

Solidarity

& Workers' Liberty



For social ownership of the banks and industry

TROOPS OUT OF LOS ANGELES



Stop ICE raids! Rally against Trump!

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Poor sick pay costs lives

It cost lives at the height of Covid, and will cost lives in future

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Many fronts in Trump's power grab



According to the organisers, eleven million people joined the 2,000 "No Kings" protests across the USA on 14 June against Trump, twice the number of previous protests in April.

On 9 July Trump's "90 days" pause on tariffs expires. There is [no sign](#) of the slew of bilateral trade deals which Trump said he would negotiate with the threat of the paused tariffs – only a semi-deal with the UK, and a minimal temporary truce with China.

Probably Trump will have to find some way to kick the can further down the road. The economically-disruptive effects, however, will remain, even from

those tariffs still in place. A world where scales of production in many industries mean capitalists want world markets, not just local ones, requires settled and predictable free-flow arrangements, not unstable and patchy deals.

Trump will seek to assert his power on other fronts.

His latest on Israel-Iran, as we go to press, is: "I have not reached out to Iran for 'Peace Talks' in any way, shape, or form. This is just more highly fabricated, fake news! If they want to talk, they know how to reach me. They should have taken the deal that was on the table – Would have saved a lot of lives!!!"

Whether he is just sitting it out until Netanyahu has "softened up" Iran more for the US to assert itself in talks, we don't know.

After sending the National Guard under federal control (8 June) and Marines (11 June) to Los Angeles, Trump will surely roll out deportation raids in more cities, and with similar military muscle-flexing. We don't know how fast he will do that. Asked what his criterion would be for sending in troops in other cities, Trump replied: "The bar is what I think it is".

Sand

Trump may face serious sand in his gears from Republican senators considering his budget bill. Senators are elected for six years, and may not be bothered about getting re-elected after that; and just a few budget-balancing types could derail the bill. Elon Musk signals he wants to mend fences with Trump, but some senators may stick with Musk's criticisms of the bill.

So far Trump has largely been able to swerve adverse court decisions, rather than have them block him in a big way. That could hit trouble when cases get to the Supreme Court, since one of his appointees, Amy Coney Barrett, seems not as pliant as Trump thought.

Trump is pressing on with his power

grab, his drive for autocracy. But the tariffs chaos must dent his authority even in right-wing circles, and he could face serious bumps in the road.

And opposition is rising, as shown by the 14 June turnout. A lot depends on whether and how that opposition can get organised.

Networks

The 14 June organisers – mostly left-NGO types – have evidently generated enough local networks to enable them to get the 2,000 protests on 14 June. David Huerta, California state president of the big SEIU union, which has many migrant members, was arrested for joining a protest line at the gate of a staging ground for ICE operations. He is out on bail, and goes to trial on 7 July with charges that could bring up to six years' jail.

The SEIU is supporting Huerta and campaigning against raids.

Bernie Sanders has announced a new "Fighting Oligarchy" speaking tour.

But the movement is still a way from the level of organisation which could stop workplace raids and dethrone Trump.

The DSA, the USA's biggest left group, mis-focuses its current agitation on calls for consumer boycotts of the Avelo airline (for its part in deportation flights) and Chevron (for its involvement in Israel's offshore gasfields).

The United Auto Workers (UAW) still backs Trump over tariffs, and the Teamsters' Union backs him specifically over film tariffs.

Working-class resistance rooted in ongoing organisation in workplaces and communities is needed, and urgently. Let's help it brew. □

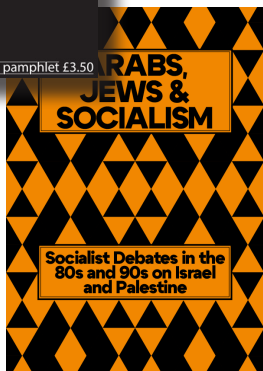
• More pages 3, 10, 11



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Activist Agenda

Meetings

Sun 22 June: Workers and the tariff wars. London AWL day school. 1pm Brunker Hall, 152 Lever St, EC1V 8BG

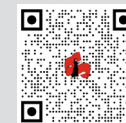
Mon 30 June: The fall of European Stalinism. 7pm Leeds University Union, Lifton Pl, Woodhouse, LS2 9JZ

At work or on campus

We organise: among health and local government, school and education workers, on the railway and London Underground, in the civil service, on uni campuses, and more. See workersliberty.org/work-unions, Insta @work-erslibertystudents, and email awl@workersliberty.org for more.

Template motions

Texts: to adapt for union branches and Labour Parties: bit.ly/mo-pe



Scan the QR code
to see our events &
meetings page.

Socialist-feminist book clubs

workersliberty.org/sf-book-clubs

6 July: Straight Sex. 3pm, Manchester Art Gallery, Mosley Street M2 3JL

7 July: Talking to My Students about Porn. 6pm, University Arms, 197 Brook Hill, S3 7HG

Campaigns

For: UK Friends of Standing Together, Labour Left Internationalists, Workers Against the CCP, Free Our Unions, Solidarity With Iranian Workers, Neurodivergent Labour, Ukraine Solidarity Campaign, Labour Campaign for Free Movement – contact details, activities, template motions, etc. – see workersliberty.org/agenda. For environmental campaigning email awl@workersliberty.org. □

Iranian left calls for peace

By Martin Thomas

Socialists and leftists in Iran certainly do not want the Israeli bombs now raining down on their cities.

But they have no interest in Iran's rulers getting the nuclear-weapon and other military capacity which could enable them to make reality of their threats to destroy Israel. They are not calling for Iranian victory over Israel.

Iranian and Israeli academics have [said](#):

"We call on both sides and the international community to take immediate steps toward ending the violence. They must find a way to bring all parties on the path of diplomacy. An immediate ceasefire should be the first step toward a broader diplomatic solution".

The Iranian teachers' union [declares](#): "What the rulers of Israel and domestic extremists inflict upon the people is a crime".

The exile-leftist Campaign to Free Political Prisoners in Iran

(CFPPI) [reports](#):

"The current crisis is being weaponised to unleash a new and terrifying level of repression. Dozens of civilians have already been arrested for nothing more than photographing or filming the aftermath of the strikes, facing baseless charges of 'collaboration with Israel'.

"Inside the notorious Evin Prison, particularly Ward 8, authorities have cut off all phone communications, severing the prisoners' only link to the

outside world. As of June 15, 2025... credible reports that the Women's Ward of Evin Prison remains under total communication blackout.

"Simultaneously, the Iran Revolutionary Guard Corps has launched a wave of threats and intimidation targeting journalists and human rights defenders".

We oppose the threat of the clerical-fascist rulers of Iran getting nuclear weapons and mass-missile capacity to make good their promise to destroy

Israel; their 45-year-old repression within Iran; their warring in the region, in support of Assad and elsewhere; Netanyahu's war which has large civilian casualties in Iran and a real threat of wider war as calculated collateral; and the horrors inflicted by Netanyahu on Gaza and the West Bank.

Support the opposition in Israel and in Iran! Stop the war! Peace! A real independent Palestinian state alongside a secure Israel. □

Support opposition in Israel and in Iran!

By Ira Berkovic

The Worker-Communist Party of Iran – Hekmatist (Official Line), an Iranian socialist group, has said: “Freedom-seeking people in Iran are engaged in a daily struggle for a revolutionary overthrow of the Islamic Republic, and to end poverty, oppression, and tyranny to secure a humane life. Israel’s attack on Iran and the start of war is a major blow to this freedom-seeking movement in its path of struggle against the Islamic Republic. Beyond the devastating consequences of this war for the people of Iran and the region, irrespective of the scale of the damage it inflicts on the Islamic Republic, in addition to enforcement of fear and danger of further misery to the people in Iran, strengthens the Islamic Republic’s hand in suppressing the freedom-seeking protests.”

In Israel, the impacts of Iranian air-strikes highlight the deep inequalities within Israeli society. A missile that struck a residential building in Tamra, in northern Israel, killed four Arab-Palestinian women, Manar Khatib, her daughters Shada and Hala, and her sister-in-law Manal. Disparities in public funding and social provision mean that Arab and Bedouin communities have no public bomb shelters. New-build housing stock includes “safe rooms”, but these are often ineffective, and only 40% of Tamra residents live in homes which contain them. Following the deaths of the Khatib family, the mayor of Tamra called on the Israeli government to invest in a programme of shelter building in Arab communities.

Alon-Lee Green, the co-director of the binational (Palestinian-Jewish) left-wing social movement Standing Together said: “The story of the killing of the Khatib family from Tamra is a story of racism. Yes, the missile that hit their house was Iranian, but the reason there isn’t even a single shelter in Tamra, a city of 35,000 residents, is plain Israeli racism; long-standing institutionalised racism that discriminates against every Arab citizen. Two million citizens, and no shelters. And the government? Racing towards a war of annihilation [in Gaza].” Several Israeli Jewish civilians have also been killed.

Some currents on the left see Iran’s bellicosity towards Israel as somehow an extension of the struggle against Israel’s colonial subjugation of the Palestinians. But it is nothing of the sort. The Iranian state is a brutally authoritarian

theocracy, whose leaders talk of “wiping Israel off the map”. It is hardly unreasonable for Israelis to be concerned about the prospects of a regime ideologically committed to their destruction developing a nuclear bomb.

Left groups, even those that support a one-state solution for Israel-Palestine, generally still say they favour “equal rights” for Israelis and Palestinians. That is certainly not what the rulers of Iran envisage when they talk of destroying Israel. The conquest of Israel by Iran, in alliance with the paramilitary forces it arms such as Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis, is a reactionary fantasy, but were Iran to gain the capacity and will to realise it, the result would not be a “free Palestine”, but an oppressive totalitarianism built on blood and ashes.

This Israeli war on Iran will, as well as taking a toll in Iranian civilian life, bring a threat to Israeli civilians from immediate Iranian retaliation, and in the medium term it may well cause the Iranian regime to accelerate its nuclear programme rather than abandon it.

Standing Together

A Standing Together statement said: “War is always bad news – and we know that this war, led by extremist leaders who have only their political survival in mind, cannot make us safer. Yes, we are afraid of the threat of a nuclear bomb, but we are more afraid of our corrupt leadership pushing us toward endless war and turning us all into ‘collateral damage.’

“Netanyahu, along with [far-right ministers] Smotrich and Ben-Gvir, are not just abandoning the hostages and distracting from their war of annihilation in Gaza, they are now dragging us into war with Iran. Netanyahu has proven time and again that he does not care to protect us, Jews and Palestinians. He only cares about himself. For him, we are just collateral damage in his mission to continue a forever war to keep his government in power and advance its messianic agenda.”

Projections approved by the Israeli cabinet factor in up to 4,000 Israeli deaths from Iranian attacks. This is the level of “collateral damage” to Israeli (let alone Iranian) civilians Netanyahu is prepared to absorb in order to pursue his agenda.

Socialists in Britain must organise public protests against the war that emphasise solidarity with working-class and democratic forces on both sides. A recent statement from the Teachers’



Standing Together activists on an anti-war demonstration before the recent bombings

Union of Iran said: “What the rulers of Israel and domestic extremists inflict upon the people is a crime [...] No country builds peace with a clenched fist [and] no nation learns security from displacement. We believe that our voice as teachers must be the voice of peace. And this peace does not mean compromise with oppression, but rather standing alongside human beings, especially innocent children. We declare with a clear voice that we oppose any warmongering from any side.”

These are the perspectives that should inform our responses. Some protests in Britain against the war, called under the slogan “hands off Iran”, imply a different approach. The force whose “hands” socialists should be most concerned to get “off Iran” is the clerical-fascist regime.

We know from its wars in Gaza and Lebanon how the Israeli military conducts its campaigns, with increasingly indiscriminate tactics that flatten entire areas to eliminate a single “target”. Those are sufficient grounds to oppose the war; the left does not need to pretend Israel is about to colonise Iran, thereby casting the Iranian ruling class in the role of anti-colonial freedom fighters. Even those Israeli leaders who talk of “regime change” do not envisage Iran being conquered by Israel and ruled by a client government or Israeli occupiers.

Meanwhile, as global attention shifts to Iran, what Standing Together rightly calls Israel’s “war of annihilation” continues in Gaza. 68 people were killed between 15-16 June, with at least 182 wounded. Humanitarian and health crises remain acute, and several people have been killed when Israeli troops opened fire near aid distribution cen-

tres, as crowds of desperate people rushed to receive food and other supplies.

Standing Together said: “Gaza has once again been completely cut off from the world, as Israel bombed the last remaining internet infrastructure and collapsed the phone network. Gaza is being annihilated quietly. Isolated without internet, without phone calls, without anyone to witness what is happening. And in that silence, bombs keep falling, aid is blocked, families are erased without a trace, journalists can’t report and medics can’t coordinate. This horror must stop.”

On Tuesday 10 June, Israeli forces conducted new raids in Nablus, in the occupied West Bank. Standing Together commented: “Since this morning, the Israeli army has stormed the ancient city of Nablus, breaking into homes and shops, assaulting civilians, and shooting people in the streets. They shot and killed a man with his hands up in the old market, then fired on paramedics who tried to reach him, injuring one and blocking Red Crescent teams from providing care. In the same raid, two brothers, Nedal and Khalid Mahdi Ameera, were killed. The number of wounded is still unknown.

“None of us will be safe while Nablus remains under military occupation and while Palestinians live without freedom of movement. Real safety will only come when both peoples are equal in this land and live in peace.”

Organising whatever support and solidarity we can for forces such as Standing Together, and working-class, democratic, and feminist forces in Iran, is the best contribution we can make to building a “third camp” in the region, against the warmongering of the imperialist rulers of both Israel and Iran. □

China apologist's accidental revelations



Antidoto

By Jim Denham

June 4 marked the 36th anniversary of what is usually, in the west, called the "Tiananmen Square massacre".

Yet for the Communist Party of Britain's Dan Ross, there was no "massacre". On 4 June the *Morning Star* carried Mr Ross's piece (first written in 2022) which claims that stories of peaceful protesters being gunned down by the Chinese military are no more than western propaganda. In fact, it was armed "radicalised protesters" that attacked "unresisting soldiers" lynching and burning several of them and audaciously displaying their corpses.

Mr Ross tells us that these accounts come not from the Chinese government, but from the *Washington Post* and the *Wall Street Journal* "in the immediate aftermath of the events of June 4 1989." As Mr Ross does not provide any dates or headlines for the par-

ticular reports he is quoting from, I have been unable to track them down. But he does name "the *Washington Post*'s Jay Matthews" (actually Mathews) as a source, and I've been able to find a piece by that reporter that at first blush seems to back up what Ross is arguing.

In an article entitled "The Myth of Tiananmen Square" originally published in the September/October 1998 *Columbia Journalism Review* Mathews states that "as far as can be determined from the evidence, no one died that night in Tiananmen Square".

So Ross is correct: the story of the "massacre" is just western propaganda?

Different

Eh, not quite. Mathews goes on to state: "Hundreds of people, most of them workers and passers-by did die that night, but in a different place and under different circumstances."

"The Chinese government estimates more than 300 fatalities. Western estimates are somewhat higher. Many victims were shot by soldiers on stretches of Changan Jie, the Avenue of Eternal Peace, about a mile west of the square, and in scattered confrontations in other parts of the city, where, it should be added, a few soldiers were beaten or burned to death by angry workers".

So, if Mathews is to be believed, the story of hundreds or thousands of peaceful students being massacred in the square itself is probably false, or at least a massive exaggeration. But the true story is even more damning of the Chinese authorities.

Mathews claims that: "The problem is not so much putting the murders in the



Tiananmen Square memorial in Hong Kong, 2020

wrong place, but suggesting that most of the victims were students". He quotes the 1993 book *Black Hands of Beijing: Lives of Defiance in China's Democracy Movement* by George Black and Robin Munro: "what took place was the slaughter not of students but of ordinary workers and residents – precisely the target that the Chinese government had intended".

Mathews summarises the Black/Munro argument thus: "the government was out to suppress a rebellion of workers, who were much more numerous and had much more to be angry about than the students".

Workers

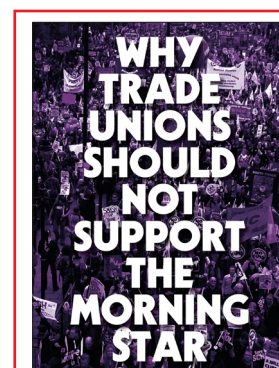
In fact, Ross does mention the involvement of workers in what he calls the "events" in Tiananmen Square and elsewhere in Beijing on 3-4 June and immediately afterwards, but claims they were "ironically... concerned by the inflationary effects of market-liberalising economic reforms".

But Yueran Zhang, writing in *Jacobin* (June 2019: "The Forgotten Socialists of Tiananmen Square") takes a

very different, and to me, much more convincing, view of the workers' motivations: "even though discontent with marketisation proved crucial in forging workers' participation, workers in the movement did not express any wish to return to the era before marketisation ... 'democracy' was the core demand of the workers as well. Most importantly. 'democracy' as understood by workers was different from the liberal notion embraced by students and intellectuals; it was a distinctly socialist version of democracy premised on the agency of the working class".

So I have to thank Mr Ross and the *Morning Star*: apologists for the Chinese ruling class they most certainly are, but they've forced me to look more deeply into what happened in Beijing in 1989. The events within Tiananmen Square may not have been a massacre: but a massacre did take place in Beijing on the night of 3-4 June and the main victims were workers. □

• There are many accounts of 4 June. Workers' Liberty clippings-book: bit.ly/4ju89



£3 (inc. post) □
bit.ly/shop-wl

The life and work of Dan Gallin, 1931-2025



Eric Lee

Dan Gallin, the former general secretary of the International Union of Foodworkers (IUF) passed away at his home in Geneva at the end of last month at the age of 94. He was to me, and to many others, a mentor, comrade and friend.

My earliest memories of Dan go back nearly fifty years. When he would visit New York, we'd meet at various events organised by the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, the forerunner of today's DSA. Dan had an interest in the American Left dating back decades to the years he lived there, at the height of the McCarthy era. In his time in the US, Dan became a supporter

of the anti-Stalinist Left and in particular Max Shachtman's Workers' Party (later known as the Independent Socialist League).

Dan detested the Stalinists and equally detested the right-wing, CIA-funded Cold Warriors who both played destructive roles in the international labour movement. But he would not have described himself as "third camp" socialist. As he once put it, "the fundamental line of cleavage in today's world is not the vertical one separating the two blocs; it is the horizontal one separating the working class from its rulers, and that one runs across both blocs. We are not 'East' or 'West'. We are 'below', where the workers are."

As Dan approached retirement age, having grown the IUF into a multi-million

strong, militant organisation of the world's food and agriculture trade unions, he first attempted to revive the international workers' education movement. In Dan's view, the workers' education movement was one of the surviving pillars of what was once a vast labour movement including political parties, youth groups, cooperatives, and trade unions. He compared some of those to the ruins of a lost civilisation – which he intended to help revive.

Dan was elected president of the International Federation of Workers' Education Associations (IFWEA) and he brought me in to produce – for the first time in the organisation's 50 year history – a quarterly magazine, *Workers' Education*, which appeared in three languages.

Later on, after stepping down from his role as IFWEA president, Dan established the Global Labour Institute, which he would sometimes describe as an "NGI" – a non-governmental individual. Well into his long "retirement" he continued to write and speak and educate a new generation of trade unionists and democratic Leftists. LabourStart collected many of Dan's essays going back decades and published them in two books, which are available at bit.ly/books-dg

For example, he long supported the idea of producing a book on the forgotten history of the first Georgian republic (1918-21). Back in the 1980s he even suggested that if I could complete writing the book, he could arrange for it to be translated and smuggled across the border into

Soviet Georgia. But the writing of the book outlasted the Soviet Union. When the book finally appeared, a much older and frailer Dan travelled to Tbilisi to participate in the book's launch. As a friend of mine who was there recently reminded me, Dan explained that "democratic socialism" was a misnomer: there can be no socialism without democracy, he said.

Dan had an encyclopaedic knowledge of the history of the Left and labour movements, world-wide. When I last visited him on the eve of the first Covid lockdown, his parting words to me were these: "Next time I see you, remind me to tell you a story about Albanian Trotskyism."

That, in a sentence, expressed who Dan was, how he thought and how he lived. □

Abortion: end the 1861 law!



Women's Fightback

By Dominika Szarek

A growing movement, led by Labour MPs Stella Creasy and Tonia Antoniazzi, seeks to repeal antiquated legislation on abortion. Antoniazzi's proposal, at least, will go to a vote on 17 June.

Antoniazzi's NC1 amendment to the Crime and Policing Bill, backed by over 60 MPs, aims to decriminalise abortion without altering service provision. Creasy's NC17 and NC20 amendments go further – proposing a full repeal of the 1861 Act, restricting ministers from rolling back abortion rights, and enshrining abortion access as a human right.

The UK is often seen as a pro-choice

nation, with around 90% of British people supporting reproductive rights. Yet, this support is not reflected in law, as abortion remains criminalised under the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 – a Victorian-era law that still dictates abortion access in England, Scotland, and Wales.

The Abortion Act 1967 introduced exemptions, permitting abortion up to 24 weeks, but underneath it the 1861 law remains in force, meaning anyone self-administering an abortion or assisting one outside legal boundaries risks prosecution. Cases like Sophia Harvey – investigated for allegedly using abortion pills despite the fetus being stillborn – show how this outdated law continues to criminalise reproductive choices. Similarly, Nicole Packer, who took prescribed abortion pills during lockdown, delivered at 26 weeks and was arrested in hospital for violating laws that restrict pill-induced abortion

to within 10 weeks, requiring clinical procedures beyond that point. She was later acquitted.

Westminster decriminalised abortion in Northern Ireland in 2019, but actual access there remains worse than in England.

Creasy's amendment aligns closely with Workers' Liberty's stance: "As early as possible, as late as necessary." While it maintains the 24-week limit, it is a crucial step toward ending the policing of pregnant people, safeguarding bodily autonomy, and ensuring abortions beyond 24 weeks do not result in custodial sentences or future political rollbacks.

However, challenges remain. Far-right figures like Nigel Farage have labelled the 24-week limit "utterly ludicrous", echoing sentiments from US-funded anti-abortion groups. Given the rise of reactionary politics, proactive support for reproductive rights is essential – not

just to preserve legal abortion, but to eradicate the police-led persecution of those seeking reproductive healthcare.

With 88% of abortions occurring before ten weeks, so-called "late-term abortions" are rare and often linked to delayed or denied access. The fight for decriminalisation is crucial – ensuring bodily autonomy remains protected, not policed. □



Women's Fightback. 28 pages, £3.00 □ bit.ly/shop-wl



Pushing back on EHRC guidance

By Simon Nelson

Over twenty charities and service providers have written to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) asking for an extension to the consultation on new guidance for service providers following the April

Supreme Court decision. These include providers of services like homeless hostels, refuges, and healthcare facilities worried by EHRC indications that they have to detect and block trans women.

There now exists useful guidance from [Transactual](#)

on replying to the consultation, an [adapted version](#), and a [response](#) from a lawyer.

The new guidance is to replace the deeply flawed, and probably illegal, EHRC "interim update". So far the majority of service providers continue to ignore that interim. But exceptions exist like Ironmonger Row Baths in Islington, where the contractor GLL has announced it will ban trans women from the women's changing room. So far, a visit shows no evidence at the baths of ban enforcement, but local Labour members seeking clarification via councillors have received no response.

The "interim update" continues to leave uncertainty as to whether it is reasonable to use a trans person's sex at birth to ban them from one set of facilities in one instance, and their gender presentation to ban them from others. The risk of trans people having no legal re-

course to any suitable facilities like toilets and changing rooms remains real.

The Good Law Project has useful [information](#) on the current legal impact of the Supreme Court decision.

Liberty's legal challenge for an extension on the consultation failed at the High Court. Current EHRC chair Kishwer Falkner (appointed by Liz Truss) has defended that decision.

The government's preferred replacement for Falkner, Mary-Ann Stephenson, may be no step forward in terms of trans rights.

At least one board member of Sex Matters (one of the groups pushing for the Supreme Court ruling against the Scottish government) has [celebrated](#) her appointment and [The Times](#) suggesting she has sympathy with "gender-critical" organisation.

Pride in Labour has expressed [concern](#) at the preferred candidate. □

Still on "local independent" line

By Gerry Bates

As efforts to create an umbrella for candidates in the May 2026 council elections continue, "community independent" councillors in Merseyside held a rally on 14 June, with Jeremy Corbyn and Len McCluskey among the speakers.

Maybe 400 people came. There had been talk of the rally adopting a political platform, but it didn't. (Corbyn's Peace and Justice Project and the SWP have proposed platforms, similar but different, both saying almost nothing about council policy, to delimit the umbrella). People were asked for standing orders to finance Liverpool Community Independents and Southport Community Independents, but not for immediate campaigning.

We think that electoral activity should be based on socialist politics and working-class political representation, and continuing active democratic organisation, not just getting "local champions" into office. □

Uni win on trans rights

By Kayden Jones

At the University of Sheffield, there has been a win for trans rights on Student IDs. According to Sophie Layton, the Trans+ Representative Councillor on the Students' Union Council, trans students can now get new UCards from the Student Services information desk with their chosen name on it instantly, without a legal name change, without any documentation, proof of identity or other information, and

free of charge.

This win came after Trans Rights policy was passed at the Student Union in response to the April Supreme Court ruling. This shows that proactive campaigning by activists and the Student Union can quickly generate results for trans students.

Campaigning will need to increase next academic year. Campaigns should draw university workers and their unions into this struggle. □



For socialists to understand and confront left antisemitism from primitive or Stalinist roots to the "anti-imperialism of fools". 265 pages, £9.99 □ bit.ly/shop-wl

Unison and Unite debate green policy



Environment

By Vicki Morris

The next major union debate on environmental policy should come at the Policy Conference of Unite on 7-11 July.

Unite organises both in the public and private sectors, and the jobs of a substantial proportion of its members depend on fossil fuel industries.

Unite publishes reports on energy nationalisation, but that does not stop the union leaders supporting new licences for oil and gas. They say they have to support new licences until there is a plan to replace the jobs lost by decarbonising industry; they launched a "No Ban Without a Plan" campaign, before the last general election.

Unite pushes nationalisation when jobs are at risk but doesn't make the link with climate change and the need for ecological planning.

An unofficial Grassroots Climate Justice Caucus (bit.ly/u-cjc) exists inside the union and it has organised for the 2025 Policy Conference. The caucus will push policy on heat strike, climate change and inequality, energy efficiency, and the right to protest.

Green networks, formal and informal, exist in many unions and there is a lot of work socialists can do to build the strength we need.

The huge public sector union Unison

has passed good policy on the environment at recent conferences, and instigated an environmental officer position in all branches.

Resolutions at the National Delegate Conference this year (17-20 June) acknowledge the need for more action to realise the rhetoric; there is also a welcome focus on challenging the Labour government, for example, over airport expansion, and the disproportionate weight the government has put on investment in Carbon Capture versus other options. The spirit can be summed up as "We will continue to campaign to save the planet regardless of who is in government".

"Public services being expected to provide the necessary social infrastructure to address the devastating immediate and future impacts of climate change" also heavily implies challenging the Government over its failure to invest in public services.

Challenge

For this challenge to succeed, the left, mainly in the shape of Time For Real Change, has to recover quickly from its recent electoral setbacks and go on the offensive, campaigning to win the General Secretary election in the autumn but also turning to building at the grassroots.

A Unison Year of Green Activism (YoGA!) has been agreed for 2026, and a first seminar for environmental officers is planned for September 2025.

The National Education Union (NEU) instigated green reps and environ-

mental officer roles at its conference in 2022. "Their purpose is to empower NEU members to address climate and environmental issues at their place of work and district." An NEU Climate Network "organises members keen on developing and implementing union policy and action to resist climate breakdown". There are some small, local campaigns, for example, the West Yorkshire Eco Educators. In the union's campaigning, there is a focus on developing and providing [educational materials](#) about climate change.

The civil service union PCS is developing a green bargaining agenda, hooking this on climate commitments already made by the Government towards meeting its 2050 Net Zero target.

The union is developing a campaign around green demands, in the same way that it makes other industrial demands. It will likely include campaigning for adaptation measures, eg, an upper temperature limit for working. The union could use this campaign to develop its existing small network of green reps.

The Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union co-sponsored the important "Our Power" report on transition in North Sea energy, where the union represents some workers. The union also makes the case for North Sea energy workers to transition to roles in renewables. However, there is not much (if any) transition-plan activity in the rail sector.

The rail unions, RMT and Aslef, have not directly formulated any green bar-

gaining claims and have no formal national or sectoral environmental/green committees. There is no network of green reps, nor rank and file oriented green/environmental groups or campaigns.

But the transport unions campaign for public ownership of rail and bus transport and here there is a clear link to environmental goals that could be developed further, with valuable links possible to passenger groups and the wider community. □

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An underwhelming Labour victory

By Dale Street

Contrary to pollsters' predictions and the expectations of many activists on the ground, Labour won the 5 June Holyrood by-election in the Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse constituency.

Labour won with 32% of the vote (2% less than in the 2021 Holyrood elections). The SNP, which had held the seat, came second with 29% of the vote (16% less than in 2021). Reform came third (26% of the vote, standing for the first time). The Tories just managed to hold on to their deposit (6% of the vote).

The Scottish Socialist Party candidate won 278 votes (1% of votes cast).

This was the first time since 2013 that Labour has gained a seat in a Holyrood by-election. But even though the win was unexpected, it was a particu-

larly underwhelming victory.

Labour's campaign certainly did not inspire voters. Turnout in the by-election was 44%, well down on the 60% turnout in 2021, and also lower than the average turnout in by-elections (50%).

Labour's 32% of the vote amounted to 8,559 votes. But in the equivalent Westminster constituency Labour had won 50% of the vote (21,000 votes) in the 2024 general election.

As one "senior Scottish Labour figure" put it in an interview with LabourList:

"People voted last year to get rid of the Tory government, and that involved some tactical voting, but we're definitely hearing loud and clear from voters that they feel let down by Keir Starmer and Rachel Reeves in particular. They feel that this government is not what they expect a Labour government to be like."

The Labour right wing is hailing the result as the start of the run-in to a Labour victory in the 2026 Holyrood elections. This is nonsense.

Labour had a majority of just 600 votes and a lower share of the vote than in 2021. Its performance was only a shadow of its result in the 2023 Rutherglen by-election. Opinion polling for the Holyrood elections still puts the SNP in a commanding lead (33%) with Labour and Reform neck-and-neck on 19%.

Blow

At the same time, the by-election result was certainly a major blow for the SNP and emphasised its lack of any political direction.

Having put independence on a backburner, it has lost the support of the true believers. The end of the faux radicalism of the Sturgeon years, sig-

nalled by Swinney's election as party leader, has cost it the support of a swathe of "progressive" voters.

And Swinney's repeated claims that the by-election was a two-horse race between the SNP and Reform has left him looking stupid and incompetent, with calls already being raised for (another) SNP leadership contest.

But none of this has benefited the Greens. They won 695 votes in the by-election, amounting to just 2.6% of the vote. SNP voters appear to have stayed at home rather than switch to another pro-independence and faux-radical party.

Reform, unfortunately, can be satisfied with its vote – 900 votes behind the SNP, and 1,500 votes behind Labour. Opinion polls suggest that this might be the start of a consolidated vote for Reform rather

than just a passing protest vote.

It is always a mistake to read too much into a by-election result. And it would certainly be a monumental mistake to read the Hamilton result as the start of a surge of support for Labour in Scotland, and as a vote of confidence in Starmer-Reeves.

Longer-term electoral success for Labour in Scotland depends on the party membership and affiliated unions mounting a successful challenge to the current trajectory of Labour in power.

The apparent retreats on winter fuel payments and benefits cuts are a modest beginning. But better organised and more active grassroots campaigning is needed to make a real impact – and to make Scottish Labour a real alternative in the 2026 Holyrood elections. □

Poor sick pay costs lives

By Stuart Jordan

Dido Harding, Head of Test and Trace, has told the Covid-19 inquiry: "The UK spent much less than other developed countries enabling disadvantaged people to self isolate. If we had allocated more of the NHS test and trace budget to isolation support, I strongly suspect that fewer would have died and infection rates would have been lower with all the benefits that would have brought."

Of course, Harding, a Tory peer and former boss of Sainsbury's, is talking in ruling-class euphemisms. By "disadvantaged people" she means low-paid

workers without occupational sick pay. During the high point of the pandemic, workers without occupational sick pay received less than £100 a week statutory sick pay if they had to isolate. Perhaps as many as 12 million keyworkers, including most care workers and a large number of outsourced hospital workers, were in that terrible position. These people were "disadvantaged" by employers who prioritised profit over stopping the spread of infection.

Alongside Malta, Britain has the lowest rate of statutory sick pay in Europe and by a big margin. Labour's reforms to SSP (now just £118.25 a week) do nothing to change that. Without the fi-

nancial means to take time off, workers with known or suspected infection drag themselves into work.

Harding's service picked up on this problem early in September 2020, when she reported to Parliament that less than one in five people were compliant with isolation rules. This was a striking figure, because compliance with other Covid measures (mask wearing, social distancing etc.) was very high (85-95%).

Harding lobbied the government for more isolation support at the time, but, she tells us, Rishi Sunak was ideologically opposed to increasing Statutory Sick Pay. At that time Test and Trace

was spending up to £1 million a day on management consultants – enough to pay full isolation pay to over 15,000 minimum wage workers. It cost £29.5 billion in all, but there is no evidence Test and Trace reduced the rate of infection, if only because so many keyworkers could not afford to act on the information that the service provided.

Workers' Liberty activists understood the importance of full sick pay for workplace safety in March 2020. Our trade unionists in local government, the NHS, the civil service and on London Underground won full Covid isolation pay for tens of thousands of low paid workers in our industries. We set up the Safe and Equal campaign to promote the need for full sick pay more widely. But mostly the wider movement did not respond.

The limited victories on sick pay between 2020-2022 have since been reversed. Workers in care homes and the NHS still need full sick pay as a basic infection control measure. More broadly, in our age of pandemics, the UK's poverty rate of SSP creates a huge and avoidable vulnerability. □

Labour after the Spending Review

By Colin Foster

The 11 June Spending Review showed the Labour leadership swerving under pressure from the labour movement; but swerving so as (they hope) to deflect criticism of the rest of their policy, and simultaneously signalling a desire to clamp down.

Many Constituency Labour Parties had condemned benefit cuts and pressed their MPs to speak up. Rachel Reeves has a minus-28% approval rating among Labour members, and Liz Kendall minus-22. They are

by far the most unpopular cabinet members, and the next most unpopular is Keir Starmer himself.

Labour councillors (not members), when polled, identified Imogen Walker as the most right-wing of Labour MPs, probably because she is the partner of Morgan McSweeney. Starmer, Reeves, and Kendall were all rated towards the right-wing end of the spectrum.

The Starmer-Reeves leadership know that their talk of "stability" producing "growth", and that then resolving all social problems,

is empty. There is no new growth. The substantive Labour policies which were supposed to help drive it, like setting up GB Energy, have been stalled. Trump's tariff wars make the prospects of renewed capitalist stability and growth even fainter.

They swerve, and they will probably raise taxes a bit later in October, but they want to clamp down. On 20 May they pushed through Labour's National Executive (NEC) decisions no longer to release Labour membership figures, even to the NEC,

and to suppress women's conference and planned Black members' and LGBT conferences. We should be on the watch-out for new anti-democratic rule changes being pushed through the NEC and then through Labour conference (28 Sep-1 Oct) at the last minute this year.

Starmer and Reeves know a clampdown will encourage yet new tranches of activists to quit Labour or dial down activity, and maybe even some unions to disaffiliate. They positively want that. They cannot get a membership which likes what they do, but they aspire to get a membership which is too beaten-down to make protests.

We should argue with activists against letting Starmer and Reeves have it their way. This is the time to revive our activity in the Labour Party, and to draw those who have lapsed back into action.

For Labour conference, the rule requiring that CLP motions be "contemporary" was reintroduced in 2024 and is still in force. Exactly what the rule means has always been slippery, even more so now.

CLPs should be sure to schedule a meeting early in September, on or before 10 September, so the CLP can decide a motion and get it in by the deadline (5pm, Thursday 11 September 2025) while minimising the risk of it being ruled out. □

Gaps in Employment Rights Bill

By a PCS member

The Employment Rights Bill is now in its Committee Stage in the House of Lords. After that, it will have its Report Stage and Third Reading in the Lords, then come back to the Commons for Lords amendments to be considered.

A group of Labour lords headed by John Hendy have proposed a number of important amendments to the Bill. If accepted, which is highly unlikely, those would radically change it for the better.

Below we list many of them, to show what is being proposed and to show how deficient the current Bill is. Any improvement in employment law is welcome,

but the current draft legislation misses issues vital to the trade union movement.

The [amendments](#) would:

- allow the introduction of sectoral bargaining
- beef up the remedies if an organisation refuses to allow access to a union to gain recognition
- introduce a clear and positive right to strike, and to take action short of strike
- remove previous legislation which renders industrial action unlawful if one of the reasons for the action is that the employer has dismissed one or more workers for taking unofficial industrial action
- restore the law permitting industrial action to be taken to achieve recognition for collective bargaining

- simplify the provisions for giving notice of industrial action

- enable the UK to keep pace with the EU adequate minimum wage directive which requires each EU country with less than 80% of its workforce covered by collective agreements to produce an action plan to achieve this level of coverage within five years.

It is highly doubtful that any of the amendments will be accepted. The Bill will probably become law in its anaemic current form. Talk has begun of an Employment Rights Bill mark 2. We support such a Bill. The trade unions should demand what is needed, rather than be content with what is being offered. □



Workers' Liberty at LO fete

Workers' Liberty ran a bookstall and a forum (on Israel-Palestine, the Standing Together movement, and our work with it) at the Little Ouvrière (LO) fete on 7-9 June,

LO, a French revolutionary socialist group, has run the fete, on an estate near Paris, almost every year since the early 1970s. Maybe 20,000 people each year are attracted by the food stalls, children's games, and talks and displays on science, pre-history, and medieval society, as well as the political debates. Total numbers are as high as ever, but the number of left groups taking up LO's offer of stall and forum space has dwindled.

Workers' Liberty attends every year. We were able to have many discussions around the stall, including with Socialismo o Barbarie and Lotta Comunista. The 2026 fete will be 23-25 May. □

The legacy of Phyllis

Third Camp Socialism: A Phyllis and Julius Jacobson Reader, edited by Kent Worcester and Paul Heideman, is published by Brill as part of the Historical Materialism book series. The [Brill edition](#) is high-priced, for libraries, but an affordable edition will be published in 2026 by Haymarket Press. Kent spoke to *Workers' Liberty* about the project.

Can you introduce Phyllis and Julius Jacobson, for readers who may not have heard of them previously? Why is their work important?

The Jacobsons are perhaps best known for founding [the US magazine] *New Politics*, which launched in 1961, and which is still being published today. They described themselves as third camp socialists and played a crucial yet under-appreciated role on the anti-Stalinist left as writers and editors.

Phyllis and Julius Jacobson led full lives. They fell in love as teenagers during the Depression. Phyllis Garden (1922-2010) was from Brooklyn. Julius (1922-2003) grew up in the Bronx. Their parents were Eastern European working-class Jewish immigrants. They came from neighbourhoods where the language of rebellion and class conflict was ubiquitous. Phyllis's parents were old school social democrats. Julius's extended family were mainly Communist Party (CP) members, and fellow travellers.

Phyllis and Julius (Julie to his friends) were in their early teens when they defiantly gravitated toward the Trotskyist movement. The relevant meeting halls and gathering spaces were clustered around Union Square in lower Manhattan. This was convenient since their families were on opposite ends of the city. They admired speakers like James P Cannon, Farrell Dobbs, and C L R James. But they were closer to Max Shachtman and participated in the 1939-40 faction fight inside the Socialist Workers Party that resulted in the formation of the "Shachtmanite" Workers Party (1940-49).

Like most men of his generation, Julie served in World War II. He took part in the Battle of the Bulge and the liberation of Paris. After the war, he oversaw the Workers Party youth work and was the driving force behind its decision to sponsor a third camp student magazine, *Anvil* (1949-60). For many years, he worked in the group's print shop and later ran a small machine shop. He also edited its theoretical journal, *The New International*, during its final half-decade.

Phyllis, a gifted and tenacious organiser, was the more naturally outgoing of the two. After high school, she led a thriving party branch at Brooklyn College. During the war she worked on an

assembly line at General Electric. She eventually became a script reader for a major studio. Both she and Julie were leading members of the WP's successor organisation, the Independent Socialist League (1949-58), until its dissolution.

Their writings tackle weighty topics: organised labour, civil rights, intellectuals, revolution and counter-revolution. For a variety of reasons, Julie was more prolific than Phyllis. He happily conceded that Phyllis was the better editor. They shared a special joy in skewering apologists for "progressive" authoritarianism. And they were delightful company. They enjoyed nothing more than a convivial meal with friends. The Jacobsons were only "hard" on a handful of topics, most notably race, labour, the Democrats, and Stalinism.

Their journal can be viewed as both an extension of and a departure from the WP/ISL project.

On the one hand, the Jacobsons invoked Shachtmanite terminology – "bureaucratic collectivism", "independent political action", "socialism from below", "neither Washington nor Moscow", and the like – long after they stopped paying membership dues. In keeping with the third camp tradition, their magazine stressed the intrinsic connection between socialism and democracy. It championed civil rights, human rights, and artistic expression. It published authors like Hal Draper (in the sixties), Dan La Botz, Thomas Harrison, and Richard Smith, who are steeped in this tradition. And it offered a platform for Soviet bloc leftists, most notably in the case of Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski's widely discussed *Open Letter to the Party* (1965).

At the same time, under the Jacobsons' editorial leadership *New Politics* accommodated disparate opinions to an extent that seems incompatible with any kind of sustained organisational ambitions. Greens, Mandelites [followers of Ernest Mandel, one of the most prominent leaders of Orthodox Trotskyism], social democrats, council communists, radical feminists, and left liberals all found a home in its pages. When it came to roundtables and so on, the final word usually went to the nearest "left-Shachtmanite". Yet it is significant that the Jacobsons insisted on publishing a "little magazine" in which third camp perspectives were merely part of the equation.

Their willingness to co-mingle with social democrats, non-Marxists, and nonconformist cultural critics may explain why Martin Thomas [concludes](#) that "Shachtman, Jacobson and Harrington got ground down into approximating left social democracy". This strikes me as unfair, not only to Phyllis but to the historical record. It minimises

the extent to which both Jacobsons remained stubbornly antagonistic vis-à-vis Democrats, the union bureaucracy, Cold War liberalism, and the like. The Jacobsons were not exactly optimists, but they retained an oppositional edge.

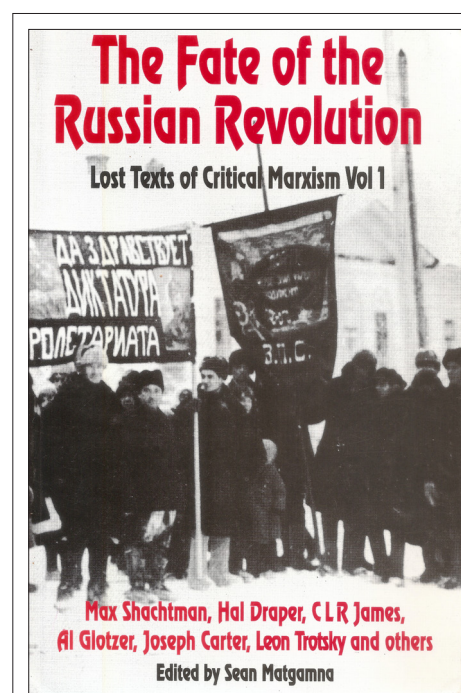
The Jacobsons I knew were preoccupied with producing the most engaging magazine possible on a shoestring budget. They "built low but on solid ground", as Leo Strauss said in a different context. They concentrated on immediate tasks such as drumming up new subscribers, encouraging new writers, drafting their own pieces. Their guiding assumption was that the level of strategic debate and political discussion needed to be raised across the American left. They were not wrong in this assumption.

All I can tell you is that Julie's childhood friend Irving Horenstein (Howe) would have been amused by the suggestion that Phyllis and Julie, his bitter print media rivals, were anything other than incorrigible reds.

What's the background to this project? Who do you hope will read it?

There are two main audiences for *Third Camp Socialism: A Phyllis and Julius Jacobson Reader*. The first is those already "invested" in this tradition. The second includes anyone with a serious interest in the history of socialist thought. Both audiences might want to wait for the paperback edition, which will be out next summer. Librarians should order copies right away, however.

The background is as follows. I met Phyllis and Julie in the mid-1980s when they were tabling at a Socialist Scholars Conference. We immediately hit it off.



Fate of the Russian Revolution volume 1: £8

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After contributing a few pieces, they invited me to join the editorial board. When I tried shopping around a *New Politics* reader in the late 1990s, none of the publishers I approached expressed the slightest interest. The demand for books on socialist themes at that point may have been at an all-time low.

With the recent progressive revival, the time seemed ripe for a renewed push at raising the profile of the magazine and its founding editors. Someone pointed me toward the Historical Materialism/Haymarket series. When I learned that Paul Heideman was also putting together a proposal for a Jacobson reader, I reached out and we combined our efforts. Paul is a generation or two younger than I am, but comes out of a broadly similar background. He has an interesting book out in November called *Rogue Elephant: The Republican Party Since Reagan* (Verso). We benefited from the advice we received from the book's advisory board: Lynn Chancer, Barry Finger, Thomas Harrison, Scott McLemee, and Daniel Randall. Daniel proved especially adept at identifying deep cuts to include along with better-known pieces.

If people on the left know about the third camp tradition, it's sometimes thought of simply as reflecting a doctrinal dispute over the class character of the USSR. But the material in the book shows third camp socialists developed nuanced perspectives over a whole range of issues, not just the analysis of Stalinism (although that was obviously central). Can you give some sense of that?

Even those who are familiar with the Jacobsons and their work will be impressed, I think, by the range and incisiveness of the material collected in this book. Rather than organising the pieces in chronological order, we have arranged the book's twenty-seven chapters into five thematic sections: Social Movements, Left Debates, the Russian Question, War and Peace, and Students and Teachers.

This allowed us to front-end some of their punchiest material, such as "Coalitionism: From Protest to Politicking" (1966), "Union Conservatism: A Barrier to Racial Equality" (1968), "In Defense of the Young" (1970), "Kate Millett and Her Critics" (1976) and "Black Outrage in Los Angeles" (1992). The first three are by Julie, the latter two by Phyllis. We also placed Julie's "Isaac Deutscher: The Anatomy of an Apologist" (1964 & 1966) and "The Two Deaths of Max Shachtman" (1973) toward the front.

The middle section showcases Julie's "Reflections on Fascism and Communism" (1983) and Phyllis' "The Americanisation of the Communist Party" (1986), as well as a series on

and Julius Jacobson



Stalin and Stalinism that Julie penned after the fall of the Soviet Union. The closing sections recover pieces from *Anvil*, *Labor Action*, and *The New Internationalist*. I'm glad we were able to include Julie's fiery polemics on student movements and McCarthyism, most notably "Do Communists Have a Right to Teach?" (1949) and "Civil Liberties and the Philosopher of the Cold War" (1953). The latter is about Sidney Hook and was cowritten with Gordon Haskell.

In your interviews with the Jacobsons in the 1990s, you discuss their break with Hal Draper over the launch of the Independent Socialist Clubs in the late 1960s. They felt it was wrong to launch a new organisation at that time. But in her contribution to the Oral History of the American Left conference in 1983, Phyllis had partially attributed the collapse of the first iteration of New Politics to the lack of "an organisation to sustain us during the bad times." What's your view on this question? Was there a point at which you think it would have been viable for New Politics to evolve from being a journal into being a political organisation?

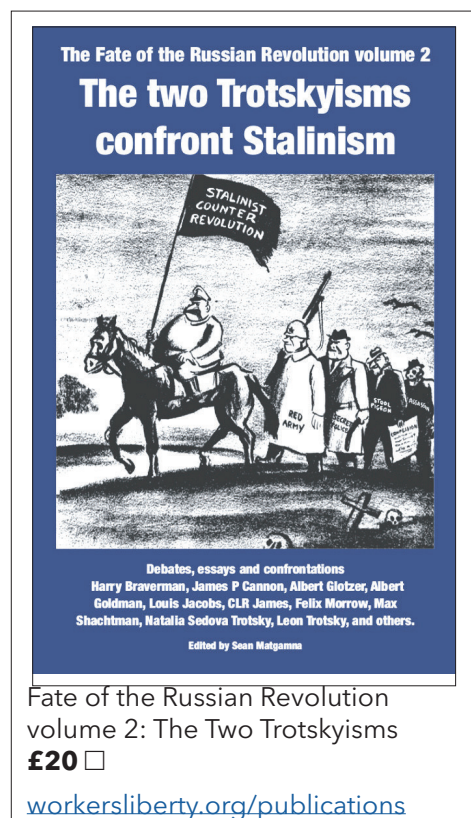
It's possible Phyllis had something like the ISC in mind when she made that comment. I never asked her. But she might have been referring to what *Dissent* achieved in terms of paid staff, a regular office, a donor base, money in the bank, and so on. We might be conflating two meanings of "organisation", in other words.

For the record, I never heard Phyllis and Julie express any interest in joining or leading a membership organisation. Nor did they pay much attention to far-left gossip. Their general attitude was reflected in Phyllis' response to Hal Draper, when he pressed them to join the newly formed International Socialists. She said it "wasn't the season for that particular vegetable".

On the other hand, they bemoaned the state of the magazine's finances and were conscious of the fact that *Dissent* received support from private foundations that would have regarded *New Politics* as beyond the pale.

While the Jacobsons did not evince much interest in "party building", they certainly sought to extend the magazine's influence. They sponsored panels at Socialist Scholars conferences and Left Forum events. They backed the Campaign for Peace and Democracy (1982-2017), a human rights nonprofit led by *New Politics* editors Joanne Landy and Thomas Harrison that had a third camp orientation. They distributed bundles to political groups such as Independent Socialist Club branches in the 1960s, and so on.

In addition, Julie edited two *New Politics* collections, "The Negro and the American Labor Movement" (1968)



Fate of the Russian Revolution volume 2: The Two Trotskyisms
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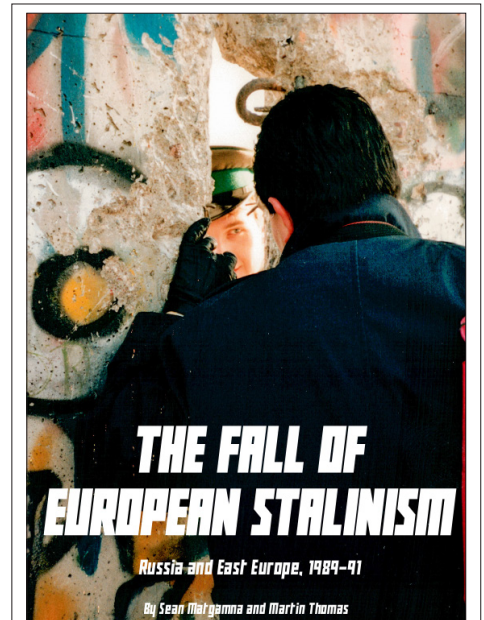
and "Soviet Communism and the Socialist Vision" (1973). Phyllis and Julie coedited the standalone volume "Socialist Perspectives" (1983). And they took satisfaction in the fact that several pieces that had appeared in the journal were widely reprinted, including Lewis Feuer's "What is Alienation? The Career of a Concept" (1962) and Hal Draper's "The Two Souls of Socialism" (1966).

Can you say something about the Jacobsons', and New Politics', relationship to the New Left? In that period, some non- or anti-Stalinist currents grew quite dramatically, as well as Maoism, which was obviously Stalinist but in a more oppositional geopolitical relationship with the USSR from the 1960s. How did the Jacobsons see that ferment? What was their view, and what's your view, of why specifically Third Camp forces didn't grow more in that period?

The Jacobsons' decision to launch a "journal of socialist debate" was inspired by the achievements of the civil rights movement. They were thrilled when Berkeley's Free Speech Movement erupted and provided a platform for campus leaders such as Mario Savio and Mike Shute. They were turned off by the unsavoury politics and apocalyptic rhetoric of groups in the late sixties like Progressive Labor and the Weather Underground. Julie's coauthored piece on "Neo-Stalinism: The Achilles' Heel of the Peace Movement and the American Left" (1976), reprinted in our volume, touches on this issue. The question of why the third camp tendency flourished during the first "new left" and floundered during the second is harder to answer.

Who were the Jacobsons' main international correspondents and interlocutors? They published people from the "Cliffite" tendency in the UK (the International Socialists, later the SWP), including Tony Cliff himself, from a relatively early period. Who else did they see as potential international co-thinkers and allies? Did they have a view of what an international left regroupment might have looked like?

They did not have a position on "left regroupment" in the sense that you mean. Their horizons were lower than that. They had a decent track record of recruiting non-US writers. They published numerous articles, reviews, and symposia on Russian, European, and Latin American politics. Some of these contributors came from third camp or Cliffite backgrounds, but by no means all. Phyllis mostly handled the correspondence. Her focus was on maintaining a network of contributors rather than forging an international tendency.



In 1991 the USSR collapsed. It was a turning-point in world history. The book surveys socialist responses at the time. **£6** □

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Workers' Liberty supporters will be interested to know whether the Jacobsons took any view of our tendency's efforts to engage with and learn from the WP/ISL tradition. When we interviewed Herman Benson around the time we published the second volume of our Fate of the Russian Revolution anthologies, he was slightly bewildered as to why a small group in Britain would dedicate so much time and resources to republishing third camp material from the 1940s. Do you know if the Jacobsons had a view on this?

They were intrigued and a little bemused that a UK group was interested in this stuff. But they were preoccupied with other things. Phyllis had an incapacitating stroke in 2000, and Julie spent most of his waking hours at her bedside before he passed away in 2003. While they were happy to see the first *Fate of the Russian Revolution* volume, they were not here for the second.

There is still a wealth of valuable material from the archives that hasn't seen the light of day for many years. If only someone would reprint all twenty issues of *Anvil*, for example. Contributors included Simone de Beauvoir, Dwight Macdonald, Jules Feiffer, Arthur Miller, Harold Rosenberg, and Eleanor Roosevelt! That would be something. □

Further reading

- More on the "Third Camp" tradition bit.ly/camp-iii
- Phyllis Jacobson, 1922-2010, obituaries from *New Politics*: bit.ly/p-jac
- Julius Jacobson, 1922-2003, obituary by Barry Finger: bit.ly/j-jac

Many millions out against Trump

By Tom Harrison

Trump's dictatorial tendencies were on display on 14 June during the North-Korean-style military parade in Washington DC. Ostensibly commemorating the founding of the US Army, it coincided with his own birthday. Trump threatened to use "very heavy force" against any protesters in Washington.

It didn't rain on Trump's military parade on 14 June, but the numbers weren't great. Lots of empty seats, and an expected crowd of 200,000 proved much smaller. Far more popular were the "No Kings" anti Trump rallies in over 2,000 towns and cities nationwide. The organisers [say](#) over eleven million attended, twice the number of April's similar protest.

Despite warnings from state officials not to turn up, thousands went to the "No Kings" rally outside the Minnesota Capitol in St Paul to show they would not succumb to far right intimidation.

The Trump administration may become even more unpopular in the coming months as the effects of the tariff antics, cuts in Medicaid, and DOGE depredations of public services sink in. The indication from last weekend is that millions of Americans aren't going to stand for the increased state repression. A mass movement is developing, and we must hope for trade unionists and socialists to move it in the right direction.

Donald Trump's power grab in the run-up to 14 June – sending the National Guard and US Marines into Los Angeles – is the latest episode in what satirists have dubbed the Reichstag Reality Show. Local protests in a relatively small part of the city against indiscriminate

arrests by ICE agents were blown up out of all proportion by Fox News and other Trump friendly media to justify disproportionate and unnecessary use of force.

"Protest Porn" showing a couple of cars on fire and someone throwing a brick were on a continual loop on these channels, suggesting that the whole of LA was aflame. Much was also made by the right wing media of protesters flying Mexican flags as if this somehow represented an "invasion", following the Trump nativist narrative.

One Republican politician even posted a picture of blond surfers on a California beach in the 1960s with the implication that they had now been "displaced" by swarthy aliens from south of the border. Anyway, California was part of Mexico until conquered in war by the USA, so who are the invaders?

Trial run

This LA crackdown can be seen as a trial run for Trump invoking the Insurrection Act, something he's been threatening to do since 2020 at least. One possible timing for him to use it would be early autumn of next year, to scupper the mid-term elections, which could lead to the Republicans losing one or both chambers of Congress.

Chief instigator of the LA exercise is Stephen Miller, White House Deputy Chief of Staff and notorious white racist. Miller wasn't happy with ICE arrest rates. "What do you mean you're going after criminals?" he allegedly told ICE officials at a recent top level meeting. Too time consuming, and not getting deportation numbers up! More indiscriminate arrests were what he wanted



– at least 1,200 to 1,500 a day – to meet a total of between half and one million deportations annually. Journalist Terry Moran was suspended by ABC for saying on social media that Miller was "richly endowed with the capacity for hatred." Sadly that's the price you pay for honest reporting in the USA today! Journalists on the scene in LA itself were attacked by "law enforcement" with pepper spray and rubber bullets.

The regime denounced protesters for wearing masks, but that didn't stop ICE masking up and removing their identification badges. They went to hardware stores, car-washes, garment factories, even lifted nannies looking after kids in the park, and stuck them in detention centres, often without water and sanitary arrangements. No wonder this brought people out onto the streets. Where is my parent, grandparent, partner, neighbour?

Tellingly, Secretary of Homeland Security, Kristi Noem, has defined habeas corpus (the right not to be detained without due process) as "the right that the president has to be able to remove people from this country". When senior US senator Alex Padilla interrupted Noem's press conference to question her, he was not only removed from the conference, but then wrestled to the ground and handcuffed by her goons. A week earlier SEIU trade unionist David Huerta was arrested for allegedly interfering in one of ICE's raids.

Trump has had the nerve to label the LA protesters "insurrectionists" when at the start of his second term he pardoned 1,500 actual insurrectionists who'd tried to overthrow the government during the 6 January 2021 attack on the Capitol.

He took the National Guard under federal control to deploy in LA, against the express wishes of a State governor.

It was the first time that had happened since 1965. On that occasion it was done to protect civil rights marchers in Selma, Alabama. This time round it was to repress similar protests.

The military jamboree on 14 June was particularly despicable in view of Trump's own bone-spurs draft dodge and his low regard for the military rank and file as "suckers" and "losers". Independent thinkers in the high command were able to resist some of the demands for self aggrandisement during the first Trump term, but those have retired or been sacked since. Appointing Dan Caine as chief of staff, Trump claimed Caine had told him: "Yes, sir. I love you, sir. I think you're great, sir. I'll kill for you, sir".

Hortman

Minnesota State Congresswoman Melissa Hortman and her husband were killed on 15 June. Another Democrat politician, State Senator John Hoffman, and his wife were shot several times in their home a few miles away. Vance Boelter, who may have had a far-right and religious motivation for the attacks, has been charged. Police found a list naming Hortman and Hoffman and including dozens of other Democrats from Minnesota such as Gov. Walz, Rep Ilhan Omar, Senator Tina Smith, and state Attorney General Keith Ellison.

Time and again the courts have ruled that administration's actions as unconstitutional only for the rulings to be swerved or nullified. With Amy Coney Barrett proving more independent-minded than Trump can have expected when nominating her to the Supreme Court, it is not ruled out that the courts can significantly check Trump, but, if they do, the value will depend on the ability of an independent movement to exploit the opportunity. □



Sanders declares new “Fighting Oligarchy” drive

Bernie Sanders spoke after Trump sent the troops in to Los Angeles.

Let us be clear, we are living under an oligarchic form of society which has created more income and wealth inequality than any time in our history. That oligarchic form of society created a corrupt campaign finance system that allows billionaires to make unlimited amounts of campaign contributions.

Trump won the election with \$270 million in support from Elon Musk, the wealthiest guy on earth. The result of that enormous campaign contribution was that Musk was given the most important job in government and the opportunity to decimate government agency after government agency.

Because of Musk's chainsaw approach, we have seen massive lay-offs in the National Institute of Health, the Center for Disease Control, the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, and many more.

Now, as I hope all of you know, Trump and the Republicans are working Trump's "big beautiful bill". At a time of massive income and wealth inequality, this legislation provides a \$645 billion tax break to the top 1% at a time when these guys already own more wealth than the bottom 93% of Americans.

This bill would also provide a \$420 billion tax break to large corporations that are stashing their profits and off-shore tax havens like the Cayman Islands.

How do Trump and the Republicans pay for these huge tax breaks to the wealthy and large corporations? Well, at a time when over 85 million Americans are uninsured or underinsured, when our current health care system is already broken, this bill slashes Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act by more than \$1 trillion. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that this bill would eliminate health care for 16 million Americans, and a recent study from Yale University and the University of Pennsylvania concludes that result in 50,000 unnecessary deaths every single year.

Further, this bill makes massive cuts to nutrition, education, and other programs that working families depend upon for their survival.

In other words, this unspeakable piece of legislation takes from the most

vulnerable people in our country, people who are barely hanging on today, and gives it to the very richest people who have never ever had it so good.

But the struggle we are engaged in now is not just to defeat this terrible piece of legislation. We are also engaged in an unprecedented effort to defeat authoritarianism and maintain our democracy.

Never before in American history has a president acted with such disdain for our constitution and for the rule of law as Trump is doing right now. He has usurped the power of Congress by putting a hold on appropriations that Congress has authorized firing thousands of employees and abolishing agencies that Congress established all that is illegal he and his supporters have usurped the power of the judiciary by threatening to impeach judges who rule against Trump's policies.

He has sued media and extorted them for large settlements including ABC, Meta, and the *De Moines Register*. He is now in negotiations with CBS and its parent company Paramount, which he sued for \$20 billion. Why? He didn't like an interview they did with Kamala Harris. His administration is attempting to zero out funding for PBS and NPR because they provide a more objective source of news than he is comfortable with.

This is clearly a man who cannot tolerate criticism of him or what he does, which is exactly what authoritarianism is all about. He has extorted money from law firms who represented clients he didn't like and he's going after universities whose courses he disagrees with.

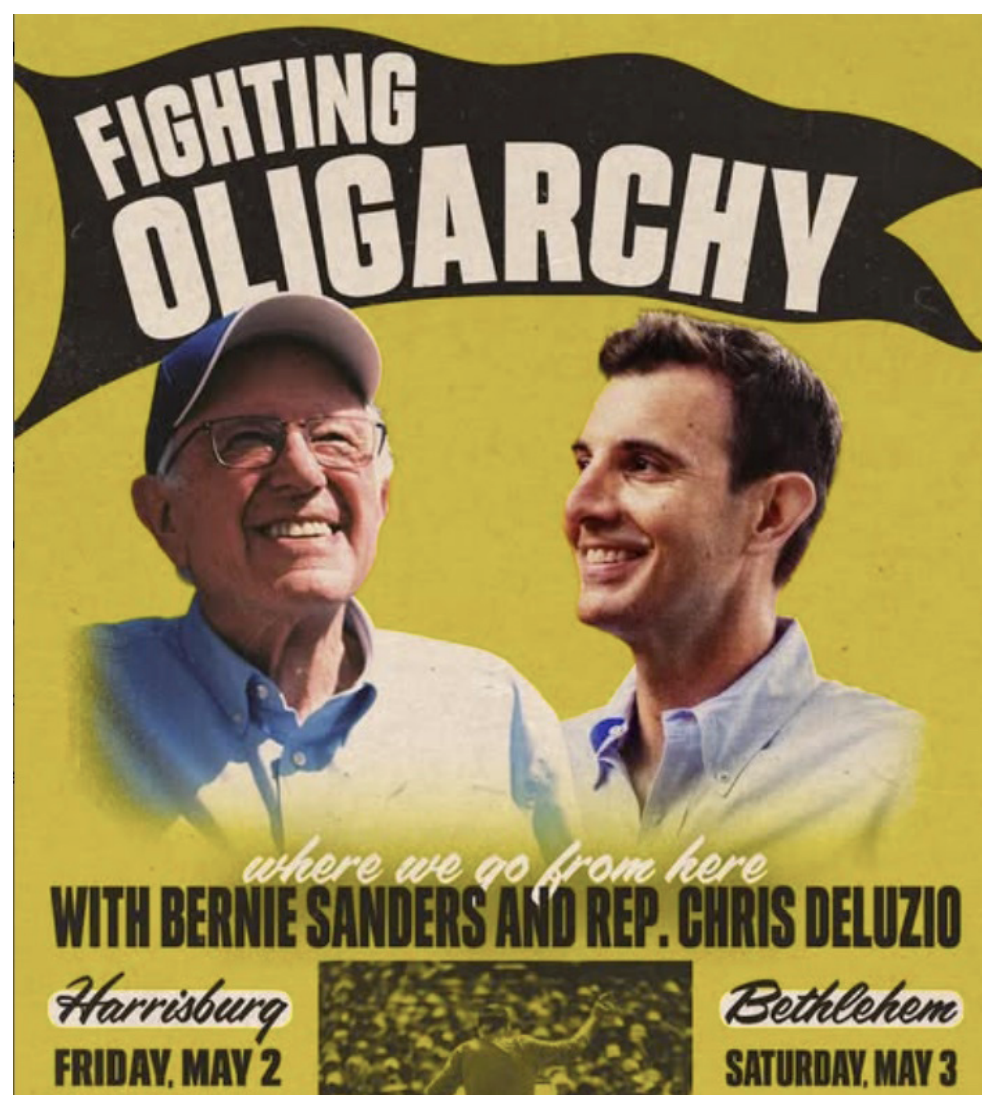
What he is saying, rather bluntly: if you stand up to Donald Trump he will punish you.

Unfolding

And now we have the situation unfolding in Los Angeles. Let me be clear. Trump's deployment of the National Guard and Marines in California is not about the protests. It is not about ICE, and it's really not about immigration. It is another example of Trump using extremely dubious legal authority to expand his never-ending quest for more power and his effort to move this country toward authoritarianism.

Trump's argument for his deployment of the troops is nothing less than absurd. Does anybody really believe that we are in the midst of a foreign invasion or a rebellion against the United States? Those are the legal arguments that Trump has used to "nationalise" the National Guard in California.

Defeating Trumpism and the oligarchs who support him will not be easy. These guys have enormous amounts of wealth and enormous amounts of power. But if there is anything that we learn from Dr Martin Luther King Jr.'s successful effort to



combat racist officials and segregation, it is that disciplined resistance is the best way forward. Burning cars or throwing rocks at police officers is precisely what Donald Trump wants.

If we're going to defeat Trumpism, it is going to require a multi-faceted approach. We have already held 18 Fighting Oligarchy rallies in 12 states, with over 250,000 people in attendance. We will soon be announcing a new series of rallies which will be located in rural conservative areas, exactly the areas that we have got to turn around.

Short-term, we're mobilising opposition around the country to Trump's disastrous budget reconciliation bill. We are working hard to end their control of Congress. If we are successful that will go a long way to putting the brakes on Trump's reactionary agenda.

Longer term, we are building a political movement which is taking on the billionaire class taking on the right-wing extremist Republican party and taking on a corporate-dominated Democratic party whose leadership is wedded to maintaining the status quo. We are fighting, to quote President Abraham Lincoln in 1863, for a government of the people, by the people and for the people.

If there was ever a time in American history when we need to come together, now is that time. If we continue to fight for the basic principles of economic, social, racial, and environmental justice, I am confident that we will get through this unprecedented crisis and we will lay the foundation for a better and more just America in the future. □

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Ukraine: life under Russian occupation

By Michael Baker

With Russia-Ukraine peace talks crawling slowly onwards with little outcome, and much discussion in the press of territories changing hands, almost no attention is being paid to the situation in the occupied territories of Eastern Ukraine. Due to tight censorship and harsh prosecutions, there are very few reports coming from inside the Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions, or from the longer-annexed Crimean peninsula.

The Russian government plans to turn large swathes of occupied Ukraine into a military production complex. In April 2025 the entire industrial sector of the city of Melitopol, Zaporizhzhia Oblast, was repurposed into one enormous military production plant. In some ways, this mirrors the repurposing of much of the infrastructure within Russia itself towards military goods, but the scale and speed of the shift is more drastic, creating centres for arms and vehicle production much nearer to the frontline.

In parallel with this large industrial transformation is a demographic one. Russia has heavily incentivised its own citizens to move to the occupied territories, though exact numbers are impossible to identify. In part, this is to populate the factory towns and cities with a new workforce. It also serves to "homogenise" Eastern Ukraine by force – it is easier to enforce laws about speaking Russian when a significant portion of the new population have only ever spoken Russian anyway, and easier to punish those who identify as Ukrainian when they have been surrounded by Russians.

In and of itself, this is a difficult experience for many of the regions' original inhabitants. The problem is compounded by enforced Russification on a mass scale. Simon Pirani has previously [reported](#) on Ukrainians being forced to accept Russian passports in order to access such basic things as central heating, healthcare or voting rights. Unsurprisingly, this has led to a large uptake in Russian passports – the Russian government claims 95% of the

occupied territories are now citizens of the Russian Federation, a process which involves recording a video declaring that you support Russia's war effort and its government. In effect, this is mass-scale production of kompromat, some of which has already been circulated on Russian state TV and the internet.

Despite apparent Russian successes, a new law was introduced this year requiring a Russian passport in order to buy bus tickets, suggesting there are people resistant enough to require further threats.

While Russians are encouraged to move to Ukraine, the reverse does not apply. Despite being legally citizens of the Russian Federation, Ukrainians with a Russian passport who try to travel into Russia are often subjected to "filtration" procedures in Russian airports, and made to wait in cramped and unhygienic conditions for hours, even days, before being allowed to travel (or not). 2024 saw at least four recorded deaths of people awaiting filtration decisions in Sheremetyevo Airport in Moscow.

Homes

The arriving Russians in the occupied regions need homes to live in. The Eastern Human Rights Group (EHRG) reports that the state is offering up homes that have been designated "abandoned". By July 2024, over one million homes had been reclaimed by the state, largely to be redistributed to Russian "settlers".

Stories abound of Ukrainians travelling to another part of the country or overseas for as little as a month, only to return to another family living in their apartment. The process has disturbing similarities with the treatment of Palestinian families and their homes in the West Bank.

The corruption that riddles Russian bureaucracy (as well, admittedly, as its equivalent in Ukraine) is in full force here, too: families will be arbitrarily told that their dwelling legally has "no owner", forcing them to bribe local government officials in order to continue living in their own home.

Vera Yastrebova, spokesperson for

the Eastern Human Rights Group, in a video explaining the seizure of Ukrainian homes, said: "'Here is your real 'Russian World' for you: they came with machine guns, covered your towns in blood, destroyed your homes, and now, like marauders, divide up other people's property between themselves. Ukrainian apartments are being given over en masse to Russian raiders, as trophies."

Children

The treatment of children in the occupied territories is slowly gaining some of the press attention it deserves. Numbers are extremely hard to pin down, but at the very least, tens of thousands of Ukrainian children (possibly hundreds of thousands) have been taken from Eastern Ukraine into the Russian care system, often via secretive "re-education camps" to try and initiate them into life as a Russian. Much like political prisoners and prisoners of war, once in the Russian care system, Ukrainian children are systematically moved away from Ukraine itself, to care services in far-flung corners of the Russian Federation. Parents who refuse to give their children Russian passports can lose custody of them, and many prominent Russian politicians and public figures have now made a show of adopting "rescued" Ukrainian children, almost as a fashion statement.

School curricula in the occupied areas have been completely rewritten. Teaching in Ukrainian is strictly forbidden, and teachers either speaking in Ukrainian or allowing their students to do so can be severely punished. All history and culture taught in schools is now Russian history and Russian culture.

Ukrainians are imprisoned in the occupied territories for any number of charges and at an extremely high rate. Once moved to Russian [prisons](#), they are then treated as a lower caste, subject to beatings, abuse and torture from prisoners and guards alike. This is perhaps even more the case for ethnic and religious minorities from the region, most prominently Crimean Tatars. That

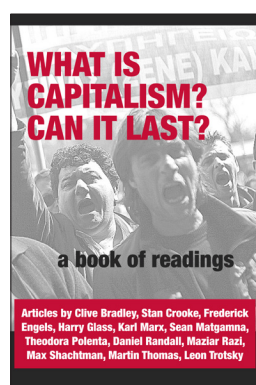
group has faced horrific and systematic persecution since the 2014 annexation, with around 150 political and community figures currently classified as political prisoners.

The risk posed by a careless attitude to reconstruction and environmental safety should not be underestimated. Russia has deliberately removed much of the equipment monitoring the condition of flooded coal mines in the Donbas, to avoid scrutiny from the international scientific community, as well as avoiding taking urgent action to contain various polluting substances and toxins that leech from the uncontained mines into the surrounding earth. With the information available, one recent report [estimated](#) that if serious action was not taken within five to twelve years, two thirds of the Donbas could become uninhabitable.

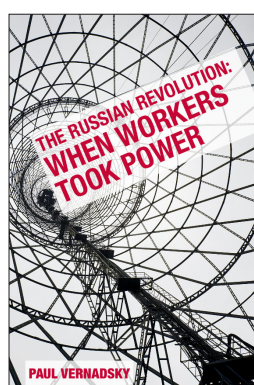
Russia has boasted of Mariupol as a revitalised city, with repaired buildings and almost all of the population returned. Reports on the ground [differ](#), describing the renovations that have taken place as superficial, with many buildings and services in the city still not available or functioning, and far fewer people living in Mariupol than the government claims. Most importantly, the two large steel factories that were the city's lifeblood have not been rebuilt in the slightest.

Strangled

Zelenskyy's government is a corrupt, Thatcherite force, guilty of attacks on the labour movement and courting foreign capital at the expense of Ukraine's working class. But to claim that it is in any way equivalent with the puppet statelets imposed upon the people of the Donbas, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia and Crimea is sorely wrong. For the people of Eastern Ukraine to survive the war and the hard years following it, they will need to build working-class forces and social movements that are currently being systematically and brutally strangled by an invading force. Any discussion of peace negotiations will have to acknowledge that fact. □



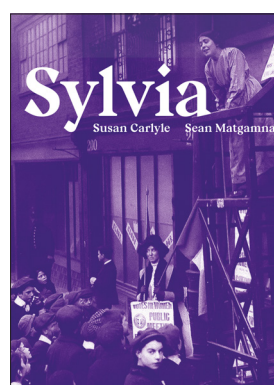
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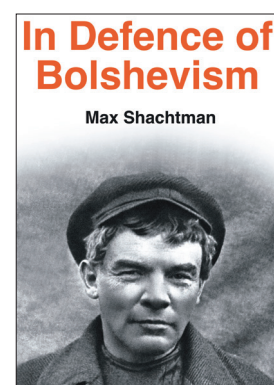
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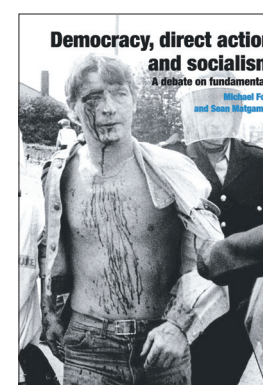
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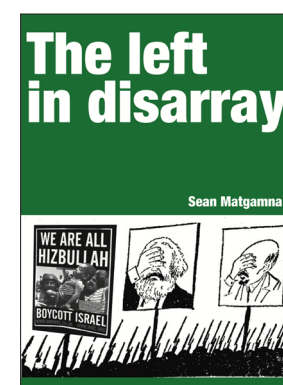
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Birmingham bins: out until December?

By Jim Denham

Nearly 400 Birmingham workers facing brutal pay cuts have voted to continue industrial action, in a ballot result announced on 5 June.

The ballot, which resulted in 97 per cent of workers voting in favour of strike action on a 75 per cent turnout, means strike action could last until December, according to Unite.

Strikes began in January after the council told the bin workers they would face pay cuts of up to £8,000 – a quarter of their wages for some. The devastating cuts will leave many unable to pay their bills, rents and mortgages.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said after the ballot result was announced: "After smearing these workers in public since January and

telling them to accept a fair and reasonable offer that never existed, the council finally put a proposal in writing last week.

"True to form, the proposal came weeks late and was not in line with the ballpark offer discussed during Acas talks in May. It had been watered down by the government commissioners and the leader of the council despite them never having been in the negotiations.

"It beggars belief that a Labour government and Labour council is treating these workers so disgracefully. It is hardly surprising that so many working people are asking whose side Labour is on.

"The decision makers at Birmingham council need to get in the room and put forward an acceptable offer. Unite

will not allow these workers to be financially ruined – the strikes will continue for as long as it takes. Unite calls on the decision makers to let common sense prevail in upcoming negotiations."

At the end of May, the High Court ruled that an interim injunction would continue until the end of the strike, meaning workers can no longer legally obstruct scab bin lorries.

Despite this, and the Council's scab operation, the strike has stayed solid: more workers have joined the strike than have gone back to work.

But there is a sense that the action is losing some of its momentum and that leadership from Unite, at both national and local levels, is lacking.

An elected strike committee would provide a forum for the discussion of

tactics and what the "red lines" should be in negotiations. Regular mass meetings would also help boost morale, involve the rank and file in decision making and keep the workforce united in the face of the council's attacks.

The injunction is a real threat to the strike. Picket lines are sparser now, and the council's scab operation is in full flow.

The council is reliably estimated to have spent close to £1m so far on policing the strike. And that figure doesn't include legal fees, private security and overtime payments to scab agency crews.

Donate to the strike fund – Unite WM/7186 Branch, account: 20308397, sort code: 608301. Title BCC Strike Donation. □



Sheffield injunction against pickets

By Kayden Jones

Bin workers in Sheffield have been striking against Veolia for ten months to get Unite, the union of their choice, recognised. GMB have played an atrocious role in the dispute, [claiming](#) Unite has launched a "campaign of harassment" against their members. Veolia bosses allow GMB flags to fly from the depot fences, giving cover for their [claim](#) that this is an "inter-union" dispute

Despite the efforts of GMB bureaucrats, a majority of workers, including GMB's members, have [signed](#) a petition calling for Unite recognition.

On Friday 13 June, a High Court injunction was awarded to Veolia, stopping persons unknown from blocking vehicles entering or exiting Veolia depots. Veolia has spent at least £60,000 on strikebreaking efforts in the last eight weeks alone, but it went to the high court to prevent

effective protest, rather than negotiate with their workers.

The injunction makes it clear that more political pressure is needed. Labour activists in Sheffield should not remain silent on the issue of a contractor for a Labour council refusing to recognise a trade union, especially an affiliated union. Pressure should be put on Labour councillors and MPs to stand up for these workers and come out publicly for the recognition of Unite. □

Woke but anti-worker?

By Dylan Seah

In the Preface to *Capital*, Marx writes that "however much he may subjectively raise himself above them", individuals remain creatures of their class relations. In a spectacular example of this, the seemingly left-wing management of Scarlett Letters Bookshop in east London – which they describe as a "space which platforms the voices of marginalised communities" – have dismissed a worker without notice and are denying the rest of the workers fixed-hour contracts and sick pay. The workers have joined United Voices of the World and are balloting to strike.

Many of the workers are sex workers who were told that stable jobs at the bookshop would help them cope with the precarity of sex work. They were assured they would be given fixed-hour contracts after Christmas 2024. Management continued to give assurances about fixed-term contracts until



they met with the union last month and denied the possibility of offering them. Under pressure from the union, they disclosed the bookshop's finances which the workers say show no barrier to sick pay or fixed-hour contracts. The workers run the shop day-to-day, and want to cooperatively run it according to their ideas.

Solidarity with the Scarlett Letter Bookshop workers! Hardship fund: bit.ly/sc-let □

• As we go to press, the owners have said they are shutting down the shop.

Save Ealing's children's centres!

By Simon Nelson

A demonstration at Ealing Town Hall on 10 June condemned Ealing council's plans to close ten of its 25 children's centres. On 11 June, the council went ahead with the decision to close, while giving a partial reprieve for three centres. As the Save Ealing Children's Centres Campaign says, this is "damage limitation", not a victory.

The Council has ignored the strength

of public opposition to the closures and the details of its consultation, which held no in-person meetings about eight of the nine centres closing.

The Council's plan, which retains 15 centres but cuts £751,000 from the budget over two years, lacks a clear Outreach Plan or Early Help Strategy. Campaigners argue that these cuts – from a service costing just over £1 million annually – will have a serious

impact on children, particularly in deprived areas.

Save Ealing Children's Centres, a coalition of parents, professionals, the Trades Council, and community groups, is calling for the decision to be scrutinised and reversed.

Vowing to continue their campaign, they demand an Early Help offer that strengthens – not dismantles – the support systems children and families

depend on. Labour members in Ealing should ask themselves whether a council set on continuing Tory austerity is the kind of leadership that should continue under a Labour government. Local Labour activists should urgently write and propose motions to their local parties against the cuts and call on Labour nationally to invest and restore funding to local government. More: saveealing-childrenscentres.wordpress.com

“What we stand for

Today one class, the working class, lives by selling its labour power to another, the capitalist class, which owns the means of production.

Capitalists' control over the economy and their relentless drive to increase their wealth causes poverty, unemployment, blighting of lives by overwork; imperialism, environmental destruction and much else.

The working class must unite to struggle against the accumulated wealth and power of the capitalists, in the workplace and wider society.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty wants socialist revolution: collective ownership of industry and services, workers' control, and a democracy much fuller than the present system, with elected representatives recallable at any time and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

We fight for trade unions and the Labour Party to break with "social partnership" with the bosses, to militantly assert working-class interests.

In workplaces, trade unions, and Labour organisations; among students; in local campaigns; on the left and in wider political alliances we stand for:

- Independent working-class representation in politics
- A workers' government, based on and accountable to the labour movement
- A workers' charter of trade union rights – to organise, strike, picket effectively, and take solidarity action
- Taxing the rich to fund good public services, homes, education and jobs for all
- Workers' control of major industries and finance for a rapid transition to a green society
- A workers' movement that fights all forms of oppression
- Full equality for women, and social provision to free women from domestic labour. Reproductive freedoms and free abortion on demand.
- Full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people
- Black and white workers' unity against racism
- Open borders
- Global solidarity against global capital – workers everywhere have more in common with each other than with their capitalist or Stalinist rulers
- Democracy at every level of society, from the smallest workplace or community to global social organisation
- Equal rights for all nations, against imperialists and predators big and small
- Maximum left unity in action, and full openness in debate

If you agree with us, take copies of *Solidarity* to sell – and join us! □

• workersliberty.org/join-awl

Making up for lost time

We are now less than ten weeks away from 25 August and our Socialist Summer Camp.

Fortunately we have had a little resurgence in donations, with our total now standing at £15,540. But it would be a mistake to think that we can slow down. Particularly as we hit

the summer and some, but by no means all, public political activity decreases. □

• Donate: workersliberty.org/fund

The NPA-R and Lotta Comunista

Following the 16-18 May conference in Paris of left groups from many countries, the French NPA-R has published this assessment of Lotta Comunista, the group with which it will be organising the follow-up in early 2025. Below is a translation with some notes from us. Our report on 16-18 May: bit.ly/34-yrs

Lotta Comunista (LC), which is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year, is an internationalist communist organisation in Italy. Although discreet, as it deliberately stays away from social media, it is the most important revolutionary group in the country.

Its militants claim to be Leninists, and although its historical core, which originated in Genoa with Arrigo Cervetto and Lorenzo Parodi, comes from libertarian communism [their first group, in the early 1950s, called itself "anarchist"], the fundamental features of its orientation, choices and theoretical elaborations come from the tradition of the communist left [i.e. of the "Italian Left" of the 1920s, distinct from the

Dutch, German, etc. "ultra-left"]. Lotta Comunista draws on Amadeo Bordiga (founder of the Communist Party of Italy and great rival of Antonio Gramsci) for its analysis of the decline and fall of the October Revolution, and especially for his criticism of the United Workers' Front [in politics: Bordiga was for the United Front in trade-union matters] and the electoral tactics that emerged from the congresses of the Communist International (strategic abstention, in their terms). This affiliation does not prevent it from having its own positions on the analysis of the Resistance to fascism (far from the positions of the Italian left-wing factions or Lutte Ouvrière in France) [Cervetto started politics in the "partisan" resistance to Nazi rule in northern Italy], or on the break after the Vietnam War with the Bordigist tradition of support for national liberation struggles. [LC argues that since the Vietnam war all national struggles are now "obsolete" and "reactionary". We don't know what the reference to "Bordigist tradition" means here: generally the

"Bordigists" disdained national struggles even before the mid-1970s]

The comrades believe that we are going through a long cycle of "political passivity" and focus their intervention on building "workers' circles", Leninist nuclei in workplaces and places of study, and significant trade union activity (including the animation of the Genoa shipyard workers' union and a presence in the industrial triangle of northern Italy). The most visible part of their activity is the sale of their press (a monthly magazine in newspaper form). Since the pandemic, they have developed what they call "class-based" volunteer activities, consisting of food collections and donations, which enable them to intervene and then organise working-class communities, often with immigrant backgrounds, the results of which are visible in their meetings and on May Day.

Our differences are significant. They concern issues of varying importance, but we will mention only the most salient ones: a certain distance towards the problem of oppressions; the question of party building (one element among others: territorial organisation rather than the workplace cells we favour); the national question, particularly with regard to current events in Palestine; a definition of a unified European imperialism that we consider premature, to say the least; and the role of strike committees in relation to trade union bureaucracies.

Studios activists will know their publishing houses in Italian, English, German, Russian, Portuguese... □

Breathless (À bout de souffle), 1960



Kino Eye

By John Cunningham

Nouvelle Vague, by Richard Linklater, a new film centred on the making of Jean-Luc Godard's classic *Breathless*, will be released in October in France. Here I would like to focus on the original.

Along with Francois Truffaut's *400 Blows* (*Les quatre cent coups*, 1959), *Breathless* is one of the foundation stones of the French New Wave (*Nouvelle Vague*). It is a remarkable achievement. Godard knew little about directing, and a number of the innovations in the film (jump cuts, loose narrative structure) could be put down to his inexperience. Nevertheless, *Breathless* was highly influential. The plot is simple. Michel Poiccard, a small-time crook (Jean-Paul Belmondo), steals a car and later shoots a cop. He hides out at the apartment of his lover Patricia (American actress Jean Seberg) but the police close in on him.



Both Godard and Truffaut demonstrated that you didn't have to spend years doing an apprenticeship in a big studio. Shooting on location, directors were no longer studio-bound, enabling a freewheeling, lively, occasionally rough-edged, style of film-making that caught the spirit of the time. Many followed suit: in Italy, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and elsewhere. You can't really claim to be a lover of cinema until you have seen both these films. □

• Watch online: bit.ly/a-bds

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Want to be part of an organised long-haul collective effort to spread the socialist ideas you read in *Solidarity*, and to link together activities in diverse campaigns and conflicts around that consistent socialist thread? Then take some copies of *Solidarity* to sell each week, and contact us to discuss joining Workers' Liberty, the group that produces and sustains this paper. Check it out and contact us via workersliberty.org/join-awl □





Orgreave inquiry now!

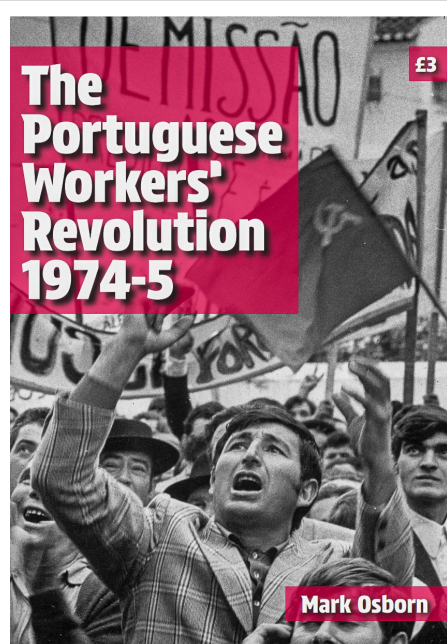
By Harold Storey

June 18 marks the 41st anniversary of the Battle of Orgreave, when tooled-up police attacked picketing miners in Orgreave, South Yorkshire. Over 120 people were injured in the attack and 95 arrested, all charged with unlawful assembly or riot. When police evidence was later shown to be false, all were acquitted.

The Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign (OTJC) has called for a full public inquiry into the events. Labour's 2024 manifesto pledged an inquiry, but has done nothing to start it.

The OTJC held their annual Orgreave anniversary march and rally in Sheffield on 14 June, attended by hundreds of supporters from the trade union movement.

The Labour government has a duty to fulfill their promise of a public inquiry and bring whatever justice they can to those long impacted by the events at Orgreave. Hold the Labour leaders to their promises! □



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Nottm HCSWs are stronger than ever

By Rob Hudd

The strike at Nottingham University Hospitals Trust shows no sign of ending. After full week's strike from 9 June by health care support workers, there were more on the picket lines that in the first six weeks.

The budget for the two huge hospitals is £1.8 billion, and it would take only £5 million to pay the hundreds of workers their demand: back pay for the six years they have been doing work way above their pay grade.

Partly, the Chief Executive, Anthony May, wants to maintain a reputation of being tough on unions that he gained as Chief Exec of the Tory (now Reform) Notts

county council. Many other Trusts have settled the back pay but May doesn't want to lose face by admitting he was wrong.

We need to look also at the bigger picture of the NHS.

14 years of Tory underfunding led to Labour being elected last year on a promise to restore funding and settle the long running junior doctors' strike, which had cost £1.5 billion when £1 billion would have given them their 35% claim. The settlement left much to be desired, but it looked as if there was a change in direction. Since then, the worse situation than the Labour leaders thought has led to austerity, plummeting popu-

larity for Labour, and the rise of Reform.

On 10 June of the strike the Trust announced the Government has told it it has to "save" another £97 million from "support services", though computer services, admin staff etc already cut to the bone lead to greater expenditure and more cuts. (Hundreds of hospitals have been hit by cyber attacks with ransomware, costing millions, as computer systems are not kept up to date and frequently crash).

Health care assistants have been renamed "support workers" but they are front-line. When strikers marched to the Executive Board meeting on 11 June it was clear the Board don't under-

stand how vital this front line role is.

The Trust have said savings have to be made on the £20 million budget for agency workers and the £200 million budget for drugs. But, as I know from having a recent treatment for prostate cancer, NHS England say they can't afford the £77 a month drug abiraterone that can keep thousands of us alive (though NHS Scotland and HSC Northern Ireland still fund it), and that will mean much more spent on hospital and palliative care.

Settle the strike now! That will save on agency workers. More centrally, the Labour government need to give the NHS the funding it needs. □

Schools still face funding squeeze

By David Pendleton

The government has agreed to honour the School Teachers Review Body (STRB) recommendation of 4% pay increase for teachers for the academic year starting September 2025. They have also agreed to fund 3%. The government's submission to the STRB was for a 2.8% rise not funded, so this is a significant improvement, at least partially accounted for by the National Education Union (NEU) campaign on pay and funding.

At its annual conference the NEU voted for a formal ballot of its teacher members over industrial action unless there were a pay rise above inflation and fully funded. Unfortunately, we spelled out no clear set of demands or strategy to win them.

Now the Executive has gone against the conference decision and is having another digital consultation of teacher members in England, 21-27 June. That's a worrying precedent.

However, given the improved settlement and the blurring of strategy and demands, it is unlikely that a formal ballot for industrial action for a better offer and full funding would win now.

With the Retail Price Index (RPI) up 4.5% April to April, and the Consumer Price Index (CPIH) up 4.1%, it is entirely possible that this settlement will be a real terms pay cut. But the focus has

now narrowed to demanding the 4% is fully funded, so we are asking members to strike to win funding, but no pay improvement in our pay... while we lose pay every day we strike. The NEU website says "crisis in SEND" (special educational needs and disabilities provision), with "funding issues crippling schools and local authorities", but does not highlight that in the consultation.

Repeated use of indicative ballots and consultative surveys leads to ballot fatigue (among local officers and reps and members) and signals that the union leadership itself has no confidence that we can win. Better if they said that honestly, than have surveys which members know are designed to provide evidence that they're unmilitant.

To win on pay and funding we need to mobilise as many members as possible. Our support staff members are more acutely affected by both low pay and funding. They should be fully involved in the campaign, being consulted and balloted alongside our teacher members.

We need clear demands on pay and funding: something like 2% above inflation or £3,000, whichever is greater. Strategy must include demonstrations and campaigning but also a rapid and escalating programme for industrial action.

In the meantime, in the consultation

we should vote yes to move to a formal ballot and then to industrial action. □

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Billions in cuts still underway

By Cathy Nugent

Pitched as a programme to kick start a “national renewal”, Rachel Reeves’s Spending Review was an attempt to differentiate Labour from the Tories. Against the Tories, Labour was the real party of economic growth. Labour, not Reform, was the “party of working people”.

Importantly, it was also an attempt to quieten the querulous mood inside Labour and the unions over cuts to disability benefits and the two-child cap on child benefit.

Reeves’s presentation, alongside Labour’s partial u-turn on winter fuel payments, shows that the campaign to fight Labour’s benefit cuts is working.

However the spending plans, which will run from 2026 to 2029, fall far short of what is needed to rebuild the NHS and other vital public services.

Capital spending plans are not affected by Reeves’s “fiscally responsible” limit on day-to-day spending – of an on-average 1.2% increase across all departments. Hence Reeves announced £113 billion worth of transport, infrastructure and house building. Whether potential Labour voters care enough about these plans is another matter. In any case infrastructure takes a long time to build and thus any political dividends will be a long time coming.

£39 billion for social and “affordable” housing over 10 years seemed impressive, but is it such a big contrast to the Tory average of £11 billion over five years? Absence of detail on the ratio of social housing to so-called, “affordable” housing (often unaffordable) makes any claim of fixing the housing crisis unbelievable.

Reeves told us she was rejecting the Tories’ “choice of austerity”, but with spending over the 1.2% limit in health (the biggest departmental spender), other departments will see cuts. What are Labour’s priorities?

The average annual real-terms increase of 16% for Ed Miliband’s tiny Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) was a relatively cheap nod to clean energy. Reeves did not however mention the now politically taboo words, “net zero”.

In a more obvious nod to reactionary opinions, Reeves flagged up ending the use of hotels to temporarily house asylum seekers; this was predicated on speeding up the deportation of “failed” asylum seekers.

What about the 2.8% yearly increase for health? It’s less than the usual 4% annual increase the

health service got before the Tories decided to run the NHS into the ground. It’s a tight budget, which jeopardises Labour’s 18 week target for hospital waiting times.

We should oppose Labour’s increases in defence money (to 2.6% of GDP). The government should be channelling money into health and other public services and creating many more jobs in those services.

Spending on benefits is not included in spending reviews but both Starmer and Reeves have made clear there will be no u-turn on proposed cuts to disability benefits. This is made clear in elements of the review.

Policies which will form part of the delayed Child Poverty Strategy include capping the cost of school uniforms and providing free school meals to all children in households receiving Universal Credit. Labour hopes these (good) policies will quell opposition to the cap. They shouldn’t, not least because the cost of expanding free school meals make the settlement on schools in England very tight. Strip out that cost and there is a real-terms freeze in the schools budget.

Reeves also flagged up £3.5 billion for employment support: “helping people to access the skills they need to progress, tackling inactivity and ensuring more people are in better jobs. This includes ... support for anyone on out of work benefits with a work-limiting health condition or disability.”

The government has said this “employment support” will lessen the impact of cuts to Personal Independence Payments (PIP). It continues

to falsely claim that there is a choice between “getting people back to work” and making those cuts. But the campaign against the cuts has reiterated again and again, PIP is a benefit which helps disabled people manage their lives and be more mobile; it helps people get and stay in work.

Labour sees the projected £5 billion cut to the benefits bill as a way to pay for the 1.2% spending limit. Not only does this make some of most vulnerable people in society pay for austerity, the approach is completely incoherent. The pressure of capital spending plans (paid for by extra borrowing), and extra day-to-day spending in departments in health and defence will mean Labour will have to back down on raising taxes, blowing a hole in their “fiscally responsible” economic policies.

Making it harder to claim disability and sickness benefits was a nasty little innovation by the Tories back in the 1990s. The Tories went so far as to stigmatise disabled people and the long-term unemployed as malingerers. Is Labour’s approach any different?

Bargain basement “get ready for work” schemes do not “fix” people whose capacity to join a capitalist labour market is limited. Nor do they create jobs let alone those which have sufficient adjustments to enable the capacities of disabled people.

Labour now arm-twisting Labour MPs and making minimal concessions to get through their cuts.

Liz Kendall has said that claimants with life-limiting and life-long conditions will not have to re-apply for PIP. Claimants who have their benefits

removed will have a longer grace period where they continue to receive the extra money. This is not enough, Labour must stop these cuts.

The big unions – Unite, Unison, and the GMB – should make good on their promises to oppose disability cuts or even to campaign publicly against them. Disability cuts will have to be legislated on but could also be rushed through Parliament. Time to oppose the cuts is short. DPAC has called a protest on 30 June at 4.30pm in Parliament Square. There is a national day of action on Thursday 3 July. Join the protests and help build them; get your trade union or Labour Party branch to actively support protests.

Against Reeves’s fiscal restraint and cuts, we say raise taxes on the wealthy and big business to increase the pool of money available to stop the cuts and rebuild public services! □

Lambeth set to strike

By Katy Dollar

Members of the public services union Unison in Lambeth Libraries will meet on Monday 23 June to set a strike strategy for their dispute with Lambeth council (in south London). The workers are in dispute over staffing levels, redundancies, timetabling, and upgrading the lowest paid staff in the service, following the council’s decision for drastic overall cuts this year.

Throughout the negotiations posts have been added into the proposed structure to improve staffing levels and staff on the lowest grades have had their pay increased. However there are still no written guarantees on rotas not changing and, though there are enough posts for people at present, there are still potential redundancies.

Anti-union laws require two weeks notice for action, so notice to the employer will be sent ahead of the workers’ meeting to decide a strategy, which is expected to include escalation. The strike committee elected at the beginning of the dispute will be extended to ensure there are reps from every site and team. Mass pickets are expected for the strikes. □

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ISRAEL-IRAN: STOP THE WAR!

By Ira Berkovic

Attacks by Israel on targets associated with Iran's nuclear programme, and Iranian attacks on Israeli targets in response, are a dangerous escalation that threatens the safety of people across the region. As we go to press, US vice-president J D Vance talks of the US joining the war. We want the war stopped: peace, negotiations.

A new Israeli attack on Iran, most likely with US backing, had long been expected by many commentators and analysts. The first wave of those attacks struck high-profile targets, including killing Hossein Salami, the commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guard, a key unit of the Iranian regime. Israeli strikes have killed 224 people at the time of writing. In Israel, 24 people have been killed by Iranian attacks.

Israel wants to cut off Iran's ability to develop nuclear weapons so it can't threaten Israel, and further to stamp its own military power on the Middle East. US President Donald Trump has framed Israel's attacks as punishment for the Iranian regime's failure to sign a new nuclear treaty with the

USA, and offered them a "second chance" before an even more "brutal" wave of attacks. But Trump's Israeli allies have no confidence in deals, even Trump's; they want a free rein to hit Iran as hard as possible and degrade its military and economic capacities for years to come. *Solidarity* opposes war between Israel and Iran on both sides. Israel's actions have their narrow rationale, but connect up with the wider project of its rulers to bolster Israel's power in the region. The savagely destructive war it is carrying out in Gaza, and the increasingly violent occupation of the West Bank, are also aspects of that project.

Iran's attacks on Israel do not take on a progressive character merely by dint of being retaliatory. Iran's militarism is a projection of its regional-imperialist ambitions.

Some in the Israeli military and security establishment say the aims of the war should be limited to cutting off Iran's nuclear programme. Others, including Prime Minister Netanyahu, argue Israel's attacks will "clear a path" for the Iranian people to overthrow the Islamic Republic. Maybe they have in mind some analogy with Leb-

anon, where a president has been elected and the official Lebanese army now has some hegemony over Hezbollah. Iran's Shah-in-exile has called on the Iranian military to rise up against the clerics. Whether he commands forces to make that call more real than the call he has also made for people to come on the streets against the regime, we can't know.

In any case, the level of war Netanyahu envisages – hitting economic and communications infrastructure as well as military targets and individual regime leaders – will lead to a staggering civilian death toll. Israeli minister Israel Katz said "residents of Tehran" would "pay a heavy price" for Iranian attacks on Israel. Most likely, Israel's war will make it much harder for the Iranian people to rid themselves of the oppressive regime. The attacks will enable the state to rally people behind the flag and suppress internal opposition. We stand with Iranian workers, women, and youth against the clerics' regime. We stand with those in Israel-Palestine fighting against Netanyahu, and for peace and equality. No to regional war, for peace and equal rights! □

• More: pages 2-3

