenda. Marxism strives, particularly through its emphasis on the necessity of a social democratic party, to bring about a situation in which the state is as weak and the people are as strong and organised as possible. He draws a vital distinction between, on the one hand, ‘the people’ as an isolated, unorganised mass, who are not thinking about national or global issues and not organised into, or by, social democratic parties with a national focus, and, on the other, ‘the people’ as a coherent, organised, partyist force, organised into, or by, social democracy on a higher level of political struggle.

To press home the point, Kautsky refers to contemporary studies about the *conservative* effects of referendums in Switzerland. Louis Blanc had already made a similar

point back in 1851 (ie, in the midst of Louis Bonaparte’s power grab). Blanc highlighted the Girondist roots of proposals for political decision-making by referendum. When in 1792 Louis XVI was condemned to death by the French convention, the Girondists demanded a referendum (in vain, true). They were convinced that this was the only way to stop the revolution falling into the hands of the *sans culottes*. Notwithstanding that, Kautsky claims that referenda might be useful in the weaker, less autocratic states (“Maybe in the US, England and the English colonies, even under circumstances in France”). However, far more importantly, he stresses the expansion and deepening of existing *representative* democracy. In terms of Britain, for example, this would involve the election of judges, the abolition of the House of Lords, short parliamentary terms and the abolition of extortionate electoral deposits, which effectively debarred working class representatives (the experience of Chartism is in the forefront of his mind).

The rise of social democracy - which Kautsky is convinced will also spread to Britain with time - not only counters the capitalist monopoly over the press and its systematic corruption of public opinion, but through the establishment of a workers’ press, leaders, speakers and parliamentarians would be trained to take the social democratic message to ever wider masses. Indeed, through party organisation the working class learns how to impose its agenda on society ... and thereby prepares itself to rule.

Despite its undoubted shortcomings, *Parliamentarism, direct legislation by the people and social democracy* retains its worth, not least because we have seen the *entirely negative* effects of referenda campaigns over recent years. In Northern Ireland the left fell in behind the 1998 Good Friday agreement, although it constitutionally institutionalised the sectarian divide of the working class; in Scotland the working class split into two hostile camps over independence and the non-Labour left hopelessly collapsed into petty nationalism; and throughout the UK the question of Europe effectively cleaves the working class into bitterly opposed ‘leavers’ and ‘remain’ers’.

## Memory loss

The reason why the left has largely forgotten the history of opposing referendums in the name of *extending representative democracy* results from two sets of ideas.

The first is the tradition of the early Communist International, which in 1919-22 declared in one thesis and in one resolution after another that revolution in the west was an immediate prospect. Communists had to prepare the working class for a frontal assault on the citadels of bourgeois power. Constitutional demands of the minimum programme therefore seemed to be of secondary importance. Even a barrier. Such an assessment doubtless appeared well founded amidst the storms and turmoil that accompanied the immediate aftermath of World War I. However, such perspectives had become a nonsense by 1923. The entirely artificial attempt to make revolution in Germany ended in a predictable fiasco.

The second set of ideas are those which stem from the so-called ‘transitional method’ developed by post-1945 Trotskyites. Antecedents can be traced back to Comintern’s 1922 4th Congress and the resolution to include “transitional demands” in drafting the envisaged programme for world revolution. Examples of such demands are the call for a

workers’ government and workers’ control over production. Then, of course, there is the *Transitional programme* written by Trotsky and presented to the founding congress of the Fourth International in 1938. It too was based on the conviction that capitalism was undergoing its “final death agony” and that therefore the world socialist revolution would triumph within a few years.

While many of the ‘transitional demands’ of 1922 have an appropriate place in the modern communist programme, the post-1945 ‘transitional method’ turns out to be merely an attempt to trick the working class into taking power by defending existing constitutional arrangements and taking up everyday economic demands. Supposedly difficult constitutional questions are shunned: eg, in Britain abolishing the monarchy and the House of Lords, replacing the standing army with a popular militia and achieving a federal republic (all compatible with the continuation of capitalism).

In other words, the ‘transitional method’ is a mere variation of the line advocated by the Russian economists of the early 1900s. Journals such as *Credo* and *Rabochaya Mysl* argued that Russian workers were far from ready for the sophisticated social democratic politics that had become so popular in Germany. No, before that, social democrats would have to help organise Russian workers around their immediate economic interests: eg, building trade unions and taking strike action against the capitalist employer. *Iskra*’s insistence on placing the demand for the overthrow of tsarism and a democratic republic at the centre of its message would find no mass hearing and criminally it ignored “the enormous educational significance” of economic struggles. Getting rid of tsarism and achieving a democratic republic were long-term goals and were anyway mere bourgeois tasks.

Modern leftwingers too often denounce immediate constitutional demands as not being revolutionary enough. Meanwhile, they give a revolutionary gloss to routine pay disputes, pacifist protest marches, liberal anti-racism campaigns and the nationalist project of breaking up Britain. Hence the *immediate* demand for a federal republic is counterposed to the *maximum* demand for a socialist republic. The result, in programmatic terms, is a combination of tailism and a refusal to even countenance an *independent* working class challenge to the existing constitutional order ●

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## INTERSECTIONALITY

# Getting beyond capitalism

Mike Macnair completes his critique of intersectionality and identity politics



**Hillary Clinton: used feminism against Sanders**

In the first part of this series of four articles I looked at Kimberlé Crenshaw's work and at 'Marxist-feminist' critiques of intersectionality in *Science and Society*, which focussed (gently) on the insufficient analytical significance given to class by writers working within the 'intersectionality' paradigm.

In the second part I examined the fiercer critiques at *Nonsite.org*, especially by Adolph Reed and Walter Benn Michaels, and Reed's support for the alternative 'Labor Party US' approach of a movement based round common, purely economic, class issues.

In the third I reviewed two books: the *How we get free* reprint of the *Combahee River Collective statement* with associated interviews; and Asad Haider's *Mistaken identity* - both of which appealed from the liberal identity politics/intersectionality of the 2010s to the soft-Maoist origins of the ideas in the 1970s.

The first three articles have shown recurring themes of the roles of class, party and 'united fronts' or 'coalitions'. This week I hope to bring some of these themes together and shift to some extent from the negative to the positive.

### Histories

I begin with the point that many of the critiques I looked at assumed that the liberal exploitation of 'identity politics' against the left, which became obvious in the Clintonistas' race-baiting and gender-baiting of the Sanders campaign, is *new*. Unfortunately, this is merely untrue.

Low-grade rightist science fiction writer GC Edmondson's 1980 book *The man who corrupted Earth* has as its hero a buccaneering aerospace entrepreneur hero, Gus Dampier. He has a black business partner, Albert, who plays up to racist assumptions by pretending to be Gus's chauffeur as 'protective coloration'. This team sends a young black man and a young white woman into space to prospect the asteroids for minerals, using reconditioned, decommissioned space

shuttles which have been left in orbit, plus solid rocket boosters. For funds, the heroes team up with a Gulf State princeling, Mansour, who has saved up the millions from his allowance, which he has pretended to spend on high living. The whole theme of the book (whose plot and characterisations are ultra-clunky) is the capitalist hero of anti-discrimination:

Gus shook his head in disbelief. "Why couldn't they [a federal agency] have just asked me?"

[Albert] "Oh, dey never asks us minorities. They always know what's good for us."

Mansour began to suspect that some of the subtleties of American dialect might be eternally beyond him. "Mr Dampier is of a minority?" he asked.

[Albert, or Gus] "How many of us millionaires you think there are in the United States?" (p129).

Edmondson is transparent because his writing is crude. But the basic idea was far more widespread: anti-discrimination, if coupled with anti-statism, can be a banner for the protection of the rights of the ultra-rich and of corporations.

The Libertarian Party was founded in Colorado in 1971 on just such a platform. Western US small-l libertarian rightism went partway down this road. Pure rightist cynics, like SF writer Jerry Pournelle (1933-2017), did so in *High justice* (1974) and *Exiles to glory* (1978); though the large bulk of Pournelle's writing is far more traditionalist on gender roles, and so on. For a couple more SF examples, Larry Niven's short story 'Arm' (1975), set in a liberal rather than libertarian future, adds trans rights, while anarcho-capitalist L Neil Smith's *The probability broach* (1980) adds animal rights. In short, it was already obvious to rightists before the date of the 1977 *CRC statement* that anti-discrimination ideas could be deployed for pro-capitalist projects. Why?

It should be clear enough that it

is not the old aspiration to universal emancipation - to quote yet again the claim that "the emancipation of the productive class is that of all human beings without distinction of sex or race" (*Programme of the Parti Ouvrier* - 1880) - which can be deployed against the left. It is, rather, the *opposition* between an 'economist' labour movement, on the one hand, and, on the other, the movements of the oppressed as *independently* grounded, *separate* struggles against patriarchy, racism, homophobia, transphobia, and so on. The *CRC statement* 'figures' this opposition by identifying Marxism with Lassalleism; Reed's arguments for an economic labour movement (and nostalgia for the early-1960s left of the Democratic Party) 'figure' it on the other side.

This opposition carries with it entailments which *enable* the libertarian stance - when diluted into Carter's 'human rights' policy, 'Clintonite' neoliberalism, and so on - to function as an opening wedge in divide-and-rule operations.

There has been a feminism of the 'party of liberty' since the English Whigs in around 1680 at the latest. There has been an anti-racism of the party of liberty (in the form of anti-slavery, but explicitly denying that 'a negro' can be claimed, as such, as property) since the 1690s. This is not to say that either trend has been an invariable or even usual majority in the party of liberty. Moreover, there has been a feminism of the 'party of order' also since the Tories around 1680 at the latest: this argues that ideas of liberty are merely ideology for male exploitative libertinism at the expense of women, or little-boy irresponsibility. And some forms of black nationalism and separatism can be party-of-order forms, aiming to set up an autonomous, black, patriarchal purity regime.

### People's front

Modern identity politics - and 'intersectionality' as an outgrowth of identity politics - is not a continuity of any of these trends (though forms

of identity politics may borrow from any of them). It begins with 'official communism' in the period of the 'people's front' policy, which aimed to resist the threat of fascism by uniting with the 'democratic' wing of capital (ie, the party of liberty) on terms whereby the workers' parties would not go beyond what was acceptable to the party of liberty.

The point is not that the Communist Party USA became for the first time left promoters of feminism and anti-racism in the popular front period. It is rather that the popular front policy led them to treat 'official' women's movement leaders, and 'official' black community leaders, as 'legitimate representatives' of group interests wholly separate from the class interests of the working class - and to begin to elaborate 'class, gender and race' as a trinity.

The 'trinity' and the underlying people's front approach inherently carried with it the idea that the specific interests of workers would be defended by the workers' movement - and that these would be essentially, economic, trade union issues; that the specific interests of black people would be defended by the black community, and black nationalists and 'community leaders'; and that the specific interests of women would be defended by a women's movement and its liberal leadership. It already, therefore, entailed acceptance of the ideas of the Rooseveltian Democrat trade union bureaucrats that gender and race issues, and so on, were not 'trade union' issues: what Lenin in *What is to be done?* called *trade unionism* and the "bourgeois politics of the working class" - he transcribed an English word into Russian to describe what in 1901-02 looked like a peculiar British phenomenon.

In *theory*, the various single-issue operations recommended - trade unions for 'worker' issues', women's groups for 'women's issues' and so on - would have their defects made up for by the role of the *party*. This might have had *some* plausibility if the party was an operation on the scale of

the German Social Democratic Party or the Italian or French communist parties, but would hardly be plausible for a relatively small organisation like the CPUSA.

Moreover, in reality the concepts of the united front and of the people's front defended at the 1935 7th Congress of Comintern were - as I quoted Dimitrov in my June 7 article - predicated on the party actually self-censoring in order to maintain unity. The logical consequence would be that the party *could not* substitute for the economics of the unions, 'pure feminism' of women's groups, and so on.

The logic of the policy was thus, precisely, to drive the issues of class, gender and race apart, rather than to pull them together. The consequence was, in turn, that the party's *primary* self-censorship drives would focus on protecting relations with the party's most powerful imagined potential allies - the trade union bureaucracy and the left Democrats. This would necessarily push women and black activists towards oppositional and independent policies and the rejection of the party itself.

### Since the 1960s

Western 'soft Maoism' in the 1960s-70s added to these conceptions three interlocked issues:

- the 'hardened' concept of the labour aristocracy as an irredeemably privileged caste, derived from Lenin's *Imperialism*, but exaggerated from that text;
- the idea of 'surrounding the cities', derived from the Maoists' (apparently) winning the countryside first, and conceived both as a ground for third-worldism and for the more abstract idea of proceeding 'from the periphery to the centre'; and
- 'speaking bitterness', the Maoist technique of political education in land reform campaigns through drawing on peasants' personal experience. In the late 1960s-70s women's liberation movement this technique became 'consciousness-raising'.

'Speaking bitterness'/conscious-

ness raising' carried with it the corollary that personal experience was to be the only guarantee of veracity. This has the consequence, as Adolph Reed pointed out in relation to Jesse Jackson, and continues to point out in relation to the 'black leaders' of the 2010s, that there can be no criterion of political trustworthiness other than authenticity of 'position' (as woman, as black, and so on) - and as a result mountebanks and agents of the establishment can set themselves up as leaders of the interest groups. 'Terf wars' - 'who is a woman to speak as such' - provide another example of the destructiveness of the method.

The Maoist antecedents of the ideas rather rapidly disappeared. The reason is that China became a much less attractive left political model after Nixon's 1972 turn brought China 'onside' as a cold war ally of the US, which became visible with the Chinese backing for the 1973 coup against the Popular Unity government in Chile, and especially after the fall of the 'Gang of Four' and rehabilitation of Deng Xiaoping in 1976. Hence, the dilute-version of Chinese ideas were repackaged as new inventions of the western left and the women's and black movements.

Indeed, the Chilean coup also drew attention to the defects of the people's front as a left policy: that what the liberals chiefly demanded if the left were to ally with them was loyalty to the constitution, which implied *not* antagonising the armed forces - thus facilitating the armed forces making a coup against both the left and liberals.

The logic has played out in the same way but a different context in the contemporary USA. Here the hoped-for alliance with 'progressive' Democrats implies not vigorously criticising the exorbitant power given to the judiciary by the US constitution - and this silence facilitates the Republicans and Christianist extremists taking back what was imagined to have been gained by women, black people and so on, through litigation between the 1950s and the present.

But if the people's front policy proved not to be a viable left policy, to abandon it would be much more difficult. That would be to fall either into 'Trotskyism' or into 'Second International Marxism'. And the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45 - the grand alliance of the west and the USSR against Hitlerism - seemed to supporters to stand as the largest possible confirmation of the people's front policy even against the repeated and savage disconfirmations of this policy (not just in Chile, which was merely the case most visible to the 'western' left). The popular front policy was thus as hard to get rid of as the tendency to 'talk about the Nazis' in political rhetoric more generally has proved to be.

## Theory

If the people's front approach was to be hung onto, the case against class politics needed more theory. It got it - masses of it - in a wide range of forms. Gramscianism and the work of Stuart Hall and other *Marxism Today* writers was one of them.

The academic deployment of Michel Foucault was another, and has remained the most popular. Foucault was particularly helpful because his work actually targeted mainly the bureaucracy and the state, and was if anything sympathetic to neoliberalism. It argued, moreover, for the primacy of conceptual structures over untheorised practices, and thus precisely *against* the possibility that common *objective interests* (arising from class, but equally from race, and so on) could form the basis of political action. If Foucault is right there are no such interests.

The reality is that Foucault's

historical arguments for these claims - beginning with *Madness and civilisation* and going all the way through to the late 'biopolitics' lectures - are deeply misconceived history, flowing from his projecting back the *late* development of capitalist 'modernity' in France onto the whole of Europe, and ignoring the untheorised practices which arose in the Italian city-states, in the Netherlands and in England before their systematic theorisation in the enlightenment. This would not matter if Foucault was *merely* a bad historian of the 'early modern'; the problem is that his ideas are constantly cited in order to work an intellectual closure against thinking about class politics.

The further the ideas used to justify the people's front and anti-class versions of anti-racism, feminism and so on went from Marxism, the *more* they could be deployed by the right. Already by 2002 'postmodernist critiques of enlightenment' and Edward Saïd could be deployed in support of Islamist versions of the party of order ... funded by US ally Saudi Arabia. The more recent move to 'white identity politics' was already predictable from this development.

## Universal emancipation

Our aim is universal human emancipation. It is delusional to imagine that racism or sexism will be overcome with capitalism remaining in existence.

Walter Benn Michaels' argument makes the point trenchantly, as I indicated in my June 21 article. Getting rid of racism, while maintaining capitalism could only be an equality-of-opportunity argument, producing a few black people in the top-income quintile, and 45% in the bottom quintile (where 45% of the US population as a whole are). And so on for all the other categories. Moreover, the anti-discrimination argument entails that, for those who are in the bottom quintile, this must either be the result of *some* form of discrimination - or their own fault. The *necessary result* of anti-discrimination politics, black nationalism and so on is thus 'white identity politics'. Vote Clinton - get Trump.

Secondly, as I argued in my third article (June 28), the only possible road to universal human emancipation is one which gets beyond capitalism; and this will require us to *cooperate*. It is the requirement of cooperation for a future beyond capitalism which forms the ground of the centrality of the working class: *because* the working class is compelled to cooperate to achieve immediate objectives.

It is not that the working class is oppressed and *therefore* revolutionary; and hence, the fact that sections of workers have won (temporary) privileges from capital does not justify the 'anti-class' line.

It is not that the working class is full of virtue. It is that the middle classes are prone to 'turf wars' over their *particular* interests, and to appealing to the 'man on horseback' or to the judge with his gavel, as a saviour from on high to deliver; and these methods lead merely back to capitalism by a short and painful route - or a long and painful one.

More immediately, a populist project will necessarily be a project of the populism of the party of liberty (Democrats, etc) or of the party of order (Republicans, Tories, etc). Without actually seeking to discriminate against capitalists and landlords, 'the people' will turn out to be dominated by them.

What immediately follows capitalism is therefore the *dictatorship of the proletariat*: not

the immediate abolition of the middle classes, but the working class taking the leadership of the society away from the capitalist class and holding the middle classes in subordination.

## Party

It is this logic, in turn, which poses the question of an independent workers' party. Capitalism will not end through strikes, or through one big strike - because one big strike implies an immediate need to *run the economy* without the capitalists, and thus for developing working class decision-making capabilities.

Capitalism will not end through the gradual growth of cooperatives as an alternative mode of economic management. The reason is that, as 20th century British history shows, the *capitalist state* will intervene to take over cooperatives or to 'regulate' them into political insignificance. Cooperatives thus in practice - if they are not merely to be forms of capitalist enterprise - depend on an interrelationship with both trade unions and a political party, which will defend them *against the constitution and against the executive, legislative and judicial powers*.

The working class needs to take leadership of the society. That implies that it needs to go beyond the 'guerrilla struggles', as Marx put it, over immediate wages and conditions, to the properly political struggle to propose laws which bind the whole society.

It needs, similarly, to formulate and fight for its own *international* policy: because, as long as it remains trapped in the framework of loyalty to the nation-state, it is also trapped in the framework of loyalty to the capitalist party of order or the capitalist party of liberty.

These are the basic reasons why the working class needs under capitalism a *political party*, which aims to make laws, and hence aims to fight and win elections. It is through this struggle that the working class can *become self-conscious of its own ability to lead the society*.

It is for this reason in turn that the idea of a *purely economic* 'Labour Party' is delusional. As the US 1996 Labor Party effort (discussed briefly in my June 21 article) shows, a party which *really* tried to offer nothing but an economic alternative would be derailed as soon as the capitalist parties turned to focussing attention on war, or on race and immigration as undermining wages, or on gender issues.

It is quite possible that we are about to see the illusions of the Corbynistas in this respect exposed by some new and this time successful Tory manoeuvre - or by the press and the Labour right driving home the knife of the identity-politics 'Labour anti-Semitism' campaign into Corbyn's back before we get to a general election.

Such a party is, as I said in the June 28 article, the sort that was called 'social democratic' before 1914 and 'communist' after 1918.

## Democratic

The workers' party is concerned with the working class developing, as a class, its own ability to lead society in cooperative activity. It is not a mere 'general staff of the revolution' or some other form of military device ('combat party' and so on). This was the error involved in the militarisation of the Russian Communist Party in the wake of the Russian civil war, and in the 1921 ban on factions. By militarising the party, its ability to function as a political decision-making mechanism or political leadership for the class was destroyed.

There was a dragged-out death over the 1920s, ending when the central apparatus round Stalin in 1927-28 brought the police into the

party against its left - and immediately proceeded, once the principle was established, to deploy the same police tactic against its former allies in the party right in 1928-29.

As long as official statements cannot be contradicted, the result of the decision-making process will *necessarily* be 'Gigo' - garbage in, garbage out - and the practical result is 'They pretend to pay us; we pretend to work'. This last is as true of the local activists in the British Socialist Workers Party as it was of Soviet workers (except, of course, that the SWP apparat pretends to lead, rather than pretending to pay ...).

How does this relate to 'identity politics'? A workers' party which was democratic in character would be defined by its common *programme*, and by 'programmatic intransigence, tactical flexibility'. Hence, it would not attempt to micro-manage every local or sectoral initiative. It would recognise the *general* right of individuals, branches, etc, to associate and communicate within the party.

Such a party would merely by virtue of these commitments give space for the oppressed; and be able to voice, as a party, the commitment to "the emancipation ... of all human beings without distinction of sex or race".

It would do so because it would *not* be operating any sort of veto on what could be said in the interests of the apparat, or in the interest of self-censorship for unity in Dimitrovia 'united front' or 'people's front' alliances with bureaucrats, liberals, nationalists, clergy and so on. It would thus provide the *space* for women communists, black communists, etc to raise issues, persuade other members, and mobilise their own forces and those of the party for public campaigning.

Such a party would be the natural champion of universal human emancipation - and hence of the specific emancipation of women, black people, etc.

The left has gone in the opposite direction. The endeavour to maintain a 'military' party with 'iron discipline', and the interest in self-censorship for the sake of unity, produces as its corollary *bureaucratic* control both of speech and of association within the party (bans on or strict regulation of factions, prohibition of unofficial communication and so on). The logic is to *require* either 'official' black, women's, etc, caucuses - which are actually demobilising - and the struggle for a caucus veto to counterpose to the apparat's *assumed* right of veto. Or else - full separation of black nationalism, radical feminism, and so on.

## Common humanity

The radical theory to justify this separatism denies that common humanity can ground politics, because this idea is a form of enlightenment foundationalism. Thus Haider. But the problem is that there are really only two possible politics. The first is to appeal to the man in charge (sic: the male gender is normal, though not universal, and part of the implicit assumptions of such appeals) to be your 'saviour from on high'. The second is to appeal for solidarity *from your fellow human beings*. This is a moral appeal. If common humanity is rejected, 'white identity politics' and 'millionaires as a minority which needs to be protected' are perfectly morally valid arguments.

The separatists are thus forced to enter into 'coalitions' - as the Combahee River Collective pointed out. 'Intersectionality' suggests that such coalitions can be built on the basis that each grouping has a veto. They cannot.

The social forums movement ran on the basis of 'consensus': ie, that all

those involved had a veto. That would be like the aristocratic constitution of the old Kingdom of Poland and would have the same result - nothing at all could be done. It turned out that in reality the Brazilian Workers' Party had a veto in the World Social Forums, not others; in the European Social Forums Rifondazione Comunista had a veto, not others; when the ESF came to London, the London mayor's office had a veto, not others.

The right to *voice* can be and should be had. The right to *organise* can be and should be had. The right to a veto can only be had *by the bureaucracy* (of the Workers' Party, of Rifondazione, of Ken Livingstone's guys) and is demobilising in effect.

Given this, 'coalitions' depend on *persuasion*, and on willingness to give something to get something and on some degree of more or less democratic decision-making process. Persuasion, in turn, depends on the appeal to common interests and solidarity to arise from common interests - at a minimum, from common humanity.

Solidarity can set us all free. Anti-solidarity, in the shape of all forms of sectional politics, including 'intersectionalism', can only serve our masters ●

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## Notes

1. 'Intersectionality is a dead end', June 7.
2. 'Race and class', June 21.
3. 'Mistaken versions of Maoism', June 28.
4. For feminism of the party of liberty, and of the party of order, see, for example, SJ Owen *Restoration theatre and crisis* Oxford 1996. 'Cannot claim a negro as such': Chamberlain v Harvey (1696), 5 Modern 182 (1697), Carthew 396.
5. Compare, for example, M Marable, 'Black fundamentalism: Farrakhan and conservative black nationalism' *Race and Class* No39 (1998). I regret that the nearest I can come to an 'anti-racism of the party of order' is Aphra Behn's novel *Oroonoko* (1685), which dramatises the idea of genetically inherited nobility through the person of an enslaved African prince. Political Islamism, Hindutva, etc, are of course party-of-order forms which may be used as types of 'anti-racist' politics by diaspora members in the imperialist countries, but are in their domestic contexts *in no sense* anti-racist.
6. There are many general discussions. Charlie Post's 'The popular front: rethinking CPUSA history' (<https://solidarity-us.org/atc/63/p2363>) has the merit of not expecting more of the CPUSA than it could possibly have delivered - and therefore pinning down points where the policy *did* lead the party to reinforce the Democrats and the union bureaucracy and weaken the working class.
7. I have written more about this in 'A useless product of 1970s radicalism' *Weekly Worker* April 11 2013.
8. For two recent examples of the argument, see Bernard D'Mello, 'What is Maoism?' *Monthly Review* November 22 2009; and <http://mou-fawad-paul.blogspot.com/2013/01/the-theory-of-labour-aristocracy-and.html> (2013).
9. Eg, Guo Wu, 'Speaking bitterness: political education in land reform and military training under the CCP, 1947-1951' *Chinese Historical Review* No21 (2014).
10. D Zamora and MC Behrent (eds) *Foucault and neoliberalism* Cambridge 2015. See also M Dean and K Villadsen (eds) *State phobia and civil society: the political legacy of Michel Foucault* Stanford 2016.
11. Compare my 'The politics of purity' (*Weekly Worker* July 21 2004), reviewing among others John L Esposito's and Azzam Tamimi's 2002 *Islam and secularism in the Middle East*.
12. It is a secondary point that 'labour aristocracy theory' is merely false as an account of the political differences between sections of the class, with the underclass and unorganised sections commonly *more* reactionary-loyalist in politics than the notorious skilled workers.

## London Communist Forum



## The dead end of intersectionality

Sunday July 29, 5pm  
Calthorpe Arms, Gray's Inn Road,  
London WC1.  
Speaker: Mike Macnair  
Organised by CPGB:  
[www.cpgb.org.uk](http://www.cpgb.org.uk)

## REVIEW

# What sort of unity?

Kevin Meagher **A united Ireland: why unification is inevitable and how it will come about** Biteback Publishing, 2016, pp237, £12.99



The last temptation was the greatest treason:

To do the right deed for the wrong reason.

TS Eliot *Murder in the cathedral*

The current Brexit process has had the effect of reminding citizens of 'mainland' Britain of the existence of the 'sister isle' next door and its capacity for making an impact on the larger island. Fortunately, a book has appeared which revisits the 'Irish question' and its Northern Irish corollary, the Good Friday agreement of 1998.

Kevin Meagher was special advisor to Sean Woodward when the latter was secretary of state for Northern Ireland (2007-09). Meagher writes in the belief that Irish unity is "the most logical endpoint", adding: "This is not, *per se*, to echo Irish republican arguments: merely to articulate the most obvious destination of the current direction of travel" (pxii).

The author sums up his case towards the end of the book:

If we accept that Northern Ireland is in an antechamber; that Britain has no selfish, strategic or economic interest in remaining; that the economic logic of a single Irish state is compelling; that demographic changes are tilting the balance, making consent for unity more likely in the future; that southern Irish voters are less reluctant to take on their once-problematic northern siblings; then all it takes is for British and Irish political elites to accelerate these trends and begin to articulate that Irish unity is the most probable and plausible long-

term settlement. Indeed, the best outcome for the British people.

But then it always has been. Northern Ireland is an artificial construct. A territory founded as a political compromise, not for its inherent economic logic. And formed by the worst sort of compromise there is: the threat of violence. The [1912] Ulster Covenant, signed [by some] in blood, was a rather unobvious prompt. (pp176-77).

Meagher argues that, historically - in practice since 1922 - British administrations have tended to leave the Six County statelet alone to run its own affairs, charging that setting up Northern Ireland was, in fact "the most ambitious example of devolution ever allowed by the centralising 20th century British state" (p43).

The default position is one of dignified indifference - except as regards the violent activities of paramilitaries. Meagher asserts: "No-one in British politics seems to care about making the case that Northern Ireland should remain part of the UK, come what may" (p65). He declares:

The Good Friday agreement effectively placed Northern Ireland in an antechamber. If there is a majority that opts for Irish unity at some stage, then change will take place (p66).

He also highlights the cost of inertia - "The £9 billion a year the British exchequer pumps into Northern Ireland is equivalent to £170 million a day"

## Belfast: still divided by 'peace walls'

## Kevin Meagher promises that capitalist progress will bring unity



(p73) - and the inflated Six Counties bureaucracy, which employs "27,000 civil servants managing the affairs of 1.8 million people, while the European Commission has 33,000 officials dealing with the EU's 743 million people" (p79).

## All-Ireland view

However, while it is arguably economically advantageous for the UK capitalist state to let the Six Counties go, that does not mean that they can be got rid of so easily - which brings us to what Kevin Meagher has to say about current attitudes in the Irish Republic - views which are obviously affected by economic conditions prevailing in that part of Ireland which is outside the UK. Admittedly, the looming spectre of Brexit complicates matters. Meagher's main line of intervention in this debate is to ask, *inter alia*:

How will the resolve of the unionist-led executive fare when presented with a loss of EU funding, agricultural subsidies and regeneration cash, as well as the economic shock of leaving the EU and a flight of capital to the Irish republic, where single market access is guaranteed? (p104).

This conjures up an intriguing picture, but surely the right response to this prospect is to echo Chou En-Lai's famous comment on the French Revolution: "It's too soon to tell".

However, on current attitudes to Irish unification in the republic Meagher may be on firmer ground, even though it must, from what he writes, be conceded

that there is some uncertainty on the topic. What does appear clear from the relatively sparse opinion polls on the issue is that there exists a level of basic support for the proposition:

with 36% of people saying that they want a united Ireland in the short to medium term (mirroring the 38% of the vote overtly republican Fianna Fáil and Sinn Féin managed in the 2016 Irish general election). This increases to 66% of people when Irish unity is again framed as a longer-term [eg, 'in my lifetime'] issue (p129).

Meagher gives some interesting details of current cross-border economic coordination, overseen, following the Good Friday agreement, by the North-South Ministerial Council, which emerged from it (see pp98-99). Returning to attitudes 'on the ground', so to speak, Meagher states:

... interpreting Irish public opinion *vis-à-vis* the unification of the country is an inexact science. But how much greater would support for unification be if it were a live issue, openly discussed on both parts of the island - and on both sides of the Irish Sea? What if the prospect of unification was wrested from republicans and became a mainstream position, embraced by all quarters of the Irish political class? (pp135-36).

In his enthusiasm, Meagher asks: "What is holding us back? It is time for politics to be as rational as economics" (p107).

This begs more than one question,

# What we fight for

but leads straight on to the current stalemate in the Six Counties, with the suspension of the power-sharing administration thanks to an outbreak of what might be called 'culture wars' (see pp139-68). Unfortunately Meagher's treatment of this topic is patchy. He makes the wholly valid point that, for Northern Irish unionists, as UK citizens, "theirs is more of an associate membership, benefiting from British taxpayers' largesse and attaching themselves to parts of British identity they like, while elevating their own identity and cultural associations to greater importance" (p148).

## Two nations

Clearly this harks back to British ancestry. There are two nations in Ireland that dominate Irish history overall, the 'Irish Irish' and the British-Irish, and the latter - *inter alia* as a defence mechanism - have asserted their right to fundamental political control. This is what has caused, and continues to cause, friction. Meagher gives a number of historical examples, but recently, under the Good Friday agreement's 'power-sharing' arrangements, a further issue has become prominent - it has been around for a long time, but Meagher should have discussed it, not only for its topicality, but because it encapsulates so much of the imperialist nationalism from which we still suffer in these islands.

The issue is the Irish language. Power-sharing arrangements in the north have broken down. Initially this was over first minister Arlene Foster's refusal to resign in deference to the so-called 'cash for ash' inquiry. Sinn Féin then added a series of fresh demands as the price of renewing power-sharing, which was then gradually reduced until their demand for a special 'Irish Language Act' was the only remaining red-line issue. As Siobhán Fenton points out, northern Irish nationalists, by the second decade of the present century, had become more and more fed up with the Democratic Unionist Party's attitude to Irish.

An illuminating incident occurred in the debating chamber at Stormont in November 2014, when a DUP politician, Gregory Campbell, made an insulting reference to the language. He began an address to the chamber by saying, "Curry my yoghurt can coca coalyer" - a crude parody of the term, 'Go raibh maith agat, Ceann Comhairle', which means 'Thank you, Speaker' and is often used by nationalist politicians as a term of courtesy during debates at Stormont. Campbell refused to apologise for his parody.

This may seem comparatively trivial, but in fact it goes to the heart of the 'great nation' imperialist superiority complex displayed by various kinds of reactionary UK politicians. Lenin would have condemned it out of hand.

How, then, does Kevin Meagher expect the Six Counties to leave the UK under favourable conditions? He writes at times as if the engine of change is some impersonal economic process: eg, in asserting: "Capitalism is succeeding where politics has failed in modernising and redefining the relationship between the Irish and British states" (p97). He states: "As memories of the troubled Irish 20th century fade, so too should unionism's siege mentality. It simply has no justification in the 21st century" (p204).

## Obstacles

Clearly the Good Friday agreement's promotion of power-sharing, together with greater involvement of the republic's government and possible off-stage influence of the EU, has had a positive effect, but

this does not mean that there are not some formidable obstacles still in the way of Meagher's 'Softly, softly, catchee Irish unity' tactic.

In terms of living conditions in the Six Counties before 'the troubles', we have seen rapprochements before, courtesy of economic developments. We should remember the post-World War II long boom and the relative prosperity it brought. Remember 1964: tensions were easing and, reportedly, there were instances of Catholics in Belfast helping to decorate Orange arches. But then the civil rights agitation began, and the old animosities resurfaced. Meagher is aware of their persistence when he writes:

The Good Friday agreement settlement - devolved, cross-community power-sharing, the consent principle and the two governments acting as guarantors - is fraying at the edges. The decision of the smaller parties to forego their place in the multi-party executive following assembly elections in May 2016 and set themselves up as an opposition party is symptomatic of this (pp210-11).

But he is convinced that sweet reason will win out:

So how hard is it, politically, to unify the island of Ireland? What are the necessary ingredients? Clearly, agreement between the British and Irish states is a basic requirement, as is the consent of the populations of both current jurisdictions. But more fundamental than this is the intellectual assumption that the move is necessary. The belief in the inevitability of eventual unification needs to frame the thinking of political elites and people alike.

So what drives these assumptions? How is a big idea generated and spread? Usually, it is down to long-term historical trends being all too apparent (p212).

Meagher gives two illustrative examples: German unification in the 20th century, and the retreat of the UK from Hong Kong. But these are not exact parallels to the Irish situation. The Hong Kong case is just another retreat from empire on the part of Britain, and the German example is a clear case of a divided nation reunited, whereas the Irish case is still one of the desirability of uniting 'Catholics, Protestants and dissenters' under the common name of "Irishmen", to adopt Wolfe Tone's language.

Cases of European nationals wishing to change their nationality *en masse* are extremely rare: the only instance I can think of is the French Revolution of 1789, when the populations of the whole left bank of the Rhine, from Belgium to Alsace, expressed a desire to join France as a result of the latter's overthrow of the feudal aristocracy. But Meagher seems to put inordinate emphasis on the potential for change emerging at the top of the social pyramid: "It is up to the British and Irish states and their respective political classes to manufacture a consensus about change" (p229).

It hardly needs saying that such an approach is not socialist: on the contrary, ordinary people need to be invited onto the political stage, being won to support the necessary solutions of their problems in the process, in full cognisance of economic and political realities.

If Meagher's scenario should win out, however, no fair-minded observer could possibly object. As Terry Eagleton explained back in

1999, the best argument against the continued existence of Northern Ireland is the historical nature of the state itself. James Connolly's comment on partition retains all its force:

Such a scheme as that agreed to by Redmond and Devlin, the betrayal of the national democracy of industrial Ulster, would mean a carnival of reaction north and south, would set back the wheels of progress, would destroy the oncoming unity of the Irish labour movement and paralyse all advanced movements whilst it endured.

Given that, socialists can hardly object to Irish unity - even on the basis of the capitalist mode of production. But we need to go further. As Siobhán Fenton's book on the Good Friday agreement admirably shows, large problems remain in the Six Counties area. Likewise the republic is in its current form dangerously exposed to the vicissitudes of the international economy. As Connolly might have put it, if you get a united Ireland tomorrow, the transnationals will still rule you.

Above all, the Irish question in contemporary form needs to be seen in full awareness of its European context. Currently much of the news focusses on the new Italian government and its intransigent attitude to asylum-seekers, Roma *et al*. In relation to the European populist right, the DUP in the north of Ireland represents a forerunner, whose political rise dates from opposition to Irish home rule in the last century and from subsequent political developments in Ireland.

The DUP is clearly part of the current European political problem and to fight it effectively, along with its international allies, we need a pan-European socialist movement armed with a coherent strategy and

programme operating throughout the EU and beyond ●

Martin Carroll

## Notes

1. "State papers released in December 2015 under the 30-year rule reveal that in 1985 Margaret Thatcher suggested to her Irish counterpart, Garret Fitzgerald, that the town of Dundalk, over the border in the Irish Republic, could be bombed in a bid to stymie fleeing republicans who sought sanctuary there. The reports do not appear to capture Fitzgerald's reaction to this suggestion of state-sponsored terrorism, but Thatcher's mindset is instructive" (p47).
2. Actually Meagher's EU figure is wrong: the EU population figure is 511.5 million as of January 1 2017, whereas the figure for the *European continent as a whole* was 741.4 million in 2016.
3. See also p132.
4. For a much fuller analysis, comrades should consult Siobhán Fenton's *The Good Friday agreement* (London 2018).
5. It should be emphasised that the British-Irish nation, locked in a colonial relationship with the 'Irish Irish' natives, should not have been given the right to establish its continued rule over Six Ulster counties to the detriment of the Irish national revolution.
6. "Called the Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme, but dubbed locally 'cash for ash', the scheme was designed to give businesses a financial reward for using renewable rather than non-renewable heat sources. However, the scheme appears to have been badly flawed and it later emerged that it was in fact giving out subsidies for higher than the price of the fuel, meaning that people were being paid to burn fuel pointlessly ... It is estimated that the scheme will have cost the taxpayer close to £1 billion due to the flawed implementation - a considerable sum, considering Northern Ireland has only 1.8 million inhabitants." (S Fenton *op cit* p280).
7. "A distinction must necessarily be made between the nationalism of an oppressor nation and that of an oppressed nation ... In respect of the second kind of nationalism we, nationals of a big nation, have nearly always been guilty, in historic practice, of an infinite number of cases of violence; furthermore, we commit violence and insult an infinite number of times without noticing it ..."
8. "That is why internationalism on the part of oppressors ... must consist not only in the observance of formal equality of nations, but even in an inequality, through which the oppressor nation, the great nation, would compensate for the inequality which obtains in real life ..." (VI Lenin *Lenin's final fight: speeches and writings 1922-23* London 2010, pp239-40).
9. T Eagleton, 'United Ireland: a non-nationalist case' *New Left Review* No234, March-April 1999.
10. 'Labour and the proposed partition of Ireland' (*Irish Worker* March 14 1914) in J Connolly *Socialism and nationalism* Dublin 1948, p111.

## Summer Offensive

# Looking good

**O**ur Summer Offensive got a big boost this week, thanks to the efforts of a team of CPGB comrades at the June 30 NHS demonstration. Altogether we netted £685 - mainly through the sale of badges, books and papers - not to mention quite a few generous donations.

That helped to lift the running total so far by £2,621 - almost doubling the overall figure to £5,299. Our target is £25,000, which we need to make by August 25, so we are a fifth of the way there, with seven weeks still to go. Things are looking good.

Amongst the numerous individual contributions, the one from PM stands out - a mere £500! Then there was TB's £60 and lots of smaller ones. Amongst them was comrade AR, who made a donation to the CPGB, while also setting up two standing orders to the *Weekly Worker* - one of them via PayPal, to give things a bit of variety.

He writes: "Having read about the 'Summer Offensive' online, this was a great way to make a contribution to help with the aim of reaching the set target of £25,000, and also a reminder to set up a regular payment to support all the great work that the *Weekly Worker* provides for the readership on a weekly basis." He adds: "My contribution has been long overdue."

Well, you've chosen the right time of the year to start it, comrade!

That date mentioned above - August 25 - is, of course, the final day of the CPGB's Communist University, our week-long summer school (see <http://cpgb.org.uk/pages/news/117/communist-university-2018> for all the information you need). For those who can make it, it'll be great to see you. But if you can't be there, please send in your SO donations in good time.

Just a reminder about the different ways you can do that:

- Send a cheque, payable either to 'Weekly Worker' or 'CPGB', to BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX.
- Go to either the CPGB or *Weekly Worker* website and click on the PayPal button.
- Make a bank transfer either to the CPGB (sort code 08-92-99; account number 65109991) or the *Weekly Worker* (sort code 30-99-64; account number 00744310).

It goes without saying that cash donated to the *Weekly Worker* will be used to fund the paper only ●

Peter Manson

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 capitalism 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.

# weekly worker

**Tories  
and big  
business at  
loggerheads**

## Take it or leave it

Eddie Ford says Theresa May is manoeuvring to achieve a 'third way' Brexit. Chances are that we will see more dither

There can be no doubt that David Cameron has a lot to answer for - just ask big business or those Tory MPs who regard him as the worst prime minister in modern history. Why did he call that referendum?

As a result, Theresa May is a prisoner of circumstances. Dither, delay and obfuscation might have been perfectly legitimate responses when confronted with the near impossible task of dealing with a totally divided cabinet - and the country at large. In his own way, Jeremy Corbyn too is faced with an almost unsolvable Brexit dilemma: go one way and you alienate a certain constituency; go the other way and you upset a different one.

Now, just over two years since the Brexit referendum, the clock is ticking loudly and something has to give soon - though at the moment meeting the October deadline for the wrapping up of negotiations with the European Union seems increasingly unlikely. Hence on July 6 May will be meeting with the entire cabinet at Chequers to thrash out a final post-Brexit customs plan, with the intention of publishing a white paper shortly afterwards setting out the details of the UK's future relations with the EU.

"Of course," acidly noted a *Financial Times* editorial, "this should have been done before triggering article 50, or even before the UK prime minister drew her red negotiating lines" (July 2). But better late than never, presumably, and the prime minister "must face down the hardliners", comments the paper, by delivering some "hard" and "unpalatable" truths about Brexit - mainly that a no-deal option is "off the table", as the government "could not survive the ensuing economic and administrative chaos". What is required is a "sensible deal" based on customs union membership. Crunch time for the Tories.

Perhaps the *FT* will get what it wants, as Theresa May surprised everyone at the beginning of the week by announcing that she had a "new" customs plan - the "mad riddle" of Brexit continues. Indeed, it has been widely reported that the first time David Davis, the Brexit secretary, heard about it was when he switched on his radio in the morning - at the time of writing a succession of Tory ministers are protesting that they still have not received a copy. The new plan appears to be a hybrid, or Frankenstein's monster, of the two schemes previously rejected as unworkable - May's preferred option of a "new customs partnership" (NCP) which would see Britain stay within the customs system and collect tariffs on behalf of Brussels; and the alternative "maximum facilitation" scheme (max fac) involving supposedly wonderful new technology and 'trusted trader' schemes. The latter was viewed by Number 10 as hugely costly and



**Boris Johnson: 'Fuck business'**

unlikely to remove the need for a hard border in Ireland, whilst NCP was detested by the ultras as the "softest Brexit possible" - with Jacob Rees-Mogg, head of the weirdly influential European Research Group, describing it as "idiotic".

According to one Downing Street insider, May's new scheme "will be the spawn of the NCP and max fac" - Britain entering into a single market on goods with the EU, collecting tariffs for the EU as per the old plan and potentially opening the door for the European Court of Justice to have some sort of role in arbitrating future trade disputes. It is expected that at the meeting the prime minister will demand that Eurosceptic ministers soften their red lines, including on the ECJ, if they are to persuade Brussels to budge on its tough negotiating position. And it is also thought that May will challenge ministers, such as the increasingly rebellious Boris Johnson, to accept the need for a close alignment on goods regulation to minimise trade friction between Britain and the rest of the EU. Backers of the new idea include business secretary Greg Clark and

chancellor Philip Hammond - the latter will be "fully costing" all the various Brexit options, especially the impact of a 'no deal'. Do not hold your breath waiting to hear about the "Brexit dividend" that will enable extra billions to be pumped into the NHS every year.

Naturally, Rees-Mogg and the ultras are sensing betrayal all over again. He has warned darkly that Theresa May risks "splitting the Conservative Party" if she softens her red lines. May's new turn - or revival of the old one with a few bells and whistles - has sparked off more excited speculation about mass resignations, leadership bids, votes of no confidence, and so on. Writing in *The Daily Telegraph*, former Tory leader William Hague advises the "ardent" Brexiteers not to "push too hard" against Theresa May - otherwise "they will end up without their main objective" (July 3). For Hague, the choice is "either to back a compromise plan now or to end up with a more watered-down version of Brexit that would be forced on ministers anyhow" because of the parliamentary arithmetic. A new Tory

leader would be confronted with exactly the same problem as Theresa May - no parliamentary majority, looming deadlines and an EU that could be prepared to play serious hardball. Nobody is going to get everything they want.

### Ownership

In other words, we have the ongoing saga of splits and divisions within the Tory cabinet - a steaming cauldron of strategic differences mixed up with ever shifting tactical positioning, naked careerism and fine electoral calculations. Anyone who says they know what is going to happen next is either a charlatan or a fool - there are just too many unpredictable factors involved. May seems to be manoeuvring crab-like towards presenting the hard Brexiteers with a 'take it or leave it' option - either accept the new compromise plan or there will be a general election. Me or Jeremy Corbyn? Maybe the Brexiteers will buckle, maybe not.

In this whole process, we have had recently a series of seemingly off-the-cuff comments that might sound rather silly, but in their own

way act as a profound commentary on contemporary British politics. So in the context of BMW, Airbus, Siemens, etc expressing deep unease about the direction of Brexit - even threatening to relocate their operations elsewhere - we had Boris Johnson saying "fuck business": a quite extraordinary sentiment to hear from a senior Tory figure. But he does not seem alone in his 'anti-business' views. We also had Iain Duncan-Smith, the 'quiet man' who inexplicably used to be Tory leader, pointing out that the forerunner of the Confederation of British Industry - the Federation of British Industries - collaborated with the Nazis before the outbreak of World War II, overseeing the creation of 33 separate agreements between British and German business groups. Perhaps even worse, writes Duncan-Smith in the *Daily Mail*, the CBI "supported the socialistic nationalisation of much of the economy by the Labour government" (June 28). Furthermore, we have had the revelation from the *FT* and elsewhere that David Davis has thus far spent a grand total of just *four hours* in talks with the EU's chief Brexit negotiator, Michel Barnier - which tells you a lot.

This raises up again, as touched upon before in this paper, the important question of the relationship between capital and the Tory Party, which has clearly changed. In part, this is to do with legislation introduced in 2000 requiring shareholders to approve political donations, but the changing nature of the *ownership* of British industry has helped alter that relationship considerably. Airbus is a *trans-European* consortium registered in the Netherlands and trading shares in France, Germany and Spain - manufacturing in multiple countries both inside and outside of the EU. BMW and Siemens are obviously German. Go down the list of top CBI companies and you will find a not dissimilar picture. These companies obviously want a 'business-friendly' government, which traditionally in the UK has been a role performed by the Tories, but they also need a continuing close relationship with the EU - if not they will transfer production elsewhere ●

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