

Solidarity

For a
workers'
government

For social ownership of the banks and industry

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www.workersliberty.org

Make Labour reverse the NHS cuts!

See page 3



Protest at Labour conference on 21 September

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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Kurdish troops: slow progress against Islamists

Sectarian impasse in Iraq

By Simon Nelson

On 31 August, the Iraqi army, Kurdish troops (peshmerga), and the "peace brigades" linked to Iraqi Shia-Islamist leader Moqtada al-Sadr reached the town of Amerli in northern Iraq and lifted its siege by the "Islamic State" movement which has taken control of a big swathe of northern Iraq and of Syria.

Amerli's inhabitants are mainly of the Turkmen minority, but many had already fled the siege. It is reported that the Turkmen themselves had dug mass graves because they planned to kill their families and themselves if they lost their fight to defend the town.

Otherwise they feared forced conversion, sale into slavery or execution by the "Islamic State" movement (IS, previously called ISIS). The UN estimates that 1.6 million Iraqis including Kurds, Yazidis, Shabaks and

Christians are refugees inside Iraq from the IS offensive.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that at least 27 captured Yazidi women, many of them children, have been sold for \$1000 to IS fighters in Syria as wives. They will have undergone forced conversion to Islam as part of the sale.

IS has continued to kidnap Peshmerga fighters and promise execution for any Kurdish prisoner who refuses to pledge allegiance to "the caliphate" (I.e IS).

US airstrikes on IS positions assisted the militias and army in reaching Amerli.

The third attempt to regain control of the city of Tikrit since the Iraqi Government lost control earlier this year has failed, despite Kurdish forces aiding the Iraqi army.

The Iraqi army is still in disarray. US military sources indicate that up to seven brigades have disbanded. The US, Iran, Saudi

Arabia, Russia, and the UK are now in an undeclared alliance against the rise of the IS.

Iraqi Shia militias under the patronage of different politicians and clerics are also part of this tacit alliance. The most powerful fall under the control of Hadi al-Amiri, commander of the Badr brigades, who is able to channel Iranian funds directly.

The Shia militias oppose IS's Sunni ultra-Islamism, and most are less extremely sectarian than IS; but the destruction of a Sunni mosque in Diyala on 22 August, with the deaths of 70 worshippers, most likely was the result of a Shia militia attack.

The sectarianism is ruinous both in Iraq and in the region. Many Shia militia fighters, like the IS fighters, have fought in Syria. The Shia have fought for the Assad government. A senior Iraqi Shia politician is quoted in the Guardian: "Where will they (the militias) go when the fight is

over here? They will take their wars and go to Saudi and Yemen. Just like the Sunni jihadis migrated, so will the Shia militias".

Kurdish fighters from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK, based in the Kurdish areas of Turkey) have increased their presence in northern Iraq, but in distinct brigades with their own command structure. Some claim that Iraqi-Kurdish forces have backed away from confrontation with IS while the PKK have continued fighting.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has publicly backed arming of the peshmerga (Iraqi-Kurdish regional government forces), but not the PKK.

The PKK remains listed as a "terrorist" organisation by both the US and EU. Denmark is lobbying for it to be removed, but the Turkish government will insist it remains on the list, despite ongoing talks between the government and the imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan.

14% swing to Labour left

By Michael Johnson

The election of the constituency part of Labour's National Executive Committee (NEC) saw the best result for the left (55% of the poll, 14% swing) since the 1980s (bit.ly/1u8QZTD).

Ken Livingstone topped the poll, with Ann Black, Christine Shawcroft and

Kate Osamor also elected. Kate is an NHS worker and Unite political committee member.

The more traditional Labour right-wing grouping Labour First got trade union lawyer Ellie Reeves elected, and it supported independent candidate Johanna Baxter, who was also returned.

Florence Nosegbe and Kevin Peel, candidates backed by the explicitly

Blairite caucus Progress, trailed in tenth and twelfth place respectively, among the 13 candidates.

This is a swing to the left in the NEC, and seems to reflect some ferment at constituency level. However Livingstone and Black both recently voted for the Collins review that threatens to strip trade unions of future power in the party.

A discussion needs to



Kate Osamor

be had about the kind of left candidates that we need.

Push Labour to save the NHS!

By an NHS worker

70% of the £13 billion NHS contracts negotiated last year were given to private providers. This is an unprecedented sell off, of the staff, resources and bricks and mortar that make up our National Health Service.

The scale, and pace of the change is staggering. From "111 helpline" to maternity services, diabetes management to stoma care and even sexual assault services and palliative care, little is safe from market forces. And with real-terms cuts to the overall budget and efficiency savings of over £20 billion to be made, the NHS is being cut to the bone.

With increasing waiting times for GP services, surgery and hospital appointments, police cars being used as ambulances, and now talk of monitoring critically ill patients by video

link, it is clear that the NHS is at breaking point. If we do not act now, and quickly, there will be no NHS left to fight for.

The Save Lewisham Hospital Campaign mobilised tens of thousands from the local community, took on the Secretary of State for Health and won. They still have an Accident and Emergency at their local hospital. Others have not been so lucky.

Gloucestershire PCT had planned to outsource all 8 of its community hospitals and all its health services. This was halted by campaigning from the local community. In East London, staff and patients at a number of GP practices have come together to fight to save those faced with closure in the coming year.

Cuts to GP funding are now a national issue thanks to their hard work.

This has not been enough to stem the tide. 20% of GP surgeries face closure

within the next five years. Money which used to be set aside for disadvantaged and rural communities is being taken from them, putting many in jeopardy.

Their contracts will be replaced by short term Alternative Provider Medical Services contracts, to be re-tendered on a regular basis.

Surgeries that used to be the centre of the local community will be torn apart. Continuity of care laid waste by the demands of the market.

We must take the fight to the Labour Party to demand they commit to reverse cuts made to the NHS.

There have been some

positive moves. Andy Burnham, Shadow Secretary for Health, has called for a halt to the privatisation, "until the public is consulted". This is a positive step, but it is not a commitment to stop all privatisation, let alone reverse the cuts.

The Labour Party needs to be bold and recognise its own mistakes with the NHS. It should call for the cancelling of the disastrous Private Finance Initiatives to free hospitals from debt.

Call for the end of the market in health and for the patient, not profit, to be put back at the centre of health care.

Rally outside Labour Party conference
2.30pm, 21 September,
Manchester Central, Windmill Street, M2 3XG
bit.ly/nhslobby

Ahmed Seif el-Islam

By Nick Holden

On Wednesday, 27 August Egypt's leading human rights lawyer, Ahmed Seif el-Islam died aged 63 after several days in a coma after heart surgery. As he lay dying, two of his children were behind bars for their political activism.

Seif el-Islam represented people of many backgrounds in Egypt's repressive legal system. A co-founder of the Hisham Mubarak Law Centre (dedicated to defending human rights cases), in 2001 he assisted in the defence of 52 men on trial for "performing immoral acts" in the 'Queen Boat Trial' and three years later he represented 15 men allegedly tortured while in detention on terrorism charges.

When blogger Abdel Kareem Nabil was jailed for "insulting Islam" in criticising the teachings of his university (and the regime of then-president Hosni Mubarak), it was Seif el-Islam who represented him. And in 2008 when a wave of strikes triggered repressive reaction from the regime, he represented those charged with organising the protests.

Imprisoned briefly as a student in 1972, and for a lengthy period for political activity during the 1980s, Seif el-Islam was also active in the 2011 revolution.

Bizarrely he was arrested in his office and subsequently interrogated by the man who would go on to assume the presidency, Abdel Fatah al-Sisi.

In the last period Seif el-Islam faced what must have been his most emotionally-draining case: representing his own son, Alaa Abd El Fattah, as the various phases of the new government exacted what can only be described as revenge on one of the leading voices of the revolutionary generation. Three spells of imprisonment have not dampened Alaa's commitment to political freedom and socialism, although he has written poignantly of the sadness he feels at missing key stages of his own young son's early life. Now however, with a 15 year prison sentence in front of him on trumped up charges Alaa has recently begun a hunger strike, one of many Egyptian political prisoners to do so during 2014. One of his hopes of the hunger strike, that he be able to spend time with his

father during his last days, has already been dashed.

The legal system in Egypt, even after the revolution, is simply perverse. Alaa and the others charged alongside him languished in jail for over 100 days before being released on bail in March this year without any explanation for the change in policy. Barely six weeks later, the judge barred the defendants from entering their own trial, and passed a "guilty" verdict, in absentia, while the defendants protested outside demanding admittance.

INSULT

Adding insult to injury, the police then seized Alaa from the crowd, and declared him a fugitive!

Since then, he has been serving his sentence and awaiting a promised re-trial, the details of which are still undecided because the courtroom is being "redecorated" with a glass cage so that the defendants can only be heard by those in the court when the judge deigns to turn on a microphone.

In June, one of Seif's daughters, Sanaa, was also arrested — for taking part in a protest against the legal system's mistreatment of

her brother! She has appeared in court for one day, but then the presiding judge went on holiday and will not return to hear her defence until September — so she waits in jail, while her father underwent heart surgery. Sanaa and Alaa were each permitted a brief visit to their father's hospital bed last weekend.

The al-Sisi regime has cracked down hard on both the Muslim Brotherhood and the left, seeking to entrench its position as the only political force with freedom to organise.

In January 2014, with his son in jail, Seif spoke to the press, already unwell and leaning on a cane, and addressed the absent Alaa: "I wanted you to inherit a democratic society that guards your rights, my son, but instead I passed on the prison cell that held me, and now holds you."

We cannot allow Seif's death to go unnoticed outside of Egypt! Freedom to the Egyptian political prisoners, including Alaa and Sanaa!

• More: bit.ly/1ufM8QL,
bit.ly/1n8g23U,
bit.ly/1qlCSKk

Resist anti-Islamic panic

By Dan Katz

The proposals by senior Tory politicians, clerics and police chiefs to trash civil liberties on pretext of the threat from the Islamic State movement in Iraq and Syria should be resisted as illiberal and even stupid.

There is no doubt the Islamists of Islamic State are unpleasant, violent reactionaries. Some of the footage posted on YouTube – of murders and beheadings – is disgusting. IS is a real threat.

It is also probable that some of the young British men and women who have left the UK to fight in Syria and joined the jihadist "cause" do pose a potential threat if they return to Britain.

Home Secretary, Theresa May, already has the power to remove British citizenship from people with dual nationality. The recent Immigration Act also gives her the power to remove citizenship from naturalised Britons. Now others would like to go further.

At the end of August George Carey, former archbishop of Canterbury, said Islamists fighting in Iraq should lose their British passports and prevented from returning to the UK. There's a faint smell of Christian sectarianism surrounding his comments, and no sense that these matters might be settled in a court.

Presumably Carey would just have us go on the word of some of our secret police to determine the guilt of alleged terrorists. If they were to be prevented from returning to the UK, how could their cases be processed in a British court?

Fortunately it seems the British government cannot implement this proposal because international legal norms make it illegal to make a citizen stateless.

London mayor, Boris Johnson wants anyone visiting Iraq or Syria to be automatically presumed to be a terrorist unless they had notified the authorities in advance. He calls this proposal a "minor change," but it is the opposite of a minor change, and would undercut an important

principle that should be defended: that a person is innocent until proven guilty.

Johnson seems unable to recognise the difference between fighting for Islamic State and, say, giving medical support to a unit fighting with the more secular Free Syrian Army (which, until recently, has been viewed sympathetically by British government officials). He seems blissfully unaware that the British state has itself given non-lethal support to the FSA.

The new rules Johnson wants seem intended to be enforced retrospectively. People who have travelled to Syria might try to return to find a new set of rules in place.

The Met police chief Bernard Hogan-Howe has called for new, harsh control orders that would be placed on suspected Islamists to restrict their movements and activities. Hogan-Howe should stay out of politics – we don't need senior police campaigning for more repressive laws. And control orders should also be opposed, especially those imposed by politicians or semi-secret court processes.

The rule should be the same for all. If someone is to have their liberty restricted they should be charged and the evidence should be presented in an open court where it can be challenged.

These – often wacky – proposals are being aired now, before any terrorist action has happened. If bombs do go off we should expect such proposals to be revived and attempts made to rush new powers through parliament.

The left has a particular interest in opposing new restrictions on civil liberties, especially those that breach fundamental ideas. We might be the next set of victims.



Theresa May, home secretary

The Etonian plutocracy

Rich and poor
By Matt Cooper



Only 7% of people in the UK went to fee-paying schools, but they dominate all the top jobs which are central to the running of the state. 71% of top judges, 62% senior armed forces officers and 55% and the highest ranking civil servants.

A report by the not-left-wing academic government policy unit, the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (28 August) says advantage is bought via the top fee-paying schools which fast track children into the top universities, particularly Oxford and Cambridge.

Those institutions not only offer a better resourced education, but help create a sense of superiority and entitlement and networks that lead to the top jobs.

Drill down into the data and there's more.

The report shows that only 44% of the 1,000 wealthiest people in Britain were privately educated. But 26% were educated abroad. Only 13% went to comprehensive school



compared to 88% of the population of the UK.

More attended selective grammar schools. Selection is far better at stratifying 11 year olds by social class than by how well they are capable of performing at 18.

Of judges 6% went to comprehensives, senior army officers 7%, top diplomats 11%, the chief executives of the biggest companies 14%, top civil servants 16% and top media professionals 16%.

One could go further and ask to which comprehensive schools the 6%-to-16% of the elite go. Not all comprehensive schools are equal. Some comprehensives have a catchment of leafy streets of utterly unaffordable Victorian villas by a

backdoor selection such as those by religious attendance. These are clearly not the same as most people's local comprehensive.

Those with a degree from Oxford or Cambridge are just 0.8% of the population and just 2.5% of university graduates. But 75% of top judges, 59% of members of the cabinet, and 57% of civil servants attended an Oxford or Cambridge college.

Previous research has shown that privately educated students, around 40% of Oxford and Cambridge students, gain access to elite universities with lower grades than those from state schools.

More than half of all state schools send only 6% of A level students to elite universities.

Of course, creating greater social mobility will not end class society. Rather, it would allow those who have been lucky in the lottery of environmental and genetic endowment to access the lower echelons of the ruling elite.

It might even invigorate and legitimate the existence of that elite.

• www.gov.uk/government/publications/elitist-britain
www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-14069516

Kick the ice bucket for collective action!

Letters



The recent "Ice Bucket Challenge" internet campaign had an impressive number of people taking part.

Participants video themselves tipping a bucket of cold water on their head and nominate others to do the same; if they refuse they have to donate to charity. Often those that take part still donate. Celebrities and political figures from Unite union leader Len McCluskey to George Bush have taken part.

This phenomenon shows us that if the conditions are right, people will be urged to act for the benefit of others whom they have never met. It reveals a fundamentally positive side of human nature.

But this trend also tells us something about the neo-liberal society we live in.

For something like this to "go viral" and earn endorsement across the class divide, it must have a degree of social acceptability that makes it non-threatening to the hegemony of ruling class ideas. In this case the fact it is not a collective form of action gives it a certain popularity; it reflects the ideological surroundings and doesn't create friction against dominant norms and values.

Also, posting a video of oneself in a vulnerable and mildly humiliating position for a good cause inevitably generates some social dividends for the person doing it. This ties a public act of charity to a personal reward, and cements the notion that good deeds are only worth doing if you get the credit. Again, a culturally permissible belief, rooted in the ideological makeup of a system that rewards selfishness and cultivates individualism. The rampant self-interest inherent in this craze is shown by an *Independent* report which states one third of people participated "to get attention".

ALSA, the charity that is the main beneficiary of the donations, pays its chief executive over £300,000. It also made a move to patent the phrase "ice bucket challenge", meaning that other charities would have to pay to use it — the barmy consequence of social need being administered by capitalist bureaucracy. The monolithic profiteers Tesco dug deep and found £20,000 from ice sales to donate. Imagine how much more we could find for good causes if workers controlled the wealth they create, instead of bosses.

Collective action is a more potent force for social change. While fads come and go, the work of socialists and trade unionists will reverberate into the future. Fight for genuine change; don't get caught up in bourgeois forms of social action.

Andy Forse, Milton Keynes

The anti-anti-semitism of fools

Eric Lee



I have just come back (31 August) from attending a large demonstration in central London protesting the rise of anti-Semitism in the UK.

The demonstration was organised by a new group called the Campaign Against Antisemitism. It was backed by all the major Jewish organisations in Britain, including the Board of Deputies, the Jewish Leadership Council, and many others. Nearly a thousand people signed up to attend the demo on Facebook; it looked to me like at least that number there. The crowd seemed overwhelmingly Jewish.

Now if this had been a demonstration against racism, organized by the leadership of the Black communities in Britain, I can guarantee you that a wide range of left groups would have been there to show their solidarity. You would have found assorted Trotskyists and others selling their newspapers, handing out leaflets and showing that they stood shoulder-to-shoulder with an ethnic minority group struggling against racist assaults, while busily trying to recruit new members.

But at this demonstration, I didn't see a single left group of any kind with an obvious presence. There may have been individual socialists — like myself — there; but there were no banners, newspapers, or flyers.

ALONE

The Jewish community seemed to be very much on its own. As if it alone could sense the danger.

On the face of it, this is odd. The rise of anti-Semitism in Britain and across Europe is well documented. Even the Muslim Council of Britain seems to acknowledge this problem in the joint declaration it issued last week together with the Board of Deputies calling for a joint fight against anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

The eloquent Owen Jones addressed the problem in a recent column for the *Guardian*.

Entitled "Anti-Jewish hatred is rising — we must see it for what it is", Jones wrote that "there really is plenty of anti-semitism that must be confronted." And he then went on to point to rising anti-Semitism on the far right in Greece. And Jew-hatred among the far-rightists in Hungary. And of course anti-Semitism on the French far right, in the form of the National Front.

But not a word about anti-Semitism in the UK. And of course no mention of anti-Semitism in Muslim communities, or the left.

Jones is possibly unaware of the long history of anti-Semi-



Demonstration against anti-semitism, Sunday 31 August

tism on the left, a history that goes back to the very earliest days of our movement. August Bebel, the great leader of German Social Democracy, famously called anti-Semitism "the socialism of fools". (Some scholars think that the quote is wrongly attributed to Bebel, but no matter — it was widely known more than a century ago.)

Classic anti-Semitic ideas like exaggerated notions of Jewish power and wealth grew in the fertile soil of the left long before the Palestinian issue ever arose. Left anti-semitism predates the recent Gaza war by at least a century. It may flare up when the guns are firing in Gaza, but it is always there, a low flame that doesn't extinguish.

People like Owen Jones, and many of those on the British left who were so notably absent from today's demonstration, seem prepared to see anti-semitism everywhere but in front of their noses.

Their opposition to Jew-hatred may be called the "anti-anti-Semitism of fools" as it has nothing in common with a real fight against anti-semitism.

As a result, they leave the Jewish community alone — or drive it into the arms of right-wing demagogues who are happy for any excuse to bash the Muslim community or the left.

And it doesn't have to be that way.

The left should be in the forefront of the fight against anti-semitism, should embrace that fight and claim it as our own. We should be helping to build widespread public support for that fight, and providing it with analysis and programme.

Instead, the left sits by the sidelines, its head in the sand, muttering about "Golden Dawn" in Greece rather than actually fighting the poison of anti-semitism here in the UK, and here on the left.

How they failed Rotherham's children

The Jay Report, which investigated abuse and sexual exploitation of children in the Rotherham area between 1997 and 2014, estimates over 1400 children have been victims. This is appalling. It is also an issue for the left.

It is an issue not just because the right-wing press have used it as an opportunity to print racist headlines, or just because the police have systematically blamed victims. Something, else, and even more fundamental is at stake. This case has demonstrated a fundamental lack of care for and understanding of some of the most vulnerable in society. It has shone a light on a system which failed children. We should care about this and have something to say about it.

The Jay Report criticised the whole system (the police, social services, schools) for a "lack of focus on outcomes for children". The report finds time and time again that significant files were missing, decisions not followed through and agencies not contacted. Investigations and reports in 2002, 2003 and 2006 brought to the attention of the council and social services a large issue with child sexual exploitation (CSE), particularly affecting vulnerable children. Despite this, people within social services continued to downplay the level or seriousness of abuse. One recent CSE subgroup concluded "agencies need to retain a sense of proportionality with regard to child sexual exploitation, as it only actually accounts for 2.3% of the Council's safeguarding work in Rotherham. Although it is a very important issue, child neglect is a much more significant problem."

BLAME

Victims of CSE were consistently wrongly categorised as "out of control" or treated as cases of alcohol and/or drugs misuse; the specific issues of CSE were not taken seriously.

Consistent with police handling of rape in general, many of the cases show the police, and in some cases social services, disbelieved young girls. In one case an initial risk assessment blamed the girl for "putting herself at risk of sexual exploitation and danger". In several cases police, on finding young girls with much older males, arrested young girls for being "drunk and disorderly"! Understandably in many of these cases parents, family members and children themselves report losing all faith in the agencies involved.

The *Daily Mail* ran the headline "Betrayed by PC [politically correct] cowards" and the EDL are camped outside Rotherham police station calling for action against "Muslim grooming gangs".

They have also called a national demonstration. We should mobilise against that.

Child sexual exploitation is not an issue of ethnicity. What happened in Rotherham is happening in other areas of the country; although there will be particular local circumstances, there will be a wide range of abusers and victims. The Jay Report cites the hesitancy of social workers and practitioners over reporting the ethnicity of abusers as Pakistani,



Rotherham chief executive Martin Kimber apologises to victims

for fear or being accused of racism. This is a problem. It actually points to a dishonest way of dealing with racism.

For many years Labour-led Rotherham council has relied upon tokenistic "multicultural events" and communicating almost exclusively with self-appointed "community leaders", often religious ones rather than engaging and building strong links with communities.

This does not deal with racism in an open way; wrongly presumes the opinions of Muslim communities can and should be communicated by "community leaders", and disenfranchises others.

For instance the council and social services ignored the possibility that abuse may be happening within the Pakistani community. An image was established of Pakistani men abusing white girls. In fact such abuse usually happens to those closest to the abuser. The under-reporting of abuse from minority ethnic victims is a problem.

The Jay inquiry spoke to Pakistani women's groups from the area who stated categorically that the practice of communicating solely with "community leaders" disenfranchised them and prevented them tackling abuse within their community. One Pakistani women's group described how Pakistani-heritage girls were targeted by taxi drivers and men waiting outside school gates. They also spoke of Pakistani landlords exploiting Pakistani women and children who were their tenants.

RISKY BUSINESS

The only agency which appears to consistently provide good support and to follow up with children was Risky Business, a non-statutory youth work project.

Damningly, the Jay Report states that senior managers in Rotherham Social Services saw Risky Business as a "nuisance". Perhaps that was because they took children and young people seriously.

Child sexual exploitation can happen anywhere. This is not an issue unique to Rotherham. Projects like Risky Business have probably ensured that the issue has come to light in Rotherham. In other areas we may just not know the scale of such abuse yet. In Rotherham we had a group of children put into a very vulnerable position by a combination of poverty, lack of opportunity, and families with mental and emotional health problems. These conditions are linked to social breakdown in working-class areas, the gutting of industry in the 1980s, and decades of mass unemployment. These exist in other places beside Rotherham.

The Jay Report found that domestic violence in the homes of children played a role in 46% of the cases, and parental mental health problems in 20% of cases. In a third of cases the victims of CSE had mental health problems and in two-thirds emotional health difficulties, most likely a combination of existing issues and ones caused by the abuse they suffered. Lack of access to mental health services was a recurrent theme.

Cycles of unemployment, lack of opportunity and low confidence led to the alienation of young children. It would be simplistic to say that was the sole issue, but their abusers exploited it. It also played a role in the perception of these children by police and social services. Society sees these children as part of an "underclass", as "sluts", "slags" and "out of control" Very few of the "experts", people who should have understood the precariousness of the children's lives, behaved as if they understood.

UNDERSTAFFED

We need to know why that was. Undoubtedly staff shortages and lack of money played a role.

In 2008 43% of jobs in Rotherham Social Services were not filled. Jobs were being covered by short-term agency staff. Staff reported being under huge pressure with the volume of cases being referred to social services, especially those involving CSE.

A big issue, a nationwide issue, is the level of bureaucracy within social services. A 2013 report by the charity Banardos found that "senior management were making heavy demands relating to performance management and data collection" This is easily recognisable by anyone working in social services, in schools or caring for vulnerable people; bureaucracy gets in the way of workers doing the job and ultimately hurts vulnerable people.

On the other hand at Risky Business, a smaller service, staff were much more in charge of what they did. It is no surprise that it responded much better to CSE cases.

Workers should be free from the sort of performance management bullshit that is used against them and gets in the way of doing their job. Socialists should oppose the use of time to pore over data solely used to massage management reports. Record keeping is important, but should directly help vulnerable people.

Accountability too is important. But it is a very different thing to "performance management". Our unions should take on the fight against these things, as part of a program for creating services which are focused on the needs of and involving the working-class people who need help and support.

Unison, representing social workers and other staff in Rotherham, has released data from a workplace stress survey that shows 75% of respondents thinking bullying was a serious issue, resulting in 33% having had time off work due to stress. Many had complained about dangerously high case loads, according to Unison's regional secretary.

He added "Instead of treating the clients that they are seeing as human beings, they are being treated as numbers, and that can lead to bad decision-making so they feel pressurised just to turn the clients through a mill, and that's not what social work is all about."

The bottom line here is that in Rotherham, and elsewhere, a minority of abusive men, often involved in criminal gangs, will look for vulnerable children to prey on. If the system does not believe children who report abuse, regards children who are sexually active as "sluts", and does not trust trained workers or give them the resources they need, it will continue to fail vulnerable children.

Vote no to Scottish independence!

On 18 September the people of Scotland will decide whether or not to become an independent state.

Latest polls show 47.6% against Scottish independence with 41.6% in favour, and 10.8% undecided. Opinion against independence has dropped, numbers undecided have dropped, and support for independence has risen. Discounting the undecided, 53% are against and 47% are for independence.

Much of the British left is disoriented on the issue, making their political compass crass anti-Toryism rather than a reasoned assessment of the issue. Many claim that an independent Scotland would be more left wing, would not pass on Westminster cuts, and would be more responsive to class struggle in Scotland. We should have no illusions that the Scottish bourgeoisie will be kinder to the working class!

This kind of anti-Toryism looks for short-cuts and wants to believe there are ways to circumvent building united class struggle across the border as the way to beat back the attacks we all face.

We favour of the right to self determination of national groups. And if the Scottish people were to vote for independ-

ence we would defend that right against "unionist" opposition.

However, generally we are in favour of taking down borders between people, not erecting them. We make the interests of the working class our priority, and a larger political unit of England, Scotland and Wales makes uniting the working class easier. This is the basis for a stronger labour movement and a stronger fight against the bourgeois state. This is the longer route, and in reality the only route to beating the Tories and the system they represent.

Scotland is not an oppressed nation. Independence for Scotland would remove no real oppression. The "rule of Westminster" that many in the Yes campaign (even socialists) claim oppresses Scotland is in reality the oppression of the working class throughout all of England, Scotland and Wales.

We are for a vote against independence. For a united Scottish and English working class to wage class war against their joint oppressor. For a federal republic in Britain and strong local autonomy for the Scottish people and others.

“Hands up! Don’t shoot!”



Coalition of Black Trade Unionists march in Ferguson

By Gemma Short

On 9 August Michael Brown was shot as he walked down the street in his home neighbourhood in Ferguson Missouri, USA.

Michael, a black 18 year-old with no criminal record, was shot with his hands up by white police officer Darren Wilson.

Dorian Johnson, a friend who was with Michael at the time, described how a police car pulled up and an officer asked them to move onto the pavement. The officer pulled his car around to block the road, and tried to pull Michael into the car, at no point stating he was being arrested or giving any grounds for arrest. When Michael tried to run away he was shot six times. Neither Michael nor his friend was armed.

This was just an extreme example of the everyday police harassment of young black men in large parts of America.

MILITARISATION

In 2012 426 people were recorded as having been killed by police officers in the USA (records are patchy and there is no national legal requirement to report).

31% were black, compared to the 13% of the US population which is black. 39% of black people killed were classified as “attacking” when shot, but 42% were “not attacking”. This reflects a reasonable fear among young black men that any wrong move can lead to your death.

Popular culture propagates a fear of young black men. The 30% white population in Ferguson are buying guns to arm themselves against this imaginary threat, yet this 30% control the political structures and the police. Just 17% of city councillors are black, compared to 67% of the population.

After Michael’s shooting the residents of Ferguson and the labour movement and activists from the St Louis are turning out onto the streets to protest. The National Guard were called in, and Ferguson’s already heavily militarised police force attacked the protests with further violence. They have been using tear gas and weapons more commonly found in war zones.

A labour movement campaign, #handsupdontship, based in a UPS warehouse in Minneapolis, is highlighting that workers there ship products from a maker of shooting practice targets to the Ferguson police. These shooting targets carry “realistic” images of potential targets, largely black, which encourage a mindset of shoot first, ask later.

The situation in Ferguson is also about wider political marginalisation and economic strife.

In 1990 74% of the population of Ferguson was white, a legacy of 1950s suburban expansion with large “American dream family homes” and a thriving electricals industry with several factories. By 2010 only 29% of the population was white. As Emerson electricals outsourced its work and cut jobs, the population shrank and many white workers moved out.

Many black workers moved into Ferguson as house prices fell. With the credit crunch and the bursting of the housing bubble black workers were betrayed. Many faced evictions, lost jobs and faced increased poverty. Many properties were bought up by large scale private landlords who increased the rent.

The school board became privatised and increasingly underfunded, and those who could afford to moved their kids out to “better” schools. Currently unemployment stands at 50%, the median income of \$36,000 has dropped 30% since 2000, and one resident in four lives below the poverty line.

LABOUR MOVEMENT

When the local school board was privatised families joined together in a campaign to keep the schools public and demand better funding. Lots of the same people had already been involved in anti-eviction campaigns and are now involved in protests against the shooting of Michael Brown.

Mark Esters of the Communication Workers Union in St Louis, who is president of the St Louis Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, says many trade unionists have joined the protests. However, the AFL-CIO national union centre has been weak in its condemnations of the shooting.

In St Louis the “Show me \$15” campaign has been organising fast food workers for a living wage. The campaign will have a national strike on 5 September. Fast food workers are mainly black and minority ethnic, and several of the Ferguson rallies have had members of the campaign speak. Two members of the campaign worked at the McDonalds in Ferguson opposite where Michael was shot.

Let’s show our solidarity with the working class people of this community!

- Donate to legal funds — bit.ly/1oA7y5m
- “Show me \$15” campaign — bit.ly/1A1DZjE

Zola and so

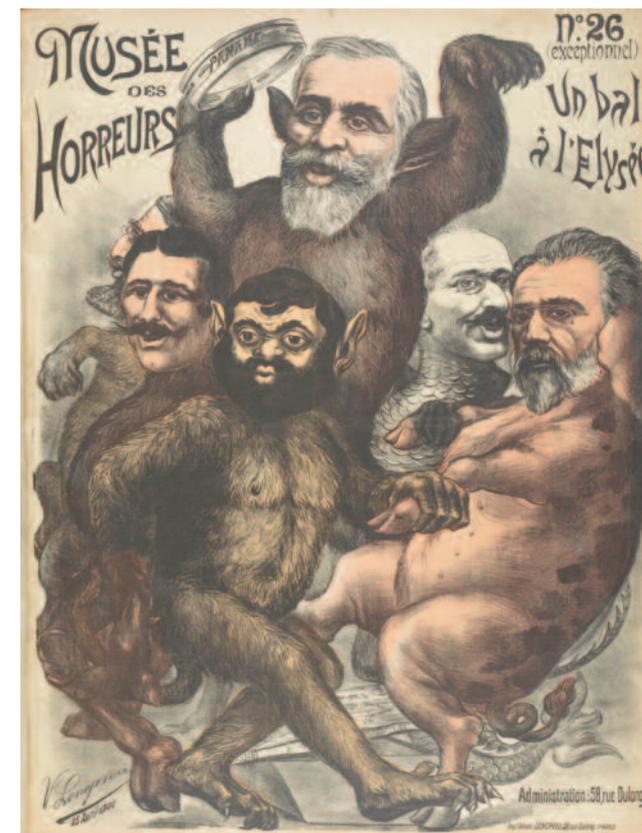
Émile Zola was one of the foremost novelists of late 19th century France. He was also sympathetic to socialism and a hero in the “Dreyfus Affair” of the 1890s. This interview with him by Max Beer appeared in the *Social Democrat* (magazine of the Social Democratic Federation, then the main Marxist group in Britain) of October 1902. Beer was the British correspondent of the German socialist paper *Vorwärts* and author of a *History of British Socialism*. Jean Jaurès and Jules Guesde, referred to by Zola, led two factions in the French socialist movement; the “Guesdists”, though generally more revolutionary, were reluctant to take sides energetically in the “Dreyfus Affair”, seeing it as a non-socialist issue.

In March 1898, M. George Clemenceau gave me a letter of introduction to Emile Zola, who at once consented to receive me “at any time after nine o’clock in the evening.” It was but a few weeks after his condemnation to a year’s imprisonment, consequent upon his letter, “J’accuse” published in *L’Aurore* of 13th January 1898.

The nervous strain which Zola had endured in those stormy days of his trial was still visible on his whole countenance. He looked rather old and weary; his shoulders stooping and his beard was rapidly turning grey. His features were by no means as rigid as we see them on the usual photos. A sad smile played upon his face as often as he spoke of the persecutions he had to undergo from the judges and from the howling mob surrounding the court of justice.

Zola bade me take a seat on a sofa, while he moved a chair opposite to me, and scrutinising me very attentively, sat down. He bent forward, so that his head was close to mine, and asked me to begin with my questions.

“The subjects that always interested me most were Socialism and the Jewish question. It is, therefore, natural that I should look upon the author of *Germinal* and the defender of Dreyfus with deep admiration. But *cher maitre*, I cannot conceal the fact that your Rougon-Macquart series and *Trois Villes* do not contain a single Jewish character worthy of our sympathy.”



A right wing magazine caricatures Zola (right), Dreyfus (second from right) and others in the “Affair”

ocialism

Zola: "Yes that's true. All my Jewish characters have, so far been quite despicable. They are, however, such as I saw them."

"Exactly. I do not impugn your power of observation. It is, as all the world knows, very comprehensive; and your studies are painstaking, sincere and scientifically correct. You will, however, permit me to say that your observation of Jewish life did not go far enough. You had no opportunity of seeing the whole of it."

Zola: "During these last few months of anguish I thought a good deal of the Jewish question. And I had good reason for it, too. As you know, I was for a long time under the influence of the historical theories of Hyppolite Taine, who laid so much stress on the racial factor in human development. My novels might surely give the impression that I regarded the Jew chiefly as a money-mongering and luxury-loving human being. My recent struggle, however, taught me that there are many Jews who belong to quite another category. There are in human history some factors more potent than race or religion."

"Economic ones!"

Zola: "Precisely. You see, the rich Jews and Jewesses hate me as much as the Nationalists and the Catholic bigots do. A few days ago a Jewish lady positively insulted M. Anatole France, our greatest critic and essayist, for having signed the petition for revision of the Dreyfus trial. But I am glad to say that the Jewish intellectuals are on our side."

PROLETARIAT

"And the Jewish proletariat too. One object of my coming to you is to express to you the respectful thanks of many thousands of Jewish workmen in New York for your defence of social justice."

Zola: "I am deeply touched by this sign of recognition on the part of Jewish labour. I have seen their poverty, their wretchedness, and their toil when I was in London in 1893. I went round Whitechapel to convince myself of the evils of the sweating system."

"The anti-semites see only the few Jewish millionaires, and shut their eyes to the misery of the toiling Jewish masses in Russia, in Austria, in England and in America. There is no Jewish question at all, but there is a struggle between the owners of the means of production and the owners of labour-power. This struggle knows neither race nor religion. It is a struggle going on, consciously or unconsciously, in the whole civilised world. Abolish this antagonism and Dreyfus trials will be no more."

Zola: "You are of course, pointing to socialism."

"Yes, *cher maitre*. The final chapter of *Germinal* expresses the advent of socialism in words so powerful that it would be exceedingly presumptuous on my part to deal in your presence with this subject. Although you do not belong to any socialist organisation, all socialists look upon you as one of their great leaders."

Zola: "I am not a leader in socialist thought, yet I sincerely wish to have all socialists as my friends. You see, only Jaurès and his friends are supporting me. Some Guesdists are standing aloof; some of them are behaving badly. They do not see that I am not fighting for a certain individual, but for the liberty of our great and noble France and against a conspiracy of mighty foes, militarism and the Catholic Church. I need all sympathy, all assistance I can get."

"It is, therefore, painful to see socialists taking no interest in the stormy events which are convulsing the French nation. They think I entered into a deadly struggle for a rich Jewish captain. He is for me only a symbol, a victim of terrible forgeries, a witness of the degradation of our Republic, which inscribed on its portals the democratic trinity: Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality... But, after all, truth is almighty. It



In January 1898 Zola braved imprisonment and harassment when he openly denounced the Dreyfus frame-up in an open letter, "J'accuse" ("I accuse")

will prevail."

Zola was speaking passionately and with great fluency. He was easily accessible, eager to impart knowledge and imbued with a modesty as sincere and deep as his love of truth. He actually thanked me for the trouble I had taken in calling upon him. At the conclusion of the interview he inquired again about the position of the millions of Jewish workingmen, about their aspirations and ideas. He also asked a good deal about England, and regretted that he was no linguist. "Je suis du Midi," he remarked smilingly; "mon cerveau n'est pas organisé pour des langues." ("I am from the South: my brain is not organised for languages.")

After a hearty handshake, I left the little house in the Rue de Bruxelles, having spent one of the happiest hours of my life. It is perhaps, an echo of that interview, when Zola in his last novel, *Truth*, now in course of publication, says:

"And at the sight of that paradise acquired by Jew wealth, at the thought of the splendid fortune amassed by Nathan the

Jew money monger, Marc instinctively recalled the Rue du Trou and the dismal hovel without air or sunshine, where Lehmann, that other Jew, had been plying his needle for thirty years and earning only enough to provide himself with bread, And ah! how many other Jews there were, yet more wretched than he — Jews who starve in filthy dens.

"They were the immense majority and their existence demonstrated the idiotic falsity of anti-semitism, that proscription *en masse* of a race which was charged with the monopolisation of all wealth, when it numbered so many poor working folk, so many victims, crushed down by the almightiness of money, whether it were Jew, or Catholic, or Protestant. There were really no Jew questions at all; there was only a Capitalist question — a question of money heaped up in the hands of a certain number of gluttons and thereby poisoning and rotting the world."

This passage is probably the most socialistic in all Zola's writings.

Who was Alfred Dreyfus?

Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish member of the French general staff, was convicted in 1894 of spying for Germany and sent to a penal colony on Devil's Island. Dreyfus was entirely innocent, and eventually this became clear. But even when it came to be widely known that the imprisoned Jewish captain was innocent, there was tremendous resistance by the French military establishment to exculpating him or releasing him from captivity.

Their attitude was in parallel to that of the British judge, Lord Denning, who said that it was better for the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six, the Irish men wrongly jailed in the '70s, to rot in jail, than for the British judicial system to be discredited by having to admit their innocence.

But there was more to it: anti-semitism. The facts of the case in question, Dreyfus's innocence or guilt and his fate rotting on Devil's Island, became less and less important as all of France polarised for and against "Dreyfus." The case became on one side a rallying point for all the anti-semitic, chauvinist and Catholic traditionalists in France.

On the other side the Republicans, the Radicals, the Democrats, and the working-class left — part of it reluctantly, suspicious of such a non-socialist issue — took up the cause of Dreyfus like people who knew that they were fighting for the soul of France. and that the outcome of this struggle would determine the state of French politics for a long time to come. For a time it looked as if even civil war was not ruled out.

Finally the left won, routing the right. After four years Dreyfus was released and reinstated. The forces who won this victory dominated French politics for the next 40 years,

overshadowing the right. After 1940, the political descendants of the "anti-Dreyfusards" helped the Nazis to round up Jews for systematic murder.

Émile Zola was the outstanding hero of the Dreyfus case. When all legal recourse seemed exhausted with the acquittal of the real traitor Esterhazy by a court martial which believed he was guilty, Zola deliberately courted imprisonment by publishing on the front page of *L'Aurore* an open letter to the President of the Republic under the famous title, "J'Accuse." There he spelled out the truth about Dreyfus.

It was the turning of the tide. Sentenced to a term in jail for libel against the head of the army, General Billot, the sixty-year old Zola fled to London. He died, asphyxiated by leaking gas, in 1902.



Alfred Dreyfus

Eva Gore-Booth/s “Government”

War Poems
By Janine Booth



Eva Gore-Booth (1870–1926) was an Irish poet and dramatist, and a suffragist and labour movement activist.

She was the younger sister of Constance Markiewicz, the nationalist, socialist and feminist who took part in the 1916 Easter Rising and in its aftermath became the first woman elected to the British Parliament, but who, as an Irish republican, refused to take her seat.

Eva became politically active before her older sister did, and like Constance, reacted against her privileged background and committed herself to siding with oppressed people and fighting for social change. She spent most of her adult life living in North West England with her partner Esther Roper, where they organised among the region's workers in support of votes for women, published a radical journal about gender and sexuality, *Urania*, and campaigned for prison reform. Eva was an accomplished poet, whose work was admired by W B Yeats — who himself later wrote a poem, “In Memory Of Eva Gore-Booth And Con Markiewicz”.

This poem, “Government”, was published in *The Workers' Dreadnought* (the newspaper of the Workers' Suffrage Federation) in its Christmas 1917 issue. It begins by arguing that the killings of the First World War were nothing new for the world's ruling classes, but a continuation of what they have done throughout the ages. Roger Casement, referred to in the ninth line, was an Irish nationalist, who had previously been a British diplomat and campaigner against human rights abuses and slavery; after the 1916 Easter Rising, Casement was stripped of his knighthood, tried, and hanged for treason.

The poem continues by describing the battlefield slaughter in the rulers' interests, before concluding with a hopeful desire for peace. The poem is punctuated by short lines which interrupt its flow, concluding each point before moving on to the next, and making us pause for thought.

The rulers of the Earth, savage and blind,
Have dug Gethsemane for all mankind,
For their humour and their glory and their pride
In every age the heroes of all nations died.
Thus Joan of Arc and Socrates were slain
By the World's Bane
Jesus Christ, a thousand years ago,
They served so;
And Roger Casement, just the other day,
Went the same way.
Now is their hour of power and life's despair,
From blasted earth and desecrated air.
The universal death that is their dream
Flowst o'er the earth in a great lava stream,
'Whelming men's thoughts in floods of liquid fire
To light the old world's funeral pyre.
Shall then our hearts in hell-fire burn
To serve their turn?
God's splendid rebels, and men's stupid slaves
Earn the same graves.
Oh! Rather let us scorn life's baser gains,
The joyless spoils of death-strewn battle plains,
Where for our riches, glory and their lust
Some million human brains are bloodstained dust.
Far better labour for that purpose known
With the Gods alone,
That hides behind the darkness and the storm
In every human form,
If but to die on God's dear battle plain,
Where daisies mount to life through sun and rain,
Whilst the wild winds their rapturous tumults rouse,
And the trees fight for beauty in green boughs.
Peace be to those who rule and hate and kill -
The world's true will
Has brought, in this black hour of pain and strife,
Violet to life.

Tom Cashman

In the last issue of *Solidarity*, Bruce Robinson remembered the life of Tom Cashman, socialist trade unionist and long-time associate of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty, who died last month. In this and future issues we will print further tributes.

By Jim Denham

Tom Cashman was, quite simply, one of the finest and most principled people I've ever met.

I first encountered him around about 1974 or 75 in the bar of Birmingham University Guild of Students. Tom was there attending a Troops Out conference; I was a naive young member of IS [today SWP] who had begun to have doubts about the Cliff regime and had joined an opposition group, the Left Faction.

Tom started talking to me, and — typically — delivered a no-holds-barred, compressed educational on what was wrong with IS, the difference between personal friendship and political principle, and why I should join Workers' Fight [forerunner of AWL]. I was to witness him giving similar informal educationals to comrades from all tendencies on the left, over the years, sometimes even buying a pamphlet from a nearby bookstall and giving it to the individual on condition that he or she promised to read it.

I should emphasise at this point that although Tom was not one of nature's diplomats (to put it mildly), I never witnessed him bullying anyone or becoming in any way aggressive. He simply made his points with appropriate force and let you think about them. He clearly enjoyed vigorous debate, and for a while became something of an internet “warrior”, often displaying considerable dead-pan wit as he made his points.

But it was Tom's absolute commitment to the labour movement and, in particular, the TGWU (later Unite) that really impressed me. His commitment was total, and based upon an insistence upon political and industrial logic in both the trade union movement and its political wing, the Labour Party. He rejected all short-cuts and political get-rich-quick schemes, insisting that the often dull, daily grind of workplace activism and political involvement was irreplaceable for serious militants.

His refusal to conform to the “left wing common sense” of much of the Stalinist-influenced milieu of the T&G/Unite meant that despite his well-known and respected abilities as an organiser, a career within the bureaucracy was out of the question — but Tom wouldn't have wanted that anyway.

I should add, on a more personal note, that behind his gruff persona (a persona that I suspect he rather enjoyed living up to, and was frequently described as “curmudgeonly”), lay

the proverbial heart of gold. He was not just an inspirational comrade as far as I was concerned, but a reliable and loyal friend. Now that he's gone I simply don't know who I'll turn to for advice, guidance and wisdom when it comes to industrial and trade union issues. And his quiet, personal courage in the last year or so, when he knew the end was near, marked him out as a very special human being.

When I think of Tom, James P. Cannon's words about a “Socialist Pioneer” (who turns out to have been Cannon's father) come to mind:

“The old man was the friend and partisan of all good causes, always ready to circulate a petition, help out a collection or get up a protest meeting to demand that wrongs be righted. The good causes, then as now, were mostly unpopular ones, and he nearly always found himself in the minority, on the side of the under-dogs who couldn't do him any good in the tough game of making money and getting ahead.

“He had to pay for that, and his family had to pay, but it couldn't be helped. The old man was made that way, and I don't think it ever once entered his head to do otherwise or live otherwise than as he did.”

Farewell, old comrade and friend!

CORRECTIONS

Johnnie Byrne, Tom Cashman's partner, has drawn my attention to errors in my obituary of Tom in the *Solidarity* 333.

Firstly, Tom did not reject the offer of a job in the T&G or Unite. No such offer was ever made. Tom did apply later for a job with the T&G but was rejected on the spurious grounds of “lack of experience”. Johnnie commented: “For most of his life, he refused to entertain the possibility of a job in the union... and in truth, his principles were such that he was unlikely to have been offered one.”

Secondly, Tom was not involved in “a plan that kept union organisation on London buses going after privatisation.” Rather “[Tom and Graham Stevenson] had a major part in organising the rest of the country, outside London, back into some kind of national collective bargaining after the break-up of the National Bus Company. This achievement was no less great because they to some extent failed in London.”

Their strategy was to organise the privatised bus companies in the Passenger Transport Trade group in the T&G, cutting across regional boundaries, largely by setting up National Liaison Committees, and to preserve and extend lay member democracy in the union.

Bruce Robinson

Do your best to change the world

How I became a socialist
By Camila Bassi



Have you ever walked down a street, seen a stranger looking depressed, and felt a painful tug of the heart?

Have you ever read or watched the news and recognised a truth to the world, that it is founded on inequality and injustice and breeds unnecessary human suffering, and not been able to turn away then and thereafter? For as long as I can remember, I've had this. I've had empathy, connection, insight, and yearning for change. Indeed, what else is there to making a socialist? Perhaps, our own biographies.

I grew up in a British Asian household with regular visits to and from the wider community. I learnt fairly early on about the paradox of my own culture: that the warmth and belonging I felt was predicated on family honour, and that such honour carries a pernicious and malignant flipside, shame. I knew my difference years before I could label the fact I was gay.

Meanwhile, I witnessed the hurt of relatives of my generation in complying with arranged marriage or in courageously pioneering their own break from it. We all share a

story, and we all paid a price, especially the women — the shame-bearers.

Throughout my teenage years, I knew and expressed a basic affinity to socialist and feminist ideas. By the time I was at university, I began the process of looking for a home to develop my political sense of self. The Alliance for Workers' Liberty appealed to me, since it stood over and above other revolutionary socialist groups in terms of its commitment to the liberation campaigns, to fighting racism, sexism, and homophobia. I sensed an organisation with intellectual rigour and moral integrity.

Looking back, it was an emotional rather than a cognitive journey that brought me to becoming a revolutionary socialist. So, so much of my intellectual growth came later. No-one needed to convince me of the appeal of an independent and internationalist, hybrid human culture, or of the fallacy of cultural relativism. Plain empirical evidence easily persuaded me that when workers collectively organise and withdraw their labour-power, no other force can shake capitalist social relations in such a powerful way.

I remember asking myself a question before joining the AWL, with a gist of impermanence: what do I want to know of myself in the moment before I die? The answer: I did my best to change the world. Yes, nineteen years on, it is still that simple, isn't it?

Putin set to face down west

By Dale Street

The fighting in the south-east of Ukraine stems fundamentally from longstanding Russian imperialist policy.

Russian president Putin does not want to see Ukraine leave Russia's "sphere of influence" by signing an Association Agreement with the European Union. He also fears Ukraine joining NATO (unlikely, but now, after the Russian aggression, less unlikely).

As long ago as 2008 Putin told the then American President George Bush: "You don't understand that Ukraine is not even a state. What is Ukraine? Part of its territory is Eastern Europe. But the greater part is a gift from us."

In late 2013, when it seemed that the now ex-President Yanukovich would sign an EU Association Agreement, one of Putin's aides warned that Russia's response would not be "neutral" if the Agreement was signed, that separatist movements would emerge in the south-east, and that Russia "could no longer guarantee Ukraine's status as a state."

If pro-Russian regions of Ukraine appealed to Moscow, the aide continued, then Russia might intervene directly into Ukraine.

Putin has delivered on his aide's warnings.

He has annexed the Crimea. He has described south-east Ukraine as "Novorossiya" ("New Russia", the old Tsarist term for a large swathe of Ukrainian territory). He has backed, if not instigated, separatist movements; and sent weaponry and munitions to separatists.

He has allowed Russia to be used as a recruitment and transit ground for separatist fighters; transformed the Russia media into a pro-separatist propaganda machine; and has sent in Russian troops in ever increasing numbers.



Putin with former Ukrainian president Yanukovich

Putin's war has already cost Ukraine over 2,500 dead. Over 5,000 wounded. Over 400,000 refugees, and maybe up to a million. A 28% decline in industrial output in Donetsk region. A 56% decline in Lugansk region. 35 mines temporarily closed. 227 educational institutions damaged or destroyed. Around 20% of this year's harvest destroyed.

Western leaders have threatened more economic sanctions. But Putin thinks he can face them down. They will not approve military intervention. Under EU "rules", a unanimous vote is needed before sanctions can be stepped up. Four EU governments have already said they will vote against.

Two shameful parades

On 24 August, Ukrainian Independence Day, the Donetsk People's Republic authorities staged what they called the "Parade of Shame", marching around 90 captured Ukrainian soldiers through the centre of Donetsk.

The event was consciously modelled on a parade of 57,000 German prisoners-of-war, organised by Stalin's henchman Beria in Moscow in July 1944. Beneath the headline "March of the Captured Fascists", an article on a pro-separatist website explained the event as:

"A revival of the tradition of the Red and Soviet Armies of the time of the Great Patriotic War. Captured fascists marched through Leningrad and Moscow, so let them do the same here. In Novorossiya the militia are fighting extreme dregs lacking moral principles or constraints."

Elsewhere in Ukraine, Independence Day celebrations were used to whip up enthusiasm for the war from the other side.

Speaking at a military parade in Kiev, President Poroshenko summoned up visions of permanent war-readiness:

"According to foreseeable historical perspectives, Ukraine will constantly be threatened by war. And we not only have to learn how to live with this, we also have to constantly be ready to defend the independence of our state."

Poroshenko also announced that the military budget would be increased by \$3 billion in 2015-17. Meanwhile Ukraine's workers' living standards, jobs and working conditions will suffer in line with the strings attached to IMF loans.

Against such a grim background, socialists internationally need to step up their support for the beleaguered Ukrainian left in its fight for working-class unity and against all forms of militarism and national chauvinism.

A challenge to debate

This letter has been sent to the Workers' Power group.

As you will be aware, Workers Power and the Alliance for Workers' Liberty have taken radically different positions in relation to the current conflict in the south-east of Ukraine.

If we understand the position taken by Workers Power correctly, this can be summarised as:

The current situation in Ukraine has been "largely provoked by the aggression of the NATO and EU axis."

The Kiev government "was handpicked by US and EU representatives and brought to power by the armed force of the fascist Svoboda and Right Sector militia."

That government is "the political tool of the IMF and western imperialism, the Right Sector and Svoboda their mailed fist."

The forces combating the government and pro-govern-

ment forces constitute "the anti-fascist resistance" in Ukraine.

Workers Power now finds itself allied with Stalinists in Britain ("Solidarity with the Anti-Fascist Resistance in Ukraine"), as well as defending the collaboration of socialists with fascist-cum-Russian-ultra-nationalist forces (the recent international conference in Yalta, attended by one of your comrades).

We think that there would be a political-educational value in holding a public debate to argue out our differences concerning the current situation in Ukraine in more detail. These issues, about political perspectives in Europe, are of importance for the wider left.

Dale Street and Cathy Nugent, on behalf of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty

Abridged from bit.ly/wop-ukr

Changing faces

In mid-July Denis Pushilin resigned as chair of the Supreme Soviet of the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR). In early August Alexander Borodai resigned as Prime Minister of the DPR.

In mid-August Valery Bolotov resigned as head – he was always simply referred to as "the head" – of the Lugansk People's Republic (LPR) and Igor Strelkov-Girkin resigned as Minister of Defence of the DPR.

According to Boris Kagarlitsky (a longstanding Russian socialist who has turned cheerleader for the separatists), the resignations were the result of pressure by the Kremlin, in preparation for a deal with the Kiev government at the expense of what Kagarlitsky calls "Novorossiya".

There is another, and much more straightforward, explanation for the resignations.

The fact that the key separatist leaders (Strelkov-Girkin and Borodai) were fascist in their politics, Russian in their citizenship, and directly linked to the Russian security services, made a mockery the claims that they represented a popular uprising.

Replacing them by lesser-known locals removed that problem. Paradoxically, it also underlined the degree of Russian involvement: the decisions about the resignations came from Moscow.

The Russian-separatist-fascist alliance

Less than two months ago Richard Brenner (Workers Power) and Alan Freeman (Socialist Action) and other Western leftists were feted in the Hotel Yalta-Intourist by Russian fascists and ultra-nationalists at a conference to boost Russian imperialist designs in Ukraine.

The same initiative met again on 30-31 August, but dispensed with the left-wing decoration.

Members of the following European fascist or far-right organisations were invited to the conference:

British BNP, French National Front, Hungarian Jobbik, Belgian Vlaams Belang and National-European Communitarian Party, Bulgarian Ataka and Bulgarian National Movement, Italian Lega Nord and Forza Nuova, Polish Samoobrona and Falanga. Ex-BNP leader Nick Griffin was also invited. (bit.ly/y-fasc)

It is unclear how many responded to this particular invitation. But Russian fascists, the pro-Russian separatist leaders and European fascism are bound together by a common ideology. Hostility to the USA, hostility to the EU, hostility to "decadent" liberal values, hostility to globalisation, and support for a "New World order" based on nationalism.

The first conference produced a "Declaration" (full of anti-fascist and anti-war verbiage, designed for an international left-liberal audience) and a "Manifesto" (to wipe Ukraine off the face of the earth, or at least to reduce it to the segment of Ukraine ruled before World War 1 by Austria).

Almost all of the leading figures in the "People's Republics" (prior to a recent change of leadership, probably ordained by Moscow) are members of, or linked to, Russian fascist organisations.

"Prime Minister" Borodai, military commander Strelkov-Girkin, and "People's Governor" Gubarev are all members of the Izborsky Club, a fascist "think tank" headed by Russia's leading fascists: Alexander Dugin and Alexander Prokhanov.

Gubarev is also a former member of the fascist Russian National Unity (RNU) organisation. RNU members are currently fighting for the separatists in Ukraine (bit.ly/rnu-uk), alongside French fascists (bit.ly/fr-ukr).

Andrei Purgin (DPR deputy prime minister), Oleg Frolov (member of the DPR "parliament"), Konstantin Knyrik (head of the "South-eastern Front Information Centre"), Oksana Shkoda (DPR "General Headquarters Representative") and the late Alexander Proselkov (former DPR deputy foreign minister) all have fascist connections.

In 2006 they attended a "summer camp" of political training run by the fascist Eurasian Union of Youth (founded by Dugin) and emerged as leading figures in the "Donetsk Republic" organisation set up the same year. (bit.ly/dugin06)

Israel's left calls for support

Elisabeth Tzurkov, a project director at an Israeli hotline for migrants and refugees, spoke to Pete Radcliff.

It's hard to tell where the deal [signed by Israel on 26 August, for a ceasefire] may be leading us. I'm sure that Israel will never allow a seaport or an airport to be built in Gaza while it's under Hamas control. This is something that is unacceptable to 99.9 percent of Israeli Jews and it will just not happen.

Rather, Israel hopes to make issues go away with time.

In 2005 Israel committed itself to helping aid to enter Gaza to allow the rebuilding of the seaport. It never happened. Israel's hoping to do the same this time too.

The anti-war movement basically supports the demands made by Hamas to lift the siege. So it can appear as if we're siding with Hamas.

And it's absolutely not the case. We're for the Palestinian people, and we want them to live and have access to the outside world so that they can trade with Israel and the West Bank etc.

In Israel there's a difference between being anti-war and being pro-peace. Anti-war is something that comes almost entirely from non-Zionist Israelis.

The pro-peace camp is much larger. But the pro-peace camp usually stays silent during wars. They don't want to criticise the government in time of war.

The anti-war movement is quite small. Our voices are not presented in the mainstream media except to ridicule us.

So unless Israeli society changes — and we're working on that — we really need help from people around the world. The demographic trends inside Israel are not making me optimistic. Polls consistently show that young Israelis are much more racist and much more nationalistic than older people. We definitely need pressure from outside to force the government to end the occupation.

UNAWARE

I think that Israel is getting away with what it's doing to the Palestinians mostly because the vast majority of people in the world are simply unaware and aren't interested in the issue.

International pressure on Israel doesn't even need to be serious sanctions. Even initial steps, arms embargoes, recalling ambassadors, can pressure the Israeli government into ending the occupation.

I personally think that that it is very moral to boycott goods that are produced in settlements.

Whether a wider boycott is the smart thing to do, I'm not so sure. It can definitely trigger a reaction in Israel that "the whole world is against us, everyone is anti-Semitic". We only have ourselves to count on. I think every person needs to do what feels right to them.

I personally don't buy goods produced in settlements. When you live in Israel it's impossible to practice BDS. If I applied BDS to my life I wouldn't be able to live here.

Certain companies, for example companies that are involved with Israeli military, with all sorts of human rights violation, should be the first targets of boycott. That would signal to the Israeli public that the whole world is not against us. The world is against the occupation.

Many other BDS targets are simply companies which appear to be targeted just because they are Israeli. In some ways all Israeli firms — unless they make a very significant effort to not do so — are connected to the occupation. For example banks that serve all Israelis offer mortgages to settlers who build their homes in settlements. So a boycott can

promote the reaction: "the boycott of just Israel, not other human rights violators, is anti-Semitic".

I think that anti-Semitism definitely exists inside the Palestinian solidarity movement. We see it in chants made by supposedly pro-Palestine protesters that are in fact simply anti-Semitic. We see it in the way Israel is singled out compared to other human rights violators.

Anyone who honestly cares about Palestinians and wants their lives to improve and wants the draconian military rule over them to end, I welcome into my camp. I don't welcome people into my camp who are motivated not by love of Palestinians but by hatred of Israel or hatred of Jews.

In Israel the largest labor organisation is basically part of the state — the Histadrut. They have absolutely no role in the anti-occupation movement. They don't even have a role in the struggle for labour rights in Israel, to be honest.

The strikes that they organise mostly benefit mostly the people in the government sector who already receive hefty salaries. They don't concern the people at the bottom who work through private contractors, or people who are at the bottom and are just not earning much.

NEW

There are new initiatives. The largest one of them is Koach La Ovdim (Power to the workers). They have collectively bargained and unionised thousands of people.

All the people who lead the organisation are very clearly leftist and against the occupation. However the organisation itself does not attend anti-war protests or call for an end to the occupation.

WAC-Ma'an is a Jewish-Arab labour organisation. It's very strongly anti-occupation. It participates in every anti-war protest. The problem that it is quite small.

Many of the people in the anti-war movement don't support the two-state solution. They support a bi-national democratic state.

I personally don't think that solution is realistic in the short term. In the long run I definitely want a world without borders and nations; but I don't think right now you can put together two nations that hate each other (Palestinians for a very good reason, Israelis because to justify the occupation to ourselves Palestinians are presented in a racist caricatured way). Polls show consistently that most Israelis support a two-

state solution and most Palestinians support a two-state solution.

The problem is that the government has convinced Israelis that the other side is not interested in peace.

The government presents all sorts of claims that the Palestinians have rejected very generous offers, although the offers were not generous. And the Palestinians who support peace honestly have every reason to feel that Israelis don't want peace.

So the problem is that people on both sides who support this two-state solution feel that it's not achievable in the short run.

The anti-war movement does a lot of work with Palestinian organisations. The problem is that due to the restrictions on movement, Israelis and Palestinians are really, really separated.

You see the cooperation mostly in protests in the West Bank to which Israelis travel.

The hotline for refugees and migrants was established in 1998. At the time it dealt mostly with migrant workers who came here on tourist visas and overstayed them or people who were invited into Israel to replace Palestinian workers.

Being a migrant worker here even for five, ten years does not guarantee you citizenship at any point. You are expected to leave once you're not needed any more.

Then a wave of African asylum-seekers began arriving in Israel in about 2005/ 2006 and they became our largest focus.

Asylum seekers in Israel, unlike in any other Western countries, are detained indefinitely in a desert camp called Holot. They are pressured in those detention facilities to leave Israel — to agree to leave, because deporting them would be against Israeli law.

We have the lowest recognition rate of refugees of anywhere in the western world.

The populations that we're dealing with here are mainly Eritreans and Sudanese who are fleeing persecution.

Another group that we help are human trafficking victims. Israel used to be a hub for human trafficking for sex work. Now that phenomenon has been abolished. But we're still dealing with people who've been trafficked into Israel for other work.

[Abridged].



Palestinian workers fighting for WAC-MAAN union recognition at Zafarty Garage, East Jerusalem, 25 August

Teachers should strike on 14 October

By Patrick Murphy
(NUT Exec member, in personal capacity)

It is essential that the National Union of Teachers call our next action to coincide with the cross-union pay strike on 14 October.

We cannot afford miss the opportunity to co-ordinate with the country's biggest unions, or the potential to make a greater impact by acting alongside school support staff.

You would think that the common sense of this approach would need little or no argument. The NUT continues to pursue our three-

year campaign for pensions, pay, and education. Our 2014 conference reasserted the importance of co-ordinating with other unions, in particular school staff unions.

Unfortunately it may not be so straightforward. The NUT conference also agreed to run a full-scale consultation of members on the next stages in our campaign. We now know that this consultation (known as "the big conversation") will start in early September via a mailing in the *Teacher* magazine and continue until 23 October. Then a special meeting of the Executive will consider the responses before debating the next steps.

The consultation will still be in process on 14 October. That should not prevent the NUT from taking action with them. We already have a mandate in our national ballots and conference decision. It will seem, and be, bizarre if we remain at work and cross picket lines on the day when support workers whom we struck with in July are on strike.

Nevertheless I expect there will be many on the NUT Executive who will see the ongoing consultation as a reason to abstain from joint action in October.

A 28 October circular to Executive members from the General Secretary stated: "colleagues on the Executive

will have views about whether we could call action on October 14th, saying that the consultation is about action beyond that date, or whether we should wait for the results of the consultation before calling further action. This can be discussed on 5th September at the special executive".

I will be arguing for the NUT to take action on 14 October side-by-side with the other unions. Our action is measured by its success in closing or partially closing schools and there is no doubt that teachers and support staff (including caretakers) together will be more effective than either group would be alone.

Also, teachers are better organised and more heavily unionised than support staff, and our abstention on 14 October would significantly reduce their confidence and the impact of their action.

Joint action can continue to pose questions for members of the other teacher unions: why, if they continue to oppose the pay and pension reforms and have a mandate to take action, do they refuse to be part of a growing campaign of co-ordinated action by millions of workers on the same issues?

Abstention, on the other hand, simply makes us look divided and disorganised.

Care UK's 57th strike day

Unison members in Doncaster are now on their 57th day of strike action as part of action against Care UK who cut wages by up to 35%.

They will be on strike until 14 September, and have pickets every day at 7am outside Care UK's Doncaster office, as well as trips to picket offices in other cities and to speak at meetings.

The strikers are also currently having weekly members' meetings to discuss the dispute.

Find out more on their facebook page bit.ly/care-uk-strike

Tube jobs fight must be re-mobilised

Tube union RMT has called off planned industrial action in its fight against job losses and ticket office closures on London Underground, after LU management threatened legal action.

Smaller Tube union TSSA had planned to call equivalent action to the RMT, but buckled at the last minute, leaving some RMT reps worried that TSSA members would make up the overtime not done by RMT members. But other activists argue that, while TSSA's suspension of its action was capitulatory and a real problem, RMT cannot be shackled to the more conservative culture of its sister union.

RMT was due to begin an overtime ban on 3 September, and its Station Supervisor members had been instructed not to attend "development days".

After LU Chief Operating Officer Phil Hufton threatened to seek a legal injunction against the action, RMT's national leadership called it off are promised.

Talks with the company through September.

The fact that LU was prepared to use the courts to stop even an overtime ban shows that bosses are nervous, and that further action would put them back under pressure and could force concessions.

Activists who spoke to *Solidarity* said that, even if

the union was not prepared for a legal confrontation with LU, further action should have been named to replace the injunction-threatened OT ban.

Workers' Liberty members in RMT on London Underground will be arguing for the union to urgently call further industrial action to arrest the de-escalation of the dispute.

For regular updates, see the blog of *Tube-worker*, a workplace bulletin for LU workers published by Workers' Liberty.

• workersliberty.org/twblog

Ritzy workers reject offer

In a ballot closing on 26 August, Ritzy cinema workers have voted to reject an offer by management, by 24 votes to 23. On their Facebook page workers said:

"We would like to make clear that this should not be interpreted as a sign that we are in any sense divided. Nor does it indicate that a large minority of our members viewed this as a good deal that is worth accepting.

"Over the last four weeks we have discussed the offer and all the implications of accepting or rejecting it in full at two full BECTU members' meetings and during lengthy discussion via email and face to face amongst ourselves ... our members viewed the offer with considerable disappointment and felt that it fell too far short of the London Living Wage ...

"The other clear message that came from the discus-

sions was that we remained united and determined to stick together as a collective and respect the democratic will of the majority, whatever that might be.

"We stand absolutely by that collective spirit that has already achieved so much during this campaign. Unity is Strength!"

• Updates will follow on the Facebook page shortly — on.fb.me/1B9zjuf

The Living Wage and Beyond

A dayschool for workers and activists at Birkbeck College, London, 4 October 2014, 10am-4.30pm.

In the last few years, campaigns of low-paid workers have emerged across the public and private sectors. The Living Wage has been won across many local councils, universities, and other workplaces. This free worker-led dayschool, just two weeks before the TUC's "Britain Needs a Pay Rise" march, will bring together these diverse campaigns and allow us to learn from

each other's experiences and talk about how campaigning on the Living Wage relates to wider industrial organising.

Whether you're an experienced Living Wage campaigner or just getting a campaign started, it's sure to be an inspiring day.

Workshops will include: How to start a Living Wage campaign, with workers from SOAS and Birkbeck After the Living Wage: Winning more demands, with the 3 Cosas Campaign How can we push the Labour

Party to support a decent wage for all?

With John McDonnell MP and Islington GMB.

Mobilising the community behind an industrial campaign, with Ritzy Living Wage.

• Register for the dayschool at bit.ly/1C60ojw. Email: livingwageandbeyond@gmail.com. Web: www.livingwageandbeyond.com Mobile: 07455 158249. Facebook: "Living Wage and Beyond". Twitter: @BeyondLW

19 NOVEMBER DEMO FOR FREE EDUCATION

Students from across the UK are marching through London on 19 November to fight for free education, the abolition of student debt, and a living grant for every student. Join us! Assemble 12 noon, Wednesday 19 November, Malet Street, London, WC1E. • fb.com/nationalstudentdemo



Tube cleaners' strike ballot

By Ollie Moore

Tube cleaners employed by ISS (mainly on the Jubilee, Northern, and Piccadilly Lines) will begin a ballot for strikes in their battle against biometric fingerprinting machines on 3 September.

RMT members at ISS have been locked out of work

since 4 July for refusing to use the machines, but have used the time to visit workplace and recruit more cleaners to the union.

Cleaners argue that the machines, which take unique biometric data, are an infringement on civil liberties, and will be used by ISS to spy on workers and potentially to report them to

immigration authorities. The RMT is also pursuing a legal challenge against ISS's use of the machines.

The cleaners have faced some obstacles within the union itself, but recently won an agreement that the union would pay them strike pay and travel expenses to fund their dispute.



Russia: hands off Ukraine!



By Dale Street

As from late August, what amounts to a straightforward Russian invasion of Ukraine is underway.

Alexander Zakharchenko, self-styled "Prime Minister of the Donetsk People's Republic", has said that there are 3,000 to 4,000 Russian troops fighting in Ukraine. But, he claims, they are soldiers on leave who prefer fighting to going to the beach!

All three offensives were launched from Russia and were backed up by artillery fire from the Russian side of the border. The most southerly of three new offensives launched by pro-Russian separatists with Russian aid is along the southern coast of Ukraine, well away from the previous combat zone, and is reported to have involved 30 tanks and 500 troops.

According to separatist political leaders such as Oleg Tsaryov and military commanders such as Aleksei Mozgovoy, the southern offensive will enable their forces to capture the town of Mariupol and then push on to link up with the Crimean peninsula, annexed by Russia in February.

In the weeks preceding the Russian attacks, the separatist forces had been on the defensive. They controlled just one

per cent of Ukrainian territory, cut into three separate areas by the advancing Ukrainian military.

As the Ukrainian socialist Left Opposition puts it: "Insofar as part of the border (with Russia) is not controlled (by Ukraine), reinforcements (for the separatists) will constantly arrive, making a purely military solution of the problem of separatism in the east impossible.

"Every attempt by Ukraine to resolve the problem by building up its military forces has ended in a corresponding build-up in military forces by Russia.

"We began to use tanks, but the opponent received armoured vehicles and anti-tank weapons. We began to use aviation, but the separatists used up-to-date anti-aircraft systems. We went over to the mass use of artillery. In response we got mass artillery salvos from Grad systems and heavy weaponry."

Socialists in Britain should support the Ukrainian and Russian left in their efforts to:

- end Russian intervention
- defend Ukraine's right to determine its own future free of interference by Putin
- prevent the Ukrainian and Russian working classes being split by the forces of nationalism and fascism.

PCS to join 14 October strike

By Gerry Bates

The civil service union PCS is almost certain to join the unions striking on 14 October over pay.

Local government workers who struck on 10 July are already set to strike again on 14 October. This time they may be joined by health workers also demanding pay rises.

Health workers' wages have dropped in real terms every year since 2009, and between 12 and 15 percent since 2010.

This year 60% of workers are offered no rise, and others get one percent.

Unite health workers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland have a strike ballot running from 26 August to 26 September; Unison health workers in England, from 28 August to 18 September.

GMB is balloting in England and Northern Ireland between 10 September and 1 October.

The Royal College of Midwives (RCM) is balloting in England from 8 to 29 September.

(Unison will ballot health-workers members in Wales from 30 September, but with the ballot closing on 20 October, too late for them to join 14 October action).

A pay revolt is overdue across the board. Between 2008 and 2013 the median (middling) worker lost £2000 a year.

For workers aged 18 to 25, the average drop was 14%; for those aged 25 to 29, it was 12%.

The squeeze on middling and lower wages continues, despite the recovery in profits, share prices, top salaries, bonuses, and even overall measures of economic output. The government's cuts in benefits and services have compounded the blow to working-class living standards.

Probably the union leaders' hope is that a few protests will nudge the government into trying to mend its popularity in the run-up to the May 2015 election by cutting some slack on pay. Unfortunately there is no evidence that one more day's strike will move the government.

A real revolt is necessary. It should not be limited to the public sector. United action is good, but pay battles do not require any group of workers to wait for all the ducks to be in line before they themselves act.

PCS members, whilst welcoming the union leaders deciding to join in with the other unions on 14 October, will ask not only "what next" but also "what if".

There is abundant evidence that grand cross-union coalitions can be unstable. Indeed at least one leading light in the PCS says that there will be no further action by Unison and Unite this side of the general election so as not to embarrass Mr Miliband. He deplores that, but his tacit conclusion is that PCS will take no further action either.

PCS and other unions must have their own plans in place for action beyond 14 October, even some opt out of further battle.

If not, then 14 October will be wonderful, with the power of the labour movement plain for all to see; but we will have to repeat the words of the French general in the Crimean war who on observing the charge of the Light Brigade said: "It is magnificent, but it is not war".

BRITAIN NEEDS A PAY RISE

March and Rally Saturday 18 October

Assemble 11am Blackfriars Embankment, march to Hyde Park

britainneedsapayrise.org