



For a  
workers'  
government

# Solidarity

For social ownership of the banks and industry

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# EDUCATION: FOR

# LIFE,

# NOT

# FOR

# PROFIT!



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## 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!

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# A "trade-union party"?

By Martin Thomas

The Annual General Meeting on 29 March of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy will discuss the idea of proposing to the unions that they set up their own semi-party, tied to Labour by an agreement but able to campaign autonomously.

A motion from Jon Lansman calls for "exploratory discussions... to seek to establish (after the general election)... a 'trade union party'... along the lines of the Co-op Party - that is to say a political party to further the political interests of the trade unions by seeking an agreement with the Labour Party (rather than by opposing it or replacing it)..."

It also suggests that CLPD "campaign for the rights of all affiliated supporters to have full rights of participation in OMOV ballots for the selection of parliamentary candidates... consider whether to promote the right of members of unions which are currently not affiliated to the party, but which have political funds, to become affiliated supporters..."

Talking to *Solidarity*, Jon Lansman stressed the need to advocate a positive initiative by the trade unions in



Pre-Second World War Co-operative Party poster

response to the Collins changes in the Labour Party, which threaten, over time, to stifle the trade-union voice within Labour. Repeated defensive measures and damage-limitation ploys cannot be enough.

If the trade unions decide to mobilise politically, we asked, why not propose they do that through the channels already provided by the Labour Party (the union vote at Labour conference, the right of union branches to send voting delegates to local Labour Parties) rather than setting up a new structure which would then lobby and pressurise the Labour Party?

The Labour Party, replied Jon Lansman, is at present discredited among trade unionists. A structure which belongs and is congenial to the trade unions might attract many who are

unwilling, as of now, to take on the uphill fight against careerists and entrenched interests in the Labour Party.

The new initiative, he said, would

have to be done collectively by the unions, or at least by a number of unions. That is preferable to each union having its own political strategy and its own, often ineffectual, effort to mobilise members politically.

The new initiative would not be a revolutionary party. It would reflect and campaign for trade-union policies on issues such as employment rights, union rights, the living wage, and so on.

Now is an odd time to cite the Co-op Party as a model, after the scandals and crises at the Co-operative Bank. But it is a loose analogy rather than a model.

The Co-op Party was set up in 1917, in the political tumult around the end of World War One. Until 1927 there were Co-op MPs, who took the Labour whip in Parliament. In 1927 the Co-op Party did a deal whereby the Co-op Party is a "sister party" of Labour, sponsors some "Labour and Co-op" candidates (32 MPs

at the last count), has individual-membership local organisations, and has its own party conference.

Currently it has about 9,000 members. People can and do join the Co-op Party without joining Labour, but the 1927 deal says that they must not also be members of parties standing candidates against Labour. In practice, Co-op organisations have sometimes functioned as caucuses for political factions intervening in Labour, including sometimes the Communist Party.

A "trade-union party" would have to be set up differently from the Co-op Party, with some structural role for trade-union organisations. But, says Jon Lansman, that can be sorted out if unions are keen on the basic idea.

Could this "trade-union party" end up helping Labour right-wingers to quash the union voice in the Labour Party itself, by allowing them to tell trade unionists that they have their voice through the "trade-union party" and do not need extra? Jon Lansman thinks not: the "trade-union party" would not have votes within the Labour Party, but could act as a force to uphold and enliven the votes the unions do have.

**If the idea gains support at the CLPD AGM, then further discussion will be needed throughout the labour movement.**

## G4S killers to stand trial

By Tom Harris

Three G4S security guards are to be charged with the manslaughter of Jimmy Mubenga, an asylum seeker who was killed during attempts to deport him from the UK.

Mubenga died in 2010 on a plane at Heathrow Airport. As the plane awaited take-off, Mubenga was physically restrained by the guards. He died of coronary-respiratory failure.

Mubenga had lived in Britain for 16 years. He had fled here from Angola, where, as a student movement leader, he fell foul of the governing regime.

In 2012, the Crown Prosecution Service decided against bringing charges against either the security company G4S, or against

the three guards. However, they have now decided to prosecute the guards based on the unlawful killing verdict of a coroner's inquest.

The coroner's report was highly critical of the practices and culture of the G4S guards working in deportation. It described a "pervasive" atmosphere of racism, "loutish" behaviour and peer pressure, as well as financial incentives for keeping detainees quiet.

The report argues that these factors combine to create a culture in which the brutal treatment and abuse of those being deported could flourish.

**The inquest also discovered that the three guards had "highly offensive" racist jokes on their phones at the time of their arrest.**

## 1,600 post jobs to go

By Gerry Bates

Royal Mail has announced plans to cut 1,600 jobs.

The cuts, mainly of back-room and Head Office jobs, come in the wake of the privatisation of the service late last year.

Unite and the CWU union, both of whom have many members working in the post, have said they are considering balloting for strike action. A spokesman from Unite claimed the job cuts had been calculated to make the service more attractive to the market.

Almost four months ago, the CWU agreed a deal with management that would give Royal Mail workers a 9% pay increase and a range of guarantees against zero-hour contracts and compulsory job losses.

In return, the union agreed to measures which would curtail the potential for local strikes. Even if voluntary redundancies were forthcoming, the scale of the job cuts in this new announcement raises serious questions about whether Royal Mail bosses will honour the agreement.

**Privatisation means running services for private profit, rather than for social need. Fighting against these cuts will take not just the threat of industrial action, but a willingness to carry it through.**

# Lithuania: anti-LGBT laws blocked

By Paul Penny

Amidst the admonitions and international condemnation following the recent introduction of draconian anti-gay laws in Nigeria and Uganda, news from Lithuania (13 March), where a bill proposing Russia-style "gay propaganda" laws was blocked by MPs, came as a relief to LGBT rights activists.

A majority of members of the Lithuanian Parliament voted to bring the proposal to a vote (39 in favour, 34 opposed, with 20 abstentions). However, the anti-gay legislation was defeated because of parliamentary rules that require a threshold of votes to be reached as well as a majority.

Petras Gražulis, the Lithuanian Christian Democrat MP who introduced the bill in an attempt to stop the 2014 Baltic Pride, accused conservative politicians who did not back the bill of "not only changing their political orientation, but their sexual orientation as well".

The bill proposed to outlaw LGBT Pride in Lithuania; ban speaking in public in support of LGBT rights; prohibit all gay rights campaign materials and audiovisual materials; and impose fines for any public



display defying "traditional family values".

Petras Gražulis is Lithuania's leading anti-LGBT politician, and he continues to spearhead homophobia and anti-gay sentiment in Lithuania, regularly equating homosexuality to pedophilia and bestiality.

In May 2012, he gate-crashed a conference organised by social democratic MP Marija Aušrinė Pavilionienė and the Lithuanian Gay League, held in the parliament building on the eve of the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, and declared that all gay people should leave the country.

"How are homosexuals

better than necrophiliacs or pedophiles?" he ranted, "I'm ashamed that the rotten West, coming from the

## Teenage Gezi victim dies

By Marksist Tutum

**15 year-old Berkin Elvan, who was hit by a police canister in the head during the Gezi protests in June 2013 and had been in coma since then, died on 11 March.**

He was hit in Istanbul's Okmeydani neighbourhood when he went out to buy bread.

He became one of the symbols of the Gezi protests. News of his death has created a burst of anger leading to numerous protests across the country. His funeral was a huge protest participated in by hundreds of thousands of people. They expressed their anger at the AKP government and its police force. But the police did not hesitate to attack the funeral as well. Many people were wounded and arrested.

Immediately after the news of Berkin's death a two-day protest boycott was declared in many high schools and universities. KESK (Confederation of Public Employees' Unions) and DISK (Confederation of Revolutionary Workers' Unions) called for a work stoppage to be carried out on the day of the funeral.

The government kept referring to "social violence" as if it was not police terror that killed Berkin.

Berkin's murderers are

European Union that is morally corrupted, propagates this to Lithuania and tells us how we should treat homosexuals. Gays should leave Lithuania, not dictate their terms to us."

Lithuanian lawmakers will consider further anti-LGBT bills this spring. A second bill, also sponsored by Gražulis and other anti-gay politicians, aims to force the organisers of Baltic Pride to pay all expenses to protect the event from homophobic attack. A third bill calls for a ban on adoption by same-sex couples. A fourth bill aims to make it lawful and permissible to vilify LGBT people.

**The Lithuanian Government has already said it will oppose the last bill.**



Steeve Briois

## Lesser evilism is no way to stop advance of the Front National

By Michael Johnson

**The first round of the French municipal election has seen a strong showing for the far-right Front National, with turnout falling to an historic low of 38.72%.**

The election is being seen as a blow to President Francois Hollande. His Socialist Party is set to receive 43% nationwide, against 48% for the centre-right UMP opposition.

Exit polls suggest that the FN has received 5-7%, an alarming level of support given that it was represented in fewer than 600 of the 36,000 municipalities in play.

The fascists had their strongest showing in the socialist stronghold of Henin-Beaumont in northern France, where FN candidate Steeve Briois unseated the left incumbent, winning in the first round with 50.26% of the vote.

The town's constituency gained widespread attention in 2012, when Front de Gauche's Jean-Luc Mélenchon stood against FN leader Marine Le Pen, in what was seen as a battle over working-class voters in an area hard-hit by deindustrialisation and unemployment.

Briois is the FN's first mayor in 17 years, and the party is also in contention for mayoral seats in four other towns, and boasts 472 councillors already.

In 15 cities, FN candidates head the list going into the second round on Sunday 30 March. The French Socialist Party's President in the National Assembly, Claude Bartolone, is calling for tactical voting to keep out the far-right.

Bartolone has not ruled out the idea that Socialist candidates may withdraw

in order to let the centre-right UMP win in areas where the latter is stronger, saying: "If this is the solution, it must be done."

This general approach was echoed by Communist Party politician André Chassaigne who said: "For the second round, the priority is to bar the way to the rise of the right and the National Front."

The rise of the far-right is alarming but this sort of lesser-evilism is not the answer. It parallels the call from some sections of the left to back Jacques Chirac against Jean-Marie Le Pen in the second round of the 2002 presidential election.

We argued at the time that the central task of Marxists in the labour movement was to develop the political independence of the working-class from all factions of the capitalist class, and to encourage it to rely on its own strength and efforts. In doing this, as Trotsky put it: "All methods are good which raise the class-consciousness of the workers, their trust in their own forces, their readiness for self-sacrifice in the struggle".

The logic of tactical voting is to stand aside or endorse a vote for the right-wing bourgeois politicians of the UMP, who are partly responsible for the social conditions in which the far-right is thriving. This serves to abnegate the left's own politics and independence, and cuts against the tasks of breaking workers away from fascism.

**This is a high price to pay for temporary electoral victories against the far-right, which do nothing to cut the roots of fascism and may have the effect of further boosting the UMP.**

## 529 death sentences

By Phil Grimm

**An Egyptian court has sentenced 529 supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood to death.**

The judge in the central city of Minya took only two court sessions to issue the death sentences, and lawyers for the defence had no opportunity to argue their case.

In the summer of 2013, hundreds of thousands of Brotherhood supporters took the streets in protest at the army's coup against the government of Mohamed Morsi.

The military brutally suppressed these demonstrations and declared the Islamist organisation illegal.

In Cairo, over 900 protesters were killed as the state dispersed a pro-Morsi sit in. It was during that confrontation that the 529 de-

fendants were arrested.

Their death sentences are punishment for the alleged murder of a single police officer. A further 683 Brotherhood supporters will be brought before the court this week.

The Muslim Brotherhood is a reactionary, right-wing religious organisation which deserves the hostility and opposition of all socialists, working-class activists and democrats. But, this mass death sentence is barbarous repressive measure, the act of an undemocratic military government.

It is part of a general repression against dissent and organised opposition in which human rights groups estimate 23,000 political activists have been arrested.

**This repression will be used against democratic and labour movement activists too.**

# Left solidarity needs to venture offline

## Letters



**Bruce Robinson is right. My claim that networked communications foreclose politics was too extreme. I revised it in the version of the essay that appeared in my book *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies*.**

There I express the idea as the displacement of politics. (The terms “foreclosure” and “displacement” come from psychoanalysis. The implication of “foreclosure” is that only psychotic acting out and violence is possible. The implication of “displacement” is that political action takes place not in the site of antagonism but elsewhere.)

Why exactly was my earlier claim too strong? Bruce says because it is too all-embracing and leads to contradictory conclusions. I think we can be more precise here.

My earlier claim of foreclosure was too broad because it did not highlight conservative, capitalist, and liberal (that is to say, bourgeois) politics as the kind of politics that flourishes in online settings because of the basic features of networked communication (features that make extreme views more likely to attract attention, that privilege short, punchy claims rather than thoughtful arguments, that increase the circulatory power of images and emotion etc. — for more details of this argument, see my book *Blog Theory*). So, my claim regarding foreclosure was not too extreme because it omitted left political possibilities but because the term foreclosure did not account for right ones.

Bruce wants us to think of the internet as it serves international solidarity and serious political debate.

What is at stake in thinking of the internet as serving international solidarity and serious political debate? The claim has to involve more than something like “email lets us send announcements to people” and “websites can feature debates”. Those claims are not controversial, but they reduce networked communication to tools without context. That is, they omit the larger set of media practices involved in networked communication (massive amounts of circulating data, tons of distraction, complex media field, etc).

So, the claim has to be more. And in fact it has been: for the last 15 or 20 years (at least), the internet has been held up as the solution to problems of political participation. We’ve been told that not only is it a tool for organising but that it can replace old forms of organisation because it makes organising quicker and easier. If the internet were this great aid to

the left, wouldn’t we be stronger? Wouldn’t we have seen our solidarity increasing, our events bringing out more people, our cause becoming furthered? This does not appear to be the case. The internet doesn’t take the place of our organisations. It is not the case that we had no sites for serious political debate — our newspapers, journals, meetings — prior to the internet.

Western commentators have been enthusiastic in their reduction of the Arab spring to media, turning it in to a Facebook revolution as if that mattered more than 100,000 people in Tahrir Square for weeks on end.

In my view, this refits revolution for capitalism, making it available to circulate as spectacle of commodity as it defuses its actual political power. The emphasis on technology over organised street protests makes protesters into consumers who just want more opportunities to participate in networked entertainment culture or to express themselves as individuals. Collective struggle gets displaced onto personal media devices. In short, the key feature of the Arab spring was not digital media even though that’s what the mainstream media wants those of us in the US and UK to think.

### DISPLACEMENT

**Indy-media and open source software: these kinds of projects have been celebrated for decades.**

On the one hand, they quickly get absorbed within the larger dynamics of communicative capitalism — more content, more apps. There is so much on the internet that it’s hard to see why one more report, opinion, or piece of software is politically significant. On the other hand, indy-media and open source distract us from the goals of politics and make us think about means. Political activity comes to be thought of in terms of producing content or devices for a general market (even if it is a marketplace of ideas); “awareness” and getting media attention become the goals. But, the struggle these goals are part of gets completely displaced — a matter of individual opinion. In other words, the problem is that focus shifts away from building political will within the class struggle.

If we are to avoid repeating the mainstream’s banal debates over social media, we need to specify what our goals are and how social media help us meet these goals or how they hinder us from meeting them. If a goal is announcing an event, then circulating the announcement through a variety of media can be useful. These media should include fliers in areas where people who don’t use the internet very much

can find them. The very processes that create echo-chambers online limit the scope of announcements that circulate online. Consequently, this has to be actively worked against.

It also appears that focusing on networked communication excludes those whose work does not connect them to computers, as well as those who are unemployed, homeless, or unconnected. We end up producing a vision of a left that excludes parts of the working class.

Combatting the primary problem of social media, its personalisation, its inherent bourgeois-liberal reinforcement of the individual as the site of interest and action, will be more difficult. With respect to Facebook, people participate as individuals. They comment and discuss as individuals. This presses people toward wanting to distinguish themselves as individuals rather than to find ways of building solidarity. An impressive alternative that emerged online has been Anonymous. Although they act as individuals, insofar as they act under a common name, they rupture individualist suppositions.

We should also acknowledge the role of surveillance. To the extent that we work to develop a robust digital left, we make all of our actions, identities, connections, and ideas available to capital and the state. As class struggle intensifies, as we undertake actions that come into direct confront with the state, this kind of exposure will work to our detriment.

It may not be impossible to build solidarity online. So far, it does not seem to be the case that social media has led to the production of dependable comradeship. It seems instead that it furthers snark, snipe, and distraction.

But what kind of solidarity do we have in mind anyway? One of clickers and sharers? Of likers and followers? Of readers and writers? What about actions among people in our workplaces and neighbourhoods?

**It seems to me that left solidarity has to venture offline in order to be any solidarity at all. To the extent that networked interactions are our focus, we fail fundamentally to build political power.**

*Jodi Dean (posted on [www.workersliberty.org](http://www.workersliberty.org))*

## Challenges for the People’s Assembly

**About 450-500 people attended the People’s Assembly delegate conference in London on 15 March.**

I found myself voting through numerous weakly written but well intended motions, for example an “immigrants are welcome here” motion, with no call to open the borders.

Every moving of a motion, supplement, or amendment attracted a large amount of applause, and by the end, this had become rather tedious. Especially as “in the interests of time” speeches were very limited and serious or protracted debate was very scarce with no taking motions in parts from the floor.

That said, there does seem an opportunity to make calculated interventions over issues of democracy as well as to push for a refinement of the People’s Assembly programme to a sharper class-struggle agenda.

At the very least, that could orient the assembly to become a more focused and disciplined environment that eschews the temptation for self congratulation through constant applause.

There is a contingent of organised far left groupings that could be aligned with, and a selection of newer activists who would gain valuable experience from the degree of involvement that an enhancement in democratic proceedings would bring.

The first changes in structure we should call for are:

- 1) End clapping of every single motion, amendment and supplements to save time

- 2) Use the extra time allow for amendments to be thoroughly debated, more speeches for and against, and take motions in parts where there is no clear majority.

**We need to move towards a culture of critical debate and calculated action if we are to use this chance to cultivate a force that can seriously challenge the neo-liberal consensus that is wrecking our future.**

*Andy Francis*

## Help us raise £12,000 by October

**This week we have been preparing the initial publicity for our annual summer event, Ideas for Freedom (4-6 July). The theme this year is “Their Class War and Ours”. For six years the rulers of Britain and many other countries have been waging an escalating class war against the working class and the oppressed. We have fought many battles and won some, but the ruling class has the upper hand. At IFF you can count on some hard-thinking and open debate to generate ideas for stronger left activism. If you appreciate this mix come to the event, and, better still support our work.**



**We want to raise £12,000 by our AGM in October 2014**

You can set up a regular payment from your bank to: AWL, sort code: 08-60-01, account: 20047674, Unity Trust Bank, Nine Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HB). Or send a cheque to us at the address below (cheques payable to “AWL”). Or donate online at [workersliberty.org/payment](http://workersliberty.org/payment). Take copies of *Solidarity* to sell at your workplace, university/college, or campaign group, or organise a fundraising event. And get in touch to discuss joining the AWL!

**More information: 07796 690 874 / [awl@workersliberty.org](mailto:awl@workersliberty.org) / AWL, 20E Tower Workshops, 58 Riley Road, London SE1 3DG.**

**This week we have raised £120 in increased standing orders.**

**Grand total: £2004**

# Education: for life, not for profit!

**The coalition government, building on New Labour, is pushing to shape education more and more along capitalist market standards and criteria.**

They dare not making schooling just something bought and sold on the market. Even if they don't care that barring children of worse-off parents from schooling would be unjust, they concede that it would produce an unqualified workforce and a brutalised society.

Insanely, though, they continue with the superstition that, short of that full-scale marketisation, the closer they can bring education to capitalist norms of competition and capitalist norms of management, the better.

Schooling is geared more and more to "marketable" scores and assessments. Students are pushed to get GCSE grades which will "buy" jobs, or "buy" a chance to do A-levels.

They are pushed to get the A-level grades which "buy" a place at a rich university. At university they are pushed to get the degree result which "buys" a good job.

With that pseudo-market metric as basis, school is pushed into competition with school, teacher with teacher, student with student.

The new methods for that are the vast expansion of academies and free schools, and the comprehensive roll-out of performance-related pay for teachers.

57% of secondary schools in England are now academies (though, as yet, only 11% of primaries). There are now 125 state-funded "free schools" either open or planned.

All these schools compete with each other to get students and sponsors. As they feed off each other, an army of lawyers, head-hunters, accountants, estate agents and management consultants feed off them, siphoning away a total of £77 million since May 2010.

Schools have ever more top-heavy structures of management piled on them. A year ago, 700 head teachers in England were getting £100,000 a year, and 200 more than £110,000.

The boss of one chain of state-funded academy schools got almost £320,000 — plus pension contributions — in a 12-month period.

Many get bonuses. In a court case in October 2013, a retired head teacher was given a suspended sentence because he had paid himself, three staff members and two governors a total of £2.7 million over some years through bonuses and salaries.

Teachers' pay now depends on "performance", measured largely through their students' "marketable" scores. Under that pressure, average work hours for teachers have increased by nine per week to 60 for primary teachers, by six



Street art

per week to 56 for secondary, since 2010. 40% of new teachers drop out of the job within five years.

Universities now compete harshly for the "best" students — from 2013 they can enrol as many students with ABB or better A-level grades as they like — and the fees they bring.

Getting the "best" students, and paying fancy salaries to prestigious professors, enables rich universities to stay rich, because their ex-students then get posh jobs and can be tapped for donations and bequests.

To run this sort of university, you need not someone who cares about ideas or education, but a crazed capitalist manager type with a brain stuffed full of stupid "managerial" buzzwords and a huge salary.

Russell Group (rich) university bosses are now on about £250,000 a year, and in 2012-13 they got an average pay rise of more than £22,000 (8%).

To the student, education is increasingly presented as an "investment". If you stay on at school, then go to university and pay fees, and if you jump through the right hoops to get "marketable" scores, you will get a "return on your investment" by higher pay. What you learn or don't learn is by the way.

This capitalist-oriented education is not even utilitarian, though some socialists indict it as such. Much of the stuff crammed into current school syllabuses is about as utilitarian as an old-fashioned wing-tip collar.

It is narrow, stunted, and stunting. Even where it teaches good content, it addles and taints it with the compulsion to compete.

**Students, teachers, education workers, parents - unite and fight for education which enlarges life rather than stunting it!**

## Higher education tuition-fee system is failing

**Despite the rise in tuition fees to £9,000-a-year for UK students and scrapping of most direct funding to universities, the new higher education funding framework is likely to cost the state more than the system it replaced.**

An increasing number of graduates are failing to pay back their student loans. Repayments are linked to earnings. Graduates repay their loans when they earn over £21,000.

In 2010, the government estimated that 28% of loans would never be recovered. Persistently low wages for young adults and the stormy economic outlook have led the civil service to revise down its estimates of the proportion of loans that will be paid back. New official forecasts suggest write-offs at 45%.

This is approaching the level at which the government will not have saved any money from implemented the new system. Analysis from London Economics says that, "if the estimated... [proportion of the fee and maintenance loans never recovered] increases beyond 48.6 per cent, the economic cost of the 2012-13 higher education reforms will exceed the 2010-11 system that it replaced".

There is also evidence that the new system, taken by itself, is already costing the government more, as the figures include the expense of writing off loans under both the old and new systems. According to the same analysts, the write-off costs for the new system may already have reached 50%.

These revised estimates are probably linked to the government's decision to cut funding in other parts of the 2014-15 higher education budget.



The failure of the government to save any money from the new system should not be surprising. Although the need to bring down the deficit was used publicly to justify the rise in fees, transferring higher education funding on to the backs of individual students was always mainly about creating a controlled market in the sector. The new system has accelerated the restructuring of higher education around the principles of competition and profit, with institutions striving against each other to attract students.

The public failure of the new system creates an opportunity to re-open the debate on higher education funding. As Andrew McGettigan has said: "Any claim to savings from the new regime has disappeared and we now need an urgent inquiry into the whole scheme. Something is seriously awry and we need clarification on what this might mean for other aspects of the higher and further education budgets."

The Tories could now look at cutting the threshold at which graduates start paying back their loans. They could also raise the rate of repayment, which was already hiked once 2010.

Though they opposed raising fees to £9,000, it was the Labour Party which introduced fees in the first place. Labour is committed to reducing the cap on fees to £6,000. And it is still committed to the principle that it is individual students who should bear the burden of paying for education (potentially through a graduate tax).

Left-wing student activists need to intervene in these debates arguing explicitly for free, publicly-funded education at all levels, and should aim to build lively activist groups on every campus to organise around these ideas.

**The National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts (NCAFC) exists to give a national expression to local anti-cuts groups and develop ideas for the student movement as a whole.**

• anticuts.com

## US unions since 1988

By Erik Forman

Activists of my generation are too young to remember, but in the first half of the 1980s, the US labour movement lost a fifth of its membership to union-busting, plant closings, outsourcing, deregulation, automation, two recessions, and the growth of the non-union service sector. Union leaders began looking for ways to stop the bleeding.

The AFL-CIO unveiled its answer in 1988: “internal organising.” The goal was to revive a social movement feeling in unions by bringing the mobilizing techniques used in external organising drives into existing bargaining units. Activists, who had seen US unions ossify into bureaucratic dinosaurs, welcomed the focus on rank-and-file participation. The manual, “Numbers that Count,” rapidly became one of the AFL-CIO’s most-requested publications.

At the same time, AFL-CIO leaders began to push for affiliated unions to organise the unorganised. In 1989 they established an Organising Institute to train members and staffs in the craft.

However, the connection between these two forms of “organising” — building more participatory locals and recruiting new members — remained murky.

Union density hit a new low of 14.9% in 1995, convincing many that these steps were not enough. The New Voice slate led by the Service Employees’ (SEIU) John Sweeney ran on an “organising” platform and won leadership of the AFL-CIO.

The new officers increased the Institute’s budget and released a blueprint titled “Organising for Change, Changing to Organise.” They called on affiliates to throw more staff, money (30% of their budgets), planning, and member activity into organising new shops.

If the US labour movement briefly seemed united behind organising, it didn’t last long. Many officers thought 30% was too much money. Some saw the new agenda as the AFL-CIO meddling in their internal politics. The shift of resources away from “servicing” members created tensions among officers, staffs, and members — between those energized by the prospect of expanding labour’s ranks and those who wanted to focus on enforcing contracts in existing locals.

Despite these contradictions, most unions got on board with the new agenda, at least on paper, but another split began to emerge over how to do external organising. “Movement builders” favoured a rank-and-file approach, where union members volunteered or got paid lost time to help non-union workers organise, or where volunteers took jobs in non-union shops to organise them from inside (called “salting”). “Capacity builders,” on the other hand, placed campaigns in the hands of professional organisers, who would fly in for house-visit “blitzes.” This debate continues today.

Even as the organising model was beginning to disintegrate, Sweeney announced in 2000 that AFL-CIO affiliates would organise a million new members per year. Few unions hit the numbers they committed to, but the pressure to meet numerical goals encouraged them to pick soft targets, often far removed from their traditional industries.

By the early 2000s, the continued pressures of declining membership had thoroughly cracked the previous consensus around organising. Unions whose leaders still wanted to reallocate greater resources to organising formed a coalition of the willing called “Change to Win” — including SEIU, UNITE HERE, Carpenters, Teamsters, Food and Commercial Workers, and the Labourers — and left the AFL-CIO, touching off a new spate of rivalries.

**But membership kept dropping. Today, aside from a few bright spots, the US labour movement is shrinking and largely ineffective at winning gains from employers. Why did unions in other countries want to emulate it?**

# How the “organising



American unions like the SEIU pioneered the “organising model”

**On 29 March 2014, Workers’ Liberty, the University of London branch of the Independent Workers’ union of Great Britain (IWGB), Ruskin College UCU, PCS Independent Left, and Lambeth Activists will host the “New Unionism 2014” conference at the University of London Union.**

The conference aims to look at historical and contemporary struggles to transform the labour movement to make it capable of fighting for working-class power. Sessions will include a talk on “the fate of the organising model” by US labour-movement activist Kim Moody. Kim was a founder of the rank-and-file journal *Labor Notes*; below, we reprint an abridged version of article by Erik Forman, which appeared in *Labor Notes* 409 in April 2013. The article discusses the origins and critiques of “the organising model”.

**For more information on the New Unionism 2014 conference, see [newunionismconference.wordpress.com](http://newunionismconference.wordpress.com)**

By Erik Forman

**The United States doesn’t export only Big Macs. We also export the trends of our labour movement. Over the last 15 years — as American management practices have cast a pall over the global economy — unions from the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, and Australia have looked to US unions for survival strategies. They came back with “the organising model”**

The term was coined in a 1988 AFL-CIO manual called “Numbers that Count,” which drew a distinction between “the servicing model of local union leadership — trying to help people by solving problems for them” and “the organising model — involving members in solutions.” The fact that this was a new idea speaks volumes.

The organising model’s first port of call overseas was Australia.

Union density there had dropped dramatically: from 51% in 1976 to under 25 in 2000. The decline was caused by labour law changes including prohibition of dues check-off, elimina-

tion of government-brokered industry-wide contracts, and a ban on closed shops; decline of industrial jobs; privatization of state enterprises; and dramatic growth of a low-wage service sector.

In 1993 the Australian Confederation of Trade Unions sent a delegation to study organising strategies in the US, reasoning that US unions had been the canaries in the mine of the neoliberal experiment a decade earlier. The ACTU established “Organising Works,” modelled on the AFL-CIO’s Organising Institute, in 1994.

Researchers Bob Carter and Rae Cooper have credited Organising Works with graduating more than 300 new organisers who “infiltrated” every union in Australia, bringing with them new techniques and energy.

Some waged vibrant campaigns that developed new activists and brought thousands of new workers into unions. Others ran smack into an entrenched “servicing” culture.

In some public sector unions, budget cuts and layoffs were generating a growing volume of grievances and a shrinking pool of resources to hire organisers. As their professional staffs dwindled and the labour law framework vanished, unions that had relied heavily on both didn’t know how to fight back.

### RANK-AND-FILE

**But rather than involve more rank-and-filers in a social movement against austerity, some unions tried to technocratically “manage” change through recruitment quotas imposed on staff organisers, while leaving representation work to volunteer stewards.**

Labour scholar Richard Hurd has called this a “tough servicing” approach to building worker self-organisation, but most workers sensed echoes of the “team” rhetoric they got from corporate bosses — where the company makes the cuts, and the workers figure out how to do more work with fewer people.

Adding insult to injury, workers were excluded from decision-making about how their unions would be restructured

# g model” went global

to focus on external organising. One organiser said, “We say [to members], ‘So we’re giving you all this work to do,’ and it really rings hollow unless they have more power to make decisions.”

There were many approaches to keeping down “overhead” costs for servicing. One national union opted not to encourage workers to organise themselves through a steward system, but instead opened a call centre to process grievances remotely.

The drive to revive labour as a social movement had rapidly descended into debates about how best to manage union staff in servicing and organising roles.

Despite the organising model’s flaws, its next stop was the UK. In the 1980s, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher declared open season on labour. Bosses smashed the epic 1984-85 miners’ strike. Steel mills and factories shut down. Unions took cuts under the “New Realism.” Union membership declined from 53% in 1979 to less than 30% in 1998.

TUC officers tried a number of gimmicks. But glossy, corporate-style re-branding, union mergers, credit card schemes, and discounts on umbrellas (no joke) weren’t enough.

In 1998, the TUC established an Organising Academy, modelled on the Australian and US training centres. Its goal was to “rediscover the ‘social movement’ origins of labour, by redefining the union as a mobilising structure.” The OA also sought to diversify white and male-dominated staffs.

If numbers were all that counted, the OA would be a modest success story. In its first 10 years, it trained a relatively diverse group of 270 new professional organisers, who are credited with the recruitment of more than 50,000 new members. Membership began to stabilise, hovering around 6 million for the past five years.

But numbers aren’t all that count. Researchers Jane Holgate and Melanie Simms reflected in 2008 that reliance on professional organisers had left out rank-and-file activists, minimising the actual change in union culture.

In response to such criticism, the TUC opened an “Activist Academy” in 2009 for “lay activists” (rank-and-filers and shop stewards). Will this be enough to put the movement back in the UK’s very top-down labour movement?

The organising model as practiced by the TUC, according to Holgate and Simms, has been hollowed out, stripped of its



**Almost all UK unions now say they are “organising unions”, with large “departments” of paid organisers. Results in practice are variable.**

political content, and marketed as a value-neutral set of tools for signing up more members, with little to say about how the unions they join are run. In the TUC, partisans of the organising model coexist with conservatives who favour “partnership” with employers — a concept advanced by the Labour Party that often means accepting cuts and layoffs.

The turn toward organising has increased the level of labour activity in the UK, but few would say it has reinvigorated labour as a social movement. The heavy reliance on professional staff and lack of an overall strategy for shifting the balance of forces limit the impact of these campaigns.

Germany’s massive industrial unions have excited the jealousy of trade unionists elsewhere since the days of Walter Reuther — and, until recently, Germany was spared the worst of the neoliberal tide.

The reigning ideology of West German labour relations was “social partnership.” All employees of a large firm could elect a “works council” that would receive company funding, an office, and the right to be consulted over any major changes to production. Unions were an accepted part of the system: the massive DGB (Germany’s primary labour federation) signed sector-wide agreements with employer associations in each industry.

## GERMAN

**But by the early 2000s, strange new words began to appear in the German lexicon: “outsourcen,” “das Management,” and “Teamsitzung” (team meeting).**

A familiar pattern followed: subcontracting, increased temporary and part-time work, privatization of state services, and the rise of a low-wage service sector.

Since 1990, the DGB has lost half its members and union density has declined from 40 to 19%.

DGB leaders, like their overseas counterparts, looked for a survival strategy. A delegation of officers from ver.di (a service workers union like our Service Employees) traveled to the US in 2004 and returned home dedicated to the organising model. In one of the first campaigns to apply the model, ver.di and SEIU took on a joint project to organise security guards in Hamburg in 2007, resulting in a collective agreement with pay increases, and the establishment of works councils in several firms.

As “Das Organising Model” has spread, some of the same criticisms have surfaced in Germany as elsewhere. Many ac-

tivists point out that the model is controlled from above. Others say the organising model is depoliticized and avoids deep questions about what kind of economy we want.

One activist found that an official union translation of Saul Alinsky’s classic organising manual, *Rules for Radicals*, had mysteriously left out a section on “democratizing the labour movement,” reinforcing the perception that officials are interested in turning unions into a “social movement” only when it means more members and dues, not when it means flattening out the hierarchies of the unions themselves.

More than 20 years after the AFL-CIO coined the term “organising model,” it is safe to say the model has produced only limited success. While the shift is certainly necessary, it has not been sufficient to revive labour as a social movement.

Everywhere the organising model has taken root, it has met three pointed critiques. First, the reliance on professional staff often reproduces the problems of the service model, as rank-and-filers remain consumers of unions, rather than producers.

Second, the single-minded focus on signing up new members has too often led to partnership agreements with employers who permit unions to organise in exchange for weak contracts.

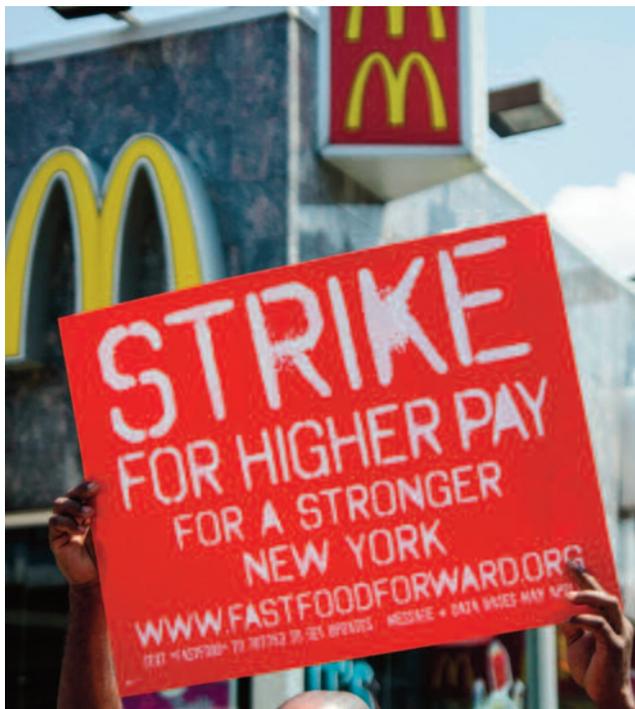
Third, the model has obscured deeper questions about labour’s vision and strategy. Even as capitalism destroys the planet and throws more people into misery, unions are looking backward to the structures of the New Deal rather than forward to a new world.

In recent months, we’ve seen the pressures of survival forcing unions to adopt organising methods derived from the grassroots tradition in the labour movement—such as striking for demands before a union is even recognised. The prospect of a new militancy emerging with backing from institutional players is exciting. But history has also shown that unless workers are not only empowered on the job but also fully in control of their unions, the rebirth of labour as a social movement will remain elusive.

**Those of us who want to transform the workers’ movement and society have to elaborate our own model for labour renewal, from the bottom up.**

Erik Forman has been active in the Industrial Workers of the World since 2005, working and organising at Starbucks and Jimmy John’s. He is currently compiling a report on union strategies for organising the food service and retail sectors as a Practitioner Fellow at the Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labour and the Working Poor at Georgetown University. Follow him at @\_erikforman on Twitter.

For an unedited version of this article, see [bit.ly/ef-om](http://bit.ly/ef-om)



**How much do recent movements like the US fast food workers’ strikes owe to “the organising model”?**

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# The left in the miners' strike

This year is the thirtieth anniversary of the great miners' strike. A new book by Workers' Liberty, out this week, tells the story of how working-class communities fought a Tory ruling-class government. But how did the left conduct itself?

By Gerry Bates

**The Labour Party, led then by the former "soft left" Neil Kinnock, refused to indict the government and brand its activities for the vicious class war they were.**

Many thousands of rank and file Labour Party activists were, however, active organisers of the miners' support groups. If the organised revolutionary socialist left had worked together seriously — for example in the Mineworkers' Defence Committee — even our small forces could, perhaps, have tipped the balance.

*Socialist Organiser* (forerunner of *Solidarity* and *Workers' Liberty*) threw everything it had into backing the miners.

We helped the rank and file strike committee in Nottinghamshire, the area where the strike faced most difficulties. We worked in the miners' support groups and helped launch the national Mineworkers' Defence Committee. We helped organise rank and file solidarity action among rail workers in the central Notts and South Yorkshire area.

From the beginning we supported and publicised the importance of the militant self-organisation and action by women in the pit communities (Women Against Pit Closures). Our supporters moved the main resolution supporting the miners at the 1984 Labour Party Conference (a resolution which was ignored by the Labour leaders). We argued in the labour movement for solidarity and a general strike, and for socialist politics.

The bigger battalions of the revolutionary left were disoriented, too self-absorbed and self-obsessed, organisationally and politically, to be other than a negative factor. The SWP had spent the previous five years preaching woe and defeat, magnifying and exaggerating the real setbacks and defeats of the working-class movement.

They believed nothing much could be done, and at first seemed to have difficulty simply taking in the fact that the biggest industrial class war since the 1926 General Strike had broken out.

Tony Cliff, wrote that "the miners' strike is an extreme example of what we in the Socialist Workers Party have called the "downturn" in the movement" (*Socialist Worker*, 14 April 1984). They stuck to that view throughout the strike, even after they, very late, in October 1984, joined the miners' support groups.

Week after week, *SW* told readers how much it regretted the lack of militancy in the miners' strike and the probability of its defeat. Naturally the SWP deplored calls for a general strike — that is, it deplored educational work in the labour movement for effective action to stop the Tory offensive against the working class, of which the miners' strike was the front line.

Only three or so years after the miners had been defeated did the SWP begin to revise the downturn theory and talk vaguely about new "volatility". By 1992, after seven years of further grinding defeats, it was putting up posters with demands that the TUC call a general strike "now" — not to assist a serious battle in the labour movement to get a general strike, but to advertise the SWP as "militant". It has remained in that mode, with many detailed variations, ever since.

*Militant* (forerunner of the Socialist Party and Socialist Appeal) then had the leadership of the labour movement in Liverpool and of Liverpool's Labour council. They conducted the council's conflict with the government over cuts as if they lived in a parallel universe to the world of industrial conflict in which the miners lives and fought.

When, in July 1984, the Tories offered Liverpool council a deal to postpone the budget issues, they accepted and demobilised the labour movement in Merseyside, which did want to fight, and which they could and should have led into a common fight with the miners.

That didn't even save *Militant's* own position. The deal with the Tories last year and then, with the miners defeated, the Tories came after them. The Labour Party leaders came in the wake of the Tories to destroy *Militant's* position in the Labour Party.

*Militant* also led a trade-union grouping, the Broad Lefts Organising Committee. BLOC was small; but with the gales of the miners' struggle filling its sails, it could have done much to increase solidarity and put pressure on union leaders to meet their responsibilities and fulfill their promises. It did nothing beyond one or two perfunctory lobbies of the

TUC General Council.

*Militant* never joined the miners' support groups. While almost everyone else on the left was out with collecting tins to raise funds for the miners, in that year *Militant* always had collecting tins for the expansion of its own press.

**Sometimes it got money from people thinking the collection must be for the miners; frequently it got righteous irritation.**

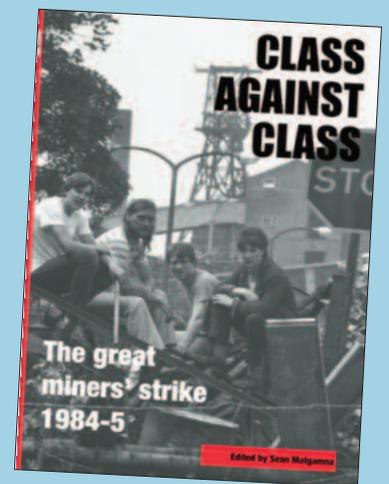
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# Bosnia: generations unite against rip-offs

Next week, *Solidarity* will carry a report by Bob Myers of a visit to Tuzla in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The country has been rocked by a wave of strikes and protests demanding jobs, better wages and economic equality. The movement has been characterised by a hostility to nationalism and government corruption. Tuzla was an industrial centre of the old Yugoslavia, and continues to be an industrial centre in Bosnia. The recent revolt began there.

Here a few extracts from Bob's report. It can be read in its entirety at [www.workersliberty.org/bosnia](http://www.workersliberty.org/bosnia)

**Before the 1992-95 Yugoslav wars the population of Bosnia was roughly one third Serb, one third Croat and one third Bosniak, i.e. descendents of people who had converted to Islam under the 400 year Ottoman rule.**

Nationalist political parties based on the different ethnic groups came to dominate the scene prior to the war, except in Tuzla.

The Dayton peace agreement, forced through by the US, mirrored the aims of the Serb and Croat nationalists and rewarded their war efforts by formalising the country's division into three parts. The Croat and Bosniak entities have to some extent merged into the "Federation" while the Serb territory remains separate.

A so called national government covering all the country has been almost totally paralysed by the squabbling between the nationalist politicians. The country is further divided up into cantons, each with its own local government, also mostly ruled by nationalist parties.

During the war Tuzla and the surrounding region, with its century-long tradition of working-class solidarity, held out against ethnic division and nationalism and mostly sup-

ported the multi-ethnic Social Democratic Party. That resistance is key to the present protests. Nationalism was used to divide the working class of Yugoslavia in order to carry out privatisation. Tuzla's resistance to ethnic cleansing, its support for the right of all people to live and work together is the bedrock on which this upsurge of activity and debate takes shape.

At a meeting during the visit, the president of the Konjuh factory union branch thanked Workers' Aid [a group active in the 1992-5 war] for their solidarity during the war. Then he explain why their factory joined the revolt.

It was started in 1885 as a saw mill, taking timber from the surrounding forests and the town of Zivinice had grown up all around it. Workers had defended the factory and their livelihoods through First and Second World Wars and through the recent war, but "our nationalist politicians have destroyed it".

The factory produces high quality furniture and other wood products which were exported world wide and the factory is still capable of doing this, but there is no working capital and all the factory bank accounts have been frozen. The tycoons only want to get their hands on the huge area of land that the company owns in the town centre. The government has downgraded its classification of the land from first to fourth class in order to make it cheaper for a buyer.

Three times the workers have marched the 110 km to Sarajevo to protest. [They] marched in the 40C heat of summer and in the -20C depth of winter. But the marchers were met with silence apart from being accused of being politically motivated.

In the current upsurge in struggle the generation gap is significant.

Many of the trade unionists are older people, predominantly men. A new generation is now entering the scene, with women as prominent as men. They were children during the war, and many of them who could speak English got jobs with the post war circus of NATO, UN, NGOs etc and learnt at first hand the real agenda of the "international community" which was not to help Bosnians determine their own future but to impose a pre-decided policy on them.

Some of these people have studied abroad and have been active in student protests elsewhere, for example in the student fees protests in the UK. They use Facebook and the internet to communicate with each other, with the Bosnian diaspora, and with radical thinkers around the world.

They are also part of that movement which has developed all over the world over the last twenty years, often independent of the unions, and healthily suspicious of hierarchical structures and "leaderships". Some could clearly leave and get very well paid academic positions abroad. The fact that they don't, and that they are putting in huge hours to sustain the Plenums, shows how different they are from the nepotists associated with the political parties. All this gives them a great advantage.

It seems that some of them are inclined to see things in terms of right ideas against bad ones, clean politicians against corrupt ones. But right ideas will not abolish the coalition of robbers, both national and international, politicians, national and international, all of them acting on behalf of capital.

**Indeed after a moment's retreat in the face of the demonstrations, the ruling elite have regained their composure and are preparing to clamp down on further protest and resist making any significant concessions.**

# Crimean Tatars: the nation Stalin deported

By Dale Street

**The Crimean Tatars were annexed into the Russian Empire of Catherine II in 1783. Before then they had had an ambiguous relationship, half-vassal, half-independent, with the Turkish Ottoman Empire. Then numbering some 500,000, they were subjected to particularly brutal policies of Russification in the nineteenth century.**

During the Crimean war, Tatars living on the coast were removed and “resettled” inland. After the war, Tsar Alexander II declared, “It is not appropriate to oppose the overt or covert exodus of the Tatars... This voluntary emigration should be considered as a beneficial action calculated to free the territory from this unwanted population”. By the end of the century the Crimean Tatar population had fallen below 300,000.

Repression helped stimulate the Crimean Tatar national identity. Fearful of an alliance between the aroused Tatars and the Pan-Turkic movement, the Tsarist regime responded by further repression in the opening years of the 20th century. The Tatar organisation Vatan was declared illegal, Tsarist police agents spied on Tatar religious and educational activities, and Tatar newspapers were heavily censored or closed down.

Following the 1917 October Revolution, the Crimea was occupied by counter-revolutionary armies. Tatar newspapers were banned, printing presses seized, and Tatar schools closed.

The defeat of the counter-revolutionary armies by the Red Army paved the way for the declaration of the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) in October 1921. Lenin had expressed his hopes for it two years earlier: “May the tiny Crimean Republic become one of the torches which cast the light of proletarian revolution onto the East”.

In the early months of the Crimean ASSR, there were terrible food shortages, but conditions improved. Output increased. The autonomy granted by the decree of 1921 was put into practice by the Crimean Bolshevik administration, headed by the Crimean Tatar Veli Ibrahimov. The former repression of Crimean Tatar national culture was ended.

## STALINIST REPRESSION

**From the late 20s Stalinism brought back the Tsarist repression of national minorities. Ibrahimov was removed from his post, accused of “indigenous nationalism”, and executed in May 1928. Thousands of other Crimean Tatars were to share his fate.**

Tens of thousands were deported under Stalin’s policy of forced collectivisation of agriculture. The famine resulting from this policy cost thousands more lives in the early 1930s. A new wave of purges began in 1935, in the name of “struggle against the nationalism of the native bourgeoisie”, and was further intensified after Stalin’s speech of December 1936 in which he denounced the ‘indigenous nationalism’ of the Crimea and declared the Crimean Tatars too few in number to have any right to autonomy.

The Tatar Latin alphabet (itself introduced only in 1928) was replaced by the Russian Cyrillic alphabet in 1938, in the full knowledge that this could not express all the sounds of the Crimean Tatars’ language. Crimean Tatar books were withdrawn from circulation. By 1938 the number of surviving Tatar-language newspapers had fallen to nine, from 23 just three years earlier.

The impact of such policies on the size of the Crimean Tatar population is difficult to estimate. In 1917, after growth in the opening decades of the century, the Crimean Tatars numbered 320,000. The population further increased in the 1920s, partly through indigenous growth, partly through immigration. By 1941, however, the Crimean Tatar population had fallen to about 250,000, which would suggest that Stalin’s policies had already claimed some 100,000 victims by 1941.

In October 1941 the Nazis invaded the Crimea and soon occupied the entire peninsula. Hitler advocated deportation of the entire population — Russians and Ukrainians as well as Tatars — and the repopulation of the Crimea by Germans from South Tirol. This would “solve” the problem of the South Tirol — an object of dispute with Italy — and create a “fortress state” populated by reliable Germans in a strategically important area.

It wasn’t done — partly because it would have disrupted Crimean industry and agriculture, which were being plun-



**Rally in Simferopol on the 60th anniversary of deportation of the Crimean Tatars**

dered for the German war effort, and partly because it would have alienated the Turkish government and pan-Turkic sentiment at a time when the Nazis were attempting to secure Turkish backing.

The Nazis even made some limited concessions to the Crimean Tatars. They were allowed a certain religious freedom, and Crimean Tatar schools and theatres were allowed to reopen. “Muslim Committees” were also created, and efforts were made to recruit Crimean Tatars into military units.

This policy was very limited, and had small success in winning Crimean Tatar support for the Nazis. As the Nazis gave up hope of backing from Turkey, they stepped up repression in the Crimea. Crimean Tatars were shipped off to Germany to work in war industries, censorship of Crimean Tatar publications was increased, and Crimean Tatar villages were destroyed in order to deny Soviet partisans access to them.

The Crimean Tatars fought back. According to a 1973 issue of the samizdat journal “Chronicle of Current Affairs”, 53,000 Crimean Tatars fought in the Red Army, and 12,000 in the Soviet partisans. 30,000 Crimean Tatars died fighting the Nazis.

By the spring of 1944 the Crimean peninsula had been reconquered by the Russian Army. Then, beginning on the night of 17-18 May, the entire Crimean Tatar population was deported and scattered across Soviet Central Asia, Kazakhstan, and the Urals. What had been planned first by the Tsars and then by Hitler but never carried out, was now achieved by Stalin — a Crimea devoid of Crimean Tatars.

Some 100,000 Crimean Tatars, 40% of the population, died in the course of the deportation and the first year of “resettlement”. This was over three times as many as had been killed by the fascists during the war.

No-one was spared the deportation, neither the old nor the young, neither Tatar Communists nor Tatars who had been in partisan units. Tatars still serving in the Russian Army were deported on demobilisation.

An “Open Letter in Defence of Crimean Tatars”, circulating in Moscow in 1969, describes the journey into “resettlement”.

“This was the journey of slow death in railway carriages for cattle, stuffed full of people like sponges. The journey lasted three or four weeks and passed through the burning summer steppes of Kazakhstan. They transported the red partisans of the Crimea, the fighters of the Bolshevik underground, Soviet and party activists, but invalids and old men as well. The other men were fighting the fascists at the front, and exile awaited them at the end of the war...”

“The Crimean Tatars were taken to reservations in the Urals, Kazakhstan, and — principally — Uzbekistan. That is how the Tatars found themselves in this area.

“The deportation was completed, but the destruction of the people had only begun”.

The Crimean Tatars were not the only national minority to meet this fate. The Volga Germans, the Karachai, the Kalmyks, the Balkars, the Chechens, and the Ingushi were all likewise uprooted and deported.

The long-standing Great-Russian fear of the Crimean Tatars possibly allying with Turkey was compounded in this period by the USSR’s more hostile attitude towards Turkey from late 1944 onwards. In March 1945 the USSR renounced the Turco-Soviet treaty of neutrality of 1925, and in July 1945 it raised the question of the “return” of the Turkish provinces of Kars and Ardahan which, according to Soviet foreign minister Molotov, had been “ceded to Turkey at the end of the First World War at a moment when the Russians’ weakness

left them with no alternative to acceding to Turkish demands”.

The mass deportations and the death of 100,000 people were nothing to do with any supposed “collective guilt” on the part of the Crimean Tatars, but were the result of Stalinism’s contempt for the rights of national minorities and its great-power foreign policies.

Having physically removed the Crimean Tatar community and scattered it across Soviet Central Asia, the Kremlin set about denying that it had ever existed and wiping out every vestige of its former presence in the Crimea. In October 1944, “all inhabited districts, rivers and mountains of which the names are of Tatar, Greek or German origin” were re-named.

The Crimean Tatars faced discrimination even in the “resettlement” areas. The *Appeal of the Crimean Tatar people to the 23rd Congress of the CPSU* complained: “People with higher education, qualified specialists, could work only as unskilled workers. We were not permitted to work in party, soviet or administrative organs, in transport or on the railways, in organs of popular education, in enterprises with defence contracts, in the militia, in the State Bank, etc.”

Crimean Tatars were expelled from the Communist Party and others banned from joining it, especially those who supported the Crimean Tatars’ campaign for restoration of their homeland.

## CONCESSIONS

**In the 1950s some minor concessions were made. In 1954 some of the restrictions on Tatars in Uzbekistan were lifted.**

In 1956 they were allowed to leave the “resettlement” areas (but not to return to the Crimea). In 1957 they were allowed to begin publication of a Crimean Tatar language newspaper.

Such concessions, and Khrushchev’s speech to the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956, encouraged further campaigning by the Crimean Tatars. In 1957 a petition with 14,000 names was sent to the Central Committee of the CPSU. In 1958, petitions with 12,000 and 16,000 signatures were sent to the Central Committee. Further petitions with between 10,000 and 18,000 signatures, demanding rehabilitation, restoration of lost property, and the right of return to the Crimea, were submitted in 1959, 1961, and 1964.

At the same time Crimean Tatar committees were established in the towns and villages to which the Crimean Tatars had been exiled, in order to coordinate the campaigning and organise education of Tatar youth in their language and culture. Delegations were repeatedly sent to Moscow to present the petitions and lobby members of the government. Despite arrests and expulsions from Moscow, by mid-1967 over 400 Crimean Tatars were resident there as official representatives of their community.

Threats to demonstrate publicly in Red Square resulted in a meeting with the government in July 1967. In September 1967 a decree officially withdrew the Stalinist accusations that the Tatars had collaborated with the Nazis, but avoided any commitment to redress. The Crimean Tatars continued to campaign. In the months following the September 1967 decree, some 10,000 attempted to resettle in the Crimea. They were barred, expelled, or forced out by discrimination and repression.

Leading Crimean Tatar campaigners, such as Reshat Dzhemilyov, one of the leaders of the most recent demonstrations in Moscow, linked up with the broader Soviet dissident movement and won support from such people as Sakharov and Grigorenko. Lobbying of government ministers continued in Moscow, and demonstrations were organised in the Tatars’ places of exile.

The Crimean Tatars also began to regain their national culture. A textbook for the study of the Crimean Tatar language was produced, and several collections of Crimean Tatar literature published. A department for the publication of Crimean Tatar literature was set up in the Tashkent Gafur Gulam publishing house.

Crimean Tatar leaders such as Dzhemilyov faced repeated trials and prison sentences for “anti-Soviet activities”. Demonstrations were broken up, and mass arrests made.

**From the late 1980s Crimean Tatars began to mobilise and demonstrate for their rights. Only under Gorbachev were they allowed to return to their homeland.**

# Turkey's sub-imperialist choices

By Levent Toprak (Marksist Tutum)

**Turkey's recent political crisis started with the arrest of the sons of three cabinet ministers over claims of bribery and the rigging of state tenders. This quickly developed into a state-wide crisis.**

The events appear to be a cut-throat power struggle between the government and Gülen movement, a transnational religious and social movement. But the matter cannot be reduced to that.

During the 12 years of AKP [Justice and Development Party] rule Turkish capitalism has grown fast; both natural resources and labour have been exploited and plundered immeasurably. During this period, besides ordinary bribery and corruption, we have also seen corruption encouraged by the amending of laws and regulations. Especially through amendments to laws governing bids for public contracts and regulations. Also the state audit court has been stopped from making substantial inspection and audits.

What has been leaked to the press since 17 December is just the tip of the iceberg of the corruption that the AKP is involved in; yet even this has shaken the political stage.

What we need to do is to remember some basic facts. Bribery, corruption, and irregularities are natural phenomenon under capitalism, decaying capitalism in particular. Although there might be certain differences of the sort and scope, this is true of even the most developed and "regular" capitalist countries.

Even in Germany, which seems to epitomise the rule of law, the president had to resign because of corruption just a year ago. We should also remember the Enron scandal in the USA under Bush. Exposure of such cases happens when they grow to such big dimensions they cannot be concealed or they pose a risk to the whole system and some politicians and parties have to be pushed out of the political scene.

Corruption always exists in capitalism and this surely serves as a means to expose capitalism in the context of working class struggles. However any condemnation of corruption not based on a revolutionary exposition of capitalism feeds illusions in the so-called virtues of a "decent" capitalism. The winning party will always be the capitalist order. Bad boys are condemned, scapegoated and, if possible, got ride of; the system is given a "cleaning."

We must also never forget that corruption issues are used as a trap when there are struggles inside the ruling class.

## SECTION

**When one section of the rulers intends to push out or undermine another section, one of their most popular strategies is the disclosure of private lives and corruption issues.**

The allegations are almost always true, but this is not the point. The masses are generally misled. The discredited order is cleaned and given a fresh start, and public support is gathered against those "bad" elements of the ruling order to get rid of them.

Beneath Turkey's current corruption investigations lies a similar kind of political operation. On the one hand the masses are given propaganda that paints a picture of Erdogan and co. swelling their pockets; on the other side, Erdogan and co try to paint themselves as innocent victims. Allegations of corruption are certainly true. But if we want to understand the essence of matter we have to go deeper. We have to ask why the coalition between AKP and the Gülen movement has ended. Why is the Gülen movement trying to put an end to Erdogan's political career?

Gülenists have been following a long-term organising strategy of infiltrating into the state. They have an enormous following in the judiciary and police.

Lacking such numbers of cadres within the state apparatus, the AKP formed a coalition with Gülenists in its struggle against pro-status quo Kemalist cadres who occupied critical positions in the state. When the Kemalist forces initiated efforts to get rid of the AKP, the AKP, in response, could fight back thanks to its alliance with Gülenists. This struggle essentially came to an end by the 2010 referendum liberalising the constitution. The elections that followed marked the beginning of a new period.

But after the victory against pro-status quo Kemalist forces there inevitably emerged conflicts between the winners over how to share the spoils. The influence of Gülenists within the



**Erdogan and Obama: no longer such good friends?**

state has not been welcomed by Erdogan. An organisation which is not under AKP's control might well undermine it some day. Moreover this organisation was demanding a much greater say.

A more ambitious Erdogan, with a renewed sense of omnipotence and self-confidence, would not bear this situation forever. Moreover Erdogan had political hegemony which has been consolidated through various shifts within the state apparatus.

A settling of accounts with the Gülenists was inevitable. But the Gülenists had come up by a completely different route and stood on an independent ground. Far from bowing down to Erdogan, they apparently made high-handed demands. Apparently, the demands they made for more positions in the army and national intelligence service were not welcomed by Erdogan.

Up to a point these tensions were accommodated and brought to reconciliation. But the Rubicon was crossed and we are now on a new level with the investigations of corruption and the government attempt to abolish private teaching institutions which are the strongholds of the Gülenists educating their cadres. Yet these developments cannot be viewed as mere power struggle but fit into a bigger context.

## ERDOGAN'S AMBITIONS

**Capitalist development in Turkey has reached the level of a sub-imperialism. The question now is what kind of policies is this stage to be reflected in on an international level.**

On the basis of Turkey's rapid capitalist development Erdogan is increasingly following a more ambitious and risky path in foreign policy.

What would be the place of a sub-imperialist Turkey, with its 17th biggest economy in the world, membership of G20, its international investments? Would it be a sub-imperialist Turkey obediently following the US policies in the region and getting its modest share, or a relatively more independent sub-imperialist Turkey with much more greed? That was the choice in front of Turkey's rulers.

Erdogan has chosen the latter, more risky option.

Viewing himself as becoming a leader of the region, of the Muslim world, and a world leader, Erdogan seemed at first to be winning. But various conflicts with big imperialist powers and some other regional powers have begun to grow rapidly. On many critical questions such as Iran, Palestine-Israel, Syria, Egypt, building nuclear power plants in Turkey and buying large weapon systems (such as missile shield), Erdogan took unwelcome positions which crossed the line for the US and the western imperialist powers. Breaking relations with Israel constituted an important turning point.

The political course pursued under Erdogan's leadership has gone beyond the natural limits for a sub-imperialist power in the Middle East. And it is quite normal that such actions are punished. Although world capitalism is in a period of crisis, and there could be certain changes in the balance of forces within the system, as the law of uneven and combined development creates a certain room for manoeuvre, there are limits.

The US, the majority of the big groups of Turkish capitalism, and the Gülen movement are trying to reshape Turkish politics. They want to push out Erdogan, but not the AKP. The problem is his political course — a more independent and "adventurist" orientation for Turkish capitalism. All sections of capital are pleased with the new level of development, but are less so about conflicts with big imperialist powers.

Erdogan has turned into a "pain in the ass".

With his zeal to suppress all kinds of opposition, Erdogan puts pressure on many big capitalists. It is not possible for Turkey, with all its contradictions, to tolerate his move to authoritarianism. Erdogan's moves will only be accepted by his crony capitalists.

The Gülen movement seeks full accord with the US's policies; its highly educated cadres are more deeply integrated into the international capitalist system. The Gülenists are much more acceptable as Islamist partners for the USA.

Any serious move against Erdogan within the framework of bourgeois politics has to be based on strong resistance within the state. Erdogan cannot be defeated through regular political means — elections and parliamentary mechanisms. This is the meaning of the corruption investigations.

## NEW BATTLES

**The conflict we are witnessing today has a broader objective basis. It cannot overcome by a compromise between Gülenists and Erdoganists. The drive is to get rid of Erdogan and his ambitious policies.**

New political alternatives being developed. President Abdullah Gul from the AKP and Mustafa Sarigul (candidate for Istanbul mayor) from the CHP (Republican People's Party) side are the most prominent figures. The Gülenists support Sarigul in Istanbul. We can expect until the elections there will be many more leaks and scandals.

Islamist political cadres have lost their glamour, they can no longer pose as examples of decency and integrity. This too is a new phase in the political evolution of Turkey.

One immediate consequence is that Erdogan's dreams for a presidential or semi-presidential system are collapsed. Under siege from all sides he might step up authoritarianism.

2014 will be a year of elections and the working class will once again be forced into polarisations outside its own class interests: tailing Sarigul in the name of getting rid of Erdogan or rallying behind Erdogan. This trap needs to be avoided. All sides of this conflict are enemies of the working class and they all must be challenged. Moreover, we are living through a period in which the problem does not simply involve elections. We need to be prepared for much more complicated events on a greater scale.

**Getting rid of this order in which exploitation, plunder, spoil, corruption, bribery, injustice have gone rampant, in which working masses are suffering in the grip of imperialist war and economic crisis will only be possible if the working class mounts the struggle on the basis of its own independent class politics.**

• Abridged and adapted from: [bit.ly/erd-gul](http://bit.ly/erd-gul)

# Teachers' dispute must escalate

By Charlotte Zeleus

**Members of the National Union of Teachers will strike on Wednesday 26 March.**

Talks with the Department of Education are ongoing, but the government has made it very clear that these talks will not deal with the issues at the heart of the teachers' dispute. They will only discuss the implementation of policies, including the raising of the retirement age to 69, the end of final salary pensions, and the end of automatic annual pay progression.

Unfortunately, the other main teaching union, NASUWT, will not strike. This has left some NUT members in schools demoralised and frustrated and where emboldened headteachers are using NASUWT's inaction to press the advantage and keep schools open.

The refusal of other teacher unions to co-ordinate with NUT is the biggest help Michael Gove



could hope for. To counter this, activists on the ground should ensure picket lines talk to NASUWT members, and that joint NUT-NASUWT meetings are set up for after the strike day to discuss escalating action in their schools jointly on workload and local pay policies.

What happens after 26 March? A well-supported strike might force NASUWT to reconsider its position, but whether this dispute involves both

unions, or just the NUT, it cannot hope to win on the basis of very occasional one-day strikes. If all the strikes so far had been part of a strategically-planned, publicly-advertised, and less spread-out series of strikes — we may have been getting somewhere. Escalated action would be more possible on the basis of such a campaign, rather than Duke of York-style one-day spectacles.

Since 2012, the Local Associations National Action Campaign (LANAC) has argued for an escalating programme of action designed to win the dispute or force significant concessions.

Public campaigning, street stalls, rallies and meetings that the NUT has rightly been carrying out need to be backed up with a serious industrial strategy.

This continues to be the only way to revive the dispute and give real hope to the tens of thousands of teachers who will strike

on 26 March.

The attacks on teachers have increased since the 2011 pension cuts. There have been changes to national pay arrangements, and a huge expansion of academies. The NUT and the other teachers' unions need to address some of the core issues such as national pay, pension age, and excessive workload. To restore national pay rates, reduce the unsustainable workload, and ensure that these things apply to all state-funded schools, it will be necessary to draw up a clear set of demands.

A fight for a national contract, campaigned for by teacher trade unionists alongside parents and the wider public, could become a tool for breathing new life into a long-running dispute.

In February 2014, LANAC agreed to stand two candidates for the leadership of the NUT, Martin Powell-Davis for General Secretary and Patrick Murphy for Deputy General Secretary. This is an important step in challenging the existing leadership and its current (lack of) "strategy". Patrick and Martin have consistently argued and voted on the Executive for escalating, co-ordinating, and planning a calendar of industrial action as well as a more independent and assertive approach to winning NASUWT to action.

However challenging, the current NUT leadership electorally is not an end in itself.

**This must be part of opening up a serious discussion about industrial strategy throughout all layers of the union.**

• More: [nutlan.org.uk](http://nutlan.org.uk)

## 12.5% of the membership, 0% of the leadership

By an RMT Women's Conference delegate

**The Women's Conference of transport union RMT, held on 7-8 March in Glasgow, saw a new determination to campaign against sexism and for women workers' rights and to tackle the under-representation of women within the union.**

Guest speakers included North Ayrshire and Arran Labour MP (and RMT Parliamentary group member) Katy Clark and Scottish TUC Assistant Secretary (and former railworker and RMT activist) Ann Henderson.

The conference passed a resolution noting that next year marks 100 years since the first woman joined RMT's predecessor the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR), and calling on the union to organise centenary events. A century on, women are 12.5% of the union's membership but 0% of its national leadership, as all RMT's officers and national executive members are men.

The union's current internal structures review provides an opportunity to address this, and delegates pledged to propose to their branches action to secure representation for women.

The Conference passed four other resolutions:

- giving factual information about domestic violence in order to expose common myths and challenge victim-blaming, and asking the union to train representatives on the issue;

- on "distressing and isolating" sexual assault and harassment at work, asserting that "RMT should be able to offer the best possible support for women in these situations and should try to tackle the culture where this behaviour arises";

- demanding improved maternity and parental leave;

- expressing opposition to the publication on the union's website of a poster advertising a charity fundraising event that included the sexist portrayal of a bikini-clad "ring girl".

Conference delegates were excited and inspired by presentations from rank-and-file delegates about international campaigns: Becky Crocker and Christine Willett had attended the International Transport Workers' Federation's Women's Conference in New Delhi.

**Janine Booth reported on the work of the European Transport Workers' Federation's Women's Committee.**

## The left in the London NUT elections

By Martin Thomas

**In the NUT Executive elections for Inner London, for which ballot papers were posted out on 19 March, the SWP has allied with Alex Kenny to try to remove Martin Powell-Davies from the Exec.**

Powell-Davies is a member of the Socialist Party, but has consistently been among those on the NUT Exec arguing for ongoing and escalating industrial action focused on definite demands (not just an appeal to Tory minister

Michael Gove to "consider compromise" with the NUT).

Nominally the Exec has a left majority; but in fact every major vote has been decided by a de facto alliance of the CDFU (one of the left factions), the "soft left" of the STA (another left faction), and the incumbent full-time officials, with the old right wing.

Kenny is the leading figure in that STA "soft left", and an Inner London Exec member. In the current election he is campaigning jointly with SWPer Jess Edwards to remove Powell-Davies from the Exec.

The leaflets from Kenny and Edwards say little other than that they like education and dislike Gove, but their hope must be that Edwards will win enough votes on the strength of being a woman and a primary teacher to displace Powell-Davies.

**Solidarity urges Inner London teachers to vote for Powell-Davies, who will also be contesting the next NUT General Secretary election in an alliance with AWL member Patrick Murphy as candidate for Deputy General Secretary.**

## Ealing hospital workers' seven-day strike



By Ira Berkovic

**Outsourced health workers at Ealing Hospital in West London struck for seven days from Friday 14 March.**

They are currently paid £6.31 an hour, 44% less than the lowest-paid directly-employed NHS staff. The workers are employed by Medirest, an outsourcing company which provides domestics,

porters, catering workers, and other staff services. They are members of the GMB union, and have already struck for four days since the start of 2014.

**Bosses have offered a pay increase to 2015, but the workers are holding out for terms closer to those of their directly-employed colleagues, including improved sick pay, which they do not currently receive.**



**Cleaning workers at the School of African and Oriental Studies (SOAS) in central London struck again on Friday 21 March. They are fighting for the same terms and conditions as directly-employed workers. For more, see [bit.ly/soas-j4c](http://bit.ly/soas-j4c)**



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## Self-determination for Ukraine!

By Colin Foster

**Ukrainians are a nation. The nation includes both those who have Ukrainian as first language, and those who have Russian as first language, just as the Irish nation includes many who have English as first language.**

Ukrainians are a nation long oppressed under Russian and other foreign rule. They have a right to self-determination.

Within Ukraine, there is exceptionally sharp class inequality. A few oligarchs are hugely wealthy and pay few taxes. The majority are much poorer even than in neighbouring Belarus or Romania.

The movement which got rid of Ukraine's corrupt president Yanukovich was against both Yanukovich's subservience to Russia, and his social policies.

The social revolt can win only by also taking on the new Ukrainian government, dominated by oligarchs. As it takes on that government it will also take on the IMF and the Western banks, which hold Ukraine in hock.

Between oligarchs and inequality, and oligarchs and inequality plus national op-

pression, Ukrainians, rightly, prefer to be rid of the national oppression.

The duty of socialists and democrats, therefore, is both to support the whole people of Ukraine against Russian threats and possible invasion, and to support Ukraine's left and Ukraine's working class against the oligarchs and the banks.

Russian troops out! Demand the Western powers cancel Ukraine's debts! Support the Ukrainian left in its efforts to create a "third pole" against the oligarchs of all stripes!

On 21 November 2013 the crisis was opened by Yanukovich, under Russian pressure, cancelling a deal with the EU.

After three months of escalating street demonstrations, strongest in western Ukraine but also spreading to the east and centred in Kiev, which has a Russian-first-language majority, Yanukovich fled on 22 February and Ukraine's elected parliament appointed a new government.

On 27 February Russian troops went on to the streets in Crimea, surrounded the Crimean parliament, and forced the creation of a new Crimean government led by a pro-



**Ukrainian crew members pictured lying on the deck of the Khmelnytsky after it was seized in Sevastopol by pro-Russian troops**

Russian party which got just three seats out of 100 in Crimea's last elections.

After 17 days of escalating Russian military intervention in Crimea, that Russian-installed government ran a referendum on 16 March, boycotted by Crimea's indigenous Tatar people and many Ukrainians, which of course showed a majority for Crimea being reintegrated into Russia.

On 21 March Russia annexed Crimea. The same day, Ukraine's government signed a deal for links with the EU.

Some socialists describe Ukraine's deal with the EU as symmetrical with Russian annexation. However bad EU policies are — and in Greece they are despicable — the equation is false. Even a workers' state would sign trade and association deals with capitalist

powers, and have to accommodate, to some degree, to the rapacious rules of the capitalist world market. Being invaded and ruled by a foreign power is different.

The US and EU powers have been hesitant about sanctions against Russia, because some EU countries in particular fear losing Russian gas supplies and profits from trade with Russia; but they have imposed sanctions on some Russian

oligarchs.

On 23 March a NATO chief warned that Russia was massing troops on Ukraine's eastern border. The Russian government denied it. On 24 March Ukraine told all its troops to withdraw from Crimea for their own safety.

Putin's army may invade eastern Ukraine to secure the areas which supply Crimea, or to annex a strip of land along the south of Ukraine, connecting Russia to the Russian-military-occupied area of Trans-Dniestr in Moldova. Or it may just use its military threats, and its ability to stir up sections of the Russian (not just Russian-speaking) minority in eastern Ukraine, as leverage to pull the whole of Ukraine back under its domination.

On 23 March, surprisingly, Alexander Lukashenko, the thuggish and usually very Russian-aligned president of Belarus, commented ruefully that "a bad precedent has been created" by Russia's annexation of Crimea.

**Even usually pro-Russian people in the region are alarmed by Putin's imperialism.**

## Putin threatens all of Ukraine

**The Autonomous Workers' Union, an anarcho-syndicalist group in Ukraine, has appealed for international working-class solidarity against Putin's aggression.**

**On February 27, 2014, pro-Russian chauvinists of Crimea, supported by Berkut riot police and Russian Black Sea Fleet committed a military coup in Crimea. Right now it's already obvious that the government of "Russian Unity" movement headed by Aksionov is no more than a puppet of the Kremlin regime.**

We don't regard Ukraine's territorial integrity and inviolability of its borders as a value, we are against violent "pacification" of Crimea, but we think that the status of Crimea should be defined with due regard to the opinion of the Crimean Tatar minority.

The latest events show that Putin is not going to limit himself with the annexation of Crimea. The aim of the imperialist Kremlin regime is to expand the Russian practices on all the territory of Ukraine.

Thereby the Russian regime proved to be the main threat

to the interests of the proletariat at the post-Soviet area.

We are opponents of war and militarism. But we think that in this situation conscious proletarians can rely on nobody but themselves.

There's no point in waiting for "rescue" from Nato. Ukrainian nationalist politicians can only organize defence of a part of the territory at best. The war can be averted only if proletarians of all countries, first and foremost Ukrainian and Russian, together make a stand against the criminal regime of Putin.

Joint action by the Ukrainian and Russian proletariat and all progressive democratic forces which will put an end to Putin's regime, will also mean an end to the current neoliberal-orientated nationalist regime in Ukraine.

While for the leftists and anarchists of the West it's high time to cut ties with the so-called "anti-imperialism" which comes down to support of Putin's regime against the US.

**No war between nations, no peace between classes!**

• 2 March 2014. <http://bit.ly/awu-crim>

## Birmingham student victory

**The campaign against police and management victimisation of student activists in Birmingham has ended in victory.**

Following protest at Birmingham University in January at which police kettled, attacked and arrested dozens of students, and the university suspended the arrestees and banned them from campus, all charges have now been dropped and all students re-instated.

This victory comes after a letter, signed by 225 members of academic staff, was delivered to university management to condemn the suspensions and their implications for freedom of speech and protest.

**The University branches of Unison and UCU came out in support, voting to back the suspended students and join the campaign. The Guild of Students and Birmingham UCU, were also due to demonstrate on Wednesday 26 March.**