

# Solidarity & Workers' Liberty

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an injury to one is an injury to all

**FERMENT IN GREECE**

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**HARMAN**

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**WHO'S IN THEIR**

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# We can beat the Tories

## Brown's BA worker-bashing shows we must fight him too

**Brown said British Airways cabin crew strike was "deplorable". His kowtowing to the Tories and bosses is deplorable.**

**BY JOHN McDONNELL MP**

**W**e're faced with an avalanche of cuts in public expenditure and public services if the Tories get in, and, to drive that through, almost certainly an attack on trade union rights and civil liberties such as we haven't seen since the Thatcher period.

If we stand by and let the Tories get in, flanked by the fascists marching on the streets, we're letting our

society be undermined for decades to come, as it was under Thatcher. Everything we do now must be focused on keeping the Tories out.

But Gordon Brown is still following a strategy of "triangulation", like Tony Blair's similar strategy. As we've seen over the BA cabin crew dispute, he has sought above all to position himself so as not to seem vulnerable to Tory attack. On many issues, that has led him to adopt reactionary policies and be caught into a competition with the Tories about how can be more brutal on cuts.

Brown's policy is undermining the Labour campaign by undermining people's willingness to vote, and in some cases pushing them into the arms of hostile parties. We can mobilise people to defeat the Tories only showing them that there is an alternative, that they can mobilise, and that they can defeat the Tories and fascists. It can't be done on the basis of New Labour policies.

The upcoming Budget will be a traditional Alistair Darling Budget — seeking to demonstrate that New Labour is "responsible" in government and willing at the behest of the international financial markets to make cuts. We already know, from his interview with the *Financial Times* on 18 January, that he is envisaging cuts of 17% in all departments other than health and some others.

Because of unemployment being not quite as high as originally forecast, there will also be some small giveaways in the Budget, trying to demonstrate a difference between Labour and the Tories.

But I think those small giveaways will leave people pretty cold. Any impact they have will be gone within 48 hours. People know that at present there is an agreement across all the mainstream political parties that working people must pay for the crisis.

The only way to motivate people to come out and vote is not on the

basis of Alistair Darling's Budget, but of demonstrating that there is an alternative — an alternative which is about planning the economy, about public ownership, about investment in public services, about trade unions, and about democracy, not just in Parliament but across the whole of society and in workplaces.

The unions need to make it clear to whomever is in government that if any government cuts jobs or services, then they will face coordinated action. We need to get coordination, and the unions linked up with other social movements, to get across the message that the movement will not stand by and watch its members losing their jobs and services.

We need a clear commitment to solidarity and strength in mobilisation.

**John McDonnell MP has backed the Socialist Campaign to Stop the Tories and Fascists. More on the campaign, see page 12.**

COALITION GOVERNMENT?

# The Lib Dems in power — the reality

By PAT MURPHY

**L**iberal Democrat leader Nick Clegg claimed in his recent Spring Conference speech that voting for his party meant a guarantee of “fairness” and “change you can believe in”.

The Lib Dems have traditionally been able to get away with the worst opportunism of the main parties on the basis that they are unlikely ever to get into power. They can say whatever they want, criticise the other parties, knowing they will never be held to account.

The recent pledge of allegiance by ex-*New Statesman* editor John Kampffer suggests that this pitch is having some effect on elements of the soft left.

But if you have lived under a Lib Dem council — as I do in Leeds where they have been party of a coalition administration with the Tories and Greens since 2004 — you will have seen where their political priorities really lie. And they

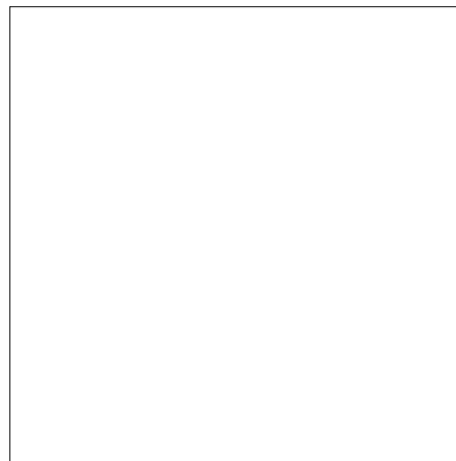
certainly don't lie in fairness, equality or the kind of change any socialist can believe in.

At a national level the Lib Dems say they are opposed to Academies, in an attempt to court people fed up with Labour's privatisation agenda. Yet in Leeds we have gone from one Academy school to three with two more now being proposed. The council cabinet member for education is a Lib Dem.

We have also seen a council pay and grading exercise to deal with equal pay issues implemented in the most ham-fisted and confrontational way possible.

In October 2008 letters were delivered to 1,100 council workers telling them that they were being offered new contracts which would reduce their pay after a period of protection. They were told that if they didn't accept the new contract they would be dismissed.

In 2009 the council's pay review left up to 3,500 bin workers and street cleaners facing cuts in pay which would also hit



Nick Clegg — not on the left

their pensions. The cuts varied from £3,000 a year to £6,000 a year. Some people faced the threat of losing their mortgages and homes. Only protracted and heroic resistance from the workers' unions, the GMB and Unison, forced the

council to reach an agreement which saw all but fifteen of these workers lose no pay.

The council leader throughout the bin dispute? Richard Brett — a Lib Dem councillor.

And these are only the big examples. At the time of writing local campaigners are fighting to prevent the same council from closing the only remaining city centre high school, City of Leeds. A recent public consultation meeting saw over 500 parents, pupils and staff passionately put the case for the school's survival.

None of this should be any surprise to socialists, who know the Lib Dems are a bourgeois party funded by big business.

Nick Clegg asked his conference to imagine waking up on 7 May to another five years of Labour when he could have offered them so much more. In Leeds we don't have to imagine. We are living through the experience of the Lib Dems in power, and it's anything but a radical alternative to Labour.

# To stop cuts, seize control of the banks!



## WORKERS' GOVERNMENT

By CLARKE BENITEZ

**T**he Tory shadow Chancellor George Osborne must think he pulled off a coup on Monday 15 March. He got Jeffrey Sachs — a real economist, an architect of Russia's “shock treatment” after 1991, but who has since distanced himself from extreme free-marketism — to co-author an article with him for the *Financial Times*.

The article said that the Tories are right to go for rapid, big cuts in public spending to reduce Britain's Budget deficit, rather than a slower approach which includes waiting and seeing whether future growth will erode the debt more painlessly.

The European Commission gave Osborne backing the next day, 16 March, by tut-tutting that Britain needs “additional fiscal tightening measures”.

The most instructive thing about the Osborne-Sachs article was the explicit way in which it based its argument on a claim about the psychology of international financiers.

Some mainstream economists, the article noted, “see the financial markets as benignly ready to finance [further] budget deficits”. Why are they wrong? “We believe financial markets are perfectly capable of getting spooked about the prospects of debt financing in the medium term”.

It's a matter, not just of paying the financiers their due sums, but keeping them mellow. To do that, the British government must axe hospitals, schools, libraries, pensions, welfare benefits, whatever. For if the financiers are “spooked”, then the British government

will end up like Greece, having to pay higher premiums to borrow on international markets, and seeing its problems spiral as the financiers get even more “spooked”.

A short, sharp blast of cuts, by contrast, will “restore confidence”, make borrowing easier, and thus (they claim) paradoxically speed new growth.

Osborne and Sachs make no claim for a cast-iron “objective” constraint enforcing big, quick cuts. Their entire argument rests on claims about what will “spook” international financiers and what will win their trust.

What about Greece? What has it done wrong? Greece's current budget deficit, measured relative to national output, is less than Britain's. Its accumulated government debt, again measured relatively, is less than Italy's and far less than Japan's.

On 13 March the *Financial Times* compared the impact of the crisis on different countries by the measure of the number of quarters of growth “lost”. By that measure, Greece has been the least hard-hit of the eight countries surveyed. Like the USA, it had got “back to” output levels of early 2007, thus “losing” only 11 quarters of growth. Germany has lost 15, the UK 17, Japan 19, and Italy 26.

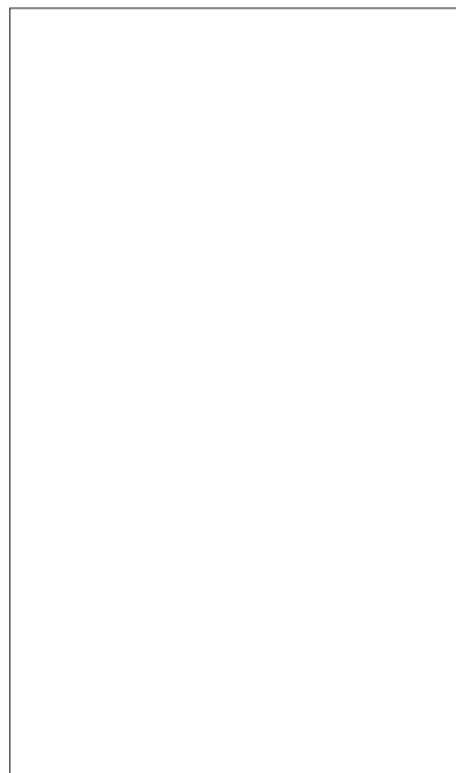
So what is it with Greece? Financiers' perceptions. The financiers have a revealingly derisive acronym for the countries at world-financial-market risk: *pigs* (Portugal, Iceland, Greece, Spain).

In 1945 Britain had a much bigger government debt “problem” than today, but the government, far from cutting, introduced the modern welfare state?

What is different today? First, “sensitivity”. A government in 1945 could not get away with citing the need not to “spook” international financiers as reason for refusing to legislate welfare provision, or for cutting what little existed. And the financiers knew that. They adjusted (and survived happily enough with it).

Today, financiers are accustomed to have their word considered instant law, and governments are accustomed to complying and getting away with it.

There is a more structural difference,



The Bank of England. A workers' government would take the whole financial system into public ownership.

too. Economic barriers between countries were much higher in 1945. There were strict government controls on exchanging currencies, which continued until 1979. Governments dealt more with financiers within their own countries, and those financiers could not so easily move their wealth (or themselves) out of the country.

Now every government is immersed in uncontrolled, global, and very fast-moving financial markets.

To placate those financiers, Alistair Darling in his Budget will schedule big cuts, if not as big and fast as the Tories.

Two political conclusions follow. Within a certain range, there is vast flexibility in the amount of cuts “necessary” for governments to survive in the international markets. One element of that flexibility is the pressures on the government. If it thinks it can make big cuts eas-

ily, it will. Why not? If it knows it can't, then it has to find other ways to conciliate the financiers. And governments, despite what they say, are still huge concentrations of economic power. They have their ways.

But all that is valid only within a certain range, and a range too narrow for socialists and working-class activists.

Further, the call for the government to tax the rich — correct always, and sufficient sometimes — does not meet the case here.

A government which tried to placate the international financiers by closing its Budget deficit through heavily taxing the rich would do worse than one which simply continued the deficit.

The shrieks provoked by New Labour's recent minuscule increases in taxes for the rich show us what would happen. The international financiers would brand Britain not just a “pig”, but a loathsome warthog.

There is a limit to what can be done by dancing with the international financiers in open, uncontrolled, fast-moving, global financial markets.

In current conditions a workers' government would have to reimpose exchange controls and insulate itself from the financial markets. It would do that not because it believed in walling off the national economy — on the contrary, it would know that its survival depended on winning workers' governments in several other countries, and organising mutual aid — but because it needed breathing space.

Reimposing exchange controls, after thirty years of spiralling global financial markets, probably could not be done without taking the whole financial system into public ownership and integrating it into a unified public banking, mortgage, and pension service, with workers' control in all the crannies of the operation to stop financial sabotage. That public ownership is what we should demand.

Far-fetched? In conventional politics, maybe. But it's going to take a lot more than conventional politics to stop the torrent of cuts due to be unleashed on us.

## GENERAL ELECTION

# We can beat the Tories

**S**ome opinion polls have the Tory lead as low as two percent. On balance the polls suggest Cameron will have a small, but workable majority. But the Tories have been pushed back, and clearly can be pushed back further. That is good.

All the mainstream party leaders are committed to cuts, but it makes a big difference whether the party in power has a mandate for huge and rapid cuts — so big and so rapid that they might have to launch a new Thatcher-type attack on the unions to push through. While the unions have channels they could use to fight Labour — though at present they scarcely do — the Tories in power would be under pressure from parties even further to the right, like UKIP and the BNP.

A Tory victory would represent a mood of thinking that nothing better is possible, and that maybe the Tories' hardline version of cuts will sort things out quicker. But a poll in the *Financial Times* on 15 March suggests that 50 percent reject all cuts. The widespread anti-cuts sentiment may be hardening.

It is vital to defeat the Tories — but it will be a hollow victory if we do not couple it with a fight for the labour movement to take on and defeat Brown. It will be a hollow victory if Brown uses a strong Labour vote in the general election to stitch up a coalition with the Lib Dems, or even a "grand coalition" with the Tories, rationalised on the grounds that the economic crisis requires "strong government".

Even if Labour does well enough to form a new government by itself, it may be a hollow victory.

- Look at the BA strike. Although the Labour Party depends heavily on financial support from the BA workers' union Unite, Brown and his weaseling henchman Andrew Adonis have turned on the workers, trying to bully them into giving in, because their politics and their instincts tell them to side with the bosses.

- Look at the budget. According to his *Financial Times* interview of 18 January, chancellor Alistair Darling plans cuts of 17 percent in most departments other than health.

- Look at the cuts taking place in higher and further education.

- Look at the NHS, where Labour is promoting further privatisation in the guise of "social enterprises", dumping the government's vague commitment to Unison to make in-house NHS services the "preferred provider".

The New Labour leaders get away with all this because the unions let New Labour take them for granted. By doing so they demobilise workers, spread demoralisation and fertilise the ground for the far right. We must fight for the unions to use all the means they have to push working-class interests against New Labour's dominant neoliberalism.

There are six weeks to go until the election. Socialists should use that time to rally trade union members, and go into the streets to rally

**BA workers want to fight. Union meeting last November at which members discussed taking strike action**

new activists — to build a force which can not only keep the Tories out, but fight Brown and his Tory policies in the name of a working-class alternative. That is the only way to fight both cuts and the continuing growth of the far right.

That is what the AWL will be doing. If you agree with our analysis, help us.

- Campaigning in Peckham and Camberwell, centre pages.
- Building the Socialist Campaign to Stop the Tories and Fascists, page 12.

## Will you help the socialist alternative?

**I**n the 2010 General Election the Alliance for Workers' Liberty will raise the banner of a socialist alternative — to give clear political answers to both the Tories and New Labour.

We will work for a Labour vote tied to a positive campaign against the cuts and privatisation agenda of Gordon Brown and David Cameron.

We will be standing a candidate against Harriet Harman in Peckham and Camberwell, south London; Jill Mountford will stand for a workers' voice in Parliament.

Getting across our messages will take money, yet we have no rich donors or "captains of industry" to finance our work. We want to raise £25,000 in the course of this election year

### CAN YOU HELP US?

- Could you take a few copies of our paper to circulate at work or college (contact our office for details)?
- Give us money each month by standing order: contact our office or set it up directly with your bank (to "AWL", account number 20047674 at Unity Trust Bank, 08-60-01).
- Donate directly, online — go to [www.workersliberty.org](http://www.workersliberty.org) and press the donate button.
- Send cheques made payable to "AWL" to our office: AWL, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA; or make a donation directly through internet banking with your bank (to "AWL", account number as above).
- Contact us to discuss joining the AWL.

### FIGHTING FUND

In the last month we have received £20.50 in new standing orders. That gives a consolidated amount of £184.50 towards our grand total. Thanks to one comrade who raised £140 with her sponsored silence! And to AN for £10. Fund so far stands at £5,177.50.

PCS SEVERANCE DISPUTE

# All out on Budget Day: the same deal for all!

BY A CIVIL SERVANT

**O**n 8-9 March the Public and Commercial Services union (PCS) took strike action on 8-9 March over the Government's proposals to reduce redundancy and early retirement payouts civil servants (proposals which come into force on the 1 April). The national union reports well over 100,000 members took action on each day.

As with all disputes, the numbers of members on strike varied greatly between union branches, with some reporting their best ever turnout, others a

poor turnout. This variation in turnout has prompted the right wing in the PCS to ridicule the dispute; they openly question the union's estimate of those who took action and implicitly are now calling for the action to end. Of course they offer no alternative way to fight the Government's proposals. In reality are content to accept them.

An overtime ban will now operate until 6 April. To keep up the pressure the union has called for a one day strike on 24 March — budget day. The union will be holding rallies on 19 March and is still pursuing MPs to sign up to an Early Day Motion calling on the Government to

open negotiations in this dispute. Over 160 MPs have already signed the EDM.

The union has said that it will continue the campaign even into the election period, though it is not sure whether this means industrial action during the run up to the election.

So far, so okay. However the union has been very poor at explaining what it wants to see happen to those members who joined after 1 June 2007 and who are on a different pension scheme from other members. Members in this lower tier only get statutory legal minimum redundancy payments. Supporters of the Independent Left grouping in the Union

(which includes members of Workers' Liberty) are arguing for full parity between all members and an end to the two-tier work force.

The union leadership are looking for a reserved rights deal — with the "privileged" members keeping what they have and those on the lower tier getting more than the statutory legal minimum, but not the *same* as those with reserved rights. We say all members must have the same, high, terms and conditions! The insistence on a two tier deal is a major weakness in our important dispute.

## Scottish cuts campaign

**P**ublic sector union Unison has called a demonstration in Glasgow on 10 April against planned, and already implemented, local authority job losses and cuts in services throughout Scotland.

50% of respondents in a recent survey of Unison members in Scotland reported a freeze on filling vacancies in their workplace. And 20% of respondents reported a policy of no cover being provided for absent members of staff.

Given that the survey covered the impact of cuts imposed over the last two years, it does not take much to work out what will be the impact of the far greater cuts in spending due to be implemented.

According to the financial watchdog Audit Scotland, the £30 billion budget for Scottish local authorities is facing a cut of between 7% and 13% between now and the financial year 2013/14. In Glasgow alone, 4,000 council jobs are to be axed over the next three years. This threat to goes hand-in-hand with plans to privatise the services where jobs are not being axed.

In Edinburgh, the SNP/Lib-Dem coalition, is planning to privatise services including cleansing, refuse collection and schools meals provision. Labour-run Glasgow is engaged in talks with leading local government contractors "Enterprise plc" about giving them control of a similar range of services.

Publicity for the Glasgow demonstration, called under the slogans "Public Works: you are not part of the problem — you are part of the solution", highlights the fact that "neither we nor our service users caused the recession — we should not be the ones paying for the mistakes of high paid bankers. We provide essential services. Public spending is vital to sustain economic recovery. We can afford it."

Unison is urging local branches to contact local community groups to urge them to attend the demonstration.

Following on from the 10,000 strong demonstration held by the Scottish teachers' union, the EIS, at the beginning of March, the Unison demonstration looks like being an even bigger display of opposition to public spending cuts — irrespective of whether they are imposed by Labour, the Tories, or the SNP.

• Assemble 9.30am University Avenue (just off Kelvingrove Park).

ROYAL MAIL

# Reject this shoddy deal!

BY EDWARD MALTBY

**A**fter keeping the membership in the dark for months about negotiations with Royal Mail bosses, the CWU postal leadership has finally announced a deal with which it hopes to conclude the latest national dispute with management.

On the CWU website the leadership trumpets the deal as "bringing pay and job security for postal workers". But, as a London postal worker told *Solidarity*, the deal actually lays the framework for further lay-offs:

"I had been told that it involved closure of 50% of mail centres, but no such figure is in there. The deal looks at the ways that such closures might be implemented, but there is no information about whether closures are taking place, or where, or how many. There are lots of words about 'rationalisation' which indicates they want to make cuts, but no information. Likewise, they indicate they want to cut jobs, but no figure on how many jobs to go."

The deal offers no serious improvement on the pay front either: "The media are talking about a 7% pay increase over three years. But there was no pay increase last year, so it comes out at 7%

over four years, which is even less."

In a situation where inflation could rise rapidly over the coming years, a deal that locks the union into three years of extremely modest pay rises is a recipe for real-terms pay cuts for posties. The meagre "lump sum" which will be paid to postal workers in return for accepting the deal also has strings attached — which effectively mean accepting redundancies — and it will be spread out, again, over three years.

Under this deal, workers will receive different pay depending on which part of the service they work in. This new situation will help management drive wedges between different sections of the workforce.

The deal is bad on junk mail and deliveries too:

"At the moment for junk mail we get paid a certain amount per item. Very little really, but it can mount up if you do a heavily residential delivery round. That will be replaced by a payment of £20.60 per week for everyone in deliveries. But they are also removing the cap on how many junk items can be delivered a week.

"Also the ban on junk mail deliveries in the run-up to Christmas is going to be got rid of too. So if you were on a residential delivery round you will be worse

off money-wise, and you could get slaughtered, workload-wise."

Finally, the deal's reduction in the working week is of just one hour, and it won't come in for another two years!

The deal contains little else of substance. In particular, it fails to address questions of private competitors and "downstream access" to mail. It also offers nothing on the question of Royal Mail's £10 billion pension deficit.

This deal is a scandal — it was cooked up behind the backs of the workers who made huge sacrifices to bring the bosses to the negotiating table, and it offers them less than nothing.

The national strike in the post in late 2009 was strong and powerful. Instead of organising a clear set of positive demands and a strong timetable for long-term action, the CWU leadership ran it into the ground.

The leadership has only been able to conclude such an insulting deal as this by stringing out negotiations over months, in secret.

The only good thing about it is that the union Executive did not vote unanimously to accept it (the CWU report says the vote was merely "overwhelmingly" in favour). Postal workers should do better than their leaders — and vote to reject in the ballot on the deal.

## Striking for safety

BY DALE STREET

**O**ver 550 members of the rail union RMT employed by First ScotRail took part in a third 24-hour strike on Saturday 13 March in opposition to the company's plan to run trains on the new Airdrie-Bathgate line without conductors. The union also staged a hundred-strong rally of strikers at Edinburgh's Waverley Station.

Running trains without conductors on the new route would breach earlier commitments given to the union that there would be no extension of the use of driver-only trains, it would also jeopardise passenger safety on the route and it would set a precedent for introducing driver-only trains on other routes.

In an attempt to undermine the strike First ScotRail press-ganged other employees (including managers flown in from the south) into working as conductors on strike days — and given very lit-

tle training.

The 20 February strike saw doors being activated when a train was short of the platform at Falkirk Station, and doors on a train at Queen Street Station in Glasgow being activated on the track side instead of the platform side.

The latest strike action will be followed up by a meeting between the RMT and Scottish Transport Minister Stewart Stevenson. Stevenson runs the Transport Scotland quango, which gave the go-ahead for running driver-only trains on the Airdrie-Bathgate route.

The RMT is demanding direct talks with the Scottish First Minister, and assurances that First ScotRail will not be indemnified for losses resulting from the strike action.

First ScotRail's strikebreaking tactics have had no impact on the strikers' morale. As RMT General Secretary Bob Crow stated: "Our members are rock solid across Scotland."

## Network Rail vote for action

BY A RAIL WORKER

**M**aintenance workers employed by Network Rail have voted by 77% for strike action and by 89% for action short of a strike over plans by the company to axe up to 1500 safety-critical jobs and to rip up national agreements on working practices.

The RMT Executive will decide on 19 March what next steps to take, after they have seen the results of a ballot held by the railway clerical workers' union, TSSA, on the same issue. It is clear that members are determined. The union leaders should be as equally determined.

Activists in the RMT have been concerned that this dispute has been strung out by the union leaders. Recently management have guaranteed no compulsory redundancies before the end of this year. This is a clearly a sop, we need to get on with industrial action.

STUDENTS AGAINST CUTS

# Defend the Sussex Six! Support the strike!

BY A SUSSEX UNIVERSITY STUDENT ACTIVIST

**O**n 3 March students occupied management offices at Sussex University. As the occupation went on, senior management locked themselves in an office and declared themselves to have been taken hostage!

Meanwhile students offered them water and politely asked if they wanted to leave). But the Vice Chancellor called the cops, who arrived on campus with seven riot vans; this was the beginning of severe repression of the student and staff campaign against job cuts.

The police threatened students with dogs and pepper spray, and meted out indiscriminate beatings to the crowd of 200 protestors outside. The Vice Chancellor suspended six students, including one who had been present at the protest for just thirty minutes.

Within days, thousands of students and workers around the country had signed a petition against the suspensions, and on 11 March a demonstration



Cops off our campuses

of 500 preceded a 300-strong occupation of an Arts lecture theatre. The occupation is still going strong at the time of writing.

This second occupation took place in open defiance of a court injunction — and was supported publicly by staff, including by the lecturers' union (UCU) branch. Trade unionists from Brighton, and speakers from the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts have visited the occupation. Now management appear to be backing off, but the suspensions remain.

The Sussex UCU branch is due to strike on Thursday 17 March, bolstered by a "yes" vote on an very high turnout — in no small part a product of the mag-

nificent solidarity that students and others have extended to staff at Sussex.

The use of riot police, court injunctions and politically-motivated suspensions cannot be tolerated. It sets a dangerous precedent for other University managers around the country.

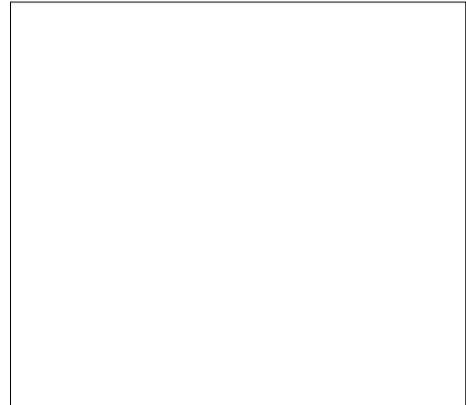
For more information, visit [defendsussex.wordpress.com](http://defendsussex.wordpress.com)

## Lambeth College cuts

BY RUTH CASHMAN

Lambeth College have given notice of 100-plus redundancies from a total workforce of 690 as part of a £3.5 million cuts package for next year. UCU are already in dispute over funding cuts and are balloting for strike action. This is part of a package of cuts affecting Further Education across London. In Tottenham, UCU branch secretary Jenny Sutton is standing as a TUSC candidate against David Lammy to highlight the fight against cuts in FE.

More information: [studentlambeth@hotmail.com](mailto:studentlambeth@hotmail.com)



Protest outside London Regional Unison offices against the raids on local offices, Monday 15 March

## "UNISON FOUR"

# Stop this witch-hunt!

BY A UNISON MEMBER

**P**ublic sector union Unison stepped up its campaigning activity last month. Defending public services from privatisation and job cuts? No. Mobilising against hospital closures? No. Once again, the union's resources were being ploughed into its seemingly inexhaustible campaign against four members of the Socialist Party.

In 2007, the SP put out a bland leaflet criticising the Standing Orders Committee at National Conference. Frustrated at the removal of a third of all motions from the agenda, the leaflet compared the SOC to the three wise monkeys — "see no evil, hear no evil, say no evil".

Despite the fact that 95% of SOC members are bald, white and male, this bureaucratic bastion pressed charges of racial abuse. For the past three years these activists have been dragged through the unions' kangaroo courts, kicked out of office and banned from holding a post in the union for up to five years.

The SP appealed to various bourgeois courts (a tactic we don't agree with). Those appeals have been unsuccessful. However the process revealed that Unison have been running training courses for their (unelected) full time officials teaching them how to "deal with the problem of Trotskyite activists".

Last month the bureaucracy organised dawn raids of the local offices where "the Four" are based. Unelected full-time officials now look poised for coup d'états in the Greenwich, Hackney, Bromley and Housing Association branches.

This whole sorry business points to a putrid rot within Unison. An enormous deficit of member involvement allows the bureaucracy to play Stalinist games with left activists.

It allows them to take control of branches and turn them into lifeless rumps.

It allows them to intimidate honest worker-activists and prevent them organising a real fight against management. The lack of involvement in the union runs so deep that Socialist Party tactic of appealing to the capitalist law courts appears more "realistic" than a militant campaign by rank-and-file members to defend and extend democracy in the union.

• [www.stopthewitchhunt.org.uk](http://www.stopthewitchhunt.org.uk)

## BRITAIN 2010:

### BOSSES' PAY

At a time when university workers and students are facing massive cuts, more than 80 university heads now "earn" more than £200,000 (*Guardian* survey, 16 March). Nineteen get more than £300,000. Some have received 15 or 20 percent increases in the last year, and some seen their salary double or even triple in ten years. In contrast, higher education lecturers have received an average increase of 45.7 percent over the same period.

The highest paid, Andrew Likierman at the London Business School, is on £474,000. He has benefited from a 78 percent increase in the last decade, "losing out" in comparison with Roy Anderson of Imperial College (162 percent) Howard Newby of Liverpool (188 percent) and Andrew Hamilton of Oxford (220 percent).

The number of other top HE officials on more than £100,000 has also mushroomed, now running into thousands.

Meanwhile, the university hierarchy is not only slashing jobs and holding down wages for university workers, but continuing its campaign for students to pay more. In the same week as the *Guardian* pay survey, Oxford Chancellor (honorary head) Chris Patten called tuition fees of £3,225 "preposterously low".

So inflated are the salaries involved that putting top university officials on something more like what they pay their workers would free up quite large amounts of money. But in any case, their huge pay outs are indicative of the kind of universities we have: giant businesses where the interests of both students and staff are sacrificed to the bottom line.

We need to get rid of these greedy spivs, and bring the higher education sector under workers' and students' control. We can start by demanding that they and not those they employ take a pay cut — a big one.

## EDUCATION WORKERS

# Developing a national fight against the cuts

BY GARETH MUNRO

**T**he past few months have seen a surge in student resistance to cuts at UK higher education institutions. It has involved direct-action tactics such as occupations and has, for the most part, been built using grassroots democracy and open meetings. But what about the resistance from workers in the education sector?

There have been a number of ballots for industrial action across higher education, which have almost universally demonstrated an enthusiasm amongst workers to take action. Ballots of lecturers organised in the University and College Union (UCU) at Leeds and Sussex have both returned resounding majorities on high turnouts.

But the willingness of workers to fight has unfortunately not been adequately taken up by their union at a national level. Because the cuts are not across-the-board but are being introduced institution-by-institution, in different ways and at different times, the anti-union laws prevent UCU from easily turning the dispute into a national one that could mobilise all its members. (Balloting members at Sussex to take strike action over cuts happening at Leeds would be considered secondary action). Nonetheless there plenty of room for a more inspiring, confident and comprehensive perspective from the union.

The cross-union Defend Higher Education Campaign, which involves other unions organising in the sector, is invisible. Its demands do not include opposition to any and all cuts. It does not call for higher taxation of the rich to fill any financial hole in the sector's funding. The campaign effectively allows management to dictate the terms of the

debate. For instance it argues against compulsory redundancies, thus implicitly accepting voluntary ones.

Unions need to fight for their own vision of how their service or industry should be organised, taking up the needs of workers and the community — and not the so-called "needs" of bosses to make money or the "realities of the market" — as its starting point.

Unfortunately the organised left in the union — which might otherwise be expected to challenge the lack of vision and fight in the union — is also lacking. The UCU Left — a collection of like-minded individuals rather than any kind of meaningful rank-and-file network — is controlled by the SWP and has become increasingly powerful within sections of the union bureaucracy, particularly within London.

Through a primary focus on international issues rather than basic industrial questions, the SWP has poisoned the political waters in UCU. Being "left-wing" in this union has become less about what strategy you advocate for organising workers against bosses and more about how enthusiastically you support a boycott of Israel.

Workers in UCU, and in unions across the education sector, urgently need solid rank-and-file networks that will allow them to develop strategies to fight and win — we need to begin a discussion on how to do that.

• Facing cuts in the college where you work? Have something to say or report? Write to us with your views: [solidarity@workersliberty.org](mailto:solidarity@workersliberty.org)

• National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts (student campaign) [conventionagainstfeesandcuts.wordpress.com](http://conventionagainstfeesandcuts.wordpress.com)

## DEFEND REFUGEES AND MIGRANT WORKERS

## Yarls Wood solidarity: close all detention centres!

BY ELAINE JONES

**O**n 10 March, Merseyside activists organised a protest outside the UK Border Agency in Liverpool to show solidarity with the women who were then on hunger strike at Yarls Wood detention centre near Bedford and to demand the closing of the detention centres, an end to deportations and the scrapping of immigration controls.

The picket was supported by Merseyside Coalition Against Racism and Fascism, No One is Illegal, and Liverpool Students Against Racism and Fascism. The News from Nowhere bookshop, Unite union branch 6/522 and activists involved in Wirral Against the Cuts supported the event.

Refugees who have no right to remain in the UK have to come every week to “sign on” at the Border Agency. The office also deals with work, study, visiting permits, applications for asylum and appeals.

We talked to people queuing up outside. This is some of the things they said:

“I’ve been working here for nine years paying taxes but I have no rights. There is plenty of room inside, but they make us queue outside, regardless of the weather, to make us feel bad.”

“Inside all the chairs are screwed to the floor and there are signs up in the toilets telling us not to urinate on the floors. They think we’re animals.”

Sometimes people are lifted by the immigration police while they’re waiting. Many said they have spent time in the detention centres and that the conditions were terrible. The constant threat of dawn raids and how the children would be frightened means living in constant fear.

Some of the people who were waiting to sign joined the protest. Others were

just asking quietly what could we do to change things.

We also spoke to representatives of PCS — who had been on strike — about the protest. We said that we supported the dispute and that we weren’t protesting against low paid staff. The local reps agreed with the demands to close the detention centres and supported the aims of the protest. One rep said we need more staff so that they can process asylum claims more “quickly and fairly” — that is not the right approach. These are issues which we need to discuss further in the unions. The unions should make it clear they are opposed to the deportation of asylum seekers and migrant workers, and say the staff working in immigration should be redeployed elsewhere in the civil service.

People fleeing persecution and torture — instead of getting help — are treated like criminals. Around 70% of the women in detention centres are rape survivors, and often have physical and mental health problems, yet interviews with the women in Yarls Wood show they don’t have access to the medical care they need.

In Liverpool we plan to follow up the protest by organising a meeting to co-ordinate campaigns, and plan monthly protests outside the UK Border Agency.

## Defend the UBS cleaners!

Cleaners who work for UBS in London are finding their terms and conditions coming under attack as they are transferred from one cleaning contractor to another. This largely migrant workforce is organising to protect its rights. The employer has sacked one of the leading union activists among the cleaners, Alberto Durango. Alberto spoke to *Solidarity*.

*How is the campaign going?*

The situation changes daily. We have daily intimidation from bosses, who are trying to break workers’ resistance to the changed conditions. Union bureaucrats are playing games and trying to convince the cleaners to accept the conditions. It is a contradictory game: we have to fight the bosses but we also have to push the union.

On the other hand, we are clearly hav-

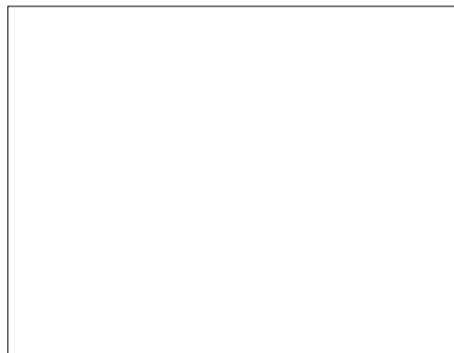
ing an effect. Cleaners at other UBS sites are starting to organise too, to demand better conditions and increased salary, as a result of the campaign at Liverpool Street.

*What do you think of your union, Unite?*

You shouldn’t have to be fighting the union as well as the bosses — but we are! At the moment there are elections in Unite and we are trying to improve our branch. I think it is important also to build an organisation where cleaners from all sectors can organise together. We need a good programme of education for the workers on the different sites.

• Join the demonstration in support of the UBS cleaners — 5pm, 19 March, 100 Liverpool Street.  
Contact [einsteindurango@hotmail.com](mailto:einsteindurango@hotmail.com)

## “I have tried to be their Hannibal”



### MY LIFE AT WORK

**Bob Carnegie is a seafarer on an offshore gas rig.**

**What’s the job like, and what do you do?**

I’m employed as a merchant seafarer on a semi-submersible gas rig off the north-west coast of Australia, the EnSCO 7500. The reason I’m employed is that under Australian Marine Orders, self-propelled rigs have to have a certain marine complement. I work night shifts, 12 hours a day, seven days a week, on a three-week cycle: three weeks on the rig, and then three weeks back home in Brisbane. For the merchant seafarers on the rig, a lot of our work is looking after life-saving equipment and trying to keep up general maintenance.

**What are the working and living conditions like?**

The food is good. Apart from that, the conditions on the rig are abysmal. In 1985 I was jailed for three weeks in the remand section of a maximum security prison, Boggo Road in Brisbane, after being arrested on a picket line. In general the conditions in Boggo Road were superior to the rig.

On the rig, you sleep four to a cabin, with eight workers sharing one toilet and shower. There is no recreation space, no place where even for five minutes you can have time to yourself.

The rig just would not be able to operate in the British sector of the North Sea, where much more reasonable living conditions have been won, let alone in the Norwegian sector.

The wages are quite high, but they in no way compensate for the horrendous conditions workers have to endure.

**What do workers on the rig think about the job?**

Many think the same as me. But there are also many who have a culture of being “tough”, taking pride in being able to tolerate bad conditions, and claiming that they’re not interested in anything but the money. It’s an odd collection of workers, flown on to the rig every three weeks and then flown off again. I’ve seen that sort of culture before — on a smaller scale — in seafaring and construction, and I know that it can be changed by strong union organisation. But it hasn’t been changed yet on the rigs.

**What do you think union activity on the rigs should focus on?**

When I started out as a young activist

in the seafarers’ union, even the Stalinists leading the union knew enough to teach me that as a trade unionist I should fight over conditions first and foremost, and we could sort out wages after we won on conditions. Conditions are key, not wage rises as such.

**What’s the union organisation on the job?**

Among the seafarers it’s 100%. At the present time the seafarers’ union, the Maritime Union of Australia, and the AWU (Australian Workers’ Union) have an Alliance. With me as the lead delegate onboard, we have recruited about 90% of the eligible workforce into the Alliance. This, I would like to stress, does not make them all good unionists yet. In the main, it reflects the fact that the MUA, and myself as the delegate, have gone head to head with the management about improving allowances and conditions on board. Recently we won a \$75 a day “hard-laying” allowance for all Alliance members, to compensate for the primitive conditions. That of course helped in union recruitment.

**What’s management’s attitude to union organisation?**

The rig is owned by EnSCO (a multinational corporation now headquartered in Great Britain) and is chartered by Chevron. Both companies are hostile to union activity.

The rig management comes in the main from the Deep South of the United States — Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas. Sometimes they can not conceal the utter contempt they have for unions and the ideals we fight for.

It is either their way or the highway, and that is why I have had many confrontations with them. They seem to believe that they are the Romans of our time, and we are their vassals. Well, I can proudly tell you I have tried to be their Hannibal, but like Hannibal at great cost. At least they can’t sack Carthage!

**If I could change one thing about the workplace, what would it be?**

It would be to have safety taken seriously, and not as an issue for companies to cover their negligent arses with. The big oil majors say they take safety as paramount. I can tell you all that is absolute bullshit! When safety gets in the way of production, safety takes a backward step.

Most of the safety reps onboard are too intimidated to raise issues for fear that they will end up on the next helicopter off the rig after some trumped-up disciplinary charge.

• Since his last three-week “swing” on the rig, Bob Carnegie has been told by a his direct employer, a labour-hire company, that Chevron have put him on a “no-fly” list, barring his return to the rig. Workers on the rig struck on 20-21 February against this victimisation. The labour-hire company currently promises to find Bob work on another rig. We will carry further reports.

## BRITISH AIRWAYS FIGHT

## Resisting union-busting

BY A BASSA CABIN CREW MEMBER

**M**orale is getting quite low amongst cabin crew workers. They're being bombarded by emails and phonecalls from managers, as well as being denounced by senior politicians in the press.

People who are off sick are being told they're not going to be paid. One member is off sick waiting to have an operation and he's now been told he may not be paid if he's off sick when the strike is on. Management are trying every intimidatory tactic they can think of.

People are disgusted by BA's scabherding. They feel betrayed by the pilots, who're supposed to be our colleagues. There's a protocol on most airlines called CRM (Crew Resource Management), which is about all grades of workers — pilots, cabin crew and everyone else — working together to make sure flights are safe and efficient. We feel that's being disregarded by pilots and volunteer cabin crew who've agreed to work to break our strike.

The trouble with BA is that everyone is fighting their own corner. There's a lot of sectionalism in the company, with different grades doing deals with management as long as they get their own issues taken care of. There are some exceptions, though; ground crew such as check-in

staff haven't done any deals with management and the baggage handlers have stayed very solid.

Willie Walsh's project is fundamentally about union-busting. The core of his argument seems to be that if a job can be done for £10,000 a year, then why would anyone pay any more? But a job done for a lower salary will be done to a lower standard.

We want people to have careers as stewards; we don't want it to be another low-paid, casual job with a transient workforce. British Airways has always had an experienced workforce made up of people who've come into the job at a young age and been able to stay in it, building up skills and experience. That isn't the same on other airlines where pay and conditions are worse. The workforce on other airlines is effectively a casualised, de-skilled workforce.

Walsh's long-term aim is to start something he calls "New Fleet", which will entail a new tier of workers doing the job our members do now, but on an entirely different set of pay and conditions. He wants to gradually move all the work over to "New Fleet".

Cabin crew workers are paid a basic wage and then supplements on top of that when we actually fly abroad. On "New Fleet" the basic wage will be a lot lower, but as that's where all the work will be, people will feel pressured into moving over to those pay and conditions.

The national leadership of Unite have more-or-less accepted the premise of "New Fleet". They seem to be saying that it's inevitable. BASSA has proposed some cost-saving measures, but fundamentally we want to resist the introduction of "New Fleet". Our members aren't going to sit here and let that happen. What is represented is an indication by management that they no longer consult with workers or their unions — they just do whatever they want. That's Mr. Walsh's modus operandi.

Walsh wants people to be flying as fast as possible, for the smallest amount of money, in the most unregulated way. He wants to be able to change people's rosters at any time.

That's a system that already exists in some airlines. In the American airlines, for example, junior cabin crew are on permanent standby and only get fixed rosters when they've attained a certain level of seniority. Willie Walsh wants BA cabin crew to work in that way too. He's a manager who announced way back in his career that he intended to break the unions in British Airways. We're facing bosses who are totally ruthless.

In the face of such a ruthless management, any and all support from the wider workers' movement is welcome. Even something as simple as an email and phonecall to our office to let us know people are on our side is encouraging. There will be picket lines at the big airports, but the law is so restrictive

## Ground staff have supported cabin crew

about picketing that it's difficult to discuss precise plans or ways people can support the pickets.

The argument of the attacks on us in the media has been that it's unfair or greedy for BA workers to be paid so much more than, say, Ryanair workers — particularly in a time of recession. But that's the wrong way of looking at it; the question isn't "why should BA workers be paid so much?", it's "why should Ryanair workers be paid so little?"

We should fight for an across-the-board levelling-up rather than allowing bosses to drag us down to the level of the lowest-paid and worst-treated. Willie Walsh gets paid more than any other CEO of any other airline, but he wants frontline workers' pay to be as low as possible. Why should we all be forced onto the lowest rung while the people at the top coin in the cash?

## UNITE GENERAL SECRETARY ELECTION

## Questions for the candidates

BY DAVE KIRK

**T**he election of a single General Secretary for the Unite union — to replace current joint Secretaries Derek Simpson and Tony Woodley — will take place in September and October, with the results announced in November.

All three main contenders say they are on the "left".

We think it is more important that revolutionary socialists use the election to argue for the type of union we need, to carry the fight for a democratic, fighting union into workplaces, into branches and onto picket lines.

We will send letters to all the candidates asking key questions that we feel need to be answered. As well as general questions to all the candidates about union democracy, organising and so on, we have some particular and specific questions for each candidate. All replies will be published in *Solidarity* or on the AWL website.

## QUESTIONS FOR JERRY HICKS

**J**erry Hicks was a shop steward at Rolls Royce in Bristol who was victimised for his trade union activity. He went to the government's Certification Office to force last year's General Secretary Election in the Amicus side of the union; he came a respectable second behind Derek Simpson. He resigned from the SWP and supports Respect.

He is standing for all union officials to be paid an average member's wage, for the election of officials and for the integration of retired members into the union's industrial structures.

Three questions for Jerry Hicks:

- You have talked about how the leadership of the union begs for crumbs from the state's table and has given massive amounts of money to the Labour government without demanding the repeal of the anti-union laws. Yet you went to a state body (the Certification Office) to force a General Secretary election. If you are committed to fighting the anti-union laws, shouldn't you repudiate your previous use of those same laws?

- Isn't it a basic democratic and class principle that only members who are currently working in an industry should make decisions on union action in that industry? That they shouldn't be in the hands of retired members, no matter how valuable their experience may be?

- You want all officials to be elected and on the same wage as average Unite members. These changes are not in the gift of the General Secretary and would need mass support to get them through a rule change conference. Win or lose, what are you going to do to build a rank-and-file campaign to push through these changes?

## QUESTIONS FOR LES BAYLISS

**L**es Bayliss is an assistant General Secretary of Unite from the old

Amicus side of the union. He is supported by the "Simpsonite" Workers Uniting grouping in the union. He was a member of the old Communist Party of Great Britain, and then the CPB until 1999.

He is standing on a platform of forging greater links with unions around the world and changing the focus of the union towards organising skilled workers with industrial muscle.

Three questions for Les Bayliss:

- You have talked about expanding on the union's international ties as a way for workers to fight back against globalisation. Unite ran campaigns around Rover, Cadbury's, Diageo and Vauxhall that appealed to jingoism and little Englandism/Scotlandism, undercutting any sense of solidarity across borders. How would you defend that? What do you intend to do to make international links mean something in shop floor struggles?

- By concentrating on skilled industrial workers, won't the union be giving up the fight to organise a fast growing part of the working class, and thus exacerbating the problems of craft chauvinism, sexism and racism in our union?

- Unite supports the Cuba Solidarity Campaign. Why does the union give so much political support to the only regime in the Caribbean that bans free trade unions, when there are workers in struggle throughout that region who sorely need our support?

## QUESTIONS FOR LEN MCLUSKEY

**L**en McClusky is an assistant General Secretary, from the TGWU side of the union. He has won the overwhelming support of the United Left grouping. He seen on TV a lot at the moment over the British Airways dispute. Len used to be sympathise with *Militant*, and now supports the Labour Representation Committee.

His main proposals are to expand the organising drive and giving central funds for organising to local branches.

Three questions for Len McClusky:

- It is a matter of principle that officials in unions (including the General Secretary) should not be privileged bureaucrats but retain the same interests and lifestyle as the members. Will you pledge to take an average skilled worker's wage and campaign for this to apply to all union officials?

- You have talked about reclaiming Labour as the party of the working class. If elected, how do you plan to carry this fight into the Labour Party? Why did you not support the union nominating John McDonnell in 2006?

- The trade union laws are framed to make successfully strike action nigh-on impossible. They have been used most recently to stymie the BA cabin crew workers. Will you use Unite's voice in the Labour Party to loudly demand the scrapping of these laws? And will you support and help organise a campaign to make these laws a dead letter by mass defiance?

## PROTESTS AGAINST BERLUSCONI

## Italy's purple populism

BY CATH FLETCHER

**T**he latest protests against Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi follow a trend for colour-branded demonstrating. It was orange in Ukraine, and here it's purple.

The "purple people" — il popolo viola — have a single demand, for Berlusconi's resignation. Their demonstrations might look good, but they're politically vapid. Against Berlusconi — fine. But in favour of what?

The "purple" campaign kicked off back in December with a "No Berlusconi Day" attracting tens of thousands onto the streets of Rome. This time the largest union, CGIL, joined in the protest, announcing a four-hour general strike to coincide with the demonstration (albeit on a Saturday). The union's slogan called for work and citizenship, and opposed tax evasion (Lavoro, Fisco e Cittadinanza). It was a minimal positive element in the demonstration. But it also shows up the problems facing the Italian left.

These latest protests have a backstory you couldn't make up. Back in the autumn, the governor of the Lazio region, Piero Marrazzo, member of the new US-style Democratic Party, resigned after a sex-and-drugs scandal. He had won with a slim majority in 2005 (50.7% to 47.4%) and Berlusconi's party, the Popolo della Libertà (PdL, People of Liberty), thought they'd be in with a chance of winning the regional elections,

due at the end of March. But they didn't get their nomination papers in on time. The obvious solution was for the PdL to pass a law allowing themselves to stand, which they duly did, only for it to be ruled unconstitutional, giving Berlusconi yet another opportunity to paint himself the victim of "communist magistrates".

Berlusconi's persistent attempts to legislate himself out of trouble, whether in relation to his own court cases or his party's incompetence, combined with a backdrop of unemployment, factory closures and crisis, should be a gift for the left. But the fall-out from the last Prodi government, and the subsequent splits and re-alignments, has left a confused and fragmented left, and the "leadership" of the campaign against Berlusconi with an apparently amorphous group of Facebook activists.

I say "apparently amorphous" because, just as some social forums a decade or so ago in practice relied heavily on the organisational efforts of Rifondazione Comunista supporters, at least some of the "purple people" are involved in one or other political party, notably Sinistra Ecologia Libertà (the fusion of the Bertinotti tendency in Rifondazione with the part of the Left Democrats that rejected joining the Democratic Party).

SEL has recently enjoyed considerable success on the left, defeating efforts by the Democratic Party to push their incumbent governor in Puglia, Nichi Vendola, to stand down in favour of a

candidate more acceptable to the centre party. Vendola demanded a primary and won convincingly with over two-thirds of the vote. Although there is much to criticise in Vendola's record, he is nonetheless proof that standing on a platform of job creation and the right to decent housing does (funnily enough) appeal to voters. "Canvass for Vendola" buses are being organised from across Italy. The small liberal anti-corruption party Italia dei Valori (Italy of Values), led by former "Clean Hands" magistrate Antonio Di Pietro, has also been quick to jump on the purple bandwagon.

Yet there remains a real problem of democracy with the new anti-Berlusconi campaigns. You cannot join the purple people, although you can become their fan on Facebook.

They (whoever they are) solicit your suggestions for building a new sort of Italian politics — but with no indication of how they might decide which ones to run with. They explicitly rule out the creation of a new party, but if their movement is really to be about more than just bashing Berlusconi, it is hard to see what will be their vehicle for achieving it.

## SANS PAPIERS STRIKES

## Gaining ground

BY ED MALTBY

**M**ore than five months since it began, a strike movement in France of thousands of undocumented migrant workers is continuing.

Concentrated in the Paris region and outlying suburbs and strongest in the construction, restaurants and cleaning sectors, around 8,000 "sans papiers" workers have been striking and occupying workplaces, demanding a change in immigration law to grant rights and papers to all undocumented migrant workers in France.

The strength that the sans-papiers workers have acquired through their strike has surprised the bosses and put them on the back foot.

Christian Mahieux from the union Solidaires told us, "A minority of capitalists, some quite big ones, are now arguing in favour of regularisations — some of them because they believe themselves to be 'ethical', and others because they are desperate to resolve the strike. Either way, there is confusion within the ranks of MEDEF [the French bosses' union] on this issue.

"The government has issued two circulars offering concessions — but they were only offering a very limited expansion of the criteria for regularisation, so they were not taken seriously."

The ways in which these workers have solved the specific organisational problems which confront them are instructive and inspirational.

Many migrant workers find themselves in a minority within their workplaces, or are isolated in jobs where they work alone for a contractor. The movement has solved this problem by organising for all migrant workers across a given sector to take part in a picket or occupation of one specific site, such as the offices of an exploitative temping agency or one particular building site.

Migrant workers are especially vulnerable to the law — they have to organise secretly for fear of instant dismissal with no recourse to the courts; they are constantly in danger of being arrested and deported. Bosses are also prepared to use violence against picket lines, whether by calling in the police or hiring private security.

And migrant workers need material support throughout strike — in the first place food. Support committees made up of Parisian trade unions, NGO-style groups and community activists have sprung up to meet this need. The Support Committees are an example of a broader social movement being cohered around a particular workers' struggle in a similar way as we have seen in this country (although on a smaller scale) as with the 1995-8 Liverpool docks lock-out and the 1984-5 miners' strike.

## Migrant workers in Italy strike

BY HUGH EDWARDS

**O**n 1 March, throughout the Italian peninsula tens of thousands of immigrant workers, small family-based businesses and markets struck against the rising tide of racism. This initiative was born spontaneously through Facebook: *Primo Marzo, 24 ore senza di noi* (First of March, 24 hours without us).

Its aim is counter racist lies from the government and other politicians, from the media, that immigrants are at best a parasitic drain on the country's wealth, at worst thieves, rapists and drug pushers.

The strike was more successful in the major cities of the north. Most of all in the city of Brescia, where fifty factories struck, involving thousands of immigrants and native Italian workers.

Irony of ironies, Brescia is in the heartland of the Northern League, arch-orchestrator of the most vile racist sentiments and practices.

It was also a success in Modena, Bologna, Parma, Genoa, Milan, where, though far fewer in number, factories came out in solidarity, to join the mass meetings and teach-in-like assemblies in the towns and city squares. Similarly in the south, in Napoli, Bari, Catanzare and Palermo. And everywhere they were joined by thousands of students and young people from schools and universities.

For the first time on a mass scale migrants recounted to thousands of their brothers and sisters the often harrowing

stories of their lives: of what it is like to be denied citizenship while you work and live; to pay your legal and fiscal obligations, but not be able to participate in full in ordinary political and social life; to know, too, that your children, native to the country, are denied the same rights until 18 years of age. And, not least, to endure the unending humiliation and fear in confronting the police state era mentality of those sections of public administration regulating the issuing of resident permits.

This vicious instrument of control and surveillance is available to all the state repressive institutions and, of course, a gift to every unscrupulous employer, landlord or entrepreneur with an eye to the main chance — Berlusconi's government has made it "criminal" to be without it! The racist pogroms in Rosarno brought to the eyes of the world the sub-human conditions that tens of thousand of migrant workers are reduced to by the operation of such a system.

On 1 March, native Italian workers, and migrants and their sons and daughters, reiterated the need to combat the racism in the working-class movement, as the absolute condition necessary to defend jobs for all, decent wages and better conditions of work, proper housing, schooling and welfare.

Many angrily demanded to know why the official trade union movement refused to recognise the strike. Good question!

The three major confederation unions, while piously proclaiming to support the anti-racist principle of the action, refused

to support it or actively condemned it. The action, they said, risked being — no kidding! — divisive.

The gutless and complicit bureaucrats, along with some shameless left apologists, mouthed platitudes about how a "real" general strike against racism of even one hour of all the workers would have been better than the call for an "ethnic" one. Formally true. But this is the formalism of the politically dead.

That only a minority of migrant workers actually struck only serves to underline the precariousness and insecurity of their situation. For few of them had any faith that in the event of their taking action, the unions would have defended them against employers only too keenly aware of the advantages of working class division.

But against all expectations, among migrant workers, their families and communities, there appeared a will and the stomach to fight against racism and all that breeds it. They showed, too, that they want to fight it as workers, inside and outside the factories, inside and outside the trade union movement, and that it has to be fought side by side with fellow Italian workers and all those in Italy like them who are victims.

That these ideals were in the heads and in the hearts and on the lips of thousands on 1 March 2010 can only augur well for the struggle to rid Italy of all its pernicious evils. The announcement by the organisers that a national conference is scheduled for April is proof that this movement can go from strength to strength.



## GREECE

# Three general strikes! But what political strategy?

BY MARTIN THOMAS

**G**reece's trade unions have organised three general strikes in the last month against the drastic cuts programme developed by the PASOK [social-democratic] government to conciliate the international financiers: 24 February, 5 March, 11 March.

Two union federations loosely linked to PASOK — ADEDY (public sector) and GSEE (private sector) — and the PAME union federation, led by the diehard-Stalinist Greek Communist Party, called the strikes. Further strikes are talked of. The financial crisis has eased slightly, with EU discussions about loans to help out the Greek government, but the cuts are still going ahead.

The broad slogans of the strikes have been simply to stop the cuts, with no indication of exact alternatives. There is a hint (though not a statement) in the declarations of GSEE and ADEDY of suggesting "more balanced" cuts. GSEE announced a "day of reflection" on 15 March, musing

that "consumption patterns must be changed immediately and dramatically", saying that greater care in shopping for bargains and decisions to "buy Greek" could help "resist the attempts to socially drive down the working class".

ADEDY's declaration of 11 March called for a "fair tax system", and concluded: "Continue and escalate our fight in unity. All together in the fight! The measures will not pass". It also wrote of "public services reorganised on a modern and healthy basis".

PAME has struck a more militant note: "No sacrifice for the plutocracy!" But this has as much of the factionally self-promoting about it as of the strategic. The Greek Communist Party rejoiced after 11 March: "The demonstration called by PAME was much bigger than that organised by the leaderships of yellow trade unions confederations of GSEE and ADEDY. Once again the strikers turned their back on the yellow trade unionists".

The Greek Trotskyist group, OKDE, seeking to show a way forward, has called for "building associations and

committees, and general meetings in the workplaces, neighbourhoods, and schools".

Politically, OKDE recommends "combining our struggle to overthrow the reactionary government of PASOK". But to replace it with whom? OKDE doesn't say. PASOK is the main "centre-left" (as they now call themselves) party of Greece. In the October 2009 general election, it won 44% of the vote. Its main rival — and immediately feasible replacement in government — is the conservative New Democracy, on 34%.

The Stalinist Greek Communist Party got 8%, an alliance around a group originating from the former Eurocommunist wing of the Communist Party got 4.6%, and a more radical "anti-capitalist left" coalition (in which OKDE did not participate) got 0.36%.

It seems that a struggle for the reorganisation and transformation of the Greek workers' movement, working on the tensions which must be opened up in the PASOK-aligned unions and within PASOK, is necessary in order to map a political way forward.

## IRAQI ELECTIONS

# Now fight for a labour law!

BY COLIN FOSTER

**F**ull results from Iraq's 7 March parliamentary election are not due until the end of the month. Best guesses so far are that the "State of Law" slate of Nouri al-Maliki — prime minister since 2006 — will win the largest chunk of seats, though nowhere near a majority.

Iyad Allawi, the former Ba'hist and CIA favourite who was the US-appointed prime minister in the "interim government" of 2004-5, but has since been in eclipse, is said to have done well, especially in Sunni-Arab-majority areas, with his Iraqiyya slate maybe winning the second biggest block of seats.

The Iraqi National Alliance, the Shia-Islamist coalition which was the biggest electoral force in Iraq in 2005, has been depleted by Maliki separating off from it. Though it brings together a wide variety of groups — from the movement of Moqtada al-Sadr, which has boasted of a militant anti-US stance, through the Islamic Supreme Council (a Shia-Islamist group originally sponsored by the Iranian government), to Ahmed Chalabi, who was the Pentagon's favourite in 2003 when Allawi was the CIA's — it is reputed to be running third.

The Kurdistan Alliance — KDP and PUK — can be reliably predicted to sweep most of Iraqi Kurdistan, and be the fourth party. All the guesses are provisional. But a few things can already be said.

A new government will only be formed through complex haggling. The process may not be as long as in 2005-6, when it took five months after the election to choose a prime minister, but it will be sordid.

Allawi's group has already alleged electoral fraud. It certainly suffered before polling day by having many of its candidates disqualified on the grounds

of alleged Ba'hist links.

The Iraqi government has ignored a parliamentary mandate to organise an (already-postponed) referendum on the deal about US troops signed by Maliki and Bush in late 2008.

In 2008, the USA started off bidding for a treaty that would have allowed the US armed forces to remain as a veritable parallel government in Iraq for an indefinite future. Maliki balked, and in the end the Bush administration, evidently anxious to get some deal, any deal, before the US presidential election, signed a document committing the USA to put all its military operations in Iraq under Iraqi control; to withdraw US troops from the cities by June 2009 (which it has done, more or less); and to withdraw all US troops by the end of 2011.

Maliki promised a referendum in Iraq on the deal. But, as <http://niqash.org> reports: "7 March has passed with no referendum on the security agreement (SOFA) concluded between the US and Iraq [in 2008]. Iraqis still do not know the Government's or Elections Commission's motives for disregarding a law passed by a majority in Parliament..."

"During a month-long elections campaign, none of the politicians spoke of a referendum on SOFA. They did not even give any justification or apology for their failure to implement it..."

It is now unlikely there will be a referendum at all. "President Obama has announced the withdrawal of all US combat forces from Iraq by the end of August 2010. There probably won't even be a [new] Iraqi government by then, let alone a public referendum. The remaining non-combat troops, meanwhile, are to pull out before the end of 2011".

Evidently the Sadr movement, the main group to denounce the deal in 2008, decided to let the issue go.

The Iraqi government's procedure is yet more evidence of how far Iraq still is from a stable and accountable democracy, despite all the formalities. Nevertheless, the 7 March election was an election, in a way that Saddam Hussein's presidential "poll" of 2002 — where he won, not 90%, not 99%, not 99.9%, but allegedly 100% of the vote — was not.

## IRAQI LEFT

**The left had no real presence. The Worker-communist Party of Iraq originally decided to stand — a welcome move, since we in the AWL had argued with them back in 2005 that they should contest the elections then — but then pulled out.**

The Iraqi Communist Party did stand more-or-less independently this time, rather than joining a coalition with bigger bourgeois forces as previously — but only "more or less" independently, since they presented themselves as the "People's Union", with no distinct working-class or socialist claim. I don't know their vote, but it is unlikely it was big.

However, there was some political movement in the run-up to the elections, and some beginning of political differentiation as distinct from the jostling of communal blocs. All the main coalitions, apparently, were at pains to present themselves as non-sectarian, nationalist, and at least semi-secular.

Maliki represented a pro-Iranian orientation, Allawi a more Arabist orientation. I don't know how much the Iraqi National Alliance has rowed back from the Islamic Supreme Council's previous advocacy of a federalised Iraq, with a southern region having the same very large autonomy that the Kurdish north already has, but in the past that has been a key differentiation between them and Maliki, who claims to represent a more

unified and centralised Iraq.

As far as I know, relations with the USA were not a big issue in the election. Nor was the continuing process of selling off to multinationals licences for shares in production in Iraq's oilfields.

But the "politics" in the election were a bit more like "politics", a bit less like straight communal-bloc haggling.

This does not mean that Iraq has achieved a stable (although limited and bourgeois) democracy, or that the 2003 invasion is vindicated. Between 2003 and now have come at least 100,000 civilian deaths. Each month dozens more are killed by Al-Qaeda-type bombings. Vast numbers have been maimed or forced to flee their homes. Iraqi society has been atomised and brutalised. Even the formalities of democracy are very shaky in Iraq. Despite the Maliki government's repeated promises of a democratic labour law, the government still keeps laws from the Saddam era which give it a legal basis for snuffing out Iraq's much-harassed new labour movement as soon as it feels strong enough to do that.

Paradoxically, a "strengthening of democracy" in Iraq in the shape of a more solid political system, and a government with more credibility and authority, could well bring a rapid risk of the stifling in Iraq of the element of democracy most important for socialists, the ability of workers to organise and agitate independently.

The shifts in Iraq do, however, show that it is (and has been since 2003) important for socialists to agitate and organise on democratic issues within Iraq, rather than limiting ourselves to denouncing the US. They reinforce the urgency of building international support for the Iraqi workers' demand for a democratic labour law, codifying the right to organise and to strike.

# Interview: why I'm challenging Blears

David Henry is standing in Salford in the general election. He was selected as a "community candidate" by the "Hazel [Blears] Must Go" campaign, but is now standing under the banner of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition. He spoke to *Solidarity*.

**How did you become a TUSC candidate?**

The "Hazel Must Go" campaign was founded before TUSC was even conceived, by a diverse group of people who aren't particularly party political, and they remain dominant in the campaign.

Disillusionment has been brewing among Blears' constituents for years, to the point where she was targeted for deselection by her own local Labour Party last June. She survived, but the turnout was very low. At the time I was about to be evicted from my home, and had been "fighting the system" from just about every possible angle.

We were originally more of a pressure group, but evolved after Blears refused to engage with our concerns. TUSC approached us at quite a late stage, about six months after the campaign had already announced we'd stand a candidate against Blears. When I put myself forward as a candidate I'd never even heard of TUSC. We had a vote on the proposal to affiliate to TUSC, which was resoundingly passed.

**What sort of people have been involved in your campaign?**

All sorts of people — Salford wants Blears out! We've had Martin Bell support us and attend our meetings, we've had huge media interest; but the emphasis has been on community and voluntary organisations, trade unions, and disenfranchised Labour supporters. The Green Party is also backing the campaign. The far-right, naturally, have stayed away!

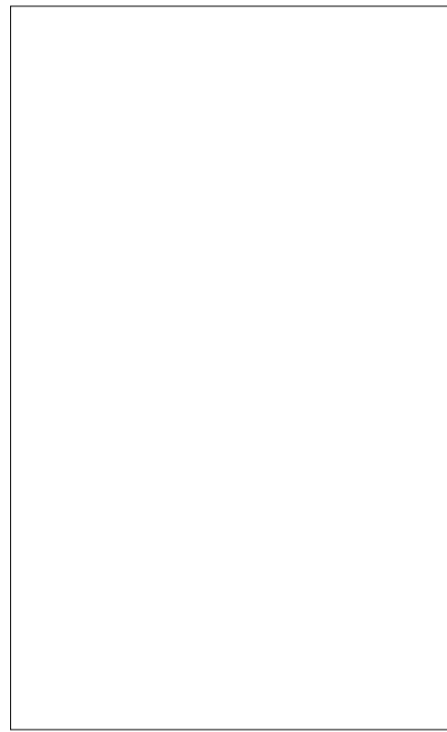
Beyond Salford, we have links with left candidates in neighbouring constituencies — the Green Party in Manchester, Respect in North Manchester, the Community Action Party in Wigan, and TUSC candidates in deprived areas of south and east Manchester.

**Where are you coming from politically?**

I grew up in relative poverty on a rough estate: my dad was a plasterer and my mother was a community health worker. We moved around different estates because my parents experienced a lot of racism as a mixed-race couple. They aren't rigorously political, but didn't have much choice but to stand up for themselves. Some of my earliest memories are being with them on an Anti-Nazi League march in the 1980s.

When I was nine I organised a campaign to save my local playground, and I've been passionate about social and environmental justice ever since. I became involved in human rights and direct action campaigns when I was still at school. Growing up under Thatcher always felt like a big grey cloud hanging overhead.

Every day was an uphill struggle during the dark days of Section 28. I began reading about the LGBT civil rights movement in the radical press as a teenager and I've been involved ever



since.

Now, with the "Pink Pound", the stereotype is happy-go-lucky, carefree, party people with big disposable incomes. The assumed leaders of the gay community are privileged, middle-class, white, macho businessmen. They have turned equality into another consumer product.

I've not always been entirely comfortable defining my political identity, but I'm basically a socialist with a tendency to resist oppression, and opposed to authority.

**What sort of place is Salford?**

Salford has the typical traits of any industrialised city. I live in the most deprived ward where there's a lot of regeneration going on, but also a lot of gentrification. The poorest have had their homes demolished and the land sold off to private developers.

Salford is one of the birthplaces of the modern working-class movement. Today, politically speaking, it's an exciting place to be. There are three Labour MPs in the city, the most high-profile being my opponent Hazel Blears, who is a key figure in the disastrous New Labour project. Blears has abandoned every socialist and working-class principle she was expected to champion.

**What are the main issues for your campaign?**

Our "Charter for Salford" outlines ten points. We are against the savage cuts planned by the big three political parties, cuts which are going to hit the most disadvantaged in Salford the hardest. We oppose privatisation, war and discrimination; we will defend the NHS and public services and are calling for free education and public ownership. We support parliamentary reform, transparency and accountability. We want a political system that operates in the interests of everyone, not just the privileged ruling elite.

**Some on the left have criticised TUSC for being not very democratic or inclusive, both at a national level and in some local areas. Do you think that's fair?**

TUSC comprises such a diversity of

*Continues on page 12*

## THE LEFT AND THE GENERA

# On Harr

Jill Mountford, who is standing as a Workers' Liberty candidate in Peckham and Camberwell, spoke to *Solidarity* about the politics behind her campaign

**What do you think of what is on offer politically from the mainstream parties in this election?**

In policy terms there is very little for the working class — we have three main political parties, if you include the Lib Dems, all vying for the centre ground. But the working class is not in the centre ground, we're firmly on one side of the class divide.

Of course, historically, Labour is the party of the working class, born out of the trade unions and organised workers needing political representation. Despite decades of attacks on Labour Party democracy and workers' rights, and desperately trying to manage capitalism better than the capitalists, Labour still has potentially strong links with the unions and so cannot be written off as a spent force.

That said, what a betrayal: 13 years of attacks on the working class, building on the previous 18 years of Tory attacks. Jobs, homes, welfare and healthcare all hacked away.

We're out every weekend campaigning on estates around Camberwell and Peckham and it is reassuring that people haven't forgotten what the Tories stand for and what they did during their 18 year reign under Thatcher and Major.

The polls show that many working-class people still see Labour as the traditional party of the working class in some form or other, even if they feel betrayed and let down by them. Of course, this is likely to translate itself into a really low turnout at the polls; not because people don't care who is in government, or don't have strong feelings about lots of different issues affecting their and other people's lives, but because they feel powerless and that voting is pointless. This is a bad situation.

Despite this there is much to be optimistic about. Once you get the ear of people it's easy to engage in some serious discussions about how we could better organise society in the interests of the majority.

Brown giving away billions of pounds to rich bankers while watching jobs in industry and the public sector fall by the wayside is undoubtedly obscene, and opposition and repugnance to it is rife.

It is our job to put forward a clear and distinct alternative, a set of working class demands that includes nationalising the banks, transport, utilities, etc; that involves creating jobs by building and staffing schools, the health service, the welfare state. It also includes repealing the anti-trade union laws and passing a charter of positive workers' rights, as well as fighting racism in all its guises and sexism.

**Of course, this election, in many places around the country, is not simply a contest between the three major parties, and a socialist candidate here and there. In this election we have the threat of the BNP. It's then we hear the main parties and their MPs talking about the importance of voting. Politicians such as Labour MP Margaret**

Jill Mountford

**Hodge in Barking have started talking about keeping the fascist BNP at bay — but it's all too little, far, far too late. For the previous 13 years under Labour and for 18 years under the Tories they have been consciously excluding working-class people from politics.**

What we have to say in any election, but especially at a time like this, when we have seen such corruption in the political class and are still going through a terrible economic crisis, is really important. The combination of the banks being bailed out and the MPs' expenses scandals has brought the whole system into disrepute. What we say on our leaflet — about the need for a workers' voice in politics, our pledge to take an average skilled workers' wage if we are elected — no one else is saying. Yet that is exactly what needs to be said in this election!

For sure there are a few good Labour MPs left, but even they have become ground down, have lost confidence. I don't think they are fighting on some of the issues they would have fought on 15 or 20 years ago.

**What are the big political issues in Peckham and Camberwell?**

Wages, jobs and housing!  
In drafting our latest election leaflet someone whose political opinion I respect questioned whether the emphasis on the minimum wage was a bit skewed. The point is that having talked to people living on Southwark's estates in the last few months, low wages seems to me to be really important. So many people do not earn even the present minimum wage — which is itself completely inadequate. And we've come across lots of people who are "underemployed".

Many people live and work in a sub-economy, working at scrappy, part-time, cash-in hand jobs, in smaller workplaces. Where the work they have has little or no opportunity to unionise, they are at the beck and call of a boss who they work alongside, and they have only two or three co-workers.

The flipside is over-employment. We've met women who are working at three or four cleaning jobs or men who have cleaning jobs and are also night security guards. All to earn a living wage. This situation is insulting to human beings. No one should have to live like this.

The other big issue is homes. I grew up in a 1930s council house. It had a back

# man's doorstep

garden, front garden, plenty of space inside. I don't want to romanticise, but looking back, it does seem like a golden age of council housing.

Now you walk around estates and even though some homes are spacious on the inside the lack of investment is blindingly obvious.

Even when money has been spent, it has been on cosmetic "improvements". They will tart up and modernise the fascia of a building, give it an aluminium covering so it ceases to look like a 1960s block... But the fundamentals, like getting your heating fixed, getting your hot and cold water when you need it, repairs to leaks and lifts, all of these things are shabbily attended to, even on some of the "better" estates.

And on the big Aylesbury estate there was a conscious political decision by Southwark council, once under Labour, now under Liberal leadership, not to invest in the estate, to prepare it instead for demolition, and for a PFI scheme to come in and build on the land, building much smaller and fewer homes.

People living on that estate have had to clarify, to the fine detail, what is being done to their homes, had to demystify the propaganda.

We on the left sometimes talk about "social housing". But as people on the Aylesbury have found out, "social housing" isn't good enough. Today "social housing" means Housing Associations, higher rents, loss of tenancy rights. It is council housing that we need. It is council houses that haven't been built — there is a huge waiting list in Southwark — and those that remain have been run down or sold off — under both Tories and Labour.

Yet there is a lot of money going into building in the area. Before the crash the penny dropped with developers that the Elephant and Castle was the next circle out from the city. They had developed Bermondsey, next stop the Elephant. So now there is a major facelift going on. There is a very stark contrast in this part of the city between incredibly flash buildings going up, and run-down estates. It's a familiar story but when this development — iconic glass and steel buildings, built to worship capitalism — creeps into an area like Peckham and Camberwell where there is so much brutalist architecture, working-class storage tanks we fondly call home, it is shocking.

We've found people sleeping rough on council estates. On one cold mid-week daytime in January we found two young men asleep. Only one guy had a sleeping bag. One was sleeping in the bin area — the space at the bottom of a rubbish shaft, a cold, stinking, grungy hole of a place, that only a description by Dickens could do justice to. You couldn't tell if this guy was dead or alive. This is 2010, Peckham and Camberwell, the Labour Deputy Prime Minister's constituency.

This is an election where we will get either a return Labour government or a Tory government. There is not a shadow of a doubt in my mind that a Tory government would be far, far worse. But everything about my experience of doing this campaign tells me that under no circumstances can we let the Labour government off the hook. All around us, what we see now is both the Tories' and Labour's legacy.

We shouldn't forget that Harriet Harman is not just an ordinary MP. She may not be a bad local MP, but that's not all she is.

When it suits her, she's the feminist, when it suits her, she is the class warrior, when it suits her, she's the pacifist. But for the last 13 years she has sat at the top table of the Labour government in different ministerial positions. We have to remind people that she has a lot to be responsible for.

### What do you want your electoral campaign to achieve?

We should be pleased with ourselves if we can put back on people's agenda the idea that working-class people have the right to a voice in Parliament.

Working-class people have a set of needs and aspirations which are quite different from those of the rich and the powerful.

It would be good if we can re-introduce ideas and slogans that were quite commonplace when I came into politics in the 1980s and that were still around in the 1990s, about workers having a right to representation, and the importance of Parliamentary politics, from an independent working-class standpoint.

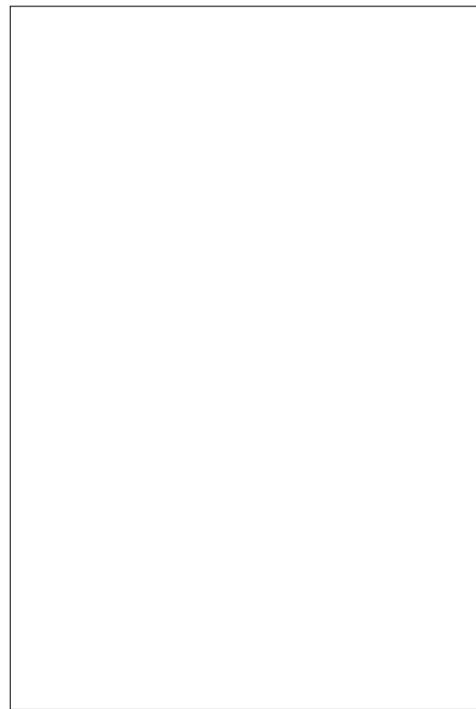
I would like us to talk with people in the constituency about how capitalism works, to help others make sense of what is going on in the economy and with the banks.

It is worthwhile just getting out onto the streets and making a noise!

We need to carry on working in the constituency with the good people we have met, for instance in tenants' associations — people we have met and will meet by holding meetings on council estates.

We shouldn't be like the big parties and think people are only worth talking to while there is an election going on. So many people are interested in ideas and have a sharp sense, from direct experience, about how the world works. That's very inspiring.

Some people in the area have a big battle ahead, people on the Aylesbury estate. We must continue to help them in that fight.



Eileen House at Elephant and Castle. Private flats and offices. Not what local working-class people need

### Camberwell and Peckham MP Harriet Harman goes walkabout on the Aylesbury Estate — dressed in a stab proof vest

### How does your campaign fit into developing and improving the socialist left?

We live in interesting times — the biggest socialist group in the Britain, the SWP, is in a terrible decline. On one level it's sad because there have been so many opportunities missed by that organisation. That's not just bad for the SWP it's bad for the working class. But ultimately it seems like an opportunity for renewal. A time to further sift out the debris on the left.

We should remain optimistic because a lot of the dross could be cleared away and the AWL, as have others, have a test now, to see if we can win people over to our ideas.

We believe, in contrast to others on the left who have bent to Stalinism and political Islam, that we have had a rational, principled, independent and systematic approach to thinking through our ideas. Now we have to prove that.

Even a small voice can be heard in the right circumstances with the right opportunities and by keeping our voice clear. I do think there are opportunities. Over the last two years people have become more interested in politics in a general way — witnessing, as we have, a Labour government coddling the richest and most powerful people in the world, while workers affected by the crisis can't pay their rents or their mortgages. A Labour government defending the system to that extent — it's been an education for many.

Now we might be entering the general election with a wave of strikes. The BA workers seem very prepared to go out on a limb and to fight their union leaders, if they sell them out. This fills me with hope of what could be possible. We will need that kind of fight when we face such devastating cuts across the public sector.

The job of socialists is to be unashamed fighters for our ideas. Inevitably we are going to get into arguments and discussions — that can only be a good thing.

### How did you first become a socialist and what has kept you involved?

I first got involved in socialist politics as I drifted out of going to Greenham Common in 1982-3. It had been a good powerful feeling to find a voice and to organise alongside other women of different generations and different classes. But

it became increasingly clear to me that women alone could not change the whole world, and women of different classes had different needs and aspirations.

But I was fortunate. I was able to get involved in the *Warrington Messenger* (newspaper) strike solidarity campaign. I was able to get on a coach from Stoke, go there and get arrested. That was my turning point. From there I went on to be involved in the miners' strike — the best year of my life! And after that there was a year-long dispute against Murdoch in Wapping.

At this time, no matter where you were in the country you could get on a coach and join a demonstration or go to a picket line — every single weekend. In between all these major class battles there were campaigns to defend the health service, stop apartheid, and so on.

Young people who come to socialist politics now are worth much more than my generation were worth. To be inspired is very hard. There is a lot to make you angry but not much to inspire you. Of course, the test is to keep up the commitment and that is the same for all of us — cherishing and developing rational and logical socialist ideas.

The thing is being able to understand how capitalism works. The fact that there are two classes in society and our interests, needs and desires are diametrically opposed to each other. Nothing in my experience in the last 30 years has shown me that they can be reconciled.

For capitalism to survive, day by day, decade by decade, century by century, it has to absolutely screw the class that it exploits for profit.

Nothing has changed fundamentally since it first came about. Even if things had gone better for the labour movement, in the last twenty or thirty years we would have had better opportunities, but still it would not have been enough.

Like billions of people the world over I come from a long line of people who have always had the crumbs from the table — and it's not good enough.

**To help our campaign:**  
Email: [sacha@workersliberty.org](mailto:sacha@workersliberty.org)  
Phone: 07904 944771

# A socialist how-to for the general election

By RHODRI EVANS

Take a busy street corner in a big city. A hundred adults pass by. Statistically, how do they relate to the general election? Forty of them won't vote. In fact, more like 50 or 60. The 40% non-voting rate is among electors, and quite a few people in cities are not on the electoral register. Young people are more likely to be out on the streets than older people, but vote less.

And the 45 or so who will vote? Extrapolating present polls, about 17 will vote Tory, about 14 Labour, about nine Lib Dem, and the remaining five a mix of UKIP, Greens, BNP, and nationalist (in Scotland and Wales). In fact the Labour number will be a bit higher than 14, the Tory number lower than 17: the Tories are weaker in big cities, and much weaker among younger people.

Statistically, unfortunately, you'll need several groups of a hundred each to pass by before you're likely to meet a far-left voter, even if the few far-left candidates do much better than they expect.

What do socialists do about this, in the coming weeks when people will be thinking about and ready to talk about their political preferences in a way they usually aren't?

However active we are, we can't hope to sway the broad political picture by the short conversations we can have in the coming weeks, with a minority of voters.

But among the 14-plus of every hundred who vote Labour, there are few outright Blair-Brownites. They are many more who have a basic working-class viewpoint, but at present see nothing to do about politics but put a cross for Labour, with gritted teeth, on 6 May.

We can offer them an active political project, rather than the private gesture of gritted teeth. We can tell them: yes, vote Labour, but also organise so that there is pressure on the Labour leaders from the left, where now the huge pressure on them from the right (which they are predisposed to go with anyway) goes almost unchallenged.

Organise to make the unions use all their channels to put pressure on Labour! Organise anti-cuts campaigns, and take their campaigning into the unions and the local Labour Parties! Organise to re-establish socialist ideas in the labour movement!

That message also offers a path to the sizeable chunk among the 50-odd who are currently unlikely to vote,

but who are willing to think about it, and to some not on the electoral register.

If we can draw even one of each hundred passers-by into further discussion and activity, we will shift the options seriously. That is what the Socialist Campaign to Stop the Tories and Fascists will attempt. It is trying to reach the "constituency" which turned out for the large meetings which John McDonnell MP drew in his campaign for Labour leader in 2007, and which otherwise remains atomised and passive.

In every area where there are even a few active SCSTF supporters, they can do a sort of "election campaign without a candidate". They can go on the streets in favour of voting Labour, but promoting positive working-class policies, a critique of new Labour, and a call to fight against the next government whether Tory or New Labour.

They can do street stalls; hustings and debates; intervention in other hustings; interventions at the public "appearances" of MPs during the election campaign.

SCSTF, so we understand, will be producing material — broadsheets, leaflets, etc — for use on such street stalls.

In the next two or three weeks the ground needs to be prepared by taking the SCSTF to union branches and to individual left activists. As SCSTF people approach those union branches and individuals, we can explain to them plans for street stalls and so on, and invite their support.

It's unlikely that we will have enough resources any-

where to do door-to-door canvassing with SCSTF. Obviously "without a candidate" is in general a limitation for an "election campaign". But the relative limitation is smaller when the possibilities if the far left had a candidate extend only to popularising ideas and winning contacts, i.e. do not include mustering a vote sufficient to become a visible "political fact". And, realistically if sadly, that is where we are now.

The "election campaign without a candidate" has the advantage of being "scalable". It can be done on more or less any scale from modest to highly-visible depending on the numbers and energy involved.

Inquiries at the Electoral Commission reveal that there are no complications of "electoral law" about doing this sort of activity as what is called a "third party" or a "non-party campaign", so long as all the literature carries the imprint (in the required form) of a "responsible person" and a street address, and the total expenditure is less than £10,000.

SCSTF supporters also should immediately plan for SCSTF public meetings in major cities soon after 6 May. Such meetings can pull together contacts made in SCSTF campaigning to discuss what to do about the major theme of SCSTF, i.e. organising a working-class fight back against the next government whether Tory, New Labour, or coalition.

• The statement, supporter list, a model motion and more can be found at: [stoptoriesandfascists.wordpress.com](http://stoptoriesandfascists.wordpress.com)

Stop them *and* organise!

## Why I'm challenging Blears

Continued from page 10

campaigns and activists. Yes, there are people who are putting the work in nationally, but they've been unfairly criticised by people who I think are scarred by events they need to put behind them in order to build a united left.

The left has been damaged by infighting and sectarianism for far too long. As a result we've got a right-wing Labour government and the likelihood of a Tory government. It's awesome that there are so many schools of thought to the left of New Labour. It can be a source of diversity rather than division. The Convention of the Left and the People's Charter are laying the foundations for bringing the left together.

The best way to view TUSC is at a local level. I can only speak for my experience here in Salford, where our campaign is the only left-wing challenge to New Labour and the far-right. TUSC isn't going to form a government, but it has the potential to put radical voices back into Westminster, where they are needed more than ever.

**Some have argued that TUSC doesn't take a strong stance on migrants' rights and migrant workers' struggles, and also that it shares some of No2EU's nationalistic stance on Europe.**

I fully empathise with that criticism, though as someone who had no involvement with No2EU I can only look at it retrospectively. TUSC is not No2EU; it's a fresh start. I don't think No2EU was actually nationalistic, but it was misunderstood that way. The majority of people involved in TUSC are well-known anti-fascists who've been attacked for standing up to racism and nationalism, like Alec McFadden who was brutally attacked by neo-Nazis in his own home. TUSC has clear policies about defending the rights of asylum-seekers and economic migrants, and here in Salford our campaign has supported those threatened with deportation. I want a world where we don't need borders or controls on the movement of people.

I'd argue that the Lisbon Treaty reinforces capitalist globalisation by devolving power away from local communities. There is a real danger that the whole planet is sleepwalking towards a "new world order"

led by capitalist superstates.

**What would you say about the big majority of constituencies where TUSC isn't standing?**

TUSC isn't fielding pointless "paper candidates" to raise its overall electoral profile. Where there exists a strong, organised, socialist, left-wing, trade union or working-class resistance movement, TUSC should be there to provide a genuine alternative to the three big parties and the far right.

**What kind of result would you regard as a success?**

We've already achieved so much. We believe victory is within our grasp, but beyond that we'd like to use the grass-roots infrastructure we've built to fight for reforms locally. Our local authorities exude corruption, and resistance is shaping up in education, in public services and in workplaces all over Salford and Greater Manchester.

When the dark days I remember as a kid return, Salford will be ready to fight back.

• More: <http://bit.ly/salford>  
<http://hazelmustgo.wordpress.com>

## FOOTBALL

# Reclaiming the game

Jules Spencer, a member of the "Football Club United of Manchester" board, spoke to Daniel Randall.

*Q: Can you tell us a bit about how the FCUM came about, and what its aims and values are? Do you think it's a model other fans should follow?*

We were formed in the wake of the Glazer takeover of Manchester United [in 2005]. Many of us had campaigned against the takeover on a "not one penny" basis, threatening that if the worst happened we would withdraw our "custom" (but not support) and therefore not help fund their "project". And so we needed an alternative, to keep that body of supporters together. Disillusionment with the way the game was heading had been building for a number of years, ironically in United's most successful period. Supporters were setting sick of paying increased prices, being told to sit down and be quiet, having kick-off times moved for television and not having a voice.

FC United is about offering an alternative and about empowerment of supporters. About accessibility and about being a positive contributor to its community. About shaping our own destiny rather than being the plaything of one owner.

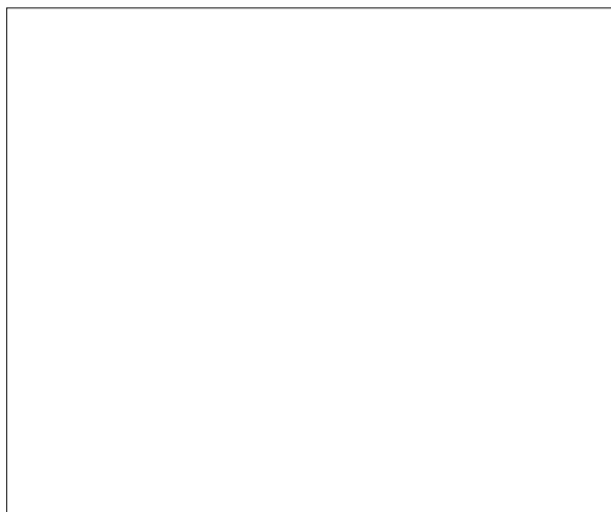
*Q: What are your aspirations for the future of the FCUM project?*

I wouldn't call it a project. It's a living, breathing football club that every day shows that there is an alternative way of doing things. We hope to have our own ground in the next couple of years, and once we do we'll go from strength to strength in delivering that alternative.

*Q: If you had to draw up a programme or charter to change the way the football "industry" was run, what would it include?*

Supporter-ownership being central to the way clubs being structured, and an independent regulator overseeing the game.

*Q: Do you think the financial turmoil gripping several football clubs — from top-flight Portsmouth to aspirant lower-*



FC United fans

*league sides like Notts County — is an inevitable result of the hyper-commercialisation of football as a sport over the past two decades?*

There are a myriad of reasons for the current financial state of the game, but central to these reasons is instability within the clubs, owners promising much but delivering little. The two examples you cite are perfect examples of that, where supposed rich owners have promised the earth but left their clubs staring facing a bleak future, if indeed they have one at all.

The "chasing of the dream" that involves ramping up ticket prices to help fund ever-inflating players' wages, the reliance on TV money which results in the paying supporter paying second-fiddle to TV schedules, are examples of where commercialisation has become more important than the football itself.

But there needn't be anything inherently wrong with commercial activity per se, if done for the right reasons. People sometimes mistake FC United as anti-commercial when we're not. We sell hats, scarves, replica kits and have a number of sponsors (although we deliberately do not have a sponsor on our shirt), but our commercial activity is done for the benefit of the football club, to help keep ticket prices down and

to aid us in delivering community work. That is the important difference.

*Q: What's the alternative? It would be difficult to some "seal off" the world of football from the market dynamics of the rest of society, so are fans defenceless against attempts to turn their clubs into corporate playthings?*

Fans are far from defenceless and actually hold considerable power. It is true that that this power is often not realised and used to its full effect, but there should be no reason why it cannot be harnessed and used as a positive force for change.

For us, the ideal scenario is complete and total supporter ownership, but at the very least clubs should be putting supporters at the very core of their planning and decision making. For that voice to be heard clubs need to welcome supporters into that process. Supporter representation at board level would be a start.

*Q: The hyper-commercialisation of the game has also revealed a huge democratic deficit in the football world; fans and even players and other staff have almost no say in how their clubs are run, and most working-class fans are now priced out of even attending games. Are the supposedly "democratic" models of club governance operated in Spain, for example, an alternative?*

The model you see at Barcelona and Real Madrid for example is one that should be welcomed, but it isn't without its flaws. You could argue that their members, whilst owning their clubs, only really get to elect a President and Executive to run the club on their behalf, which is a form of democracy not a million miles away from what we have in the top-tier of English football.

However we like to think that the model we have at FC United, where our owners not only elect the Board but get to vote on all the major decisions the club takes and decide the strategic direction the club takes, is a better example of how a club should be structured. On an international stage the model that they have in Germany, where clubs are much more formally tied to their supporters and their community, is perhaps a better example than you have in Spain.

• More: [www.fc-utd.co.uk/history.php](http://www.fc-utd.co.uk/history.php)

## FILM

# All pressure and action

WILL LODGE REVIEWS HURT LOCKER

**A**t this year's Oscars Kathryn Bigelow became the first female director to be given a gong — for her film *Hurt Locker*. It was a worthy winner in a crop of "Iraq war flicks", but it is not political film.

*Hurt Locker* follows an Army Bomb Squad unit during their last six weeks on tour in Iraq. The film begins with the death of their old commander, Sergeant Thompson (Guy Pearce), and the arrival of their new boss, Staff Sergeant Will James. The main plot follows the tension that arises between James and his crew, Sergeant Sanborn (Anthony Mackie) and Specialist Eldridge (Brian Geraghty), over James' cavalier attitude, and seemingly suicidal mindset.

Visually, *Hurt Locker* is very good, with Bigelow getting some great shots, including the one used in all of

the trailers — of Staff Sergeant James running away from an explosion. Some of the wide countryside shots, filmed in Jordan, are also excellent, and both close-up and far-out shots of the squad at work make you feel the pressurised situation the soldiers were in.

But the plot itself isn't greatly interesting, displaying themes in no way unique to *Hurt Locker*. The story's grip comes from the characters who are convincing. You can empathise with the behaviour and emotions on display. The film makes no political comments at all, neither on the broader context of the conflict, nor on issues such as equipment shortages or command failings. This may well be because it is an American film, and because it is quite tightly focussed upon the bomb disposal aspect.

*Hurt Locker* is definitely worth watching if only to be carried along the ride and to enjoy the tense "action" sequences.

## BRITAIN 2010: CHARITY

**T**he *Evening Standard's* new "campaign against poverty" is a campaign for a return to the Victoria era.

In its series of articles under the heading *The Dispossessed*, the paper notes that 40 percent of London children live in poverty and 20 percent in "severe poverty", while inequality continues to widen. The conclusion it draws is that public services will never cope and that more private philanthropy is needed. Simon Jenkins:

"But another answer lies in an unfashionable quarter, in reverting to the voluntary and charitable sector from which London's welfare state emerged. We thought we could do without soup kitchens, the Salvation Army, church day centres, charity lying-in hospitals, citizens advice and private colleges. Now I am not so sure.

"All cities need to top up their public services with a second welfare state, local, informal, messy, under-regulated but at least motivated. London has never needed one more than now."

Drafting in politicians from all parties, celebrities, and Prince William, the *Standard* promises a "crusade" against poverty. It's a vile mixture of cynicism and stupidity. A return to Victorian-style philanthropy will make things worse, not better.

There is no mystery about how to end poverty. Stop privatisation, and tax the rich to fund quality jobs, homes, services and benefits for all. Axe the bureaucrats, consultants and private finance schemes leaching the life out of the public sector. Nationalise the banks and use their wealth for social provision. Scrap the anti-union laws so that workers can get organised and fight. Support every working-class struggle, from cleaners at the London banks to the BA workers.

Somehow we doubt the *Standard* will be taking up these ideas.

## UNION “ORGANISING AGENDA”

# Agitation and accommodation

Martin Thomas reviews “Power at work: Rebuilding the Australian union movement”, by Michael Crosby. Federation Press, Sydney, 2005.

In later writing, Crosby has described a union-organising campaign which he considers a model as “unashamedly top-down”. This book is the view from “the top” of the “organising agenda” which US, Australian, British and other unions have adopted since the late 1990s.

Crosby is a former Australian union leader who became director of the ACTU [Australian TUC] Organising Centre; then went to work for SEIU, the US union which has most pushed the “organising agenda”; and is now director of the European Organising Centre, in Amsterdam, for the US union federation of which the SEIU is part, Change to Win.

The back cover of his book carries a recommendation from Greg Combet, secretary of the ACTU until 2007 and now an Australian Labor government minister, and the text praises Jeff Lawrence, Combet’s successor as ACTU secretary and leader, when the book was written, of Australia’s foremost “organising-agenda” union, the Liquor, Hospitality, and Miscellaneous Union (LHMU).

At first sight socialists might want unequivocally to welcome the book’s approach, and criticise Combet, Lawrence, and Andy Stern of the SEIU only or mainly for not carrying it through fully enough.

Unions should stop trying to sustain themselves in hard times by a focus on “servicing” members — offering cheap insurance, legal advice, and so on. Instead they should focus on building “power at work”.

But what sort of power, built how? A closer look at Crosby’s prescriptions sheds light on why the ACTU under Combet and Lawrence has performed much the same as the ACTU under Combet’s right-wing predecessor Bill Kelty, and how the SEIU came to organise two or three hundred of its officials and activists to disrupt the April 2008 conference of the US rank-and-file unionists’ network Labor Notes.

Crosby is clear and candid about his “organising agenda” as being driven by the top leaders of unions.

The leaders should start by increasing union dues; merging union organisations to get economies of scale in administration and servicing; and thus freeing resources to employ an army of “external” organisers who will “think about nothing else other than building the union’s power in non-member workplaces”.

In approaching non-union workplaces, those organisers should be cunning and tenacious. Starting with one or two contacts — maybe workers who were union members elsewhere, and have kept up their union membership on transferring to the new workplace — they should assemble a list of names and addresses of workers, and systematically visit them at home.

Once they have sufficient numbers from home visits, they should construct a “map” of the workplace, enabling them to organise and monitor a process of spreading the union message from one worker to another in each section, on each shift, and to key “opinion-formers” among the workers.

Collective union activity in the workplace should generally start with low-key actions focused on low-key demands winnable from even the nastiest employers. Bit by bit they should build up to winning union recognition.

Once the union is recognised, it should ease off the pressure, and shift organisers to new areas.

The union must not “abuse its agreement to act cooperatively by pursuing ongoing industrial action to settle disputes...” “The union office... will not normally be assessing grievances, looking for opportunities to organise and agitate workers to build power”.

The aim is “to persuade employers that it is in their commercial self-interest to allow their employees to make a rational judgement about collective representation free of the intimidatory behaviour advocated by Big Business’s political wing... [to] reach a mutually beneficial accommodation with employers”.

Crosby cautiously distances himself a bit from the policy stated by many British unions, of “partnership” with employers and government, but shares its axioms.

Dismissing a class-struggle alternative by caricaturing it, Crosby states: “We cannot win... if we are sug-

gesting that the endpoint of organising is the construction of a workers’ soviet which will deliver edicts to management backed up by ongoing collective action... [And] workers won’t tolerate a state of permanent revolution...”

Crosby wants union activists in the workplaces, but with a carefully controlled level of activism. He advises full-time union officials, when “picking” delegates [shop stewards], to avoid “the loudest”, “delegates... behaving badly, table-thumping, unreasonable demands, a refusal to be constructive in sorting out workplace problems”. He bases this advice on complaints from managers who, he assures us, “were not anti-union”, but had been put off by loudmouth union delegates.

Unions should not fight “unfair dismissal” cases where the member’s case is too shaky. Doing so uses resources which should instead be directed to organising new sites.

Once a workplace has been organised, unions should look for alternative ways for “workplace leaders” to “build the collective consciousness of the workers”. He suggests “organising a blood-bank collection drive... [or] activities designed to build solidarity with workers in other countries”. Another option currently pushed by one of the unions which Crosby praises, the Queensland Public Services Union, is a campaign called “Climate Connectors”, which mobilises union activists to “green” workplaces by switching off unnecessary lights, economising on use of paper, turning up air-conditioning temperatures, etc.

Crosby praises the SEIU’s mobilisation of its workplace activists to campaign for the Democrats in the USA in 2004, urging other unions to follow the SEIU in rewarding such activism with jackets, mobile phones, and ballyhoo.

His recommendations on unions’ political activity explicitly dismiss the idea of mobilising more union activists to use the positions to which unions are entitled in the Australian Labor Party. Instead, unions should mobilise activists for electoral and political campaigns on the SEIU model, and have their leaders use the influence which that demonstrated “power” gives them with the politicians.

He emphasises education within the unions, but sees it as top-down. “The vast bulk of our 1.8 million members haven’t got a clue about what is happening in their society”, so it falls to the top leaders to give them that “clue”.

“In the vast majority of unions”, writes Crosby, “the leader has the ability to determine the future of every staff member there”. His call is not to change that hierarchy but to use it more efficiently.

He recommends less election of union officials, and stricter “performance management” of the officials by the union’s top leaders. As a model here he cites an Australian professional-engineers’ union which hires a “chief executive” instead of electing a general secretary.

His case for fewer elections is based on three arguments. First, that election of officials makes it harder for women to get top positions, since women union

## The SEIU: spearhead of the “organising agenda”

officials are more likely to take years out from their union-official career to look after small children. Second, that directly-elected leaders can use their electoral mandate as a rival authority to that of elected union committees. Thirdly, that elected officials are likely to be tied to the “constituency” of workers who elected them, and thus less manoeuvrable for purposes of organising new areas.

## TOP-DOWN

The “organising agenda” offers more possibilities than the “servicing” approach of the late 1980s or early 1990s, but it is not a preliminary or undeveloped version of a class-struggle policy for rebuilding trade unions.

Almost all Crosby’s arguments have some grain of good sense. When organising a new workplace in hostile conditions, for example, it usually is advisable to start with action on small, maybe very small, but winnable issues.

But all are warped by his “top-down” approach and orientation to “mutually-beneficial accommodation”. A class-struggle approach requires more than amending Crosby’s scheme in this or that detail. It requires a fundamental shift in viewpoint.

With some caricature, a Crosby-model union can be described as having five parts:

- a membership paying higher dues;
- a corps of workplace activists settled in “mutually beneficial accommodation with employers” but meanwhile keeping busy by organising among workers for blood donations, switching off unnecessary lights, etc.;
- one corps of full-time officials sitting in a call-centre dealing with members’ individual grievances as efficiently as possible;
- another corps of full-time officials who are geared to “think about nothing” but recruitment in fresh workplaces, and who are constantly moved on from area to area so that they have no long-term accountability (even informal) to organised workers; and
- a union leader who can “determine the future of every staff member” and will get rid of the laggards and misfits among the officials.

It is a caricature because Crosby concedes that some bosses require not only one-off, but also repeated, pressure to nudge them into “mutually beneficial accommodation”, and that unions must offer some democracy. But Crosby does want to push unions as far towards the caricature model as possible.

Missing from Crosby’s vision is the idea of unions organising sustained, militant cross-industry campaigns for positive demands, responsive to and accountable to rank-and-file workers.

That sort of campaign has not been seen in the British union movement since the successful campaign in 1979 by the (right-wing) engineering unions for the 39 hour week. But it was the core of the organising strategy of the IWW in its heroic period, and is the core of what’s needed now. Such a strategy would include unions employing full-time organisers, but in a very different framework.

## SCOTTISH DEFENCE LEAGUE

## Exploiting Lockerbie

BY DALE STREET

Following its failure to organise protests in Glasgow (in November last year) and Edinburgh (in February this year) the Scottish Defence League (SDL) announced that it would be holding a “respectful vigil” in Lockerbie on 27 March.

The SDL’s decision to opt for a “vigil” in Lockerbie was a confession of weakness: lacking the confidence to try to organise an event in an urban centre, it chose instead to try to stage a stunt in a town of just over 4,000 inhabitants in the Scottish Borders.

(The pretext for a protest in Lockerbie was Scottish Justice Minister Kenny MacAskill’s decision — taken in August last year — to release from prison Abdelbaset al Megrahi, convicted for the Lockerbie bombing, on health grounds.)

But now it seems that even Lockerbie is out-of-bounds for any SDL protest.

The SDL’s announcement triggered a wave of protest not just from all political parties in Scotland but also from local groups in Lockerbie itself.

The SDL’s “respectful vigil” was dismissed by a relative of one of the victims of the Lockerbie bombing, for example, as a “base attempt to trade on this terrible disaster for extremist political ends”, and one which should attract “nothing but contempt for the base philosophy which lies behind it”.

The SDL appears to have realised that not only did no-one in Lockerbie want their “respectful vigil” but that staging such an event would also see them being trashed in the media for failing to respect the wishes of the relatives of the bombing.

**In yet another retreat, the SDL is now claiming that it held a “moving vigil” in Lockerbie a week last Saturday (6 March):**

“We did not take SDL banners or flags, we stood in silence and respect, and a floral tribute was left as a mark of our great sorrow for those murdered in Lockerbie.”

The reason given by the SDL for bringing forward the date of its protest, and staging it in such a way — without SDL banners or flags — that it could not even be identified as an SDL event, is:

“We had no interest in bringing disorder and the red

fascist circus to this lovely Scottish town. We wanted to remember those who were murdered with dignity and without left wing fascists charging around the town looking for confrontation... (and without) the state-funded UAF thugs and the rest of the left-wing fascist thugs bringing disorder to Lockerbie.”

Whether the SDL actually staged even this anonymised “vigil” in Lockerbie is open to question: if it did take place, then it was so low-key that no-one in Lockerbie, including the local press and police, even noticed that it was taking place.

The SDL’s claim that it “brought forward” the date of its “vigil” from 27 March to 6 March would suggest that it is no longer planning any event in Lockerbie on 27 March (although it is impossible, at the time of writing, to be absolutely sure about this).

Dumfries and Galloway Trades Council, which had intended to call an anti-SDL demonstration in Lockerbie on 27 March, has said that it will “review the situation leading up to 27 March” and will “neither mobilise nor demobilise but be ready”.

“Scotland United” — a kind of Scottish version of Unite Against Fascism — is continuing to argue what it has argued from the moment when the SDL first announced its plans for a “vigil”: that opponents of the SDL should stay away from Lockerbie.

As one of their spokespersons put it at a Scotland United press conference: “I’ve been speaking to various organisations who understandably want to demonstrate against these extremists and urging them not to go to Lockerbie.”

If the SDL were to attempt to stage an event in Lockerbie on 27 March, then, given the local opposition to both the event itself and also to any counter-demonstration, there is a discussion to be had about how best to respond.

But such a discussion is something quite different from the stance taken by Scotland United: that the SDL, as a matter of principle, and in order not to frighten away support from the likes of the Tories, should never be confronted head-on.

Although there is no room for complacency, it certainly does look more likely than not that the SDL has abandoned plans for a “vigil” in Lockerbie on 27 March. If so, this would show up the SDL to be such a busted flush that even an isolated token gesture is beyond its abilities, never mind a proper demonstration.

recently referred to those suffering after the earthquake in Haiti as “rioting ingrates”.

No court injunction will end this foul, racist attitude. He is a fascist. He is a genuine political mobster creeping and lying his way into the possibility of becoming an MP.

The BNP should always be viewed as racist, regardless of legislation, because of who they are and what they stand for. They must never be perceived as the party for the working class, because of their stark and barefaced anti-working class politics.

Any parliamentary success would wreck social conditions within their MP’s constituency and affect healthy inter-racial relations across the country.

Communities will be led to suffer from their dangerous and malignant policies and ideas. We must never retreat in the exposing who they are, however mainstream they present themselves.

This forced development within the BNP’s party constitution must not be perceived as a victory. The injunction may in fact widen their support.

If we don’t respond they may be allowed further into the political mainstream, posing as a credible party, whilst continuing to grow as a dangerous, fascist organisation.

It is critical we reinforce the truth about the BNP’s racism, and continue to raise working class and socialist ideas as a serious and effective response to tackling the immediate danger they pose.

## WESTMINSTER

## EDL show of strength

BY DANIEL RANDALL

**The English Defence League’s decision to call a central London rally during working hours on a weekday, and their ability to successfully mobilise for it, is an alarming indication of their growing strength and confidence.**

Showing solidarity with the visit to Britain of far-right Dutch politician Geert Wilders, estimates of the EDL’s numbers ranged from a few hundred up to 1,000. YouTube footage of the EDL’s main march shows a sizeable EDL presence that outnumbered the 250-or-so anti-fascists mobilised to oppose them.

The EDL crowd was made up overwhelmingly of white football hooligan type men, but not entirely — there were a few women and a tiny handful of black and Asian people, proudly pointed to something like trophies. Anti-fascists chanted: “We are black, white, Asian and we’re Jew”. An EDL woman replied: “So are we, why are you bringing race into it?”

The placards on the EDL demonstration were few in number, and all against Islam. They did not focus on promoting women’s rights and the right to free speech. The key slogans were “Close East London mosque”, “England needs a Gert [sic]”, and “Ban the Burkha”, with the most unflattering picture of an Asian woman (in a burkha) they could find — their real “message” being “Muslim women are ugly”.

The opposition to the EDL march was coordinated by Unite Against Fascism (UAF), and was heavily dominated by the SWP (which controls UAF).

Despite fine talk about “stopping the EDL from marching”, the SWP leaders of the mobilisation didn’t seem to have any real ideas about how to actually confront the EDL (who, according to varying reports, were either at Vauxhall train station, in pubs around Leicester Square, or on High Holborn).

The anti-fascist action began on College Green outside Parliament and consisted largely of chanting “Nazi scum off our streets” at passers-by.

The SWP acquiesced at the first sign of resistance from the police and instigated a “sit-down” just a few hundred yards away from the Green. This allowed the police to form a loose kettle.

More chanting ensued, except that now — because of the police cordons — there weren’t even any members of the public around to hear. The police felt confident enough at this stage to begin picking demonstrators off. Over the next hour or so an ever-diminishing number of anti-fascists was whittled away by police snatches, and there were a fairly large number of arrests. No riot police were used. Many of those arrested were processed on then driven away in two London buses.

The EDL were able to have their march almost entirely unopposed; another victory for the far-right in the face of feeble resistance from the anti-fascist movement. The SWP’s report of the day’s events attacks “the state” for “allowing” the EDL to march — which somewhat misses the point.

It would be dangerous to eschew legal and “official” actions in favour of seeking all-out pitched street-battles with people undoubtedly better at fighting than we are. That said, the SWP cannot hope to sustain its current Janus act whereby it positions itself both as the most r-r-r-revolutionary element by giving lip-service to militancy but also continues to bureaucratically control UAF, a cross-class alliance which hegemonises the anti-fascist movement and keeps it situated in the respectable, bourgeois-liberal centre-ground.

UAF leader Weyman Bennett has described the next anti-EDL mobilisation, in Bolton on Saturday 20 March, as “a line in the sand”. There are two perspectives on offer for the anti-fascist movement: one is the SWP/UAF perspective of cross-class, state-reliant liberalism and the other is the tradition of working-class direct-action anti-fascism embodied by protests such as the Battle of Cable Street. The Bolton mobilisation may well prove to be a line in the sand between these two perspectives as well.

## New rules, same old BNP

BY DANIEL ANGELL

**The BNP have changed their membership rules, and are now allowing “non whites” into the realms of party membership.**

Although the stunt has gained much attention, anti-fascists know full well how little difference this will make to party policy.

Let us make no mistake about it: the BNP will always remain, in its leadership and rank and file, a racist organisation. A party on the extreme right, a party with firm links to violent neo-Nazi organisations, and a party seeking to wreck working-class relations within Britain’s towns and cities.

The BNP are an ever-growing and serious fascist threat, with deep-seated racism still at their very core.

To simply stop being a fundamentally racist organisation is contrary to the BNP’s policies, ideas and reason. Their agenda for over two decades has been almost entirely centred on the idea of a complete end to non-white immigration and complete repatriation for those non-white people already living in Britain. It would be barmy to say that they are not racist.

A glimpse into BNP leader Nick Griffins’ past says it all.

He has outspokenly denied the Holocaust, been charged with incitement of racial hatred, given speeches at Ku Klux Klan meetings, and led the old National Front marches sporting “white power” t-shirts. He

## COUNTERFIRE

# What-ism in the 21st century?

By MARTIN THOMAS

Someone has put a lot of time and money into the new Counterfire website, launched by the sixty people who recently quit the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) with John Rees and Lindsey German. It's very slick, and frequently updated.

Money and time in? And what comes out? That is less clear.

A launch announcement is entitled "Leninism in the 21st century", but says nothing about Leninism, or indeed about the 21st century, unless coverage of "the crisis in capitalism" or "alternatives to the discredited and failing policies of the political elite" were unthought of in the 20th century.

When the website was first launched, the article nearest to offering a "political perspective" was one on the "new workers' party" question. That article has since, as far as I can tell, been removed from the website.

It was not written by a Counterfirer, but cut-and-pasted from the blog of a writer who once contributed to the *Weekly Worker*, then joined the Socialist Party, and has recently moved over to the Labour left. "Power has shifted in the Labour party... The best place

for rebuilding the labour movement and renewing working-class politics is inside Labour" (<http://bit.ly/workersparty>).

Some Counterfirers are looking that way? Or a website worker cut-and-pasted the item with no thought beyond that it would "add an element", and soon got slapped down by the Counterfire group's leaders? I don't know.

Most of the website is news and comment cut-and-pasted from elsewhere. There is no announcement of meetings or activities initiated by the Counterfire group itself. The site promises a weekly e-letter: either it hasn't happened yet, or they have someone sifting out and deleting subscriptions to it from "undesirables" like me.

The parent body, the SWP, has been edging away from its attempts to ally with Islamism — including outright Islamic clerical-fascism in its "soft" Muslim Brotherhood form — but the site suggests that the Counterfirers still look that way. It announces a meeting, apparently organised by a local group of the Stop The War Coalition (whose office is largely run by Counterfirers), where Counterfire honcho Chris Nineham will speak alongside Anas Altikriti of the British Muslim Initiative and a speaker from the Federation of Student Islamic Societies.

John Rees, the Counterfirers' leading ideologue, is described in the website's blurbs as "writer and broadcaster", presumably a reference to his recent TV presentations for the Islam Channel. Leninism? Can you imagine it? "VI Lenin, pamphleteer and raconteur".

The ostensibly-weightiest item on Counterfire, apart from the "feminist manifesto" they're pushing, is a review by Nineham of Peter Thomas's new book, *The Gramscian Moment* (see [www.workersliberty.org/gramsci-pt](http://www.workersliberty.org/gramsci-pt)). The review is anodyne, notable mostly for an attempt by Nineham to smooth over the differences revealed by Thomas between Gramsci and Georg Lukacs (the author whom John Rees made his "intellectual" reputation by writing about).

Thomas explains that much of Gramsci's writing on "hegemony" was informed by a drive by Gramsci to deepen what he had learned about the united front tactic from Lenin and Trotsky. But Nineham offers no account of why Counterfire (and the SWP) have replaced Lenin's, Trotsky's, and Gramsci's idea of united fronts based on class policies and open criticism by "Munzenbergist" fronts, "broad" concoctions designed to put on a show but to blur class lines in politics and stifle criticism.

• [www.counterfire.org](http://www.counterfire.org)

## COUNTERFIRE AND WOMEN'S LIBERATION

## Bourgeois feminism in socialist pyjamas

By JORDAN SAVAGE

Counterfire was launched on International Women's Day. Throughout the website a lot of work has been done to assure the appearance of gender equality and to foreground the women's struggle.

Photographs of picket lines, for example, carefully show as many or more female workers than male ones. This sounds like PR nonsense but it is important: to develop as a socialist feminist entity in action as well as name, Counterfire, like all of us, must guard against the possibility of misinterpretation.

This launch-day effort to highlight women's rights included a front-page story by women's editor and SOAS student union women's officer Elly Badcock under the headline, "Pyjamas don't harm us but lads' mags do".

The story was a report on a demonstration that Badcock had been part of at Tesco King's Cross on Friday 26 February. A group of student feminist activists went to the supermarket in their pyjamas, in protest at the fact that it is now against store policy to admit customers in their nightwear.

The demonstration was called by the high-profile feminist organisation Object, and intended to highlight the perceived hypocrisy of banning pyjamas in a store where lads' mags showing pictures that objectify women are readily available.

Now, the idea that there is a specific hypocrisy at play here is quite hard to grasp. Object's angle is that pyjamas were banned as they may cause offence to customers, and that Object activists are offended by lads' mags, so Tesco managers should ban those too. This is not a logical position to take; the question of lads' mags and of wearing one's pyjamas in public are entirely different, and Object's decision to take this opportunity to flaunt their anti-objectification position doesn't make sense.

Or, it wouldn't make sense without a clear reason why a pyjama ban is an attack on women. Because it is mostly likely to be women who go to the supermarket in their pyjamas? Because it is not the place of Tesco managers to dictate what women should wear?

This is alright as far as it goes; however neither Object nor Elly Badcock offer any statistics on the sex or gender of those who wear their pyjamas in public. The only conclusive reason for assuming that the new regulation is an attack against women is that in the eyes of Object everything is an attack against women!

In Badcock's article, she quotes fellow Counterfire activist Clare Solomon saying: "This is clearly a class

### Pyjamas don't harm us but lads' mags do?

issue. The ban was sparked because working-class mothers turned up in pyjamas; if they had been wearing designer ones it would have been a totally different story."

Apparently the major impetus behind this class analysis of the Tesco ban is that in Liverpool, there is a strong counter-cultural tendency among working-class women to wear pyjamas outside as a statement about reclaiming leisure time. Indeed, Badcock notes (in personal correspondence, notably not in the online piece) that in Tesco outlets in Liverpool, warm pyjamas are sold for precisely that purpose. At last! Some form of hypocrisy on Tesco's part now becomes clear.

Solomon's statement still doesn't make sense, however: designer nightwear could hardly be considered more suitable for public consumption, given its tendency to resemble lingerie. Surely Christopher Robin-esque comfortable striped flannels are far more "respectable".

The assertion that there is a class element to Tesco's ban *may* have some grounds for support, but that grounds is not to be found in Badcock's article or in Solomon's assertion, both of which seem to fall into the overall Object modus operandi of deciding to make a statement around a specific issue, and then shoe-horning the reasoning in later, no matter how ridiculous, no matter how made up.

As an organisation, Object is manipulative, dishonest and anti-sex. I have heard an Object activist accuse a sex worker of condoning rape by having sex for money, going on to say, "rape is part of the job description" (Anarchist Bookfair 2009). This statement is not only personally offensive; it is also an attack on workers' rights. It is a line of argument that Object made their niche during the debates leading up to the passing of the Policing and Crime Act in September last year. This is the law which criminalises the purchase of

sex in certain circumstances and, overall, takes self-control and self-protection out of sex workers' hands, forcing them, and particularly the precarious migrant section of the workforce, into ever more dangerous conditions.

Counterfire is very new; whether it is to be a campaign, an organisation or nothing more than a website is not clear at present. Overall, the focus on the women's struggle as part of the fight for socialism is to be commended. Indeed, even the participation in the pyjama demonstration may have begun for the right reasons, but this logic was not drawn out clearly in the way that the action was reported. In order to clarify its position as a socialist-feminist endeavour, however, it is imperative that they climb out of bed with Object at the earliest possible opportunity.

There is nothing wrong with disliking the manner in which female objectification permeates society. But there is also nothing wrong with a woman choosing to use her body for money either, if it is her own free choice to do so. The battle against a disproportionate representation of women as sex objects in our culture should be fought by working with women in the sex and advertising industries to organise against their exploitation as workers — not by graffiti-ing and tearing down pictures of naked women wherever they occur, or staging opportunist demonstrations which have little substance or logic to them.

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WHY THE IRISH LEFT WAS SET TO FAIL IN 1968-9

# The true history of the IWG split

BY SEAN MATGAMNA

Part two of a response to Rayner Lysaght ([www.workersliberty.org/lysaghtreply](http://www.workersliberty.org/lysaghtreply)) on the history of revolutionary socialism in Ireland.

**R**ayner Lysaght's response to the charge that an anti-semitic witch-hunt took place in the Irish Workers' Group in 1967-8 is typical, and typically modest. He is infallible: he saw no anti-semitism, heard none; he read no anti-semitism, he remembers none:

"The present author did not find any anti-semitism during his own brief period as member of the IWG in its last years. He remembers no anti-semitic witch-hunt thinly disguised as 'anti-Zionism' in that organisation in 1967-8. If there had been such a move, he would have been targeted, as, at that time, he was inclined to the Zionist side himself."

Yes, but would you let yourself see it even if it were pointed out to you?

As a matter of fact, you didn't. When I pointed it out in the Irish Workers' Group Internal Bulletin you chose to ignore it. And there was no good reason, in terms of facts accessible to everyone in the IWG, to reject what I wrote.

The infallible Lysaght doesn't notice it, but when he says that he was "inclined to the Zionist side" himself and yet was not targeted, he inadvertently backs up what I said (as I will demonstrate).

The "allegation of anti-Semitism" in the IWG was not about some incident in the then distant past, of which Liam Daltun wrote an account, but about current events in the IWG, in the course of the 1967-8 faction fight which broke it up. It concerned an attempt to heresy-hunt as "secret Zionists" people who had exactly the same politics as the rest of the group on the Middle East.

The only reason for considering them different on this question was that two of them, Rachel Lever and Phil Semp, were of Jewish background and the third — this writer — was married to Lever. The following are facts for which there is "documentary" evidence.

The IWG had an Annual General Meeting in September 1967. I'd moved the "Manifesto" stating the organisation's principles and a new constitution, and Gery Lawless had seconded it. No political differences had emerged. Immediately after the AGM, a six-month process of division opened up, culminating in a final split at a conference in Dublin on 17 March 1968.

That started with an attempt to simply cut Rachel Lever and myself off from the IWG by way of a refusal by the Treasurer — Gery Lawless's wife, Anne Murphy — to advance the finances for the next issue of the IWG magazine *Workers' Republic*, responsibility for which we had been given by the AGM.

This led to a confrontation between Lawless and me in the London branch in October, much of which turned into a head-bang about our attitude to Stalinism in general and to the East German uprising of 1953 in particular.

Faced with a de-facto split, I then produced a polemical overview of the IWG and its problems, *Trotskyism or Chameleonism*. Most of the Trotskyists in the IWG rallied around the politics of this document. It polarised the group, dividing it pretty much down the middle.

The decisive turning point was in December, when the three-person committee elected at the AGM to administer the IWG summarily and without any warning removed three people, Liam Daltun, Rachel Lever and myself, from membership on the grounds that we were in arrears with our subscription payments. The members of the committee were Lawless, Anne Murphy, and the new IWG secretary, Liam Boyle.

At that point Rachel Lever and I were owed money that we had paid out to finance the magazine for which we were responsible, *Workers' Republic*, and the IWG Internal Bulletin, for which we were also responsible. The committee's move was a factional coup. From that point onwards there were two organisations within the IWG, each one functioning separately.

## "SECRET ZIONISTS"?

**I**n the period up to the June war of 1967 and for quite a while afterwards, the entire British left was "pro-Israel" in the sense that we all rejected the then slogan of the Palestine Liberation Organisation and its leader

Ahmed Shukhairy, "Drive the Jews into the sea".

While desiring radical changes, we supported the continued existence of Israel as a Jewish state. We did not advocate — as far as I remember no one on the left did — the destruction of the Jewish state and its submergence in an Arab entity, however defined. The IWG and the left generally supported the programme of a unified Arab Federation of the Middle East, "with autonomy for national minorities such as Jews and Kurds". (That formula originated, I think, with the Mandel/Pablo Fourth International).

The IWG published two sizeable pieces in *Workers' Republic* on the subject, upwards of three thousand words each, one before and one in response to the June 1967 war.

The first, focused on the guerrilla campaign against British rule in Aden, sketched in the background of the nationalist "Arab Revolution" and the conflict between the Arab nationalists and the traditionalist Arab kingdoms and sheikdoms I wrote it (as Anthony Mahony), and *Socialist Worker's* forerunner, *Labour Worker*, reprinted it.

The second article was a response to the June war, written by Rachel Lever and myself, and drawing heavily on work by the Israeli Marxist organisation Matzpen. It appeared under Rachel Lever's name in *Workers' Republic*. Unless you want to count an advertisement in *Irish Militant* for the pamphlet on the Middle East which Tony Cliff wrote at the time, the "Rachel Lever" piece constituted the only response of the IWG to the June war. (Rachel and I usually had a hand in each other's work, an arrangement from which I benefited far more than she did.)

The Rachel Lever piece put the common IWG position. No one alleged that it did not, or criticised it politically, least of all for being "Zionist". The article — which now reads to me as a pretty vile piece of work — presented a very hostile account of Israel. It took a position for the defeat of Israel in the June war. It advocated the Arab Federation with autonomy for Jews, Kurds and other national minorities.

## HOW THE IWG DIVIDED

**P**olitically the IWG was a Noah's Ark of leftists held together by the fact of being Irish, most of us Irish people in England.

It included a spectrum of scarcely reconstructed Stalinists (such as, for instance, the chair of the London group, Sean Lynch, an elderly long-time member of the CPUSA), soft Maoists, Guevarists (some of whom would become involved in the Saor Eire Action Group), and various "Trotskyists", including the Workers' Fight group-in-formation (forerunner of AWL). There was also a group of supporters of the British IS (forerunner of the SWP), then still in its anti-Leninist phase. We had negotiated their entry into the IWG with IS/SWP leader Tony Cliff earlier that year.

All the Trotskyists, bar Lawless and Eamonn McCann, rallied to our side in the faction fight. The other side was a variegated bloc of all the others, in which IS people were the biggest grouping. We called it "the Anti-Trotskyist Coalition".

After some delay, Gery Lawless produced a reply to *Trotskyism or Chameleonism*. A major element in the "reply" was the charge that I, and my close associates, had "hidden political positions".

Mainly, these charges were stupid or simply ludicrous. For instance, I was a "secret state cap" [italist on Russia.] Why? Because I had recently read Max Shachtman's *The Struggle For The New Course*. Shachtman was a "bureaucratic collectivist", not a "state capitalist"... In fact I had been openly sceptical about the "degenerated workers' state" account of Russia, but that was anything but a "secret".

That particular stupidity was an attempt at winning over some of the "degenerated workers statist" in our camp. It was all the more bizarre in that all the state capitalists in the group were in Lawless' bloc, kept there by the good offices of Tony Cliff and the knowledge that they would be the strongest group on that side after the split had been consummated.

Another of the allegations that we had "secret", "hidden" politics was the charge that I and my close associates, the nucleus of what is now AWL, Rachel Lever and Phil Semp, were secret... "Zionists". But war is a pretty

good test of where people actually stand on the issues it brutally pushes to the fore, and there had been no differences in the IWG on the recent Arab-Israeli war: we had all been for the defeat of Israel. And, to repeat: two of the "secret Zionists" had written the only IWG statement on the war! On the political face of it, this was as daft as the charge that I was a "secret state cap" because I'd been reading Max Shachtman.

Now, if someone publicly, in writing, in the Internal Bulletin (and, so we heard, in much stronger terms in talking about it), accuses people of being "Zionist" when they have exactly the same politics as the rest of the group on Israel and the Arabs, but two of them are Jews... what does that mean? What can it mean? What is being said?

## MARRANOS?

**T**he only basis on which such accusation of being "Zionist" could be grounded was that some people are — as I wrote in the IWG Internal Bulletin — "Zionist on a level deeper than politics".

"Zionists" despite politics, irrespective of politics. Some people are "congenital Zionists". Some people are... Jews. And Jews are, irrespective of their politics, Zionists.

(And as well as "congenital Zionist", there was a category of "Zionist by marriage", a condition, a state of being, that also existed outside of and irrespective of politics on the Middle East, or on any other issue.)

It was a heresy hunt against Jews for "really" being "Zionist", despite politics. Just as the Spanish Inquisition after 1492 harried Marranos (Jewish converts to Christianity) as false converts, so Rachel Lever, Phil Semp and I were harried as not genuine anti-Zionists. Given the fact — on the level of politics, we were exactly the same on the Israel-Arab issue as the rest of the group — there is no getting away from it. It was a Jew-hunt.

And you, comrade Lysaght, went along with it; chose to ignore it when it was pointed out to you; and joined the bloc whose organiser and spokesman was conducting the Jew-hunt.

I have no idea what Rayner Lysaght's politics on the Middle East were then. But when he says "If there had been [an anti-Zionist heresy-hunt]" he "would have been targeted, as, at that time, he was inclined to the Zionist side himself", it adds point to what I've said.

The issue was not posed as Lever, Semp or me holding some mere dissenting opinion on the Middle East conflict. If it had been that, then Lysaght too — I'll take his word about his opinions then — would have been targeted. He wasn't. The two Jews and I — who, politically did not in the least "incline to the Zionist side", were. That is the point, comrade Lysaght!

It's a phenomenon which some of our student organisers encountered in the colleges in the 1980s, when there were quite a few attempts to ban Jewish societies for being "Zionists and racists". It was always the Jews who were targeted, while such people as Tony Benn, who was then a supporter of "Labour Friends of Israel", were not...

Think, before you write, Rayner. Or at least pause to think about it afterwards.

The logic of the "secret Zionists" nonsense is unmistakably anti-Semitic. That logic would have been bad enough, and an indictment of those like Rayner Lysaght who chose to ignore it when they should at the least have disavowed it and told Lawless to shut up. And then, on top of the "logic", it came out that the IWG's chief Zionist-hunter had in his Dublin days he had been an especially bigoted Catholic — a member or supporter of Maria Duce, a right-wing ultra-Catholic group one of whose political aims was to make the Catholic Church the only church recognised as legitimately part of the Irish state. (The De Valera constitution of 1937, while recognising the "special place" of the Catholic Church in the state, also mentioned others — Protestants, Jews — as a legitimate part of the state).

## MARIA DUCE

**I** had never heard of Maria Duce. As far as I can remember, when Daltun and others said that Gery Lawless had been Maria Duce, I formed the impression that Maria Duce was something like a more aggressive Legion of Mary.

I suppose Maria Duce's anti-semitism must have been brought into it. In any case, little was made of Lawless's past by our side. It was just another piece of Walter-Mitty-type tall-tale-telling by "Paddy Münchhausen", as Daltun called Lawless.

I don't think I properly registered what Maria Duce was until, decades later, I looked up Fr Fahey in the catalogue of the British Library. Fahey was a full-blown clerical-fascist anti-semitic. He had published a version of the notorious Tsarist police forgery and handbook of 20th century anti-semitism, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, under the title *Waters Flowing Eastward*. He believed that communism was part of a world Jewish conspiracy.

Maria Duce had connections with the clerical Fascist organisation in the USA whose anti-Jewish chief demagogue had also been a Catholic priest, Father Coughlin, the "Radio Priest" of the 1930s. (Coughlin was "silenced" by the church authorities when the USA entered World War Two.)

When Denis Fahey died in 1954 the church authorities forced Maria Duce to change its name. My understanding is that its publication *Fiat* did not cease publication until the early 1960s. The coterie of Maria Duce in and around Sinn Fein-IRA in the fifties included — so Manus O'Riordan, who researched the subject, says — Sean South, a Republican martyr who died on a raid into Northern Ireland at the start of 1957.

Where the second-hand tale-spinner Lysaght has Lawless being converted to Trotskyism during his five months internment in 1957, the records of Gery Lawless's court hearing in 1960 have him explaining his politics in terms of the influence of Father Fahey, and depositing a copy of the Maria Duce paper *Fiat* to explain his position (ECHR Series B 1960-1 p.165 and p.167-8).

A strange aspect of this strange story, and one of the things that confused the issue, was that Gery Lawless presented himself to be... a Jew! His mother was Jewish, he told people.

Now, when someone tells you something like that, you might say "that's interesting", but you accept it without question. Why not? If Lawless had told me that he was a Nigerian Ibo, the gap between what that would lead me to expect and his appearance might have triggered the question to the light-haired Lawless: "But exactly what sort of Ibo are you, Gery?" But Jews come in all shapes, sizes, and shades of hair and skin.

The "secret Zionist" witch-hunt led people on our side who had known him since the early mid 1950s in Dublin — mainly Liam Daltun, I think — to point out that the Jewish mother story was one of his many tall tales that made its first appearance when Lawless got to London.

Lawless thought in terms of national typologies. As Liam Daltun said in the Internal Bulletin, others can become Marxists without the need to "discover a Jewish grandmother". Not Gery Lawless. Was he Jewish? I have no idea. It's improbable, but of no consequence either way.

#### NOT JUST LOGIC

**If the logic of the "secret Zionists" nonsense was unmistakably anti-Semitic, there was yet more to it than that.**

Three years later, I moved to London, went around the Irish pubs with Liam Daltun, and encountered some of the people who had been in the London IWG. It slowly dawned on me that there was a low-level philistine-Catholic anti-Jewish prejudice. I stress low-level, and I don't want to exaggerate it: but it was there. After that, it began to seem possible that Lawless's nonsense charge — one of many crazy things in the faction fight — was not quite so innocent.

One of the people I encountered was called either Tom O'Leary or Michael Moran (one of those names was, I think, a pen-name). He had been in the Communist Party, the Irish Communist Group, and then the IWG. He wasn't a member, I think, in late 1967 or 1968, but he was one of the cronies who hung around downstairs at the IWG meeting place, the Lucas Arms, on Sunday nights.

In 1970 or 1971 I heard him make an outburst — possibly drunken — at a meeting of the Irish Solidarity Campaign denouncing Marxists as "rootless cosmopolitans". He may have denounced Marx as a Jew: my memory is unclear. It was a sizeable meeting, and there may be others who remember the incident.

I came to the conclusion that one of the most important aspects of the story was my own uncomprehending response to the real anti-semitism in the "Zionist"-hunt. I had seen the political implications of the "secret Zionist", "congenital Zionist" nonsense, and I had pointed them out in the Internal Bulletin. But I had not seen it as "functional", actual, anti-semitism — as a deliberate pandering to and fomentation of anti-Jewish

attitudes in the IWG. I had warned of the "dangerous implications" of Lawless's charges, but I hadn't accused him of active anti-semitism.

If I had thought there was "active" anti-semitism in the episode, I would not have let fear of ridicule or unpopularity deter me from indicting it. I hadn't thought that. I simply hadn't been able to conceive of that — hadn't been able to take it in.

I had had a fairly low political opinion of most members of the IWG. But that could be changed. That's what you wrote articles and made speeches to do. Anti-semitism was a different matter — moron stuff. Whatever about their political underdevelopment, the IWG members were pretty good people, the older ones people like my parents. Uprooted people, victims of Ireland's wretched education system, people for whom I had a strong sympathy and empathy. I'd have been hurt to think that they were anti-semitic.

I decided that I had been too "nice-minded" to let myself think that there could be people in the IWG capable of anything like that, twenty years after the Holocaust. It had a profound influence on me for the future.

#### AHA! BUT NOW?

**But, it will be said, my present-day "Zionism" shows clearly that Lawless did not misunderstand or misrepresent me in 1967-8!**

That argument would at best be a case of false rationalisation, deducing backwards from later developments.

For the sake of argument — *for the sake of argument* — let us agree that politically, as well as being a miserable "apostate knave" and "traitor slave" undeserving — as Lysaght tries to insist — of an Irish national identity or of the Irish passport that I hold, I am "pro-imperialist", a running-dog of "Zionist imperialism" and everything else politically despicable. That sheds no light on the IWG business.

From the position which we in the IWG all held at the time of the Six Day War, where did the politics of Rachel Lever, Phil Semp, and myself evolve to? Towards "Zionism"? The stark opposite. We came to be supporters of the destruction of Israel.

In 1967 no-one on the left that I ever heard of advocated the destruction of Israel. We expressed our politics in the too-vague phrase, "autonomy for national minorities like Jews and Kurds" in a Middle East Federation. Everyone regarded the slogan of the then Egypt-controlled Palestine Liberation Organisation and its leader Ahmed Shukhairy, "drive the Jews into the sea", as demented and repulsive chauvinism, as a political embarrassment.

Between 1967 and the Yom Kippur war of October 1973, the left evolved, in a moving consensus, towards "absolute anti-Zionism". "Autonomy for the Israeli Jews" gave way to support for the new PLO proposal for a "secular democratic state" in all of pre-1948 Palestine that would absorb and subsume Israel. Though much better-sounding, the new PLO line was in fact the old PLO position — conquer the Jews, destroy Israel — but now it was mystified and disguised. The realisation of a single state in all of pre-1948 Palestine, with an assumed Arab majority, presupposed the conquest of Israel and the forcible suppression of the national rights of the Israel Jews. The idea that, after such a war and conquest, the surviving Jews could be equal citizens in a victorious Arab state was delusory, serving only to make the proposal palatable for those who believed that the Israeli Jews had rights such as those expressed in the old, too-vague, slogan "autonomy".

We evolved to that position too. Though we opposed the persecution of "Zionists" in the colleges in the 1970s and 80s, we were part of the "moving consensus". Our paper, *Workers' Fight* second series, was vehemently anti-Israeli and for Israel's defeat in the 1973 war. All three "secret Zionists" of 1967, Rachel Lever, Phil Semp and I, held to those attitudes. For the rest of their political lives as revolutionary socialists, Phil Semp and Rachel Lever never shifted from that "absolute anti-Zionism". I did, but only a decade and more after 1967.

Like the proverbial man in the nightmare, I woke up and found we'd set the house on fire, but couldn't at first and for a very long time wake up the rest of the inhabitants. When I started a discussion on it in our organisation (then called International-Communist League), Rachel Lever was one of my implacable opponents. She left revolutionary socialist politics in 1982 without ever changing her mind. So the idea that "really", we really might have been "secret Zionists", would be simple ignorance. Our evolution after 1967 demonstrates that.

In fact, who was it whose 1980s views on the Middle

East had changed radically from the 1960s? It wasn't me! After 1978, when I realised that "secular democratic state", which our whole organisation understood to include defence of the right of the Israeli Jews to be equal citizens in that "secular democratic state", was plain nonsense, having no meaning but to prettily wrap up support for the military conquest of Israel, I returned to a variant of "autonomy for national minorities like the Jews and the Kurds". To "secular democratic state" I counterposed "two states" — a Palestinian state alongside Israel, the policy which the PLO would adopt in 1988 and which the UN partition resolution of 1947 had stipulated. (The territory of the UN-designated Palestinian Arab state was then annexed by Jordan and Egypt in 1948-9, and a small part of it by Israel. Israel conquered the Jordanian and Egyptian territories in the 1967 war.)

Apart from questions of right and wrong, nothing other than "two states" is practically possible. Nothing else would do justice to both peoples. Nothing else offered any way forward for the Palestinian people.

Again, leaving the rights and wrongs of the issue aside, perhaps the worst result of the unrealisable project of conquering Israel was the long political paralysis of the Palestinian people — their use by Arab states (and now, vicariously, by the "anti-imperialist" would-be left) as pawns against Israel, and pawns who could, when they got out of hand, be massacred by Arab armies, as in Jordan in September 1970 and in Lebanon a dozen years later.

In adopting the "two states" position, I did not change radically from the "autonomy" position which the IWG held, but came back to it, after a foolish and politically senseless detour — following the PLO and driven by "anti-imperialist" indignation at Israel's treatment of the Palestinians — into vicarious Arab chauvinism.

#### FARRELL AND MCCANN

**How, asks Rayner Lysaght, could "great revolutionaries" like Michael Farrell and Eamonn McCann — and let us not forget Rayner Lysaght himself — have been involved, or remained silent during the anti-semitic episode in the IWG?**

Michael Farrell was a member of the IWG and, I assume, active in the Belfast group set up in mid-1967 after a number of sympathisers of the British IS (forerunner of the SWP) joined us. Before the split he never played any part in the internal life of the IWG. He wasn't at the "re-founding" AGM of September 1967 in London, or at the March 1968 final split conference in Dublin, and he took no part in the written exchanges over the six months in between.

In the course of researching a series of articles on the left and the Northern Ireland crisis of 1969 ([www.workersliberty.org/node/9251](http://www.workersliberty.org/node/9251)), what struck me most about Farrell, for whom in the 1970s I had come to have considerable respect, was how eclectic his politics were in the late 1960s.

Eamonn McCann? He was heavily involved in the IWG. In the IWG files in my possession I found a letter from him telling me that he had edited Gery Lawless's document in reply to *Trotskyism or Chameleonism*, that he'd given it what connection it had with grammar and the English language, that he had eliminated some bits of extreme nonsense, but that he took no responsibility for the nonsense left in, or for any of it.

He had edited the document. He had made it more plausible than Lawless had, by removing some lunacies, and thus made it more difficult for the reader to form an accurate picture of the mind and credibility of the author. But he took no "responsibility". That was Eamonn. One of the bits of lunacy he spared was the charge that we were secretly "Zionists".

The history of the IWG, and (so I gathered from participants, mainly Liam Daltun) the ICG before it, was a history of perpetual personal squabbling, never-ending, never-resolved, and usually only by implication political.

Some time in early mid 1967, McCann resigned as editor of the IWG paper *Irish Militant*. (He would never return to that post). He and Liam Daltun organised an opposition to Lawless, demanding his removal as IWG Secretary.

A considerable part of Lawless's time was always given over to lining people up and keeping people outside London posted on the vagaries, irresponsibilities, and multifarious villainies of whomever he was in conflict with or feared or expected to be in conflict with or thought his correspondent held in too high an esteem.

There is a large chunk of letters in the IWG files, from mid-1967 in which Lawless bombarded me with accounts of his critics. Last Sunday evening Liam Daltun had sat downstairs in the Lucas Arms talking with the "has-beens" and "the lump", and didn't come

up to the branch meeting. Eamonn McCann had been seen (so Lawless had been told) in Hyde Park with a flower in his hair and possibly another in his mouth during a “hippy” “flower-people” gathering. That sort of thing. A lot of it.

I had good relations with both Daltun and McCann, and routinely made efforts to get Daltun to write things. I heard nothing from either of them about what was going on in London. This was remarkable because I eventually learned that I was their candidate to replace Lawless as IWG secretary! Lawless didn't tell me that. I had no knowledge of what Daltun and McCann were doing.

I thought at the time that Lawless's role in the Group was, overall, positive and necessary. He was a far better Secretary, with his energetic, thick-skinned, hustling approach, than I'd be. I was heavily involved in trade union work in the Port of Manchester and in the work of attempting to create a national port-workers' rank and file committee, in preparation for the big upcoming showdown with the bosses and the government over the decasualisation of dock labour to the advantage of the employers (it led to strikes in London, Liverpool, and Manchester between September and November). And I wanted also to concentrate on the educational work I thought could best be done through producing the IWG magazine *Workers' Republic*.

I thought the politics, and turning the group into an adequate Trotskyist organisation by means of education, was the most important work, as well as the most congenial to me. At the time I saw Lawless as an ally in that. Even if all that had been different, I would still have seen the proposal to convulse the group in a fight over the formal post of secretary as disruptive and unnecessary, a distraction.

I tried to conciliate, urging Lawless to listen to the just criticisms of McCann and Daltun, and McCann and Daltun to take the work of the organisation more seriously. I suggested that the whole group should read and discuss James P Cannon's *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party* as a manual of proper behaviour in a revolutionary socialist group, and Lawless arranged that. It would be a central reference point in the polemics after October 1967.

Like the man who tries to stop a senseless fight in the pub, I antagonised both sides to some extent.

And when the faction-fight erupted in October 1967? When I and Liam Daltun took up much of what Daltun and McCann had said, and tried to provide a political analysis of the IWG's organisational problems as well? McCann backed Lawless! From McCann there was a lot of humming and hawing, but he finally took a position that all the group's troubles could be resolved if we affiliated to the Mandeliste “Fourth International” (the “United Secretariat”).

It was a cynical ploy against our side, most of us highly critical of the Mandelites. Personally I was not so unfriendly, and after 1969, when the Mandelites came out for a “political revolution” in China — 20 years after Mao had taken power! — I would for a while consider myself a “critical supporter”. But in 1967 I was not going to support affiliation to the Mandeliste United Secretariat of the Fourth International. Neither was the biggest group in the “anti-Trotskyist coalition” within the IWG — the supporters of IS/SWP. The “proposal” to affiliate to the Mandelites functioned only as a reason why people shouldn't join our side in the faction fight. I can't remember if it had any effect.

And Eamonn? A mere few months later, he would start writing for *Socialist Worker*, and enter into a long-term association — politically speaking, a very “open” marriage — with that tendency. His links seem to have survived even the near-decade of the SWP tendency's alliance with Islamist clerical fascism.

#### MCCANN'S POLITICS

**McCann, a small-city proletarian with, I think, a labour-movement family background, “came around” the Irish Communist Group in its last period, mid-1965, as a recent ex-student (expelled, I think, for some prank).**

A conversation with him about Patrick Pearse sometime in the summer of 1965 sticks in my mind. He had just read something of Pearse's, and excitedly told me his discovery: “Pearse was a right nutcase”. I thought that was far from the full truth, and far from just, but you could see the way the idea liberated him from what he had previously thought unquestionable. He was a couple of years younger than I was, at most, but politically speaking he was still a baby whose eyes were just opening.

He received his basic political education in the very ambivalent politics of the IWG from Daltun more than Lawless, but from both: an internally unstable and ever-

shifting mix of Republicanism and advocacy of the Workers' Republic.

Despite the enormous differences between the two, McCann, like Lawless, was politically capricious, “subjective”, and individualist. His role in the IWG, certainly after mid-1967, was typically irresponsible.

I was agreeably surprised in 1969 when, back in Derry, McCann stood out against a lot of the nonsense that People's Democracy peddled, steadily advocating socialist politics. My attitude to him thereafter was to be glad when his positive political sides were in the ascendant, but not to rely on that happening.

But even in 1969, he was typically quirky and unstable. Together with Bernadette Devlin, whom he influenced heavily, he called for the deployment of British troops right at the start of the fighting in Derry in August 1969. What was wrong with that was not the observation that British troops were necessary to control the sectarian fighting, nor a feeling of relief when they came, but the taking of political responsibility for what the British state did, and the delusion that such calls as McCann's and Devlin's influenced what the British government did — the failure to make maintaining independent working-class politics, and independence from the bourgeois state, a key consideration.

On my observation, in the autumn of 1969, McCann played the role in Derry of “responsible” home-town boy. The best illustration of that is his role in the final meeting of the Derry Citizens' Defence Committee, which ran the Catholic areas barricaded off from the RUC and the newly-on-the-streets British soldiers between August and October 1969.

The committee was a federal body, with representatives from different groups and political “constituencies”. I represented the “outsiders”, the people who had come to defend the area, a couple of dozen of us billeted on mattresses in the huts at Celtic Park. The incipient SDLPers were in control. The chair, a veteran Republican, Sean Keenan, an old internee who would be a founding Provisional in December 1969, was obviously perplexed during the proceedings — a “non-political” Republican in strange territory.

To sway the meeting in favour of taking down the barricades, the SDLPers-to-be brought in what seems in my mind's eye to be a very old man, another Republican veteran, Neil Gillespie. He was about 70. In my mind's eye he is quavering-voiced and has a walking stick.

He made the keynote speech, the gist of which was: “This is not the time to free Ireland”. So we should take down the barricades and let the soldiers occupy Derry, a predominantly Catholic-nationalist city two miles from the border with Donegal and the 26 Counties...

He too would be a founding Provisional a few weeks later. He was named as the secretary, I guess nominal, of the Derry Provisional Sinn Fein branch.

A motion was produced in favour of taking down the barricades, and with fulsome thanks to the British Army. There was a lot of opposition to the proposal, especially from the younger people there, of whom McCann was normally the de facto political leader and spokesman.

McCann made a sonorous speech, full of rolling revolutionary rrrs, contemptuously rejecting the resolution's praise for the British Army. After listening to him for a bit it dawned on me, with astonishment, that McCann, while denouncing the inessential bits, was supporting the gist of the resolution! When the vote was taken — between taking down the barricades and an alternative, which I proposed as the best I could think of to stop the stampede in the committee, that the committee did not have the right to take such a decision, and should instead call a mass meeting of the people in the barricaded areas — McCann voted for the “let-the-Army-in” resolution!

I didn't and don't think that McCann's position was

treachery, or anything like that. What was wrong was to take political responsibility for the new “settlement”, after the rushing-through of radical electoral and police reforms by the British government, of the issues that had convulsed Northern Ireland, and positively to support the British state and its army's reoccupation of all of Derry.

Politically, McCann was seriously disoriented. My acquaintance with Eamonn McCann's journalistic work in the last decades is too small to base an opinion on. Some of it suggests that he has not progressed politically from the nonsense-end of the IWG forty years ago. (See [www.workersliberty.org/node/3899](http://www.workersliberty.org/node/3899)).

#### LYSAGHT IN THE IWG

**Lysaght is here a second-hand story-spinner. He admits it in his article, saying that his sources for his history of Irish Trotskyism before 1967 were “statements from surviving participants”.**

He talks of what he did in the IWG in its last “years”, but in fact Lysaght did not become active in the IWG until near the end of 1967, when it was already effectively split in two. For sure the earliest he became even a nominal member — membership norms were very loose — was mid-1967. My impression is that it was later than that.

Lysaght has the virtue of taking his politics seriously. Yet he was not at the September IWG conference, which was a sort of “re-founding” conference. He was on the fringes of the group from mid-1967, a contact in the Dublin Labour Party, referred to me in some surviving letters from Lawless to me as one of “our centrists”.

In fact he was then not a centrist — someone hovering between reform and revolutionary socialism — but a reformist. I first heard of Lysaght in mid 1967 from a mutual friend, Bob Mitchell, a Welshman in Dublin. Mitchell told me of Lysaght as someone who believed that the Irish Labour Party leader, Brendan Corish TD, would “lead us” — the Labour Party, the labour movement — “as far as we wanted to go”, even to the socialist transformation of society; and someone who, though a socialist, was proud of a supposed descent from the last High King of Ireland, Rory O'Connor, in the middle of the 12th century. (Lysaght put that genealogy on the back cover of his 1970 book, *The Republic of Ireland*.)

Lawless wanted us to flatter Lysaght by publishing what I thought was a confused reformist piece of his in the IWG magazine, *Workers' Republic*. I objected.

I first met Lysaght when he came to Manchester to see Rachel Lever and myself in January 1968. I wrote an account of the meeting for our side, which is in the IWG files.

He struck me as honest and sincere, but clueless about what was going on and what the issues in the IWG quarrel were, and too full of himself to resist Lawless's flattery.

The IWG was already effectively split. Lysaght got drawn into the “anti-Trotskyist coalition”, where he was made to feel much appreciated. Within weeks of his involvement in the group, they made him “national secretary” of what little there was to be “national secretary” of. He rose to the role. There are a couple of Internal Bulletins in the files signed no longer with a mere name but by The National Secretary.

He was at the final conference in March 1968, where the two sides spent a day head-banging and then separated for good. Late in the day, I saw something that summed Lysaght up. The petulant McCann, for some reason or other, left the chair in a huff. At that point Lysaght stood up, almost speechless with rage, angry hands clenched by his side, shaking.

He shouted at the meeting: “I am the only one here who has any theoretical ability”. Glaring challengingly at a meeting united in astonishment if by nothing else, he raised himself as high as he could, and added with great dignity: “I will now assume the chair”. And, like Napoleon taking the crown out of the hands of the Pope and crowning himself, he did.

When the IWG died, Lysaght tried to join the League for a Workers' Republic (the continuation of the IWG Trotskyist Faction), but there was an old antagonism and they bore grudges. They made accepting him conditional on his handing over all his stocks and shares to the organisation. I couldn't persuade them to let him in anyway. Maybe I should have tried harder.

Within a couple of years, the reformist of 1967 had become a platonic support of Guevarist guerrilla action in the stable, bourgeois-democratic 26 Counties. He hasn't looked back since.

As a romantic adoptive Irish nationalist, nothing was more natural than that Lysaght would buy into Gery Lawless's fantasy world. In any case, he has been a second-hand tale-spinner on behalf of Lawless for a very long time now.

# WORKERS' LIBERTY & SOLIDARITY

## FIGHTING BNP AND EDL

### We need working-class politics!

BY CHARLIE SALMON

**I**knew it was possible, but I didn't think it could actually happen". How many of us had these thoughts rattling around our heads in the aftermath of Nick Griffin's election to the European Parliament? 6 May 2010 could inspire the mass resurrection of such sentiments.

Yet in the face of abundant and very clear "messages" of the political dangers we face mainstream anti-fascism appears consistently myopic and complacent.

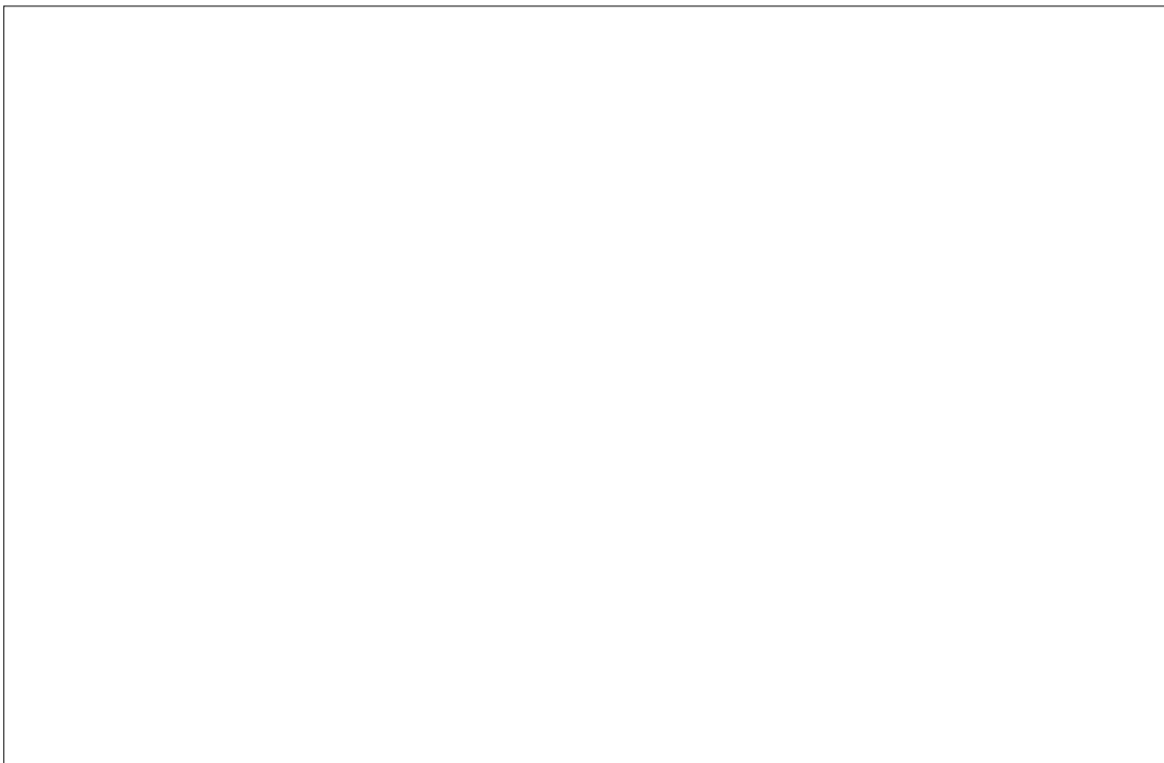
What are these ignored "messages"? A resurgent, organised right; a discredited Labour party; palpable anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim public sentiment; the collapse of grass-roots working class organisation; political disenfranchisement and widespread anger at the manifold anti-working class attacks from successive governments. Further back, the dangers of a disunited and politically disorientated opposition to fascism.

In the face of all this, groups like the Socialist Workers Party's "Unite Against Fascism" and Searchlight's "Hope not Hate" campaign have not adapted. Rather than organise anti-fascist campaigns that address themselves to working class political concerns, UAF and HnH peddle a more or less apolitical opposition. The former concentrates on "exposing" the Nazi roots of the British National Party, the latter on contrasting the positives of "local life" to the BNP's message. Both of these tactics have an element of necessity, but in isolation they are not sufficient to combat the fascists.

When it comes to stopping the anti-Muslim racists of the English Defence League, different problems crop up. Where UAF is incapable of working with united, democratic campaigns to stop EDL actions, HnH prefers to call for state bans and prescriptions.

We need a different form of organisation: a campaign that addresses itself to the new political realities, offering working class politics and initiating working class organisation against the British National Party. In response to the EDL we need to organise for working class self-defence, uniting white, black and Muslim workers to stop the racists from marching.

**Building a working-class anti-fascist and anti-racist network**  
Saturday 27 March, 12-5pm, Queens Walk Community Centre, Queens Walk, The Meadows, Nottingham.  
<http://nottmstopbnp.wordpress.com>



BA workers have had enough of Willie Walsh and his attacks on workers

# Support the BA workers!

BY DARREN BEDFORD

**T**he British Airways cabin crew dispute is hugely important. BA boss Willie Walsh's attempts to deregulate, de-skill and casualise the BA workforce will not be an isolated attack — it will be part of a widespread, generalised offensive by bosses to break the backs of well-unionised workforces that have won stable pay and conditions. None of us knows which industry, which workplaces, will be next. The fight now is in BA; it is our duty to support those workers. Their fight is our fight.

The pattern is clear; a financially profligate management has, in the midst of a global financial crisis, driven a large company into the ground and is now demanding that the workers — through pay-freezes and job cuts — pay the price, to save the company... for the shareholders.

Soon we will hear the same script from managers in local government, in the health service and in higher education. Except the workers

will be asked to "save the service", for the country.

The barrage of media abuse to which BA workers have been subject is no accident. Any group of workers who stick their heads above the parapet and dare to challenge the current bourgeois consensus in favour of cuts will be subject to similar attacks.

Like the BA workers, they will be called greedy and selfish.

Perhaps they will, like BA workers, have the distinct honour of being called such things by senior politicians such as the unelected Transport Secretary Lord Adonis and the unelected leader of the Labour Party and Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

No worker should have to uphold the "right" of super-rich managers to continue to manage, — because they will always manage things at the expense of the very people who make their businesses function. BA cabin crew have said that they will no longer put up Willie Walsh's "right" to do that. The rest of the workers' movement must support them.

Individuals: £20 per year (22 issues) waged, £10 unwaged.

Organisations: £50 large, £22 smaller (5 copies).

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