



Solidarity

For social ownership of the banks and industry

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www.workersliberty.org

Deficits balloon, winter comes

THREAT OF NHS CLOSURES



See page 3

Demand emergency funds now!

Join Labour! Join Young Labour!

What is the Alliance for Workers' Liberty?

Today one class, the working class, lives by selling its labour power to another, the capitalist class, which owns the means of production. Society is shaped by the capitalists' relentless drive to increase their wealth. Capitalism causes poverty, unemployment, the blighting of lives by overwork, imperialism, the destruction of the environment and much else.

Against the accumulated wealth and power of the capitalists, the working class has one weapon: solidarity.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty aims to build solidarity through struggle so that the working class can overthrow capitalism. We want 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 the labour movement to break with "social partnership" and assert working-class interests militantly against the bosses.

Our priority is to work in the workplaces and trade unions, supporting workers' struggles, producing workplace bulletins, helping organise rank-and-file groups.

We are also active among students and in many campaigns and 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, to strike, to picket effectively, and to take solidarity action.
- Taxation of the rich to fund decent public services, homes, education and jobs for all.
- A workers' movement that fights all forms of oppression. Full equality for women and social provision to free women from the burden of housework. Free abortion on request. Full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender 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.
- Working-class solidarity in international politics: equal rights for all nations, against imperialists and predators big and small.
- Maximum left unity in action, and openness in debate.
- If you agree with us, please take some copies of *Solidarity* to sell — and join us!

Contact us:

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The editor (Cathy Nugent), 20e Tower Workshops, Riley Road, London, SE1 3DG.

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Miillions are "feeling the Bern"

A statement by the US socialist group Solidarity (abridged)

Why are so many people attracted to Bernie Sanders' campaign?

More than 100,000 people were excited enough to attend 3,500 meetings throughout 50 states on July 29. In August and September Sanders drew huge crowds in Minneapolis, Denver, Madison, Phoenix, Council Bluffs, Phoenix, Seattle, Portland, Maine, Portland, Oregon (20,000), Los Angeles (27,000) and Boston (somewhere between 25-30,000).

On the labor front, he held a conference call of 26,000 union members in September, with 1,350 of them volunteering to work on his campaign.

All this is not because Bernie Sanders is a Democrat. In the Democratic Party today he remains an isolated outsider... before his presidential run he was most famous for being the longest-serving independent in Congress.

He's introduced legislation for a \$15 federal minimum wage, for free college tuition, and for tight financial regulation and reform that the corporate-tied Democratic leadership won't touch. We disagree with Sanders' relative silence on war and the military budget, but whatever his weaknesses, they don't make him acceptable to the Democratic leadership.

What Bernie enthusiasts have in common is that they are excited and relieved to find, for once, a candidate they don't have to hold their nose to vote for. They've pulled the lever for "lesser evil" corporate Democrats like Hillary Clinton before, against right-wing Republicans, but they're fed up with the idea that those are the only two choices... They support Sanders because they see him speaking up for society's economic underdogs.

While Hillary Clinton sat on the board of Walmart, Bernie Sanders was marching on union picket lines. Today he stands with those workers fighting for \$15 an hour and to get out from under student debt and to form new unions. He demands that we drive corporate money out of politics; he argues for universal health care and free college. And he was moved by the



intervention of the Black Lives Matter movement to make a strong statement on institutional racism and police violence.

It's anger over our mounting insecurity—and the knowledge that it doesn't have to be this way—that is fuelling the Sanders campaign. We can view the excitement as a continuation, through electoral politics, of the Occupy Wall Street movement that erupted in 2011.

Bernie Sanders' supporters in the unions are challenging the labor officialdom's longstanding, unquestioned, and virtually unconditional support for the Democratic Party leadership and organization.

UNIONS

Labor for Bernie, the group that organized the 26,000-person phone call with Sanders, brings together members who have seen their unions disrespected for decades, and who want to challenge both the economic and political state of affairs.

They want to challenge their bosses and force the government to recognise their rights, and many are finding that they have to oppose their own union leaders to do so.

Sanders has always called himself a "democratic socialist," but that did not feature so much in the first couple months of his campaign. With every new interview it has become more prominent. In 2014 Kshama Sawant won a seat on the Seattle City Council, showing that once again (as was true 100 years ago) a socialist could win political office in America.

Sanders has made it clear that his model is "social democracy" in the Scandinavian tradition: free health

care and education for all; good jobs and wages with excellent unemployment insurance, public housing programs, and a generous conception of the public good and social well-being.

Health care and social protections are under attack in Europe, too, but since they started at a higher level, these societies remain far ahead of the United States in the quality of their citizens' lives. However, these social programs exist within the context of a capitalist system that still creates inequality, exploits labor, and still goes from boom to bust. In fact, capitalism makes impossible many of the ideals that social democrats themselves aspire to. Militarism, too, can't coexist with Sanders' ideals—for one thing, defunding the war apparatus would be a great place to get the money for health care and education.

Sanders' campaign has the potential for going beyond a futile pressure group within the Democrats. Together with other movements, it could help lay the groundwork for an independent populist political movement.

More long-term, the choice is between giving up and going home once election season is over, and staying active in all sorts of movements that challenge politics as usual. The Democratic Party is not an empty vessel which a movement for "political revolution" can fill with its own ideas and own supporters. If it were possible to take over that party and use it to fight the power, it would have happened earlier.

No, this party is a long-standing institution, a convenient vehicle for perpetuating the dominance of the capitalist class.

The leaders who control

the Democratic Party have no intention of allowing Bernie Sanders to get anywhere near the presidential nomination. In the end, they need the votes of his supporters and the energy his campaign generates, but they'll do whatever is needed to stop his momentum.

Sanders' proposals can never be realized within that party—and Sanders knows it. Why else would he have remained an independent his whole life, until 2015?

After Bernie's uprising has been buried by the Democratic Party leadership, the Green Party and its likely presidential candidate Jill Stein will be on the November 2016 ballot running on many of the very same principles that energize the Sanders campaign. (We would have been delighted to see Sanders run as an independent, but he has ruled that out.)

For Bernie Sanders' supporters, Jill Stein's campaign represents what you're fighting for right now. The voices of protest and indignation can continue making themselves heard at the ballot box. Around the country, there will be referenda on social justice issues and local independent candidates running as pro-people renegades against the Democratic Party machine. Our support should uncompromisingly follow our political convictions if our "revolution" is going to take off.

More important than any candidate's electoral campaign is what we do to build movements and organize people to challenge neoliberal policies—and eventually, to challenge capitalism. Join the movement to combat climate change. Fight for \$15 an hour. Support Black Lives Matter. Work for universal health care. Make your union into a force that matters, or help organize your workplace. Join those who are fighting to reduce student debt. Oppose the demonization and deportation of immigrants. Join in international solidarity with the victims of imperialism around the globe.

To win the aspirations that Bernie represents will take all the movements, in the streets — before, during, and after the elections.

• www.solidarity-us.org

Threat of NHS closures

By Pete Campbell,
junior doctor

Nye Bevan's famous quote that the Tories were "lower than vermin" was a direct and forthright response to the sustained and bitter attempts to wreck the NHS before it had even started. Similar arguments have appeared in the years since then.

It is said that the NHS is unfundable, unwieldy, overly bureaucratic. They are the perfect arguments for today's modern politicians, containing a small kernel of truth that can then be spun into an obscure, maddening distraction from the real debate. We are hearing some of those arguments over the current dispute over junior doctors' contracts. What's really going on.

The Conservative Party's pre-election pledge of £8 billion in extra funding was a perfect example of obscuring the truth. "We are the party which will fund the NHS" they claimed. No mention of the estimated £30 billion spending deficit.

No mention of the savage cuts to social care which have increased the pressure on the National Health Service.

No mention of PFI, the Health and Social Care Act, the chaos which is commissioning in the NHS at present. The problem of budget deficits within the NHS are not a new problem, like the ruinous Health and Social Care Act they have been "visible from space" for a



long time.

Last week it was announced that providers of NHS services in England exceeded their budgets by £935 million in the first three months of this financial year. This is on top of a known perilous situation for the finances of a number of Foundation Trusts.

The blame for these increasingly ruinous deficits has been placed on current events, likely high agency staffing. But the deeper more systemic issues have existed within the NHS for much longer.

MISMANAGEMENT
We are seeing the culmination of a decade of NHS mismanagement.

The introduction of financially independent Foundation Trusts by the then Labour Government created a system where individual groupings of hospital could go bust. At the same time this system appeared to allow them more freedom from central government control. But central government retained a steely grip on most of the purse

strings, and in order to meet the financially-motivated targets set by government many hospitals struggled to focus on providing quality care. The most famous of these was Mid Staffordshire Foundation Trust, involved in an appalling care scandal.

Their financial freedom allowed Foundation Trusts to launch big infrastructure projects with funding from Private backers. Private Finance Initiatives (PFIs) will end up costing the NHS in excess of £300 billion pounds, 12 times the worth of the infrastructure that has been built.

Then the Health and Social Care Act tightened the market's grip on the slowly suffocating NHS. Not only was the NHS being set up to fail, but a bigger space was being created for a private health market within England. This is exactly where the Conservative Party want the NHS to be.

In this environment, it is not surprising that previously passive forces are beginning to wake up to the situation. Junior Doctors are not the only ones protest-

ing, although they seem to be doing a better job than the NHS Providers, the organisational grouping who argue for Foundation Trusts and other providers of NHS care.

They have been rowing with the government about "tariffs" for the past year. This is the amount of money they get paid for the work they do. It is being cut, just like everything else, and they appear powerless to stop it.

Junior Doctors across the UK have a direct understanding of the crisis which is facing the NHS. Our current contractual dispute centres around working patterns, staffing, recruitment, education and training, all key issues. In order for the NHS to return to sustainability, a huge shift in political will is required. This is why the junior doctor contract could be key to turning the tide in the war on the NHS.

The government have decreed that the NHS is not too big to fail, and they are all too happy to become "deficit deniers".

Junior doctors have clear demands, which focus on protecting patient safety, protecting education, training and doctors who work less than full time. We have been clear that we will not accept a contract imposed upon us. Our fight is about the long term future of the NHS.

Join us on 17 October in London, and on 24 October in Newcastle. This is our chance to stand up for our NHS and its workers.



"Dead women can't vote"

Sisters Uncut is a feminist direct action group which campaigns against austerity cuts to services for survivors of domestic violence.

At the recent film premiere of *Suffragette*, the group staged a "die in" on the red carpet, while over 100 sisters let off smoke bombs, waved placards and chanted: "David Cameron take note, dead women can't vote". The action drew international media attention to the often-neglected issue of domestic violence.

Sisters placed *Suffragette* in a contemporary context by saying: the fight is not over. Sisters also placed the all-white feminism of the film in perspective by asking why women of colour, who played a role in the Suffragette movement, have not been featured in the film.

This is relevant because cuts to domestic violence services have disproportionately impacted on women of colour. Of the services that have closed since 2010, 32 have been specialist services for BME women.

Sisters Uncut is growing; it welcomes new activists (all women — trans, intersex and cis) and hopes soon to set up groups around the country. For more information see: www.facebook.com/sistersuncut

Becky Crocker

Docking benefits won't keep children in school

By Gemma Short

Parents of children who are absent from school will have child benefit docked by £120 if they do not pay a fine within 28 days.

Local authorities can already take parents to court if their children are "truanting"; courts can fine parents £60, rising to £120 if the fine is not paid within 21 days. Larger fines, community or jail sentences are also handed down to "persistent offenders".

These punishments already disproportionately affect poorer families. In April the National Union of Teachers' conference passed policy against parental fines, including the demand that poorer families should not be penalised for taking their children on holiday during the cheaper term-time months. It called on holiday companies to stop hiking prices during the summer, and said that schools should take an appropriate response to requests for absences during term time.

The policy notes research that shows holidays during term time have little or no effect on overall educational success, and that holidays provide valuable experiences for children which should not be the reserve of families that can afford non term-time prices.

Persistent truancy is a different matter of course. However this is unlikely to be solved by docking child benefit, and is in fact likely to make the situation worse in the long run for students who are for whatever reason staying out of school, especially for those from poorer backgrounds.

The government seems to want to make the lives of children and their families worse, and hope that makes them act better!

Funding alternative education provision, more and better early intervention work, involving parents in the life of schools, and making children feel less like failures at school — these are more likely to involve children in school in a meaningful and beneficial way.

Defend Bahar Mustafa!

By Cathy Nugent

The criminal charges against the left-wing, feminist activist Bahar Mustafa, apparently for tweeting using the ironic hash tag "kill all white men", are both ridiculous and outrageous.

Bahar was the subject of a huge media storm some months ago over this issue and the "offence" of helping to organise a one-off BME women-only meeting at Goldsmiths College, where she is a student union officer.

Scores of right-wing, men's rights activists, and others who were simply misinformed, apolitical and/or over-opinionated

got on her case, on social media and elsewhere. Bahar was the focus of a nasty, harassing, political campaign.

This is the latest stage in that toxic campaign — the bizarre use of hate speech laws to prosecute an anti-racist. That it comes a day after Teresa May uses divisive and scaremongering language against migrants shows up the malicious character of this prosecution. But that it comes from the police and the establishment is very alarming for everyone who wants to defend freedom of speech and to fight racism and all other oppression.

Defend Bahar Mustafa!



Maybe 250,000 people marched through Berlin on Saturday 10 October against the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). If and when it comes into operation the US-EU deal could radically push the balance of power towards corporations and away from democratically elected governments.

Socialist Party: “Sell” out over the EU

By Elliott Robinson

The Socialist Party’s political lines are coming apart at the seams. Over Europe it is becoming less and less coherent.

Twenty years ago it wrote off the Labour Party as a bourgeois party and stopped calling for a Labour vote even where there was no left-of-Labour challenger. It started running propaganda candidates under various guises such as TUSC, without ever making a breakthrough. Its analysis ruled out any kind of left development within the Labour Party.

Now the Corbyn surge has happened, the Socialist Party “wishes him well” from the side lines, while issuing ultimatums and continuing to field its own candidates in the 2016 elections.

On the EU referendum, the Socialist Party continues with its 45 year-long adaptation to Stalinism and nationalism by advocating the British state withdraw from the European Union (EU) in the forthcoming referendum. Hannah Sell produced the latest compressed version of its arguments in the *The Socialist* (23 September).

Sell says that “the EU really is a capitalists’ club”. It is in essence, “an agreement between the different national capitalist classes of Europe, with the aim of creating a large arena for big business across Europe to conduct their hunt for profits with as few barriers as possible”. This description is accurate. However this is true of almost every institution within capitalism. It is no guide on the choice between a walled-off capitalist Britain and Britain in the EU.

The missing element is the political economy of capitalism, which strives towards further concentration. This means capitalist states are driven towards integration, as well as towards conflict and war. Which tendency wins out is not predetermined. More significantly, Marxist politics takes the existing reality as its point of departure. It is never part of the Marxist programme to turn the clock back to an earlier stage of capitalism, but rather to push through the actual tendencies of capital and work on the existing terrain of capitalism to fight for workers’ power.

Capital and its states have made limited steps towards integration, meaning there are now some common links and



RMT union was a large part of the Socialist Party dominated No2EU coalition

chains melding workers across Europe together. These connections are the material basis for working class internationalism: workers face common enemies on a common terrain. Workers cannot win major reforms or even hold power for long in one country alone in Europe because of those ties of capital. International solidarity is not luxury but an absolute necessity in today’s class battles and in tomorrow’s fight for power. In principle, Marxists therefore favour European integration as against walled-off states, even on a capitalist basis.

What tactical stance should Marxists take in EU referenda? The concrete circumstances condition our view. Some sections of British capital, both in finance and industry, do not regard Europe as the main market and look to the US, the BRICs and to other states, including those former British empire states that belong to the Commonwealth. They would rather see Britain as an “offshore” base for capital, with lower social costs and social overheads than the EU. And some small capitalists just look to the British home market.

CUTS

These Eurosceptics are clear that workers in Britain will have to suffer a historic reduction in living standards, pay and conditions.

Workers will have to pay with more flexibility, more insecurity and mobility, less regulation and less protection. The world for workers in Britain (and across Europe) immediately after Brexit will be a cold, harsh world of cuts, unemployment and hard labour.

In these circumstances, workers in Britain face a choice: either remain in the neoliberal EU, with some protections and some links with other European workers; or go with the offshore-base wing of British capital, and foolishly hope that the disruption of relatively free flows (of people, trade etc.) across Europe will somehow work to our advantage, by virtue of the fact that it is a disruption of capitalism.

In these circumstances, a vote to remain within the EU makes tactical sense, defending the gains won and fighting to level up alongside other workers across the continent.

Sell says “the history of the EU has been a succession of treaties each further enshrining anti-working class laws”. The actual history is one where capital has not always got its way – hence the referendums lost and the concessions made to workers. Sell forgets the made-in-Britain anti-worker laws. She forgets the limited gains made by workers across Europe on working time, agency workers and other safety laws. She forgets the improvements over decades, especially for Southern European workers’ living standards, and the great gain for workers that we can move freely to jobs across the EU. By claiming reform of the EU is “utopian” she is simply rubbing out the actual history of struggle within it and substituting an immiseration thesis that cannot be sustained. Ignoring those aspects of reality that are inconvenient to your case is no basis for working class politics.

The Socialist Party’s stance is to chastise Jeremy Corbyn for making a “serious mistake” in committing to campaigning for staying in the EU in the referendum. Sell rehashes the tired old 1970s argument: “If a Corbyn-led government was to implement some of the policies he was elected as Labour leader on – such as nationalisation of the railways and energy companies – it would immediately face shrieks of outrage from the institutions of the EU that a British government

was ‘breaking the law’.”

Corbyn will have a lot more problems to contend with than shrieks from the EU if he enacted these measures. In advance, he would have to explain to workers in France and Germany, who work for Deutsche Bahn, Eon, EDF and other firms owned by capitalists and their states in Europe what he was doing and what it meant for them. He would have to appeal for solidarity with workers in Europe as the necessary counterweight to the hostility of European capital. The pro-EU stance helps that; the “leave the EU” position cuts across it.

NATIONALISM

Sell makes some terrible concessions to nationalism, despite claims of internationalism and opposition to chauvinism. She states:

“EU measures such as the ‘posted workers’ directive are designed specifically in order to drive down wages. The result is an increase of fear and resentment that workers already resident in a country will see their wages and public services threatened by increased migration particularly from the low-wage economies of Eastern Europe.”

“The only answer to this”, she says, “is to build a united movement to fight for the rights of all workers; for a £10 an hour minimum wage, the rate for the job for all, and for an end to austerity. This must include defending the rights of all workers who have moved across the continent in search of work to remain, if they wish to do so, with full rights in the country where they now live.”

It is not much of a pan-European programme to lay down the minimum wage denominated in pounds sterling and it is no answer to recycle the myth that wages and public services are threatened by migration. Workers’ living standards are threatened by capitalists and their states – not by other workers moving to better their own situation. Concessions to chauvinism divide the working class, making a consistent internationalism impossible.

The Socialist Party will register TUSC as a “permitted participant” in the referendum campaign. They will not share platforms with UKIP and the Tories – but they have not ruled out standing alongside Stalinists and Labour Party chauvinists in a sideshow “independent” “leave the EU” campaign.

Sell claims that “TUSC has a vital role to play in fighting for a socialist, internationalist campaign to exit the EU”. But the Socialist United States of Europe will not be on the ballot paper: it will be a choice between the current capitalist EU and offshore Britain seeking a lower-cost place in the world market. She argues that “without such a campaign the danger is that workers’ anti-EU feeling — and very probably anti-government feeling as the referendum could become in effect a referendum on the government — will be channelled by the right wing ‘little Englanders’ of Farage and co”.

The danger of a “left” anti-EU campaign is that it provides the ideological and organisational vehicle for workers to capitulate to nationalism, facilitating a far worse outcome outside after Brexit. This path will set back the labour movement in Britain and across Europe by decades.

The real job of the Marxist left is to forge an internationalist consciousness within the working class of Europe that can challenge and then take power from our common capitalist enemies.

Help us raise £15,000

With just over a month to go on our fundraising drive, we have raised enough to recruit a new part-time worker for our office.

With the upswing in political life from the Corbyn earthquake, having the new worker in the office, initially one day a week, will help us respond to the situation around us. We will be able to further improve *Solidarity*, produce more regular in-depth supplements, and have more reporting from the movement.

A more responsive newspaper is only as good as its distribution network. New subscriptions to the paper generate funds but also allow us a wider reach for our ideas.

It is likely we have encountered many new people, or re-encountered people we have known before, in recent months. Now is the time to ask them to take a subscription to our paper. If you are a subscriber to *Solidarity* will you consider raising your standing order to help us increase our work? If you are an occasional *Solidarity* reader will you now consider taking a subscription?

Please also consider:

- Getting a subscription to our weekly newspaper, *Solidarity* — workersliberty.org/subscribe
- Taking out a monthly standing order.
- Making a one-off donation
- Organising a fundraising event in your local area
- Committing to do a sponsored activity and asking others to sponsor you
- Buying some of our books, posters, autocollants or pamphlets

For information on standing orders or how to donate visit workersliberty.org/donate For more ideas and information on fundraising visit workersliberty.org/fundraising

Thanks this week to Ella, Bill and Ed. So far we have raised £11,175.

Stay in and fight for a workers' Europe!

David Cameron recently entertained German Chancellor Angela Merkel at the Prime Minister's country residence Chequers; he was trying to persuade her to support his demands for the UK's re-negotiated membership of the EU.

The Tories want to reduce workers' rights and EU migrants' in-work benefits. Cameron has promised a referendum on UK membership of the EU; if he fails to get the concessions he wants in the re-negotiation it is not clear whether Cameron himself will argue for the UK to remain in the EU. The referendum is likely to be in 2017, but this week the campaigning lines for "leave" and "remain" were being drawn.

The cross-party "in" campaign, Britain Stronger in Europe (BSE: the most unfortunate of acronyms for an uninspiring line-up) was launched on Monday 12 October. The launch was presided over by former Marks and Spencer boss, now a Tory Lord, Stuart Rose. Also present were: Karren Brady; former TUC general secretary Brendan Barber; and Green MP Caroline Lucas, though the last two did not get to speak. NUS President Megan Dunn has also joined; NUS policy is to stay in the EU but Dunn has been given no mandate to join BSE or any other campaign.

BSE's website (www.strongerin.co.uk) declares "Britain is stronger, better off and safer in Europe than we would be out on our own. Join the campaign to remain in Europe — and let's secure a stronger Britain that delivers opportunity now and for future generations."

In an effort to out-jingo Ukip, the tone of the campaign is heavily patriotic, with red, white and blue branding. At the launch, Rose said:

"To claim that the patriotic course for Britain is to retreat, withdraw and become inward-looking is to misunderstand who we are as a nation.

"I will not allow anyone to tell me I'm any less British because I believe in the strongest possible Britain for business, for our security and our society."

On the "out" side is "Vote Leave", a cross-party campaign involving Business for Britain, Labour Leave campaign, and Conservatives for Britain. Supporters also include Green Party peer Jenny Jones and Ukip MP, Douglas Carswell.

Its Parliamentary Planning Committee is made up of Steve Baker, Bernard Jenkin and Owen Paterson (Conservatives for Britain), Douglas Carswell (Ukip), Kate Hoey, Kelvin Hopkins and Graham Stringer (Labour Leave).

Their website (www.voteleavetakecontrol.org) has enticing promises: "Vote Leave, take control", "Vote Leave, invest in science", "Vote Leave, invest in the NHS", "Vote Leave, save money", "Vote Leave, get change", "Vote Leave, the



Amazon workers in Leipzig, Germany, struck last year over pay and conditions. We argue for workers' organisation across Europe to level up workers' pay and conditions.

safer choice".

The website explains that "technological and economic forces are changing the world fast. EU institutions cannot cope. We have lost control of vital policies. This is damaging. We need a new relationship. What should it be?

"We negotiate a new UK-EU deal based on free trade and friendly cooperation. We end the supremacy of EU law. We regain control. We stop sending £350 million every week to Brussels and instead spend it on our priorities, like the NHS and science research.

"We regain our seats on international institutions like the World Trade Organisation so we are a more influential force for free trade and international cooperation."

IMMIGRATION

Vote Leave does not go for a full-on anti-migrant message.

But on a list of "issues" is the subtitle "Europe can't cope and is going in the wrong direction". This is illustrated with a boat crowded with refugees, yet the text underneath does not mention migrants and is to do with control from Brussels, and Britain's "lack of influence".

Also in the "out" camp, and vying to be the official "out" campaign, is Leave.EU (formerly "The Know"). Relaunched at Ukip party conference in September by multimillionaire

Ukip donor Arron Banks, the campaign insists that it is not party political, i.e. not a front for Ukip.

The Electoral Commission has to designate official "in" and "out" campaigns, which will be given airtime, a grant, and spending limits.

Leave.EU's pitch plays to British chauvinism, attempting to conjure up images of Britain as a proud world power:

"Our politicians say this country isn't good enough; too small to make a difference in the world. We say they have lost confidence in our country. It's time to be a bigger part of the world rather than a smaller part of Europe. We believe Britain could do so much better outside of the EU"

They also make a heavy pitch to workers struggle to make ends meet: "Imagine having £1,000 more to spend each year. By leaving the EU, each household could be better off by this amount — through cheaper food bills, no membership fees, with the cost of regulations lifted, too."

They also claim to be standing up for democracy. "Imagine not having our laws dictated to us by Brussels. Instead, MPs would become accountable to the public and we would once again be able to make and decide on our own laws." As if leaving the EU changes the undemocratic nature of the House of Lords, makes MPs more accountable, or magically introduces voting reform.

Leave.EU makes much more of immigration, playing migrants against each other by peddling the idea that they welcome skilled migration but reject "having to accept all EU migrants regardless of skill level."

Against cross-party, cross-class collaboration of either "in" or "out" variety, Workers' Liberty is helping to build Workers' Europe, an "in" campaign that fights for workers' and migrant rights. We oppose working with business leaders and Conservative politicians, even if they are for staying in.

We welcome Jeremy Corbyn's opposition to EU withdrawal and his demands for a cross-EU campaign for enhanced workers' and social rights. We welcome Labour's decision to have its own campaign for a vote to stay in, rather than a cross-party campaign; we will argue for it to have separate, pro-worker, politics, as well as organisational separate-ness.

We will campaign in favour of the UK remaining in the EU. We will campaign against chauvinism, advocate workers' unity across Europe, and build the idea of a positive programme for European workers — as an alternative to both the capitalist EU and capitalist nation states.

• Website: campaign.workerseurope.net.
Twitter: @workers_europe

Point-scoring and addled advice

Right-wing Labour MPs John Mann, Chris Leslie, and Mike Gapes have rushed to the internet, TV, and the press to score points against Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell.

McDonnell said just before Labour Party conference that Labour would vote for the Tories' "fiscal charter", on the grounds that it has so many loopholes for running deficits that it carries little weight, and voting against it would help the Tories brand Labour as over-spenders.

On Monday 12 October McDonnell, rightly we think, reversed his position and said Labour would vote against the "charter".

Mann, of all people, is now posing as an anti-cuts warrior. He told the BBC, mock-approvingly, that "Jeremy Corbyn was elected on... tackling austerity", and feigned to criticise McDonnell from the left. The same John Mann published a "manifesto" after the May 2015 general election urging Labour to go for a "huge cut in the welfare budget".

Mann now favours voting against Osborne. Chris Leslie, the right-wing former Shadow Chancellor, plays the other side of the road, saying that to vote against Osborne is extreme and Labour should boldly... abstain.

Getting Labour's newcomers involved and integrated in Constituency Labour Parties and constituency Young Labour groups is urgent. Only when they are properly or-

ganised in the party structures can they be an effective counterweight to the spoiler right-wing Labour MPs.

There is a twist to this story. The pressure on McDonnell to back Osborne's move to make budget-balancing a legal obligation in normal times came, as far we know, not from the Labour right but from a section of the supposedly Marxist left!

ULTRA-LEFT

Socialist Action, a small group which nonetheless has influence through people who have wormed their way into backroom jobs, wrote an article (14 September: bit.ly/s-act) accusing Corbyn of being at risk of "ultra-leftism".

It urged caution. "The hopelessly confused idea of so called 'Keynesianism', which does not even derive from Keynes, that the key economic policy to deal with recession is to run a budget deficit needs to be thrown out — errors on this help lower the credibility of left wing policies". Decoded: vote with Osborne, or you are "ultra-left".

Since then McDonnell will have had the chance to discuss with competent (though not even specially left-wing) economists like Simon Wren-Lewis, one of his new panel of economic advisers.



As Wren-Lewis has pointed out: "First, [Osborne's new formulation of the 'fiscal charter'] is for the total deficit rather than the current balance, so it puts a squeeze on investment just at a time that investment should be high... Second, even with the get-out clause... the new rule is likely to make the deficit much less of a shock absorber, and so lead to unnecessary volatility in taxes or spending".

Essential task

By Martin Thomas

On 10 October the national committee of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty published its draft proposals to go to this year's Workers' Liberty conference, on 21-22 November, and opened the pre-conference discussion.

In some activist socialist groups, the "pre-conference discussion period" is pretty much the only time when extensive debate is licensed. Workers' Liberty is not like that. Every activist can propose innovations, raise objections, or advocate censures, and group with like-minded others to do so, any time of the year.

But the pre-conference period is a set time when we step back to take a longer view and to assess a whole year's activity. Four regional pre-conference meetings have been organised, as well as more local branch discussions, to prepare the conference.

This year, fairly unusually, all the proposals from the committee come with the approval of the whole committee and without minority counter-documents. We have wide agreement about turning towards activity in the new Corbyn Labour Party.

However, there will be amendments or alternatives from other members. Getting it right is important. Bland consensus is not our way. The Corbyn earthquake has created political openings none of us expected. If we fumble or dither, they can be missed; and if they're missed, it may be a while before we see their like again.

Our guideline will be Antonio Gramsci's declaration: "The decisive element in every situation is the permanently organised and long-prepared force which can be put into the field when it is judged that a situation is favourable (and it can be favourable only in so far as such a force exists, and is full of fighting spirit).

"Therefore the essential task is that of systematically and patiently ensuring that this force is formed, developed, and rendered ever more homogeneous, compact, and self-aware..."



Janine Booth speaking at last year's conference

"It's about doing something opinions, not just having the

After the Corbyn surge we begin a series of interviews with labour movement activists

Maria Exall, Communication Workers' Union and chair of the TUC LGBT committee, spoke to *Solidarity* in a personal capacity

What are the factors behind the "Corbyn explosion"?

It is a response to the Tory victory. Anyone who has half a socialist thought in their head will have been shocked by that, would have thought "we are stuck with this lot for another five years, they are going to do so much damage to welfare, the unions."

What is exciting about it, especially as this includes a lot of young people, is people thinking how politics does matter. Jeremy's campaign came along and they were inspired by the necessity of politics, at different levels.

The second element is people who were once Labour Party members and who have come back. Plus existing Labour members, are realising that the Blairite era is well and truly over.

Ed Miliband was a bit half-and-half. People backed him wanting something different and they got half of something different. Now people are thinking, what is the Labour future? Maybe other candidates in the leadership contest didn't present something so future orientated. The Corbyn campaign was seen as a new paradigm.

The third element is that things in Labour politics are quite different when in opposition than in government. There is more room for recasting politics. Maybe that was an element in the unions' thinking because it was surprising that they supported Corbyn. All the time that I've been active in the unions and attending Labour conference on behalf of my union, it's been about "how can we win power" and "what will be acceptable". That's important actually, because it's about convincing the majority of the British people. However to be always constrained by this imperative, as it was in the New Labour era, was a problem.

Now things have gone the other way and people are coming out with all sorts of ideas. In any party that should represent the labour movement and the working class we should gather up all these ideas. But we also need to think about how to convince people to vote for Labour. There has to be a strategy for the future.

The new political direction needs people to go out and convince people, street activity, door knocking..

Yes that's right. But we also need to develop the Labour left. There has been some residual left in the party over the last ten



years, people voting for left candidates etc. but it has been suppressed. We need a united democratic organisation to support this shift in politics.

People should get involved in their constituencies and their union's political organisations to ensure this develops. Of course it raises democratic questions about who decides what policies get pushed and so on.

What were your impressions of this year's Labour conference?

There were obviously some people who were really pissed off that Corbyn had won. There were people who had voted for Jeremy as well. But also a whole lot of people who didn't vote for him but wanted to give him a go. I would say they were in a majority.

People responded very well to John McDonnell's speech, even though he made it very clear that he wanted to take Labour on a different political route. Jeremy's speech was received very well. I think though a whole lot of people will be coming in and changing things. They are not so very different from the people who have been involved before. There is a difference but it is not as great as has been said.

A majority of people went along with the Blairites, but that's all it was — *going along with*. Doesn't mean that they thought in the same way as those people controlling the party machine. The Blairites got just 5% of Labour Party members' vote this time [votes for Liz Kendall]. After all, most Labour Party members don't go to meetings, and those that do might, just go to, for example, a selection meeting.

It's as Tony Benn always used to say, there are the members, the activists and the Parliamentary Labour Party. They are all different people. It's still the case. The problem, and political time-lag we have now is with the

PLP. It's very important now for the trade unions to encourage people to stand, to have candidates who represent working-class people and push campaigns.

Do you think the unions are going to try to capitalise on Corbyn's victory? Getting local branches to affiliate, pushing policies forward?

There will always be a tension in the union movement between control from the top and what happens at the base. That may become an issue. For example, getting working-class candidates. It means unions have to go out and find people, educate them. More than just going through the motions of supporting this, that or the other campaign.

To organise effectively we need to take people coming into the party, from where they are. Their experiences won't be identical. But if people aren't empowered, or shown how to get involved, then they won't. People may get involved because they have been inspired. But there is a difference between being a member of a political party and being part of single issue campaign. With the former you are part of a project to win people over to a political viewpoint. And that is quite difficult. It requires you to think differently.

There is a big necessity for political education...

Yes, that is what we need. It needs to involve the trade unions as well. For instance, how many people understand what's wrong with the Trade Union Bill? It seems to be an abstract democratic question. Unless you know how things work on the ground you won't understand that the Tories are pushing back the unions in the workplace. Plus if you hear about what is happening on the ground, then solidarity becomes a bigger possibility.

How would summarise your thoughts and feelings about Corbyn?

I think it is a massive opportunity to push forward socialist ideas in Britain. And for the Labour Party to remake itself with a more pro-worker and grounded agenda on all the big issues about political economy, and trade union rights.

Personally I think the domestic agenda is more uniting; if you want relate to people on issues that really matter in their lives that is the direction to go in. We all have our important single issues, enthusiasms. But what this is about is trying to build connections in communities and workplaces. That has always been the strength of the Labour Party compared to other political formations.

Because it is a mass political party, of half

g about hem"

a million people, you have the opportunity to be rooted in working-class peoples' lives. If you are socialist of any sort and want to motivate people on a class basis then you have to take that seriously. The priority for the moment is to pick things that really chime with people, tell people how to fight back against the Tories and make clear that the labour movement is on peoples' side.

Trident? I support abolition, it is a problem, but you are picking a hard issue there. A bit similar to Republicanism. For rebuilding the Labour Party in the immediate term we have got to be clear that we have a leadership that fights for people in their workplaces and communities.

There are some issues you can not avoid; that's true of the Trade Union bill. But on other issues you can pick and choose. We have to choose the main things — housing, rail. I would hope we can take policies on these issues further. Public ownership of the rail is an easy issue; it's not so easy on the other utilities. But we have to tackle that. The same arguments apply to other utilities as to rail. A campaign on rail is an opportunity to make people political about public ownership. I would hope there is more space to make similar political arguments.

The same on the trade union issue. In the Blairite years the argument always had to be



balanced between unions and employers. Why? I would hope there is more opportunity to get beyond that. To talk about, for instance, who actually creates the wealth. It should be about drawing out the basic socialist arguments.

Anyone who is a socialist activist needs to get active. It's now about rebuilding the sinews of the movement. Politics isn't about

having an opinion, it is about doing something about having an opinion. The collective approach is not just about debating and voting; it is also about building support for campaigns, to work with others to achieve something. And we are going to have to have big fights. In local government for instance, where democratic accountability has almost disappeared, and it's now all about

directly elected Mayors, it will be a big task to reverse that situation.

I've been quite privileged to be quite rooted in an active labour movement structures, a union branch and as a member of the Labour Party. I can see things with a more long term perspective. A continuity of working in those structures is important.

Lewisham shows how local networks can be built

Labour
By Sacha Ismail



Workers' Liberty members in Lewisham (South London) have been involved in setting up a Jeremy Corbyn supporters' network in the borough.

This network, which met for the first time on 17 September and had its second meeting on 12 October, has attracted a lot of interest, suggesting great potential for such local groups.

During the leadership campaign, there was a lot of support for Jeremy Corbyn in Lewisham — he won two out of three constituency Labour Party nominations, despite opposition from the MPs. Moreover Lewisham has a strong history of left and working-class struggles — including two recent victorious campaigns, against the closure of the local A&E and Maternity Unit (2013) and against the academisation of five schools (this year). However, this didn't automatically translate into Corbyn organisa-

tion. As the leadership campaign came to a close, activists made a big, concerted push to get things going, with excellent results.

We have certain advantages in Lewisham, but the enthusiasm which Lewisham for Corbyn has generated suggests that such initiatives can take off almost anywhere.

The 17 September meeting, attended by about 90 people, allowed those present to air their thoughts and feelings about what Corbyn's victory means for the left and labour movement. Despite negative comments from Deptford MP Vicky Foxcroft, a big majority of those present wanted to set up an ongoing left labour movement network in Lewisham.

The meeting agreed to hold an organising meeting within a month; to initiate a Lewisham Young Labour group; and to hold regular stalls using the Labour Party's petition on trade union rights. All of these were carried out.

Stalls at New Cross Gate have got a good response, with about a hundred signatures each time and several new recruits for the

Labour Party. Young activists have pushed ahead with plans for a local Young Labour group and various meetings and activity. There was a youth caucus before the 12 October meeting and a much larger number of young people at the main meeting this time — in part because Goldsmiths University term started in late September.

The fledgling Young Labour group is going to work with the university Labour Club to build a stronger base of support at Goldsmiths. The first Lewisham Young Labour public meeting will be in mid-November.

The 12 October meeting, attended by about 80 people, began the process of getting Lewisham Corbyn supporters more organised.

We discussed taking motions (including on union rights and Trident) to wards and CLPs; more street stalls; holding public debates including on Trident and council cuts; and taking the lead in stepping up voter registration, particularly in light of the very important London Mayoral election next year.

The meeting broke into groups which came up with many other ideas which we will put into practice over the next months.

We also agreed to affiliate with the new national Momentum organisation and rename the local network Lewisham for Corbyn — Momentum. We will discuss a longer term name at a future meeting. The next one is on Monday 9 November.

- Facebook: Lewisham For Corbyn — Momentum
- lewishamfor Corbyn@gmail.com
- Local Corbyn supporters' groups are now appearing under various names all over the country. This week, for instance, Corbyn supporters in Hammersmith, West London, held their first formal meeting; while Sheffield for Corbyn, possibly the first formal group to be set up during the campaign and one of the most successful, renamed itself Momentum Sheffield and elected a broad steering committee for the first time. We will carry more coverage on local groups in the coming weeks.

An open letter to a young Labour member

By Tom Harris

Dear comrade,

You are one of the tens of thousands of young people who have joined the Labour Party since Jeremy Corbyn's campaign for and victory in the leadership election.

Like me, you grew up and became interested in politics at a time when the Labour Party seemed like a very unattractive proposition to socialists, left-wingers, or people who just wanted to change the world.

New Labour had taken Britain into a bloody and disastrous war in Iraq. Domestically, it had introduced tuition fees, privatised public services and overseen an increase in inequality.

When a right-wing Tory-Lib Dem coalition came to power in 2010, the Labour Party was half-hearted and spineless in its opposition to the new government's programme. The Labour opposition pandered to the tabloids in their scapegoating of migrants and refused to back workers when they struck to defend themselves against spending cuts.

But after all of that, you and thousands like you have been enthused to join the Labour Party by Jeremy Corbyn and the ideas he represents. Those ideas represent a break with New Labour and a break with the right-wing consensus that has been dominant for as long as our generation has been alive. It is a hugely exciting time.

Now that Corbyn has won, it might be tempting to think: "Job done! A left-wing leadership has been elected, and now they can get on with it."

I urge you to not be satisfied with that conclusion, and to persuade you to get more involved.

Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour left have been propelled into leadership thanks to a wave of enthusiasm for a differ-



ent kind of politics. But they face a parliamentary party made up of MPs who are, in the main, horrified by the upheaval and keen to see it reversed.

They face a corporate media that is deeply hostile to the left.

They face the challenge of overturning all the conservatism and prejudice of the dominant "common sense" in society.

So long as Corbyn and co. are isolated, surrounded by hostile MPs and a bureaucratic party machine, their prospects look bleak. But the leadership election shows that if the left can harness the support and enthusiasm of the grassroots members, it can beat back the right. In the longer term, the success of the socialist left depends on our capacity to convince more and more people of socialism.

Whether that happens or not depends on what we do now, on whether people like you, who signed up to vote for Corbyn, can turn yourselves into activists and in turn win over new layers of people.

One of the important ways we can do that is by rebuilding Labour's youth organisation into a left-wing movement, active in our communities and which provides young people

with a place to discuss big politics and develop their ideas about the world.

That might sound like a tall order. But only a few decades ago, hundreds of Labour youth groups existed across the country, bringing thousands of young people into socialist activity.

Nowadays, most places do not have a Young Labour group, or if they do, the group covers such an impossibly large area ("Birmingham" or "the North West") that it is hard to do much in the way of regular activity in a local area. Often the focus is too much towards door-knocking for elections, or win and cheese with the MPs, and not enough towards providing young people with the space to think, argue and learn. We can and should build constituency Young Labour groups.

Likewise, most universities and colleges don't have Labour Clubs. Many of those which exist are right-wing, inactive and confined to throwing an occasional cheese-and-wine evening with an MP. But there's nothing to stop people from setting them up, or getting involved to transform bad ones into vibrant, campaigning bodies.

To carry out this kind of work, left-wingers among young Labour members need to get organised ourselves. Last month, a meeting of around a hundred people set up a new organisation, Labour Young Socialists, to help bring together and organise the left.

The "Corbyn surge" has provided a rare opportunity for our generation to change politics, a generation that had been brought up to think that any radical challenge to the status quo was out of the question. Let's organise to grasp that opportunity with both hands!

• labouryoungsocialists.wordpress.com/

Momentum: welcome and worries

By Martin Thomas

It's good that people from Jeremy Corbyn's leadership campaign team have launched a new grass-roots organisation, Momentum.

At all levels in the Labour Party, from the Parliamentary Labour Party through the head office and regional organisations, through council Labour groups, down to constituency officials, hold-overs from the Blair era are entrenched.

Unmindful of Labour Party democracy, they will be hoping for a poor Labour showing in the May elections for local government, Scotland, Wales, and London, so that then they can make a coup against Corbyn.

Only if the 250,000 people who voted for Corbyn, and the tens of thousands who have joined the Labour Party since, become organised, can we make democracy prevail.

Luke Akehurst, secretary of the right-wing Labour First faction, has complained that it is "strange that the winning candidate in a Labour leadership election would sustain the life of their campaign after winning, rather than seeing their role now as having responsibility to unite the whole party".

That's cheeky. Labour First certainly didn't disband when the right wing controlled the Labour Party leadership, as it has done since 1983. And the other Labour-right faction, Progress, better-funded (by Lord Sainsbury), wasn't even formed until 1996, after Tony Blair had won leader.

The launch of Momentum will help spread the example given by Labour Young Socialists, Sheffield for Corbyn, Lewisham for Corbyn, Merseyside Labour Left, Newcastle Red Labour, and similar, of the left organising to draw in Labour's newcomers and help them to become effective in building democratic and active and attractive constituency Young Labour groups and constituency Labour Parties.

The campaign team from Corbyn's leadership campaign has been redistributed in two directions. Some have got jobs in the new Leader's Office. Others, maybe the more grass-roots-oriented types, are now launching Momentum.

They are under fire from the right, and anxious to keep the sometimes fragile alliances of the campaign, including with union leaderships like Unite's which can be pushy about where they want the left to line up. Those difficulties partly explain, but do not erase, our worries about the way Momen-

tum has been launched.

It has been launched with no promise of a democratic structure. In fact, inquirers have been told in so many words that a Momentum conference (the organisers "expect" it will have one) will have no power to take decisions. There may be some "plebiscitary" decision-making by electronic referendums of Momentum supporters.

The steering groups, so far as we understand, will be put together by delicate haggling at the top between Corbyn campaigners, some existing Labour left groups, pro-Corbyn unions, and pro-Corbyn MPs.

What if Momentum activists want the movement to oppose the Tory Trade Union Bill outright, rather than offering to accept the Tory ballot thresholds in return for other concessions, as Unite general secretary Len McCluskey has done?

What if they want an urgent campaign to scrap Trident, and are not happy with Len McCluskey's interpretation of ambiguous Unite policy? ("We won't be voting in favour of any anti-Trident resolution" — *The Independent*, 27 September).

COMPOSITE

Worse, the publicity launching Momentum says nothing about who's on the steering groups.

The Labour Party under Blair was undemocratic, but at least you knew who was responsible for the bad decisions (Blair), and how to change them (oust him).

A launch email was signed by four Labour MPs — Clive Lewis, Rebecca Long-Bailey, Richard Burgon, and Kate Osamor — and recent ex-MP Katy Clark. But their names do not appear on the Momentum website, and they are not running the movement day to day.

Momentum is proposed as a composite structure, with an inside-the-Labour-Party element, and a "social movement" element. At present there is no way to join Momentum, rather than just to sign up to keep in touch with it, but the plan is that non-Labour people will be able to join equally with Labour people.

Naturally enough, the Socialist Party has suggested that it will join Momentum en masse, and so may well the SWP, the Communist Party of Britain, etc. Local Labour left caucuses organising under the Momentum umbrella will have to call themselves "Labour Momentum", not just "Momentum".

Unity with SP and SWP people, and even with CPB people, is desirable in campaigns where we share clear-cut aims, and regular organised debate with them is desirable where we do not.

But this pantomime-horse structure makes Momentum effectively a new party intertwined with the Labour Party. (Except with no clearly stated political program. And except that it will not stand candidates. But won't it? What if a local Momentum group, angry at right-wing Labour councillors, wants to challenge them next May?)

The structure of the Labour Party has, historically, given enough of a frame to Labour left organisations (local left caucuses, and wider groups too: the Campaign Group Supporters' Network, Labour Party Socialists, the Rank and File Mobilising Committee, the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory... back to Victory for Socialism or the Socialist League) that they can operate usefully and have at least some democratic mechanisms (conferences, named committees, elections) without demanding "discipline" and without being continually convulsed by battles for control.

Those have always been much weaker and more blurred than the informed democracy which an activist Marxist organisation needs and can generate, but they have served their limited purpose.

For a notionally more ambitious operation, effectively a near-full-fledged party, to have structures which are, as some in the Labour Representation Committee group (LRC) have said, "an amorphous mess" — that makes for rancour and squabbles, not democratic cooperation.

Both the lack of democratic mechanisms, and the Rube Goldberg structure, are defended as necessary to give equal weight to sympathisers who participate only online with those who come to meetings.

The idea here is just wrong. Even if Facebook introduces an "angry" emoji as an option alongside the "Like" button (as apparently it will: *Independent* 10 October), capitalism will not be overthrown by millions of "angry" clicks, but only in the streets and in the workplaces, where people organise face-to-face.

Participation, involvement, getting together, discussing, debating, forming cohesion — those should be our mottos, rather than surfing on a wave of slacktivism.



Writing the future in blood

Ira Berkovic reviews *Macbeth*

Justin Kurzel's *Macbeth* is visually stunning. The photography and design are almost too good; they nearly overpower everything else in the film, meaning one comes away not so much with memories of the complete piece but a series of its images seared onto one's consciousness. Nearly, but not quite.

There is no doubt, though, that look is hugely important to the film. Director of Photography Adam Arkapaw, costume designer Jacqueline Durran, and the hair and makeup teams have done exceptional work, and deserve a decent haul come awards seasons.

Although some reviews have commended the film's "authenticity", citing mainly the Scottish accents, the film does not in fact attempt to "authentically" render 11th century Scotland, but creates a sometimes disorienting collage of aesthetic and cinematic influences. The obvious Japanese influences are surely a nod to Akira Kurosawa (director of *Throne of Blood*, 1957, one of the definitive cinematic adaptations of *Macbeth*), but the film also draws on less obvious sources for inspiration (there is a distinct Jedi feel to much of the costume design), as well as ones perhaps nearer to hand (the warriors' woad face paint comes from *Braveheart*, rather than from historical authenticity).

Much has rightly been written of the compelling central performances of Michael Fassbender and Marian Cotillard and *Macbeth* and Lady *Macbeth*. Cotillard portrays Lady *Macbeth* as a complex, conflicted character, and Kurzel's decision, in the film's opening scene, to make explicit something Shakespeare only hints at (and which I won't reveal here), gives the couple and their actions an extra emotional depth.

As well as the leading pair, Sean Harris and Elizabeth Debicki as Macduff and Lady Macduff deserve particular praise for their performances — all the more so in Debicki's case, as the austere abridgement of Shakespeare's script leaves her character with almost no dialogue.

At the film's press conference at the Cannes Festival, Fassbender spoke of his attempt to portray *Macbeth* as a solider with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and speculated about the psychological damage medieval warfare in particular, where there is no quick trigger-pull from distance to dispatch an enemy, and kills must be achieved by bludgeoning or stabbing an opponent with immense force, must have done to its participants. Kurzel stops short of comic-book, Tarantino-style bloodshed, and the brutality of the violence is more powerful for it.

The Irish writer Fintan O'Toole, in his kooky but rather fine little book *Shakespeare Is Hard But So Is Life* (2002), argues that Shakespeare's tragedies are concerned, at least in part, with incipient modernity (driven by proto-capitalist mercantile economic forms) and the threat it signalled to the feudal order — based on divine right, quasi-theocracy, destiny, and superstition. *Macbeth*, in his obsession with the witches and their prophecy, is a man grappling with the idea of human agency and our ability to act to shape the future.

This question, of our relationship to our own futures and the legacy of our present actions, looms large in the film. Perhaps its central and most chilling motif is that of children, and specifically offspring — the child soldier who fights and dies alongside *Macbeth* and returns repeatedly as a ghost; the silent child who accompanies the Weird Sisters; the children's choir which serenades Duncan with a Gaelic song; Duncan's own child Malcolm; and of course Fleance (Kurzel's brings the latter two into rather jarring cinematic engagement in a final "twist" that radically departs from Shakespeare).

***Macbeth's* characters become slaves to the prophecies they believe they are acting either to fulfil, or to extirpate. If there is a contemporary moral or political "lesson" to be drawn from this spectacular work of cinematic art, it is perhaps to remember that our future remains unwritten, and that our actions matter — but also that our own society, like *Macbeth's*, remains too full of forces who would write that future in blood.**

"Bottom up, not top down"

Liam Conway reviews *Chicago: the Great Teachers Strike* by Banner Theatre

La Villita (Little Village), south side Chicago, 2001. Parents demand that a school is built on vacant land. Nineteen go on hunger strike to achieve this goal.

They pledge not to back down until there is justice on the south side of town. Many local people turn out to show solidarity with the hunger strikers. Not only do they win the demand for a school but also a role for teachers, parents and students in the design of the new building.

So begins Banner Theatre's musical account of the inspiring story of the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) and their supporters, in taking on and mostly defeating the privatisers of City Hall and their attempts to make teachers and others pay for massive cuts.

Notts National Union of Teachers and the local Trades Council sponsored two showings of Banner Theatre's performance at a local further education college. The songs are uplifting and emphasise a movement that was motivated from below, initially against corrupt and useless leaders of the CTU who said nothing could be done to stop the GERM

(Global Education Reform Movement) and believed "the role of the union was to protect the union".

Using video footage alongside the music, Banner Theatre show how new leaders of the union emerged from the classroom to challenge the inertia of the bureaucracy. They began as a small group organising bold resistance like camping in the snow to resist school closures. It wasn't long before the Caucus for Rank and File Educators (CORE) emerged to challenge and defeat the old leadership with a commitment to organise a programme of strike action alongside community campaigning.

First the new leaders organised civil disobedience leading to 100 arrests, and they called on the people of Chicago to join the teachers in fighting back against the privatisers.

In one school a day of silence was organised in which students, fed up with a Gradgrind curriculum, said nothing at all during lessons.

"Bottom up, not bottom down is what makes the union strong" is a line repeated in one of the main songs of the performance. And when the strike came in 2012, 29,000 members of the CTU were engaged, not as a stage army, but as an agent for change in Chicago's schools. Alongside the teachers, thousands of parents, students and Chicago citizens

Grace Lee Boggs, 1915-2015

By David Finkel*

When Grace Lee Boggs died, on 5 October in her beloved adopted city of Detroit, she was well into her eighth decade of activism.

A brilliant philosophy student who found decent-paying opportunities blocked by discrimination against Chinese Americans, by her mid-twenties Grace Lee was a socialist militant and contributor to the revolutionary Marxist journal *New International*. Under the party name Ria Stone, her essays there included analyses of the history of World War One and the anti-imperialist opposition, the rising importance of China, and particularly powerful pieces on the March on Washington Movement against racial segregation in the US military.

As a prominent supporter of the tendency led by CLR. James, Grace's political odyssey led through the Workers Party and Socialist Workers Party of the 1940s to the Correspondence group of the 1950s.

Having moved to Detroit, in 1953 she and auto worker James Boggs formed a marriage and partnership in politics and struggle that lasted 40 years until his death. Their essays (often published in *Monthly Review*, for example "The City is the Black Man's Land," 1966) reflected an attraction to the rising power of revolutionary black nationalism as the potential vehicle for a US proletarian vanguard.

Subsequently, feeling the shattering impact of deindustrialisation and the destructive effect of drugs both on their theoretical conceptions and on their own east side neighborhood, they moved toward a kind of communitarian socialism with the National Organization for an American Revolution which they formed in 1981.

For the past thirty years, Grace Boggs developed a series of programs and organising initiatives around community-based education and empowerment, notably a project called Detroit Summer, and has inspired more than one generation of activists looking for ways in which to create a new collective and transformative culture.

If you could say one thing about Grace Boggs' life, she never stopped thinking about the future.

* First published by US socialist group Solidarity Against www.solidarity-us.org/atc



helped reverse school closures, gain huge concessions on the curriculum, force the reinstatement of sacked staff and, most of all showed what can happens when workers act decisively with a strategy that goes way beyond one-day protest strikes.

Nationally the NUT [National Union of Teachers] has helped to fund this production and this is good. Now what our union needs to do is stop pretending the NUT is some kind of social movement equivalent of the Chicago Teachers Union and begin to respond to rank-and-file demands for serious resistance to the major attacks from the Tories. This is particularly important given the defeats we have suffered over pay and pensions since 2010.

Our UK teachers rank and file group, Local Associations National Action Campaign (LANAC), is as yet small but growing. We should aim to become the new CORE. Who knows? In few years time Banner Theatre may be touring Chicago with a new production showing how LANAC turned the NUT into a "bottom up, not top down" fighting force.

In the meantime I recommend every trade unionist to see this excellent production. You will be entertained and educated in equal measure.

The Leningrad delirium

Among many other things, the new book published by Workers' Liberty and edited by Sean Matgamna — "The Two Trotskyisms Confront Stalinism" — digs out a dramatic lurch in the "Orthodox" Trotskyist movement in 1941, described in this excerpt.

The "Orthodox" were those who stuck to Trotsky's formula of the Stalinist USSR being a "degenerated workers' state" while, in the 1940s, the elements in reality on which Trotsky based that formula were changing dramatically. Along the way, they lurched one way and then another, never properly assessing their mistakes.

The book argues that the "Heterodox" — Max Shachtman, Al Glotzer, Hal Draper, CLR James, Raya Dunayevskaya, and others — developed a much less garbled and corrupted continuation of Trotskyist politics.

In their weekly paper *The Militant* of 30 August and 6 September 1941, the Orthodox came close to suggesting that the Stalinist regime in Russia had suddenly ceased to exist.

The German siege of Leningrad, which would continue for 882 days, was beginning. Workers' battalions were organised from Leningrad factories, those that had not been evacuated — on the initiative of and under the control of the Stalinist police. The people of the city were willing to resist: the Nazis declared in leaflets dropped into the city that: "We will level Leningrad to the earth and destroy Kronstadt to the water-line".

On 30 August 1941 the front page headline of *The Militant* announced: "Workers Arm To Save Leningrad". Subheads: "Masses Inspired By Memories Of October 1917. Kremlin Finally Compelled To Make Appeal To Traditions Of The October Revolution As Workers Rally For Defense To The Death". *The Militant* did everything that could be done by excited words, the flashing of romantic revolutionary images and reminiscences, and the arbitrary assignment of motives — the people defended nationalised property — to paint a picture of revolutionary workers acting outside the political control of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

"In the hour of gravest danger to Leningrad, birth-place of the October Revolution, its proletarian inhabitants are mobilising arms in hand to defend their city to the death against the German army. A tremendous revolutionary resurgence is sweeping the masses. Leningrad today is witness to scenes having their only parallel in the heroic days of the civil war, when, in October 1919, Yudenich's army was crushed by the aroused might of the armed Leningrad proletariat...."

"In tremendous mass meetings the workers are shouting forth their defiance of the imperialist enemy. From every factory and shop, picked units of workers are joining the regular troops to help hold the battle lines and are filtering through to the enemy's rear to aid the guerilla detachments."

In fact the "units of workers" were "picked", organised and controlled by the Stalinist apparatus. *The Militant* drew and coloured the picture as if the workers were no longer under the control of the bureaucracy's murdering political police, the GPU.

The Kremlin, said *The Militant*, had been "compelled" to play a positive role in rousing the working class: "Today a Voroshilov is compelled to proclaim to the workers of Leningrad... 'Leningrad was and is and shall forever remain the city or the great October Revolution'." Everything was changed, changed... utterly!

"The masses of Leningrad are demonstrating that that is the appeal for which they have been waiting. Once again, as in the days of Lenin and Trotsky, they are surging forward, ready to die in defense of the conquests of the October Revolution".

All this was false, arbitrary, political self-projection — foolishness. They substituted their own concerns and fantasies for the likely concerns of the Leningrad workers facing Nazi enslavement. It was wishful thinking — or even more discredibly, insincere calculation by some of the central SWP leaders of what would serve as a useful "party line". It wrapped up Russian realities in ideological red ribbons, appealing political mirages, fantasies presented as hard fact, and blissful self-induced political amnesia about the Stalinist realities.

"The proletarian revolution within the Soviet Union exhibits irrepressible vitality. Despite the injuries laid by Stalin's regime upon the revolutionary proletariat, its living forces well up in a mighty stream. Stalin, who disarmed the



Leningrad residents collect water from a broken water pipe

workers years ago. is now compelled to rearm them. The Stalinist bureaucracy takes this step with misgivings, at the most critical hour of its existence, in order to save its own skin. But that does not lessen the objective significance of the act. The arming of the people gives testimony that the workers' state endures... Leningrad is not, like Paris and Brussels, ruled by a powerful capitalist clique which could oppose the arming of the people and their fight to the death against the fascists." And the Stalinist autocracy?

The Nazis in 1944-5 "armed the people" in the Volksturm, and hundreds of thousands in that home guard died, resisting the Allies in the last months of the war. There was no capitalist clique in Berlin either? When Trotsky (and Cannon after him) said the bureaucratic autocracy had all the vices of all the ruling classes and seized a proportionately greater share of the social product in Russia than the rich in the advanced capitalist countries, that it deprived the workers even of the basic necessities of life, they were wrong? It wasn't true? It had ceased to be true? The Russian workers hadn't noticed?

Politically serious people would feel obliged to say how all that fitted into the picture they were now drawing of Russian Stalinist society. In this vein, the Orthodox were not serious political people but demagogues.

NATIONALISED PROPERTY

"The readiness of the Leningrad workers to offer up their lives to save their city", *The Militant* continued, "demonstrates that they know they are defending, not the privileges of Stalinist bureaucrats, but the nationalised property and other remaining conquests of the revolution".

If they withstood the siege, the nationalised property would be in the hands of the workers and not of the autocracy?

Further: "The Stalinist propaganda machine strives to conceal the real character of this mass uprising... The masses of the USSR lack the necessary class organs through which to exercise their creative energies and mobilise their maximum forces. The Soviets, the trade-unions, Lenin's Bolshevik Party, the Young Communist League — all these indispensable class agencies have been destroyed by the Stalinist regime... These institutions must be reborn and resume their commanding place in Soviet life. The arming of the people [by the Stalinist regime] is the first step in this direction."

"The class in arms possesses power to demand and to win the restoration of its political rights and its democratic institutions. The Soviet proletariat is in a position to move forward and regain all that has been taken from it by the Stalinist reaction". The workers, or "the masses", shared "dual power", or something not far from it?

Even in its high delirium, *The Militant* did not forget to denounce and damn the Heterodox Trotskyists: "The Russian workers exhibit no signs of defeatism. Such renegacy belongs to the petty-bourgeois radicals in the capitalist countries".

The front page headlines of *The Militant* of 6 September 1941, the second number issued under the imprimatur of political bedlam: "Masses Defend Soviet Cities. Hold Nazi Army At Odessa, Kiev And Leningrad. Traditions Of October 1917 Inspire Masses To Fight To Death Against Imperial-

ists". This outdid the previous issue in at least one respect. It carried a straightforwardly Stalinist cartoon on the front page, headed "A Tale of Two Cities". It had two panels, labelled "Paris" and "Leningrad". In "Paris" we see a bourgeois on his knees offering a giant key to a big Hitler figure stamped with a swastika. In "Leningrad" we see the Hitler figure crouching, almost on his knees and looming above him, much larger, is a muscular worker grimly rolling up his sleeves. The Stalinist autocracy is no part of the picture.

The Orthodox were still working on their translation of the idea that Russia remained a degenerated workers' state because of the nationalised economy into the idea that the class character given to the "workers' state" by nationalised economy pervaded everything and made it a state equipped with "the foundation of socialism", one where "the masses" — the slave-driven masses — knew by experience "the superiority of living in a workers' state".

"In Leningrad... workers at the end of their factory shifts engage in vast defense drills... In mortal fear for its own existence, the Stalinist bureaucracy is finally forced to rally the workers by appeals to the real tradition of the Soviet Union — the October Revolution". "All evidence points to the one inspiring fact: the October Revolution still lives and fights on".

The gratitude of the Orthodox for a few words — Voroshilov's reference to Leningrad as "the city of the Great October Revolution" — and their satisfaction, was not only pitiable but also evidence of their deep political demoralisation. Someone reading this without knowing what happened next would have thought that they were going over to a species of critical Stalinism, on the basis of out-of-control fantasy and self-delusion. In fact that's what, politically speaking, they did.

Then they backtracked, recalled to something like sense by Natalia Sedova Trotsky [Trotsky's widow]. Episodes of similar delirium, some worse, some better, would be a recurrent feature of the Orthodox over the decades to come.

This, I think, was the first appearance in the history of the Trotskyist movement of this sort of wilful, knowing or half-knowing, misrepresentation or downright falsification of reality in order to spin consoling fantasy as a useful party line.

Much that we see in *The Militant's* coverage of the start of the siege of Leningrad must have been — as far as the party leaders were concerned — designed and angled to appeal to Communist Party members and supporters.

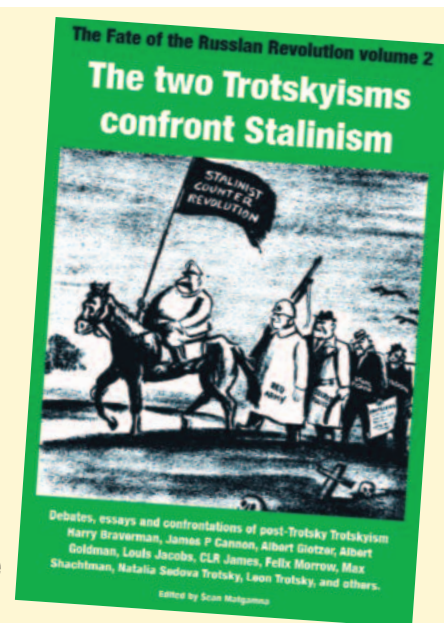
Where calculation started and sincere delusion, whipped up among themselves by a small group of like-minded people, ended, is impossible to know.

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Vote Bridget and Jane in NUT

By Liam Conway

On 28 October ballot papers go out to elect two vice-presidents for the National Union of Teachers (NUT).

Only LANAC candidates, Bridget Chapman and Jane Nellist, have anything to say about the strategy needed to beat the Tories' attacks.

This year there are four other candidates for Vice-President. Two from Broadly Speaking, the old right-wing, and two from the Socialist Teachers Alliance/Campaign for a Democratic Union, the current leadership who responsible for our "action" campaign since 2010, a campaign that resulted in major defeats on pay and pensions.

STRATEGY

These four candidates have one thing in common — they are saying nothing about the need for a national action strategy to take on the Tory attack on trade union rights, mass academisation and further cuts.

At NUT Annual Conference in April, the two STA/CDFU candidates voted against a national strike in the general election period, a strike that could have put education on the map as an election issue. Despite the resources put into the Stand Up for Education campaign through organising

stalls and election hustings, education as an issue got barely a mention in the election.

Now the election is over, the NUT leadership appears to have no idea what to do next — on either the anti-union laws or the continued attacks on education.

Jane and Bridget know that teacher morale is dangerously low and that there is a crisis of recruitment. They are the only candidates clearly stating that we need a robust response that includes local and national action to deal with this crisis.

Jane and Bridget have come under pressure from some in the STA/CDFU block, including a leading member of the SWP, to stand down in the interests of so-called left unity against the two Broadly Speaking candidates. This is not going to happen and neither should it, given that there is now so little to choose between the candidates of the old right and the new STA/CDFU controlled leadership.

LANAC supporters should campaign to help Jane and Bridget win in these elections.

This should be part of building a serious rank and file organisation rooted in the branches and workplaces and capable of defeating the existing leadership as well as generating serious disputes at both local and national level.

"Part of a wider picture"

Service controllers on the Waterloo and City Line on London Underground (LU) have been fighting for re-grading. They struck from 28-30 September. One of the activists spoke to *Tube-worker*.

What's happening to us is part of a wider picture.

London Underground is cutting staff in a variety of areas, and our experiences — of essentially being promoted to more responsible roles, involving more work, without that being reflected in our pay — mirror what's currently happening to sta-

tion staff. They've picked on us particularly because we're a small unit, but if we can win our fight for justice it might inspire other grades in other areas.

To make sure that the anger in our workplace fuels a resolve to continue fighting, we need continued communication from the union, and regular updates from talks and negotiations so we can decide the best way forward for our dispute.

• Full interview: bit.ly/WCinterview

Don't privatise our libraries!

By Bill Davies

Barnet's Tory councillors, determined to push through devastating cuts to Barnet's libraries, were met with a lively and defiant protest on Monday 12 October.

An alliance of public service campaigners, library users, residents' groups and Barnet Unison organised the mass lobby of the Council's "Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding" (CELS) committee meeting to pile the pressure on the "flagship" cutting and privatising Tory council.

CHANTS

Loud chants led by John Burgess, Barnet Unison branch secretary, along with Christmas carols with improvised new lyrics of "Save our Libraries!" (repetitive but never boring!) lifted the spirits of campaigners and projected an unequivocal message.

The protest later reconvened in the public gallery of the Town Hall's largest committee room which quickly became full up, leaving some campaigners waiting in the lobby for news.

Following a sham consultation in which Barnet Council tried to manipulate local residents into choosing between three options, all of which involved cuts to library staffing levels and floor space, the Council is proposing 46% staff redundancies and a 70% reduction in staffed opening hours.

Barnet, like other boroughs, wants more self-service and volunteer-run libraries. 10 out of 14 libraries will have massively reduced staffed hours (but

an increase in unstaffed hours) and the other four, no paid library staff at all. Responses to Barnet's consultation have overwhelmingly rejected the proposed cuts — in any option — and have called for a fully-funded, professionally-staffed service with no cuts or closures.

OBJECTIONS

In the CELS committee meeting, Tory councillors failed to answer the objections and concerns raised both in public questions and by Labour councillors on the committee.

They pressed ahead with their brutal cuts proposal using their majority on the committee to pass it by 5 votes to 4.

However, pressure from the campaign pushed them into referring the proposal for a decision at a full meeting of Barnet Council on 20 October. If it passes, there will follow a 12-week consultation on the proposal and a final decision at another meeting of the Council.

The Tories have a wafer-thin majority of one seat on Barnet Council.

Library campaigners are hopeful that more pressure over the next few days may bring a much-needed victory in the fight to save Barnet's libraries from the destruction the Tories seem determined to inflict.

• **Save Our Libraries:** Mass lobby of Barnet Council, Hendon Town Hall, NW4 4BQ, Tuesday 20 Oct, 6:00pm (Council meeting starts 7pm)

• **For Barnet Unison's response to Barnet's Library Review see:** bit.ly/1N9YinJ

Lambeth libraries

On Friday 2 October Lambeth council informed its library staff that 25% of us will be made redundant as five libraries are closed and replaced with unstaffed book collection stations and self-issue machines.

Three of the libraries will transfer to a new "Culture Board" run by Greenwich Leisure Ltd (GLL) — which will run gyms in the buildings! In fact the final council report, after a six month consultation which overwhelmingly rejected

the library cuts proposals, is solely based on what GLL wanted, down to which locations they wanted, regardless of local need.

Library campaigners and Unison members protested at the Council Cabinet meeting on Monday 12 October.

Despite the council moving the location of the meeting at the last minute, hundreds turned up to protest, with many of those unable to get into the hall.

Barnet strikes again

By Gemma Short

Council workers in Barnet struck again on 9 October in an on going dispute over privatisation.

Over 50 workers and supporters joined the picket line at Mill Hill depot, and were addressed by Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell.

Workers later held a rally where reports from picket lines and next steps were discussed, as well as issues such as the Trade Union Bill.

Workers will next strike on 2 November, and will join the lobby of parliament against the Trade Union Bill on that day.



IWGB wins couriers living wage

By Peggy Carter

Couriers organised by the IWGB have won the Living Wage for couriers working for Gophr.

The IWGB has been organising courier and logistics workers in London, campaigning for the London living wage and better terms and conditions.

Gophr has agreed to pay its couriers £11.10 an hour, as well as bicycle maintenance costs and sock pay.

Campaigners are still campaigning against City Sprint, which has not raised its rates of pay for 15 years!

IWGB hopes that more courier companies will now sign up to paying the living wage.

Win at Sellafield

By Charlotte Zalens

Construction workers at the nuclear decommissioning plant at Sellafield have secured a deal in their dispute over health and safety.

The construction companies and Sellafield Ltd have agreed to facilitate a shop steward to deal with health and safety, workplace wel-

fare and training issues. The agreement comes after several strikes, including unofficial walk outs, in the past months.

A cross-company health and safety committee has also been formed.

This can go a long way to ensuring competing construction companies don't undercut each other by risking workers' safety.



Demonstrators have turned against Erdogan's government

Labour right backs Cameron on Syria

By Henry Thompson

David Cameron had indicated that he will seek Parliament's support for airstrikes on Syria. It remains unclear when a vote will take place.

In an interview with the BBC on 6 October, Cameron said he would go to for a parliamentary vote "at a time when there's a greater consensus across the House of Commons for that action". Some Tory MPs oppose military action in Syria, so the Prime Minister might have to rely on opposition MPs to pass a motion for airstrikes.

The vote will be a significant moment for the Labour Party and Jeremy Corbyn's left-wing leadership. Corbyn has said that he is against airstrikes in Syria.

The bombing would help one or another reactionary faction, or more likely be a token to bolster the UK's credit with the USA.

At Labour Party conference in September, delegates voted not to support airstrikes in Syria unless four conditions were first met: authorisation from the UN, a plan for humanitarian assistance for refugees displaced by the action, assurances that the bombing is only targeted at ISIS, and that any bombing is subordinated to international diplomatic efforts to end the war.

However, according to the *Guardian*, around 50 Labour MPs are planning to vote in favour of airstrikes. Labour MP Jo Cox and Tory ex-minister Andrew Mitchell co-wrote an article in the *Observer* in support of action.

This represents an undemocratic flouting of Labour Party conference policy.

Workers protest after Ankara bomb

By Gerry Bates

Workers struck and demonstrated across Turkey on 12 and 13 October to protest at the bombing which killed at least 97 people at a peace rally in Ankara [Turkey's capital] on 10 October.

The Confederation of Public Sector Trades' Unions (KESK), the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (DİSK), the Turkish Medical Association (TTB) and the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (TMMOB) called for a nationwide strike on 12 and 13 October.

A march in Istanbul gathered at Taksim Square at 6pm on 11 October. The Turkish left-wing activists of UID-DER (Association of International Workers' Solidarity) report that banners included: "We know the killers!" "Call killer AKP [the ruling party] to account!", "Long live the workers' unity and the brotherhood of the peoples", "Government, resign!"

The march was supported by KESK, TTB, the left-wing party HDP, UID-DER and others.

A KESK speaker challenged the government: "Persist in your war-mongering? We will call for peace. We will continue our struggle".

Government condemned over refugees

By Phil Grimm

Over 300 lawyers have signed an open letter to David Cameron, criticising the government's handling of the refugee crisis.

The letter, whose signatories include several former law lords as well as a former president of the European Court of Human Rights, condemns the government's plan to take in only 20,000 refugees over the next five years. The letter argues that given the great wealth and stability of the UK, it should be doing far more to help refugees, including allowing many more of them into the country.

The letter calls for an end to the "Dublin system", which says that refugees must apply for asylum in the first safe country in which they arrive. It argues that the best way to undermine the exploitative people-smuggling of refugees to the UK would be to allow them come here legally, thereby removing the need to risk their lives by paying money to criminal gangs.

One judge who signed the letter said: "When history considers how our country has behaved in this moment of serious crisis, do we want to be judged as having wrung our hands while standing back in the face of immense suffering?"

Meanwhile, activists on both sides of the channel are organising solidarity demonstrations in support of the thousands of migrants stranded in Calais.

The Calais Migrant Solidarity campaign has organised a demonstration on Friday 16 October from 6pm at St. Pancras station in London to protest against "Eurostar, Eurotunnel and the whole border regime of which they are a part." A coalition of groups has called a further protest in Dover on 17 October.

The protests are calling for the border to be opened, and for migrants arrested trying to walk through the tunnel to be released.

