

# Solidarity & Workers' Liberty



No 299 9 October 2013 30p/80p

[www.workersliberty.org](http://www.workersliberty.org)

For a workers' government

Tamarod in Gaza

page 3

لِسْحَبِ الثَّقَةِ مِنْ نِظَامِ الْاِخْوَانِ  
**REBEL... تمرد**



Why the Mail hates  
Ralph Miliband

page 9

Slavoj Žižek  
on film

page 10



# ROYAL MAIL

# SALE

See

page 2

# IS TORY

# RIP-OFF

## What is the Alliance for Workers' Liberty?

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

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

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty aims to build solidarity through struggle so that the working class can overthrow capitalism. We want socialist revolution: collective ownership of industry and services, workers' control and a democracy much fuller than the present system, with elected representatives recallable at any time and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

We fight for the labour movement to break with "social partnership" and assert working-class interests militantly against the bosses.

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

We are also active among students and in many campaigns and alliances.

### We stand for:

- Independent working-class representation in politics.
- A workers' government, based on and accountable to the labour movement.
- A workers' charter of trade union rights — to organise, to strike, to picket effectively, and to take solidarity action.
- Taxation of the rich to fund decent public services, homes, education and jobs for all.
- A workers' movement that fights all forms of oppression. Full equality for women and social provision to free women from the burden of housework. Free abortion on request. Full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Black and white workers' unity against racism.
- Open borders.
- Global solidarity against global capital — workers everywhere have more in common with each other than with their capitalist or Stalinist rulers.
- Democracy at every level of society, from the smallest workplace or community to global social organisation.
- Working-class solidarity in international politics: equal rights for all nations, against imperialists and predators big and small.
- Maximum left unity in action, and openness in debate.
- If you agree with us, please take some copies of *Solidarity* to sell — and join us!

### Contact us:

● 020 7394 8923 ● [solidarity@workersliberty.org](mailto:solidarity@workersliberty.org)

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

● Printed by Trinity Mirror

## Get Solidarity every week!

- Trial sub, 6 issues £5 ○
- 22 issues (six months). £18 waged ○  
£9 unwaged ○
- 44 issues (year). £35 waged ○  
£17 unwaged ○
- European rate: 28 euros (22 issues) ○  
or 50 euros (44 issues) ○

Tick as appropriate above and send your money to:  
20e Tower Workshops, Riley Road, London, SE1 3DG  
Cheques (£) to "AWL".

Or make £ and euro payments at [workersliberty.org/sub](http://workersliberty.org/sub).

Name .....

Address .....

I enclose £ .....



# Keep it public! Fight on the principle!

By a CWU member

**Big investors, and a fair few middle-class people who can afford £750 to bid for shares, stand to make large windfall gains as Royal Mail shares are allocated and start trading, from 15 October.**

The government has deliberately set the share price low to get a successful sell-off, and the moneyed classes are confident that new private bosses will be able to get good profits by beating down postal workers' pay and conditions.

On 16 October the postal workers' union CWU will announce the result of a ballot on strikes to win guarantees on terms and conditions. However, the union's campaign so far has been far too defensive.

The story of the campaign against Royal Mail Privatisation by the CWU starts over 13 years ago.

When Derek Hodgson was General Secretary the union went along with the liberalisation proposals of the 1997-2001 Labour government in the Postal Services Act 2000. It did so on the basis that the publicly owned Royal Mail (where the majority of postal CWU members work) should be free to compete in the liberalised postal market. The

liberalisation of the postal sector in the UK was undertaken by Labour well in advance of legislation on liberalisation from Europe.

AWL members who were CWU activists at the time opposed the proposals. The opportunity to argue a workers' case against liberalisation and competition and instead for proper public planning and investment was lost.

The framework for future privatisation was in place from then. The "private sector disciplines", i.e. cost cutting to be competitive, were used, with the result that there was pressure to reduce Royal Mail employees' terms.

### CLOSURES

**There were closures of major Mail Centres, and rounds of job cuts, as well as an increase in temporary and casual workers.**

This experience contrasts with that of the privatisation of BT where the share sale happened in advance of the development of a fully liberalised market. Though the telecoms privatisation took place in 1984 it was not until the early 1990s that there were major job cuts.

The postal regulatory structure brought in after the Postal Services Act mir-

rored the consensus in other utilities — that the major player (in this case Royal Mail) has to meet universal obligations on access for a fair "playing field". This rigmarole is in reality about giving guaranteed profits to new entrants to the market, which can choose the most profitable areas of the business.

The CWU has undertaken recruitment drives in the various private firms operating in the sector, but too little too late. Other unions have already got members and in some cases recognition in these firms.

Late in the life of the last Labour Government Peter Mandelson followed through the logic of liberalisation, and pushed for part privatisation. By then the union had a different leadership under Billy Hayes, who was in principle against the model of liberalisation and privatisation. A vigorous and successful campaign was undertaken, which included fighting within the Labour Party.

Since the 2010 election, though, has sought only to achieve ameliorating amendments to Con-Dem legislation. Both Coalition partners are in favour of postal privatisation, the Liberal Democrats having a worse track record on this

than the Tories!

The CWU campaign has recently focused on a boycott of the private companies who compete with the publicly owned Royal Mail. This has gone down well with union members and has rallied opposition, but it is a mistaken strategy long term because it conflates postal workers' interests with those of Royal Mail, which operates as a business within a liberalised market.

### POSITIVE

**A motion for renationalisation was overwhelmingly passed at Labour Party conference.**

But shadow minister Chukka Umunna refuses to give a clear position. It's like going through the motions... and the share sale is going ahead.

The current campaign of the union accepts in effect there is no alternative to a "company union" approach. You can't keep postal services public without arguing positively for public postal services, including greater public investment, and against the liberalised model.

**To keep the sector unionised the CWU needs to appeal to all workers in the postal sector on the basis of class solidarity.**

## Something to learn from Tea Party

**The Republicans in the US Congress seem set to take the US budget deficit up to the wire on 17 October.**

And possibly beyond, to the point where the US government not only sends workers home unpaid, but fails to pay its bills. If president Obama and the Democrats campaigned boldly for the principle of universal health insurance — which is what the Republicans want to destroy — then the Republicans could not get away with it. Or even if the Democrats were bold about using unusual financial expedients.

But the chief political lesson is on how politicians who are militant and determined can use legislative assemblies to do much more than the usual point-scoring or polite opposition. The tactic of deliberate parliamentary obstruction was pioneered in Britain, by Irish nationalist MPs led by Charles Stuart Parnell in the 1870s and 1880s, when all Ireland was ruled by Britain. Their activity helped win many concessions for Ireland, including, eventually, the principle of Home Rule.

**Labour should follow that model.**

## Robinson quits EDL

**On 8 October English Defence League leaders Tommy Robinson and Kevin Carroll quit the EDL.**

Robinson said it was because of the "dangers of far-right extremism".

According to the EDL-watching website "EDL News", this "signals the end of the EDL".

Unusually for a far-right group, the EDL has had no social programme and very little ongoing organisation. It has organised a series of street demonstrations, some fairly large, many small, often violent, since spring 2009. Nominally these are "against Islamic extremism": in fact they are mostly mobilisations of

**EDL NOT WELCOME HERE!**

gangs of football supporters who gather in pubs, drink heavily, and then go out looking for Muslims (or people who "look Muslim") to harass.

Ever since the EDL emerged, Solidarity has argued that it is an unstable formation, but one with the built-in danger that it serves as a terrain within which a nucleus can regroup a new militant fascist organisation.

**We still need to be on guard for that danger.**

# Anti-Hamas plan for 11 November

By Heather Shaw

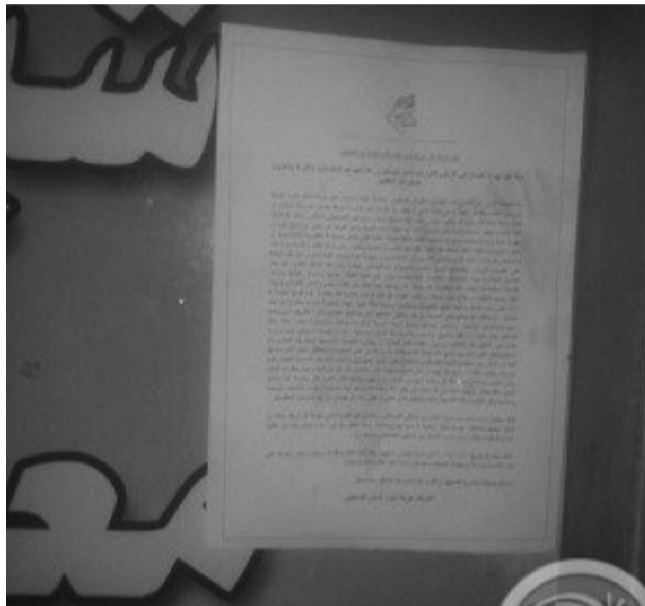
In recent months, a Facebook page with 25,000 followers has appeared under the title of the Palestinian Tamarod Movement.

Tamarod ("rebellion" in Arabic) in Egypt collected more than 22 million signatures to oust Morsi. The Palestinian reimagining of this movement is creating a stir in the Gaza Strip by calling a day of protests against the Hamas government on 11 November.

Tamarod activists have boldly distributed a statement of intent directly to the homes of some Hamas leaders, taking to the streets in the early hours to avoid arrest. They have even emblazoned expressions of solidarity on the offices of the Maan News Agency and Al Arabiya, which were closed down by the government recently. They claim nearly 7,000 signatures on a similar petition to that used against Morsi.

Although attempting to downplay the significance of Tamarod in Gaza by dismissing it as "a movement on Facebook...nothing more than that", Hamas security officials have begun questioning and arresting large numbers of activists and journalists, as well as politicians, about their involvement with and knowledge of Tamarod.

Hamas says Tamarod are pointing their frustrations in the wrong direction. Prime Minister Ismail Haniyah said on 21 August:



Tamarod statement of intent

"We are hearing some calling for rebellion... I support the rebellion, but a rebellion against occupation... this language should not be used amongst Palestinians. Do not embark on this dangerous path. It is a path which could have severe consequences on our unity".

Threats to bring down Tamarod are rising in intensity as 11 November approaches. The Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, circulated a photograph showing an armed member of the organisation along with the slogan "We prepare in silence, and Tamarod's funeral tomorrow will come, 11/11 is our deadline".

On 6 September Hamas held a news conference with a short video "confession" from an alleged

Tamarod activist saying that they were receiving funding and support from Israel, Fatah, and intelligence services from across the Middle East, to execute a coup in Gaza in the next six months. Tamarod activists insist that the only funding they get comes directly from monthly contributions from members.

Abu Yamen of Tamarod says that plans for 11 November will continue despite the arrests and brutalisation of activists. He says: "People can no longer be silent facing this injustice, oppression and deteriorating economic situation. Every citizen will be a leader and will take a camera to record what will happen."

"The march will be a march of mobile phones".

# On hunger strike to stay

By Vicki Morris

Thirty women asylum seekers from Pakistan and elsewhere, have staged a hunger strike at Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre against forced deportation.

Some of the women were part of a group scheduled for removal from the UK on a charter flight to Lahore, Pakistan on 1 October. The

Pakistani women were basing their asylum claim on gender-based persecution. A statement by 14 of the hunger strikers says:

"We need justice, we need safety and we need protection. Women seeking asylum from gender violence, honour killing, forced marriage, domestic abuse, trafficking need time to prove their cases. We have had no access to legal aid... because of huge waiting list

due to mass round up no due process".

Yarl's Wood in Bedfordshire, Britain's largest immigration removal centre for women, holds up to 400 people and is run by private outsourcing company Serco under contract from the Home Office.

There are currently calls for an investigation into allegations of sexual abuse of detainees by some staff.

# Global strikes and solidarity

## HONG KONG

The Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU) held a solidarity rally on 1 October at a Government office in Hong Kong.

The demonstration called for the release of Wu Guijun, imprisoned for organising with co-workers against job losses when the furniture factory where they worked re-locates.

According to the IUF trade union federation:

"The workers downed tools on 7 May and petitioned the local government to intervene. On 23 May, 300 workers were besieged by the police while marching to the City Government; more than 20 workers were arrested and detained, including Wu Guijun. All were eventually released except for Wu. According to his lawyer, Wu now faces criminal prosecution for 'assembling a crowd to disturb social order'."

Online petition: [goo.gl/oXShHn](http://goo.gl/oXShHn)



Police attack garment workers

## BANGLADESH

Over 200,000 textile workers across Bangladesh struck in early October.

Their demands were for at least a doubling of pay to 8000 taka (£63) a month. The minimum wage was last raised in 2010, and the government and factory bosses proposed a rise only from 3000 to 3600 taka (from £23 to £28 a month).

Textile factories employ over 3.6 million workers in the country, often with completely inadequate safety precautions, as seen in the collapse of the Rana Plaza factory complex in

April, which killed over 1000 workers.

More militant strikers have begun operating road blocks and forcibly shutting down factories. Over 100 factories were closed on 2 October.

Police attacked strikers with rubber bullets, injuring at least ten people.

## SOUTH AFRICA

On 4 October, platinum miners in Rustenberg struck against a proposed 4800 redundancies by mining giant Amplats.

Having pressured Amplats into reducing the proposed redundancies from 14000 to 4800, members of the Association of Mineworkers and Construction union (AMCU) are striking to save every single job. Last year, the police shot 34 wildcat strikers at Lonmin's Marikana platinum mine. But unemployment in South Africa is 25%.

The miners are refusing to give in.

# Italy: Letta pledges more pain

By Hugh Edwards

On Tuesday 1 October Silvio Berlusconi abandoned his threat to bring down the Italian government of Enrico Letta.

The whoops of joy from the international bourgeoisie were nothing compared to the orgasm of triumph from their counterparts in Italy, finally reassured that the

project begun around two years ago by Mario Monti to restore financial stability and competitive fitness would not be derailed by the desperate antics of a many-times-condemned billionaire criminal.

Prime minister Letta, in his address to parliament on 1 October, offered up hosannas to the wonderful achievements of Monti —

carried through with full support from his Democratic Party and the PDL of Berlusconi — and then promised even further "painful reforms". These will add to the misery of an official unemployment rate of 12% (40% among the young), average family incomes reduced to the buying power of the late 80s, and the pillage of every in-

stitution of public life.

The birth of Letta's coalition five months ago evoked widespread anger within the Democratic Party, in the union confederations, and across the spectrum of left opinion. Yet the possible collapse of the government saw no-one arguing to re-shape the balance of forces in a mass working-class-led electoral challenge to the

politics and interests represented by the coalition.

All the union leaders, and the parliamentary fake left — Nicky Vendola's SEL — openly supported the government. The extra-parliamentary forces gathered behind the campaign "in defence of the Italian constitution" led by metalworkers' leader Maurizio Landini remained philistinely indiffer-

ent to the political crisis.

The effect can only be to further deepen confusion, cynicism and demoralisation among millions. The populist Five Star movement alone gave no support to the government.

It will be licking its lips at the prospect of the inevitable next round of crisis.

## Zero hours and workers' control

Edd Mustill



**Finally the widespread phenomenon of zero hours contracts has broken into the national consciousness, with a lot of coverage in the media.**

Unite estimate as many as 5.5 million workers could be on such contracts, perhaps a fifth of the national workforce. Ed Miliband felt compelled to promise to ban certain types of zero hours contract in his speech to the TUC last month.

Zero hours is so common in the service sector that it has become the norm in some chains; as much as 90% of the workforce in the case of Sports Direct. But it also afflicts other workplaces. Over 20,000 university staff are thought to be employed on the basis of zero hours.

This growth can be attributed more than anything to the decline of union power at the point of production. And its continued growth could serve to weaken the unions further because many of them have been slow to cotton on to the importance of organising casual workers.

So combating zero hours is key for unions to defend their own interests; retaining membership, protecting established terms and conditions, and preventing the undercutting of wages. Unions are perhaps beginning to move on this; the food workers' union BFAWU recently won, through strike action, the near eradication of zero hours and agency work at the Hovis/Premier Foods factory in Wigan.

### FLEXIBLE

**But the zero hours question also throws up wider questions about the nature of "work" and how it is organised.**

The defenders of zero hours make the point that "flexibility" is good – this is true. But a Mass1 survey for Unite found that only 13% of workers on zero hours contracts wanted to stay on one. Not surprising, because flexibility on the boss's terms means hell for the rest of us.

Many of the so-called "benefits" of flexibility actually only show up the sketchy nature of zero hours work. After all, what's better? Giving up shifts (and pay) to deal with a personal crisis, or being properly covered with good holidays and sick pay?

It would be a missed opportunity if trade unionists limited our demands to guaranteed hours. We can take it a step further and argue that workers should collectively decide how work is shared out. Why? Because we don't want people structuring every aspect of their life around work. And we want to affirm the principle of union control of workplace procedures, build the confidence of unions to put forward positive proposals for how work can be shared.

Unite are calling for "a restoration of sector level collective bargaining" to tackle zero hours. It sounds like what they have in mind could be a return to the old Wages Boards, the merits of which are debatable. Of course, this won't happen, particularly in unorganised sectors and particularly under a Tory government, without massive industrial campaigns calling for it.

**On a local level, union branches which feel confident enough should start to assert themselves over working practices as the Hovis bakers have done, and draw up plans for the sort of workplaces we want to see.**

## Stalin's Great Secret

Eric Lee



**This summer marks the hundredth anniversary of the drafting of a letter which revealed one of history's greatest secrets. Or maybe not.**

The letter in question is dated July 12, 1913 and is signed by Colonel Alexander Eremin, head of the Special Section of the tsarist Department of Police. Writing from the police headquarters in St. Petersburg, Eremin informs a captain in the distant Siberian town of Yeniseisk that one of the revolutionaries who has just been deported to his jurisdiction is, in fact, a former police collaborator.

The agent's name is Josef Vissarionovich Djughashvili – better known to us today as Stalin.

According to Eremin, Stalin began giving information to the police following his 1906 arrest in Tbilisi, continued working for them in Baku, and then again in St. Petersburg. By the time the letter was written, Stalin had broken from the police following his election to the Bolshevik Central Committee.

The problem with Eremin's letter is that no one knows if it is genuine.

The letter first surfaced, apparently, in the 1930s and there is reason to believe that Trotsky saw it, or knew of its existence. But Trotsky chose to reject the view – then widely held – that Stalin had probably been a double agent.

In the mid 1940s the letter surfaced again in New York, having been passed around among White Russian emigres.

It was finally published in 1956 as a front cover story in *Life Magazine*, followed up by a book-length treatment by journalist Isaac Don Levine. Levine had authored the first English language biography of Stalin a quarter century earlier and considered the letter to be genuine.

Most scholars disagreed.

Within a few years, the letter was largely forgotten.

But when Mikhail Gorbachev suddenly opened up Soviet society to a measure of free discussion in the 1980s, the letter resurfaced as Russian historians resumed the discussion of Stalin's early career and possible role as a police spy.

Having studied the history of the letter for several years, my own view is the same as that of historian and diplomat George F Kennan, who said that the letter is "one of those curious bits of historical evidence of which it can only be said that the marks of spuriousness are too strong for us to call it genuine, and the marks of genuineness are too strong for us to call it entirely spurious."

Among the aspects of the letter that raise the possibility that it is genuine is the extraordinary story of Stalin's 1906 arrest in Tbilisi, today the capital of Georgia.

## Our hemline, our choice

Letter



**Many young women attending secondary school will be aware of the almost fanatically zealous way schools pursue a particular aspect of the uniform policy: namely the length of the school skirt.**

Schools routinely rebuke pupils for any length deemed too short, remind us to check our skirts before going into assembly, and occasionally deliver an admonitory spiel with a threat of some form of sanction following.

Usually this is done under the pretext that "male staff will feel uncomfortable" or even sometimes about how members of the general public feel about our attire.

A cursory examination reveals these reasons as deeply problematic. Using male staff as justification for school policy disturbingly transmutes school students into sexual objects and carries the dangerous implication that what we wear is responsible for whether we are objectified or not.

This message must be fiercely combated at every turn.

Adjusting our skirt lengths for the benefit of the "general public" suggests that the public have a right to control what

Most accounts of Stalin's life make no mention of such an arrest. But one place it is mentioned is in Trotsky's unfinished biography of Stalin, which was published at about the same time as Levine and the White Russians began their quest to get the Eremin letter published.

Trotsky's book – which rejects Stalin's possible role as an informer – nevertheless includes a chronology and notes his 1906 arrest.

If Stalin was arrested in 1906, it was probably at the time of the police raid on the underground printing press in a Tbilisi neighbourhood called Avlabar. Like nearly everything else in Georgia at the time, this would have been a Menshevik-controlled press. Stalin was one of the very few Lenin loyalists in that region of the Russian empire.

But this was a time when Bolsheviks and Mensheviks were forced to work together, and shortly after Stalin learned of the location of the Avlabar press, the police closed it down, making many arrests. Stalin may have been the one who tipped the police off.

### SUSPICION

**If Stalin was one of those arrested, and if he took up an offer to become a collaborator, he would have been swiftly released. This would have awakened suspicion, and would almost certainly have been covered up.**

Over the years, several biographers of Stalin – admittedly, a minority – have accepted that the circumstantial evidence of Stalin's collaboration with the police is overwhelming. But hardly any of them believe that the Eremin letter is genuine.

A century later, one might ask if it matters. I think it does. For many decades, many on the revolutionary left – probably most – accepted that Stalin was a genuine communist with whom one might have disagreements. Some went so far as to say that once in power, Stalin even committed violations of socialist legality. The Trotskyists of course went further and accused him of betraying the revolution.

But what if that betrayal pre-dated the revolution by a decade or more?

In the end, Stalin created a police state that made the tsarist police seem like amateurs. His half-dozen escapes from prisons and exile under tsarist rule became impossible once he was at the helm of the Russian state. He learned the lessons well from a poorly organized political police; the GPU and NKVD of his era were far more efficient and ruthless than their tsarist predecessors.

**Stalin, it may turn out, was not a genuine revolutionary who was corrupted by power. He may well have been corrupted by weakness, a young, fearful man in the clutches of the police, accepting an offer that he could not refuse.**

we wear – that a woman should dress for the gratification of others, robbing her of her own agency as an individual. Let us not forget that what is deemed an "appropriate" length is nothing more than an arbitrary judgement – every single aspect of regulating skirt length is suffused with the worst kinds of patriarchal moralism that causes harm to women on a daily basis.

There is many a running joke based on this and other nonsensical facets of uniform policy (how does nail varnish affect our ability to learn?). However, we must understand that this is their point: that they are nonsense. They are not in place to serve our educational betterment; they are there as an insistence on submission to authority even when, or more truthfully especially when, it is senseless to do so. They are there to get us accustomed to a societal structure where the vast majority of us will be systematically disempowered and expected to accept this state, preferably without question.

**The struggle against uniform regulations under the shadow of capitalism's everyday horrors may seem a tad frivolous. But the school is the place where we learn and develop ourselves, and what better lesson to learn than that we are free to wear what we want rather than what others prescribe for us?**

Rida Vaquas, south-west London



## Lynch-mobbing blocks fight for better future

**Hamzah Khan's death through starvation in 2009, the discovery of his mummified body two years later and the recent conviction of his mother, Amanda Hutton, has brought a horrific case of neglect and abuse to public attention.**

Judge Roger Thomas QC said it was "as bad a case of unlawful killing of a child by a parent as it is possible to imagine".

From what we know, Hamzah was starved to death by extreme neglect from his mother, who was his sole carer. At the time of his death in December 2009, the four year-old child was still wearing a size 6-9 month baby-gro and a nappy. His mummified remains were found by a police support officer following complaints from a neighbour in 2011 about littering. That police officer raised the alarm when she saw the entire house was knee deep in rubbish.

We also know that Hamzah's father, Hutton's long-term partner Aftab Khan, was subject to a restraining order after he admitted to battering Hutton in 2008. Months after the injunction, he made complaints to the police and social services about Hutton's neglectful parenting. For the next three years Hutton managed to elude the authorities. She claimed that Hamzah was living with relatives hundreds of miles away.

Hamzah's oldest brother Tariq, 24, was the only other adult who knew about Hamzah's death. He claims Hutton had threatened to kill the other children if he went to the police. He says she put a knife to the five year-old's throat. He has been charged with preventing the burial of his brother and given a suspended sentence.

### HATE

**Hutton ticks a lot of boxes for being the a public hate-figure. Not only is she a neglectful single mother with an alcohol problem.**

She also had seven other children by an Asian father. And perhaps worst of all as far as the tabloid press is concerned — she fraudulently claimed child benefit.

Perhaps more shocking than the death itself, is the fact that this woman was so isolated that she managed to slowly kill her child over a period of three years and then keep the child's death a secret for a further two years while five other children scratched out a survival in her house.

This woman was so isolated that she only came to the attention of another human being when the rubbish and filth that had filled her home had reached a point where it was spilling out the door. Neighbours spoke of their amazement when police brought five children out of the house. They say they had never seen the children before and did not know they were living there.

Amanda Hutton is undoubtedly a loathsome individual. But individuals make choices and act within a broader social context. So however difficult and painful it is, this situation deserves to be understood. Even if our attempts at understanding are partial or inadequate, we should not fear those attempts.

What sort of world creates such a person? What sort of world do we live in where such horrors are possible?

It would be simplistic in the extreme to say that the death

of this child was a result of the capitalist system. Many millions of people live in this society and do not become child killers. But this child killer *does* live in a capitalist society and that society *did* create the circumstances in which this atrocity was possible.

The background to these events are that Amanda Hutton was abused for many years by her partner. She suffered from post-natal depression. She had sole responsibility for six children. She was lonely and alone. She maintained her pitiful existence on a cocktail of anti-depressants, alcohol and cannabis.

The Jeremy Kyle-esque witchhunt orchestrated by the bourgeois press does not allow us consider any of these circumstances.

Right-wing moral hysteria is a lot of noise to prevent us from thinking clearly about the deeper questions raised by this case. It is designed to create the impression that we live in an otherwise perfect world which is spoilt by a few moral degenerates. It puts a barrier to any deep understanding.

### LYNCH

**It equates understanding with excusing. It directs our attention towards lynch-mob vengeance and is a dog whistle for calling up all sorts of rotten prejudices about single mothers, ethnic minorities, and the poor.**

Mob mentality ensured that Hutton was sentenced to 15 years in prison. This sentence serves nobody. This woman can hardly be deemed a risk to anyone — except herself. A short period of incarceration to draw a line under these events and start some rehabilitation may be justified. But what is 15 years in prison going to achieve?

There will be a serious case review, but its conclusions will be inadequate. They will inevitably conclude that there was not enough cross-agency information sharing and that social services should be bolder in intervening.

Socialists have different answers. Our program addresses itself to the problems of poverty, depression and social isolation. We have very concrete demands for free childcare, well-funded children's services, play facilities, adult education, decent parental leave entitlements, funding for community services (leisure centres, parks, and self-organised groups that can help stop social isolation). Such things can ease the pressure on parents and lessen the isolating effects of child-rearing.

On top of these concrete demands we have broader aspirations for cultural, societal change. We want to abolish loneliness. We want everyone to have access to productive work and social wealth. We want to break down the divide between "work" and "life", between productive and reproductive labour. We want to create a new culture based on human solidarity, meaningful endeavour and abundance.

It is almost certain that abuses and atrocities will still occur in the socialist future. But there was something shockingly easy about Hamzah Khan's death that passes a damning judgement on our society.

**A socialist society, built on an international movement of working-class solidarity, would be a safer place for children. We owe it to this small child to fight for this future.**

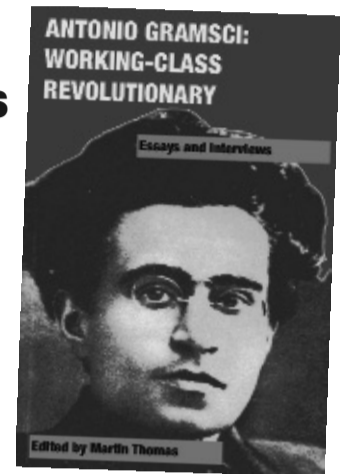
## BOOKS FROM WORKERS' LIBERTY

### Antonio Gramsci: working-class revolutionary

This booklet discusses a major recent study on the *Notebooks* — Peter Thomas's *The Gramscian Moment* — and argues that

**the *Notebooks* were in fact a powerful contribution to the working-out of revolutionary working-class strategy in developed capitalist societies.**

£4. Buy online at <http://bit.ly/gramsci>



### What is capitalism? Can it last?

With articles from Leon Trotsky, Max Shachtman, Maziar Razi and many more.

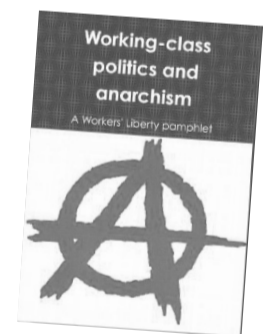
Edited by Cathy Nugent.

£5. [tinyurl.com/wicell](http://tinyurl.com/wicell)

### Working-class politics and anarchism

Debates between members of Workers' Liberty and comrades from various anarchist traditions.

£5. [tinyurl.com/wcpanarchism](http://tinyurl.com/wcpanarchism)

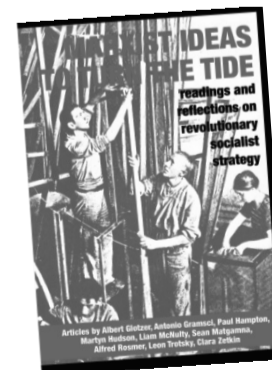


### Marxist Ideas to Turn the Tide

Readings and reflections on revolutionary socialist strategy. Articles

**on the history of the Communist International, the United Front, Workers' Government, revolutionary organisation and programme.**

£5. [bit.ly/m-ideas](http://bit.ly/m-ideas)



# What the Trotskyists did in Nazi-occupied France

In a way similar to that in which Ralph Miliband is being denounced as “the man who hated Britain”, in France, after the end in August 1944 of the Nazi occupation, the Trotskyists faced charges that they had not really opposed the Nazis.

The charges came mainly from the Stalinists of the French Communist Party (CP), but the CP was strong enough then, and the bourgeois authorities reluctant enough to authorise left-wing publications, that for a while the Trotskyists’ paper remained as illegal as it had been under the Nazis.

In the statement reprinted here, the Trotskyists outlined the real record of their activity during the war. There had in fact, at times, been confusion and disarray among the Trotskyists, but fundamentally they remained the only active force loyal to working-class and internationalist principles.

The main French Trotskyist organisation, the PCI, was declared legal in June 1945, but its paper *La Vérité* not until early 1946. Until then, it could buy paper on which to print *La*

*Vérité* only under the counter. The Trotskyist group grew substantially in 1944-7, because it was almost the only group supporting workers’ basic demands. The CP argued against strikes on the grounds that “national reconstruction” was the priority.

When the CP lost its place in government, in May 1947, and turned to backing strikes; the Cold War sharpened; and France’s capitalist economy began to recover from its shattered condition of 1944, the Trotskyists came under pressure on all sides. They suffered splits and losses. Minorities did the best they could to keep Trotskyist ideas alive until they again acquired a large audience, in the late 1960s: their vicissitudes are another story.

A book about the French Trotskyists’ activity in the war, by Yvan Craipeau, one of their leaders at the time, has recently been translated into English by David Broder, under the title *Swimming Against The Tide*, and is available at [bit.ly/craip](http://bit.ly/craip).

• French original of this article: [bit.ly/la-v-44](http://bit.ly/la-v-44)

***La Vérité* was an organ of “resistance” for four years. The first number of *La Vérité* was secretly mimeographed as early as August 1940.**

There was another clandestine organ, *L’Humanité*, (official organ of the French Communist Party) but all Parisians remember that it was then distributed in the streets with the tacit consent of the occupying forces and besides, officially applied for legal publication. *L’Humanité* appeared then without a single line against German occupation by virtue of the German-Russian agreement, which it warmly defended.

In contrast *La Vérité*, which had on its masthead “Neither Petain nor Hitler — For a Workers’ and Peasants’ Government” violently attacked Nazism, denounced the (Nazi) raiding of goods, appealed for regrouping against fascism on both sides of the demarcation line, etc. To our knowledge, *La Vérité* was the first organ of resistance.

For four years, in 19 mimeographed and 54 printed issues, *La Vérité* campaigned against fascism and the occupying imperialism. Its campaigns were oriented as follows:

## 1. Struggle Against Fascism

To this struggle was devoted the first editorial of *La Vérité*; since then, there has not been a single issue of *La Vérité* where it was abandoned. For the rest, let us recall that since the first months of the occupation, our youth comrades organized against the fascist gangs, assured the physical defence of the last free youth organization, the CLAJ (Youth Hostels). The Nazi authorities soon dissolved it and arrested its leaders.

## 2. Struggle Against Racism and Anti-Semitism

Also since the first issue.

## 3. Struggle for the Peoples’ Right of Self-determination

This right being applied to all the peoples including the colonies.

## 4. Struggle Against Imperialist War

We struggled with all our strength against imperialist war — which, as the *Franc Tireur* recalls, is the fruit of the whole of the capitalist regime — by appealing to the workers of all countries to unite, in order to overthrow the bourgeoisie.

That is why our masthead reads: “Workers of all countries, unite.” This is why our doctrine is that of the Socialist. United States of the World, which alone can prevent the return of fascism and war, and this is also why we denounced the manoeuvres of the occupying imperialism trying to make the working peoples pay for the imperialist war.

## 5. Struggle for Fraternisation

We appealed to the German soldiers to turn their arms against their officers and to fraternize with the workers of Europe, at the same time as we appealed to the workers of this country to address fraternally the workers dragooned by Hitler into his army, calling upon them to struggle together against fascism and capitalism. This propaganda is that for which *L’Humanité* reproaches us with most hatred, pretending that we want to “give our hand to the murderers.”

On the contrary, *La Vérité* repeats unceasingly that “we must execute the agents of the Gestapo, the SS, the reactionary officers. It is against them that we must give our hand to the German workers in uniform”.

Here, for instance, is one of our most recent posters, in Ger-

## Israeli military refuser Noam Gur speaking in Britain

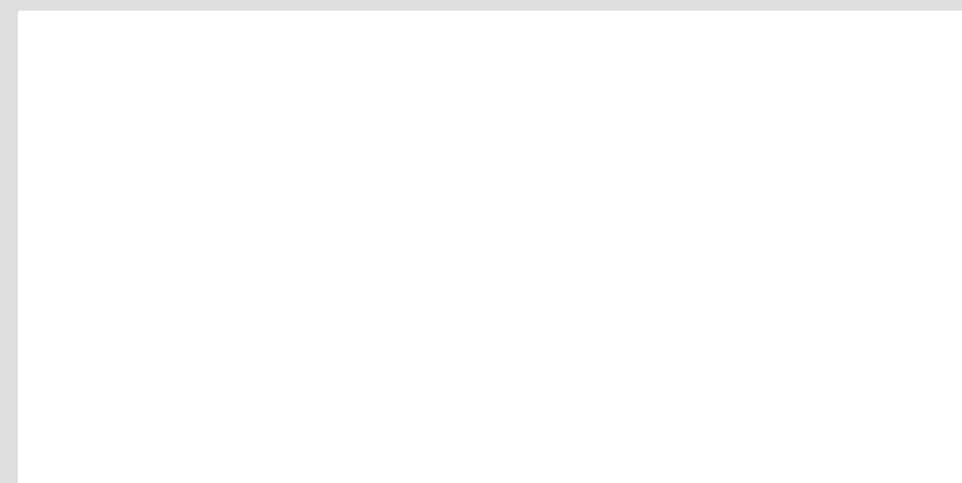
**Between 12 and 24 November 2013, a young woman jailed by the government of Israel for refusing to serve in its army of occupation will be speaking across the UK, on a tour organised by the socialist organisation Workers’ Liberty to make solidarity with the Palestinians and the Israeli left.**

Noam Gur is 19 years old, from Jerusalem. She is a queer and feminist as well as anti-militarist activist. In April 2012 she was jailed for refusing to serve in the Israeli Defence Force as part of compulsory national service.

Noam says: “I refused to join an army that has, since it was established, been engaged in dominating another nation, in plundering and terrorizing a civilian population that is under its control. The systematic destruction and dispossession that form part of a long-established policy of population-transfer, murder of non-violent demonstrators, the Apartheid wall, the massacre “operations” that the Israeli army chooses to carry out, and the rest of the daily violations of the human rights of the Palestinians have led, and continue to lead, to a long, indefinite, and preventable cycle of bloodshed.

“For years I have been told that this control is supposed to protect me, but information about the suffering caused due to terrorising the Palestinian population is omitted from the story. The road to achieving true and just peace is long and hard, but as I see it, these actions by the Israeli army only push it further away. Over this past decade, the Palestinian people have been increasingly choosing the path of non-violent resistance, and I chose to join this path and to turn to a popular, nonviolent struggle in Palestine — this, rather than to serve in the Israeli army and continue the violence.”

Today Noam is an activist with organisations including the feminist anti-militarist group New Profile, Anarchists Against the Wall, and Ta’ayush, a joint Jewish-Arab campaign



which takes direct action in defence of the Palestinians.

**Between 12 and 24 November, Noam will be speaking at trade union, student and other meetings across the UK. More details soon. The schedule will be tight, but if you’re interested in hosting a meeting or want to know about one in your area, get in touch: email Heather Shaw at [centre\\_stage\\_red@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:centre_stage_red@yahoo.co.uk) or ring Sacha Ismail on 07796 690 874.**

## Collage of wartime Trotskyist papers

man: "German soldier! Start the struggle immediately against Hitler, the Nazis, the Gestapo. Start the struggle immediately against all capitalists! Disarm your officers, form your Soldiers' Councils! Don't throw your arms away! Give them to us! Struggle with us, your brothers, the French workers! Bring the revolution to Germany and establish the power of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils!"

For *L'Humanité*, the whole German army is indistinguishably a mass of murderers, although in that same newspaper numerous facts are reported which demonstrate the contrary.

We even refer them to the Catholic newspapers like the *Témoignage Chrétien* to make them understand that the German soldiers have been forcibly integrated into the Wehrmacht and are Hitler's victims like the workers of the occupied countries.

## FRATERNISATION

**Most of them hate Hitlerism, and the revolution would have started in Germany long ago if they had not been welded to their General Staffs by the wall of national hatred which encircled them, and if they had seen a way out of their situation. This is why the Gestapo reacted violently against our fraternisation efforts.**

Thus, in one single case, in October 1943, against our comrades who edited *Der Arbeiter* in Brittany, 65 of our comrades, of whom 30 were German soldiers, were arrested, deported and murdered. On that occasion four members of our leadership were caught and tortured. But this repression did not prevent our work from continuing. Up to August 1944, we edited several organs in German, namely *Unser Wort* and *Arbeiter Und Soldat*, the latter distributed in the barracks, from 5,000 to 10,000 copies.

## 6. Struggle for Food Supplies

From the very beginning *La Vérité* called upon the working masses to constitute housewives committees, to demonstrate, to take into their hands the distribution of the food supplies, against the Hitlerites, the Vichyites, the monopolists and gangsters of the black market. This struggle of the city workers was conducted in close alliance with the peasant workers. This same campaign can be found in our most recent issues.

## 7. Struggle Against the Downfall of the Standard of Living

## and for the Workers' Demands

In our newspapers, we devoted a considerable section to the workers' struggles, promoting strikes and mass sabotage. We supported these campaigns of our central organ by hundreds of leaflets and plant newspapers. We participated in almost all the workers' movements and led a certain number of them.

## 8. Struggle Against Deportations

*La Vérité* was the first newspaper that warned the workers about the deportations that were being plotted, and that called upon them to resist collectively, and if they were forcibly compelled to leave, to advise them on the organization of resistance in Germany, mass sabotage, strikes, in liaison with the foreign and German workers.

## 9. Struggle in Support of the Maquis

Through workers' strikes and the solidarity of the population. Precise instructions were given in that sense to all our districts which backed the partisans everywhere by demanding democracy within their ranks

## 10. Struggle for the Workers' Militia

But for us the centre of the struggle is in the factory. We called upon the workers to organize themselves militarily in order to struggle against fascism: against that of Darnand, Déat and Doriot, and also that which might develop tomorrow under cover of the resistance movement and with the backing of big capital. On this point, our campaign has been parallel to that of *L'Humanité*.

## 11. Struggle for the General Strike

Always insisting that the strikes should retain the character of fights for workers' demands we supported all the strike slogans launched by the CGT (General Workers' Confederation). For instance in July-August 1944, we backed the slogan of general strike and of occupation of the plants. The militant workers know that our comrades were not the last ones in the plants that carried out these slogans.

## 12. Struggle for the Unity of Action of the Workers

We never ceased our appeals for the regrouping of the working class. In various regions our leaders have cooperated with that of several other groups. We also appealed in

**Renault strike, April 1947, started and largely led by Trotskyists. The Communist Party only supported once the strike had gathered irresistible momentum.**

particular to the Socialist and Communist Parties, asking them to carry out unity in action. Also from the beginning we fought against the traitors like Belin who tried to enslave the CGT while we struggled.

Such is, in its general lines, the policy which our comrades defended during four years despite the violent blows of the Hitler and Petain police.

We are asked whether we belonged among the "resisters". But let that question be asked of the hundreds of our militants who paid with their lives or their liberty for their attachment to our ideas and their devotion to the working class.

## OUR MARTYRS

**To speak only of a few of those shot, there is Meichler, ex-manager of Unser Wort who was among the first shot in Paris.**

There are Marc Bourhis and Guegen, the former secretary of our Concarneau district, the latter former Communist mayor of Concarneau who rallied to our ideas, both shot in October 1941 at Chateaubriant at the same time as Timbaud.

There are young workers like Lebacher of Drancy, teachers like Thiolon of the XIth (arrondissement, Paris), regional leaders like Cruau of Nantes, old militants like Wintley, leader of our German group in Paris, caught and murdered by the Gestapo in particularly atrocious circumstances, or young workers like Van Hulst of Suresnes, killed by a bullet in his head in a fight against the Darnand militia.

Among the hundreds of our comrades who were arrested and deported, let us name the various regional leaders like Chauvin from Bordeaux, Demaz from Marseilles, Albert of Paris, Gerard Block from Lyon, Henri from Nantes, all our leadership of the South zone in 1941, almost our entire leadership of Brittany in 1943. And eight members of our Central Committee; Souzin, Corvin, Leblanc, Regnier, Liber, Blasco, Filliatre, Marcoux, the first well-known to Comrade Saillant with whom he worked in the Building Federation and the latter having escaped wounded from the torture chambers of the Gestapo.

**Such are those whom *L'Humanité* dares call "Gestapo agents!" Such are those about whom we are asked whether they "resisted against Hitler!"**

• This abridged translation from *The Militant* 3 March 1945.

# Making the press really free

The Privy Council — an unelected body of medieval origin — will meet on Wednesday 30 October to see if it can modify the proposals for press regulation backed by the three big political parties and placate the big newspapers, most of whom backed a rival scheme already rejected by the Privy Council.

The press lords want to retain the right to smear and lie without redress; but the proposed regulations include such things as making publications outside their framework (like *Solidarity*) liable to worse penalties under Britain's libel laws, which already do much to protect the rich from criticism.

The socialist alternative was explained by the Russian revolutionary Lenin in this article shortly before the workers' revolution of October 1917.

The Mensheviks and the Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs) were reformist left parties, then governing Russia in uneasy coalition with open bourgeois parties. The Bolsheviks were Lenin's party; they would win a majority in the congress of workers' councils (soviets) in late October 1917, and take power.

## By V I Lenin

**The peasants are being deceived, fooled and intimidated by the utterly deceitful and counter-revolutionary bourgeois and "yellow" press, in comparison with which the press of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries (not to speak of the Bolsheviks) is very, very weak...**

The capitalists (followed, either from stupidity or from inertia, by many SRs and Mensheviks) call "freedom of the press" a situation in which censorship has been abolished and all parties freely publish all kinds of papers.

In reality it is not freedom of the press, but freedom for the rich, for the bourgeoisie, to deceive the oppressed and exploited mass of the people.

Indeed, take, say, the Petrograd and Moscow newspapers. You will see at once that it is the bourgeois papers ... that have by far the largest circulation. What makes for this prevalence? Not at all the will of the majority, for the elections have shown that in both capitals the majority (a gigantic majority, too) favours the democrats, i.e., the SRs, Mensheviks and Bolsheviks. These three parties command from three-quarters to four-fifths of the votes, while the circulation of the newspapers they publish is certainly less than a quarter, or even less than one-fifth, that of the whole bourgeois press (which, as we know and see now, supported the Kornilov affair directly and indirectly).

Why is that so?

### RICH

**Everyone knows very well why. Because the publication of a newspaper is a big and profitable capitalist undertaking in which the rich invest millions upon millions of rubles.**

"Freedom of the press" in bourgeois society means freedom for the rich systematically, unremittingly, daily, in millions of copies, to deceive, corrupt and fool the exploited and oppressed mass of the people, the poor.

This is the simple, generally known, obvious truth which everyone sees and realises but which "almost everyone" "bashfully" passes over in silence, timidly evades.

The question is whether and how this crying evil can be fought.

First of all, there is a very simple, good and lawful means... which workers should always bear in mind, for they will hardly be able to do without it when they have won political power.

That means is a state monopoly on private press advertising.

Look at [the bourgeois papers] you will see a multitude of private advertisements, which yield a tremendous income, in fact the principal income, to their capitalist publishers.

This is how bourgeois papers hold sway, how they get rich, and how they deal in poison for the people all over the world.

In Europe there are newspapers which... are delivered free... and yet yield their owners a sizeable income. These papers live by advertisements paid by private people, while the free delivery of the paper ensures the best circulation of the advertisements.

**In the wake of the 1905 revolution state censorship was relaxed in Russia. A period of intense political and intellectual creativity followed, which included the publication of satirical magazines.**

Then why cannot democrats who call themselves revolutionary carry out a measure like declaring private press advertising a state monopoly, or banning advertisements anywhere outside the newspapers published by the Soviets in the provincial towns and cities and by the central Soviet in Petrograd for the whole of Russia? Why must "revolutionary" democrats tolerate such a thing as the enrichment, through private advertising, of rich men, Kornilov backers, and spreaders of lies and slander against the Soviets?

Such a measure would be absolutely just. It would greatly benefit both those who published private advertisements and the whole people, particularly the most oppressed and ignorant class, the peasants, who would be able to have Soviet papers, with supplements for the peasants, at a very low price or even free of charge.

Why not do that? Only because private property and hereditary rights (to profits from advertising) are sacred to the capitalist gentlemen. But how can anyone calling himself a revolutionary democrat in the twentieth century, in the second Russian revolution, recognise such rights as "sacred"?!

Some may say it would mean infringing freedom of the press.

That is not true. It would mean extending and restoring freedom of the press, for freedom of the press means that all opinions of all citizens may be freely published.

What do we have now? Now, the rich alone have this monopoly, and also the big parties. Yet if large Soviet newspapers were to be published, with all advertisements, it would be perfectly feasible to

guarantee the expression of their opinion to a much greater number of citizens — say to every group having collected a certain number of signatures. Freedom of the press would in practice become much more democratic, would become incomparably more complete as a result.

But some may ask: where would we get printing presses and newsprint?

There we have it! The issue is not "freedom of the press" but the exploiters' sacrosanct ownership of the printing presses and stocks of newsprint they have seized!

Just why should we workers and peasants recognise that sacred right? How is that "right" to publish false information better than the "right" to own serfs?

Why is it that in war-time all sorts of requisitioning — of houses, flats, vehicles, horses, grain and metals — are allowed and practised everywhere, while the requisitioning of printing presses and newsprint is impermissible?

The workers and peasants may in fact be deceived for a while if such measures are made out to be unjust or hard to realise, but the truth will win through in the end.

### PRESSES

**State power in the shape of the soviets takes all the printing presses and all the newsprint and distributes them equitably.**

The state should come first — in the interests of the majority of the people, the majority of the poor, particularly the majority of the peasants, who for centuries have been tormented, crushed and stultified by the landowners and capitalists.

The big parties should come second — say, those that have polled one or two hundred thousand votes in both capitals.

The smaller parties should come third, and then any group of citizens which has a certain number of members or has collected a certain number of signatures.

This is the distribution of newsprint and printing presses that would be just and, with the Soviets in power, could be effected easily enough.

Then, two months before the Constituent Assembly, we could really help the peasants by ensuring the delivery to every village of half a dozen pamphlets (or newspaper issues, or special supplements) in millions of copies from every big party.

That would truly be a "revolutionary democratic" preparation for the elections to the Constituent Assembly; it would be aid to the countryside on the part of the advanced workers and soldiers. It would be state aid to the people's enlightenment, and not to their stultification and deception; it would be real freedom of the press for all, and not for the rich.

**It would be a break with that accursed, slavish past which compels us to suffer the usurpation by the rich of the great cause of informing and teaching the peasants.**



# The socialism the Mail hates

By Martin Thomas

**Paul Dacre, the Tory editor of the *Daily Mail*, is over-confident and nervy. So much so that he launched and has stuck to a claim that Labour leader Ed Miliband secretly pursues “the vision” of his Marxist father Ralph Miliband, who was “the man who hated Britain”.**

Often, usually, the Tories keep their support by presenting themselves as the safe, cautious option. They are the people with the expertise and habit of command to make cuts when necessity drives.

The times have become a little less usual. Chancellor George Osborne has announced a splendid economic recovery — and at the same time a plan to continue cuts to the far future and put everyone jobless beyond two years into compulsory unpaid labour.

Tory health minister Jeremy Hunt has declared a ban on the tiny 1% pay rise (a cut in real wages after inflation) promised to NHS workers.

Hesitantly, minimally, and without disavowing their early-2012 declaration that “we will keep all these cuts”, the Labour leaders have started talking left.

They will abolish the bedroom tax. They will repeal the Health and Social Care Act. They will not nationalise the energy companies, but at least peg prices for 20 months. They will empower councils to take over undeveloped building land. They will do something, they haven't said what, to promote the Living Wage.

The Tories see top pay, share prices, and dividend payouts all recovering nicely, but profit rates with a way to go yet, and opportunities yet unrealised in the depression economy to shift the balance of forces further against the working class. They want to indict all talk of curbing the inequality spiral.

Their minds probably sodden with Tory triumphalism, Dacre and the *Daily Mail* have overstepped themselves, pushing even right-wingers to dissociate.

By their slipshod attack, they have opened up a debate about left-wing ideas like Ralph Miliband's.

There are precedents. On 4 June 1945 Winston Churchill claimed that a Labour victory in the July 1945 general election would bring creeping totalitarianism. “A socialist policy is abhorrent to the British ideas of freedom... Socialism is in its essence an attack on British enterprise... A free parliament is odious to the socialist doctrine... No socialist system can be established without a political police... They would have to fall back on some form of Gestapo”.

## BACKFIRED

**The attack backfired. Probably some who previously hesitated about voting Labour were pushed that way when they saw that the Tories had no counter-argument better than an amalgam between Labour and Nazism.**

Another Tory ploy of the time connects up with the Miliband slur. On 16 June 1945, Harold Laski, then chair of the Labour Party, had just finished a general election speech in Newark, Notts. A Tory approached him and, reading from prompt cards, asked him two questions: why had Laski not served in the army in World War One, and why had he advocated violence?

The *Daily Express* and other papers owned by the same lord reported Laski as answering the second question: “If Labour could not obtain what it needed by general consent, we shall have to use violence”. The *Express* headlined: “New Laski sensation: socialism even if it means violence”.

The Tory press was already running “a stream of stories about ‘the red professor’, the eminence rouge behind the... voter-friendly figures of Attlee and Morrison” (Stefan Collini: *Absent Minds*). Laski was to them what Ralph Miliband is to the *Mail*, and with the advantage that he was alive.

Laski, like many social democrats, had come in the 1930s to think of himself as a sort of Marxist, and of capitalism as needing some sort of revolutionary overthrow. Of course he didn't say what the Tory press alleged: what “violence” could the Labour Party possibly muster to overpower, simultaneously, both “general consent” and the established capitalist military hierarchies?

Laski limited the repercussions for the general election by suing for libel. But he lost the subsequent libel case, in No-

vember 1946. The defence lawyer secured a Tory judge and a special jury, with high property qualifications. He told the jury that “even if Laski had not used the exact words attributed to him... they fairly represented... his writings and other speeches”.

Plucking at the strings with which dislike of “foreign” Jewish intellectuals like Laski and Miliband would resonate, the lawyer declared: “We have beliefs in many things which Mr Laski does not believe in at all. We believe in law and justice in England; we believe in fairness; we believe in religious beliefs”.

In the years that remained before Laski's death in 1950, his standing in the Labour Party was diminished.

In 1945-6 Ed Miliband's father Ralph Miliband was a student of Laski's. Like Laski, he was a left-wing Jewish intellectual. Unlike Laski, son of a prosperous British family, Miliband came from a working-class family of Polish origin which had settled in Belgium.

Ralph Miliband joined a left Zionist group, Hashomer Hatzair, in 1939. Among the other members of the group in Brussels was Abram Leon, who soon became a Trotskyist and in 1944 died in Auschwitz.

In May 1940 Miliband fled to Britain, with his father, from the invading Nazis. He was 16. His mother and sister found refuge with a sympathetic Belgian farmer.

In 1941, Miliband won a place to study at the London School of Economics, where Laski taught. He returned there after serving three years in the British navy. After his studies he became a lecturer at LSE, then at Leeds University, then at other universities.

He was, according to his student and friend Leo Panitch, “a rather uncomfortable and peripatetic supporter of the Bevanite Left inside the Labour Party in the early and mid-1950s”.

In 1957 Miliband joined the editorial board of a journal, *The New Reasoner*, launched by E P Thompson, John Saville, and other former members of the Communist Party who had quit after Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin and then Khrushchev's own invasion of Hungary.

Miliband himself had never been a member of the CP. His views on Stalinism were similar to those of Isaac Deutscher, author of a fine and admiring biography of Trotsky who yet believed that the USSR would gradually evolve into democracy.

Miliband, unlike Deutscher, opposed the 1956 Russian invasion of Hungary; but in 1988, in the Gorbachev era, he wrote: “Much that is happening in the Soviet Union constitutes a remarkable vindication of [Deutscher's] confidence that powerful forces for progressive change would eventu-

**The Mail claims Ralph Miliband “hated Britain”. Yet in the 1930s the Mail itself (and the Mirror, then also owned by Lord Rothermere) backed the fascist Blackshirts.**

ally break through seemingly impenetrable barriers... We take this opportunity to recall with gratitude... how great was his contribution to the understanding of the Soviet experience”.

Miliband's credulousness about Gorbachev's reforms did not make him a Stalinist, though I remember, around that time, heckling Miliband at one of the Socialist Conferences called by Tony Benn in Chesterfield. A Russian diplomat had been invited to speak. We protested at the idea that the “reforming tsar”, Gorbachev, was anything socialist. Miliband was on the platform, defending the invitation.

In 1960 *The New Reasoner* merged with another journal to become *New Left Review*. In 1962 Perry Anderson (aged 24) became editor of *New Left Review*, and slanted it towards importing slabs of continental-European Marxist text into a Britain depicted as dank and stultified.

Miliband, like most of the older contributors, dissented, and in 1964, with John Saville, launched a once-yearly journal called the *Socialist Register*, which continues.

In *The New Reasoner*, Miliband had argued: “Very high on that agenda, there is the need for socialists to make clear once again, but in the vocabulary of the 1960s, why common ownership of the means to life is the key to socialist change... The next job, however, is to carry this clarification to the Labour movement, in other words, to make socialists.”

“There is an audience, even if it is now a bored audience, in all that multitude of institutions which go to make up the Labour movement. Nor is the boredom of the audience a fixed factor...”

“There are some who yearningly look for a short cut. There isn't one. Now is the time to get in and push”.

## LAST

**In 1961 he published his most influential book, a history of the Labour Party entitled *Parliamentary Socialism*.**

At the time, most of the left, even the revolutionary left, subscribed implicitly to a “one last push” theory of socialism. The 1945 Labour government had done much of the work: a new Labour government pushed by the left would complete the necessary nationalisations. *Socialist Review*, the forerunner of the SWP, had expounded its own programme as a list of demands to be carried out by a Labour government.

Miliband showed that the Labour Party, even in its great days of 1945-51, whose achievements he did not scorn, had always operated within bourgeois limits. Much more than another push to the left was needed.

The analytical conclusion did not imply giving up on intervention in the Labour Party. Yet, some time around the mid-1960s, Miliband drifted out. He was active in the Centres for Socialist Education from 1966, but then, as far as I know, outside active politics until his death in 1994, apart from his brief involvement in the Chesterfield conferences.

In 1967 he wrote a series of letters to the Belgian Marxist Marcel Liebman, a contributor to the Trotskyist weekly *La Gauche*, about Israel. Lucid about Israeli government misdeeds, Miliband was also lucid in defence of the Israeli Jews' right to maintain their own national state. The exchange was published in 2006 with an introduction by the Lebanese-French Marxist Gilbert Achcar.

In 1969 Miliband published another important book, *The State in Capitalist Society*, which showed the capitalist class nature of the modern bourgeois-democratic state in factual

*Continued on page 10*

# Coffee table radicalism

Matt Cooper reviews *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology*

**It is difficult not to warm to a film that places a radical left wing philosopher into mock ups of various film sets to lecture on his theory of ideology. That is what film maker Sophie Fiennes has done with Slavoj Žižek.**

So we have Žižek dressed as a priest talking about the ideology of fascism in the mother superior's room from *The Sound of Music*, about the vampiric attitude of the ruling class towards the working class in the lifeboat from *Titanic* and about the nature of political violence in Travis Bickle's single iron bed from *Taxi Driver*. All of this is amusing enough and makes a long and in places opaque lecture pass pleasantly enough, but the ideas that underlie it are rotten.

Slavoj Žižek has been proclaimed by some as the greatest political philosopher of the late twentieth century — there is even an International Journal of Žižek Studies. His work is popular with a layer of the radical left, although maybe the kind who consumes rather than acts on their politics.

He has somewhat replaced Chomsky as the author of the coffee table books of choice for the armchair radical, and he sold out the Royal Festival Hall when he spoke there in 2010.

His ideas have been developed in a series of books since the late 1980s, and fit with the themes of anti-globalisation, Occupy, and other radical struggles that are often one side of class struggle.

It is noticeable that Žižek does not attack capitalism as such. The exploitation of workers as workers is notably missing from this film. Rather he attacks consumerism, particular in its Coca-Cola/Starbucks form. This is despite, or maybe because, his philosophy is obtuse.

Although Žižek places himself in the revolutionary tradition and draws on Marx, he does not see himself primarily as a Marxist. He says he wants to reinvigorate German idealist philosophy, particularly that of Hegel, through the application of the French post-Freudian, Jacques Lacan.

There is no feeling in this film (or in Žižek's numerous

## Žižek tries to tell us about fascism

books) that this view emerges from a study of society and the forms of ideology in it. Rather, consistent with his idealist philosophical approach, the ideas emerge from the realm of pure thought, albeit cut with some empirically based psychoanalytic theory. The world is sampled, squeezed and (mis)interpreted to fit this theoretical view.

His evidence about society is what many of us would not think of as evidence — mainly film. This is not an affectation, but central to Žižek's view of the world. Ideology is fantasy, and film is the purest form of the projection of such fantasy. Film is not the mirror which we hold up to ourselves, but feeds us the fantasies by which we constitute ourselves. The films are, for Žižek, reality. Thus *M\*A\*S\*H* and *Full Metal Jacket* are used to understand the American military, *Brief Encounter* the nature of social control, and *Jaws*, fascism!

To say that the shark in *Jaws* stands for nothing other than fear itself is hardly a startling insight. Alfred Hitchcock spoke in similar terms about how the purpose of his films was not essentially narrative or plot, but to create an emotional response in the viewer. To say this kind of work gives us an insight into how the Nazis scapegoated the Jews is little short of ridiculous.

Onto his argument, Žižek bolts some bits of other people's

theories as if they were his insights. So he goes on to say that underlying the fantasy of Nazi ideology was one of a modernising revolution that preserved tradition. But the idea of fascism being "reactionary modernism" was asserted by Jeffrey Herf in 1984, and has antecedents stretching back to the 1930s.

Similarly, Žižek's assertion that the riots in the UK were driven by consumerism (the "wrong dream") is both unoriginal and, in Žižek's case, seems to be based on the most casual of acquaintance with the evidence.

*The Pervert's Guide to Ideology* also demonstrates a wilful failure to engage with a Marxist understanding of ideology. In this film (and elsewhere) Žižek has dismissed the Marxist theory of ideology which he claims can be summarised by Marx as "they do not know it but they are doing it". The line is a rather obscure one (from the first German edition of volume one of *Capital*, but not in future editions).

Nor is the line directly about ideology; the "it" here is people producing exchange values for the market. For sure, this has a relationship to ideology, Marx argues that it obscures the real nature of production to satisfy human needs, a veil that will only be lifted by once production is carried out by "feely socialised man under their conscious, planned control." But the Marxist view of ideology based on the nature of social life is not understood, far less developed, by Žižek.

For Žižek both the nature of ideology and the liberation of humanity is based on the idea of fantasy. For him, people's relation to ideology-fantasy is "I know very well what I am doing but am I still doing it." The project of liberation is not to end fantasy, but to replace it with a better fantasy, or to dream with the right desire.

Thus Žižek goes down the road of anarchist cliché, we should "be realistic, demand the impossible", and he argues that the dream should not be of wanting the working class to awake, but that new dreams and revolution become a subjective act of will.

**Žižek's politics are, ultimately, mere fantasy.**

## The socialism the Mail hates

From page 9

detail and without oversimplification. He defended its ideas, rightly I think, in a long exchange with Nicos Poulantzas, who would become an inspirer of Eurocommunism.

According to Panitch, Miliband saw us, "the various Trotskyist parties", as condemned to "sectarianism and isolation" because of "clinging to an insurrectionary model derived from the Bolshevik Revolution, which was entirely incapable of generating mass support from the working classes of liberal-democratic, advanced capitalist regimes".

That attitude, once Miliband's hopes for the 1950s-60s "New Left" had faded, left him more thoroughly "sectarian and isolated" than any of us. Indeed, inactive.

The *Mail* quotes from Panitch autobiographical notes which Miliband wrote in 1983. He "remember[ed] standing in front of [Marx's] grave", at the age of 17 in 1940, "fist clenched, and swearing my own private oath that I would be faithful to the workers' cause..."

"I don't know", wrote Miliband in 1983, "how faithful I have been to that oath in terms of action: I am sure I should have done more, immeasurably more. But I have not, from that day to this, departed from the view that this was the right cause and that I belonged to it".

The *Mail* article of 28 September made that vow its first item of proof that Miliband "hated Britain". It did it by the same method of amalgam used by the Tories in the 1940s against Laski and Labour.

Socialist and Marxist views meant hostility to the British establishment and to narrow-minded English nationalism — and so, "hatred of Britain".

The *Mail's* two other citations are a diary entry by Miliband, at age 17, railing against English nationalism, and a letter by him to a friend decrying "Eton and Harrow, Oxford and Cambridge, the great Clubs, the Times, the Church, the Army... the values of the ruling orders".

According to the *Mail* editorial on 1 October, this showed "nothing but hatred for the values, traditions and institutions — including our great schools, the Church, the Army... that made Britain the safe and free nation in which he and his family flourished".

The story about Miliband "hating Britain" has an ironic twist, because Miliband's *Socialist Register* published, in 1965, E P Thompson's article *The Peculiarities of the English*. Thompson, polemicising against Perry Anderson's depiction of Britain as a hopeless conservative mush, vindicated the strengths of working-class history in Britain. (Anderson, it should be said, later conceded that Thompson had been right).

But for Thompson and for Miliband there was not just one Britain to be hated or loved. As Trotsky put it in the order of the day to the Red Army on 24 October 1919, when they were fighting for the life of the workers' state against British intervention: "there are two Englands. Besides the England of profits, of violence, bribery and bloodthirstiness, there is the England of labour, of spiritual power, of high ideals of international solidarity. It is the base and dishonest England of the stock-exchange manipulators that is fighting us. The England of labour and the people is with us".

Miliband loved the England, or Britain, "of labour and the people", which in historical fact won those freedoms the *Mail* prates about, and detested the "England of profits" which resisted them all the way.

Ed Miliband, replying to the *Mail*, showed that Ralph Miliband did not "hate Britain", and he showed also: "My father's strongly Left-wing views are well known, as is the fact that I have pursued a different path... I want to make capitalism work for working people, not destroy it".

**Yet in replying Ed Miliband could do no other than portray his father's views as worth discussion. Let's discuss. Let's see what it is that spurs the *Mail* to such unreasoned venom.**

## Adventures in politics, love and life

By Matthew Thompson

**Cloudy Sunday is the first novella by Mike Kyriazopoulos.**

Mike will be well-known to members and sympathisers of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty. Mike was active with us until 2007 when he moved to New Zealand and joined the Workers' Party/Fightback.

Mike began writing *Cloudy Sunday* earlier this year after being diagnosed with motor neurone disease.

For a short book of seventy pages, *Cloudy Sunday* packs in a lot of historical and other detail as it traces the main character Tuatahi from New Zealand via South Africa and England to Greece (a journey reflecting Mike's own time in those countries).

Tuatahi is part of the Maori Battalion sent to Greece to fight the invading German army at the start of the Second World War.

As well as discussions of Maori religion, New Zealand labour politics and the history of the Trotskyist movement, we get insights into the Russian invasion of Finland, Rebetiko (Greek blues) and attempts by the Greek Resistance to win over rank-and-file German soldiers.

**This is also a human story of a young man leaving home to travel the world, falling in love and experiencing battle for the first time.**

• You can buy *Cloudy Sunday* as an eBook on Amazon and read more about it on Facebook.

# Government attacks NHS workers' pay

By Joan Trevor

**The Government has called on NHS pay review bodies to abandon a planned 1% rise in pay for 1.3 million NHS staff.**

They say that the rise — which is below inflation and conforms to the Government's own policy of public sector pay restraint — is unaffordable. It is due to be implemented from April 2014, after two years of pay freeze and attacks on healthworkers' pensions.

The Government's justification for the move is part of their propaganda against public sector pay generally: they oppose the system of automatic incremental pay

rises that exists in many public services. They say those rises add £900 million to pay costs in the NHS. They argue that there should only be basic pay increases if there is evidence that recruitment, retention, morale or motivation issues require them.

The independent NHS pay review bodies will make their recommendations in February or March 2014, but they could be swayed by the submissions made to them by the Department of Health.

And the threat is clearest to the healthworkers' unions. They are being told: give way on pay structure or potentially lose this

## Overpaid? We don't think so

year's planned pay increase.

The unions have protested against this bullying. Unison said: "We are not going to negotiate while a gun is held to our head for a paltry 1% pay rise — our members will not react well

to that."

Unite suggested that health secretary Jeremy Hunt was going against Treasury advice that a 1% rise was affordable.

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapists pointed

out that NHS personnel had already faced a real-terms 12% cut in pay in recent years.

The background to these moves is the Government imposed real-terms cuts — about 4% a year — to NHS funding. If the NHS wage bill is becoming less "affordable" it is because the Tories and Lib Dems are choking off the money the service needs to thrive.

Disgracefully, the Government is also trying to pit health service users — that is, most of the population — against healthworkers, warning in its submission to the pay review bodies that the safety and quality of patient care will be re-

duced if staff receive any more money.

Health campaigners should refute these lies: a good quality service relies on a well-paid and motivated workforce. The interests of service users are the same as those of the staff. The real enemy to patient care is the Tory-Lib Dems and their cuts!

Healthworkers should not pay the price of bailing out the banks, and their unions must prepare to fight on this issue.

**Activists in the unions will have to organise to make the health union bureaucrats organise a proper fight.**

## Build "Defend the Link"!

By Rhodri Evans

**The Defend The Link campaign meets on 9 October to plan its campaign up to the Labour Party's special conference, probably on 1 March 2014.**

Its aim is to defend the trade unions' collective political representation within the party. In July, in the wake of the now-discredited charges against the Unite union of malpractice in the Falkirk Labour Party, Labour leader Ed Miliband called for trade unionists to be counted out unless they individually "opt in".

The interim report to Party conference on 22 September by Ray Collins indicates a Labour leadership unconfident on the issue, and at least seems to say that any "opt-in" formula will be in addition to, not instead of, collec-

tive union representation.

There is good scope to campaign. Even better because the big public services union Unison has promised to send an official representative to the 9 October meeting, and other unions like TSSA and the Bakers are also backing the campaign.

There is also need to campaign. The Collins report is slippery. The leftish shift by the Labour leaders on the bedroom tax and energy prices, though welcome, could be used as cover for damaging proposals on Labour structures.

**Central initiatives should be backed up by the creation of local DTL working group or committee in every area which works to canvass local Labour Parties and branches of affiliated unions.**

• [bit.ly/d-t-l](http://bit.ly/d-t-l)

# Teachers take on Gove

By Kieran Miles

**NUT and NASUWT members in Yorkshire, the Midlands and parts of eastern England struck on Tuesday 1 October in opposition to Michael Gove's attacks on education.**

As well as making changes to the curriculum with no staff consultation, Gove has been attacking teacher pay, notably through the removal of the national pay scheme, and a less-than-inflation 1% pay rise in 2013, as well as demanding teachers work longer hours, retire later, and for a smaller pension pot at the end.

2500 schools in 49 authorities were closed in total.

On 17 October, another

day of regional strikes will take place in London, the South West and South East, and the North East.

Union leaders have started discussing a coordinated national strike in November, but the absence of a named date undermines

any serious attempt to defeat the government's plans.

**NUT and NASUWT members should pressure the unions to name a date, and start planning now.**

## Bus drivers fight pay freeze

Cheshire workers at Network Warrington buses struck on 6 and 7 October in an ongoing dispute over wages. Their first strikes on 13 and 21 September highlighted that for the first time in 16 years, the workers would get no pay rise. The bosses pleaded falling profits. Unite members plan further strikes on 15, 23 and 31 October, refusing to pay for their bosses' losses.

# Firefighters' pensions: Scottish ballot result due

**The result of Scottish firefighters' ballot over Scottish government pension plans is due as we go to press.**

The SNP led Scottish government has offered some guarantees on capability

and protection of older firefighters which are better than what is on offer to firefighters south of the border.

There is a problem with Scottish firefighters accepting the deal. They will end up with different conditions

from the rest of the UK and leave other fighters to fight a battle over a new pension scheme (including increased pension contributions) and a statutory retirement age of 60.

## Irish doctors strike

**Junior doctors in the Republic of Ireland held a one day strike on 8 October over long working hours.**

Three thousand doctors took part and fifty-one hospitals were affected.

Junior doctors are routinely required to work individual shifts of over 24 hours at a time and up to 100 hours a week. The Irish Government has admitted that the hours worked are in breach of the European Working Time Directive.

The doctors' strike follows weeks of failed negotiations with the Irish health service.

During the strike doctors carried out a transplant and dialysis service and palliative care. They attended patients who were undergoing active chemotherapy and radiotherapy which cannot be deferred, and unforeseen major incidents.

**About 12,000 outpatient appointments have been cancelled as a result and about 3,000 operations had to be postponed.**

## Crossrail Blacklist Victory Party

**Saturday 12 October  
7.30pm until 12.30am**

**Live music from hipster ska heroes Dirty Revolution  
Bread & Roses, Clapham Manor Street, London, SW4 6DZ  
(nearest tube: Clapham Common or Clapham North)  
FREE ENTRY**

## How to make our movement a safe space for women

A meeting for women who signed the "safe space" statement. 2-4pm, 19 October, University of London Union, Malet Street, London.

Speakers: Michelle Stanistreet General Secretary NUJ, Maria Exall CWU and TUC General Council

• [bit.ly/w-lm](http://bit.ly/w-lm)

## Demonstrate for pensions and jobs, against cuts and privatisation.

**11am Wednesday 16 October, Malet Street, London, WC1E 7HY**

# Lampedusa: open the borders!

**As of 8 October, only 155 people seem to have survived the wreck of a small boat in which Somali and other migrants were attempting to reach Italy from Libya.**

The boat sank just off the coast of Lampedusa, a small Italian-owned island in the middle of the Mediterranean, between Sicily and Tunisia.

It is reckoned to have had over 500 people on board — over 25 for each metre of its 20-metre length. 232 bodies have been found so far.

Just a day before the boat sank, the Council of Europe condemned the

immigration policy of the Italian state.

The Council criticised the policy under which migrants who survive such boat trips are then often forcibly returned to countries where death or torture are everyday risks.

Many migrants are put into “detention centres” before being forcibly returned. Italy, the report says, maintains a permanent “State of Emergency” on its shores.

Armed coastguards often confront the overcrowded, flimsy boats full of refugees.

Other European countries use these policies as

an excuse to refuse to share responsibility with Italy for the absorption and settlement of migrants who go to Italy first because it is the EU country whose territory is most easily reached by boat across the Mediterranean.

Lebanon is currently dealing with an inflow of Syrian refugees equivalent, as a proportion of its population, to eight million people coming to Britain to seek safety.

**The richer countries should open up their fiercely-guarded borders.**

# London students need a union!

**By Michael Chessum**  
(president, University of London Union, in personal capacity)

**University of London (UoL) bosses want to shut down the University of London Union (ULU), the cross-London student union.**

There are essentially two factors here: one to do with the ideological agenda of university managers and the weakness of the student bureaucracies, the other to do with the fate of the University itself.

ULU has played a pivotal role in the student movement since 2010, often calling and hosting major demonstrations alongside the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts. It is also part of one of the most vibrant workers' struggles in the country, the 3 Cosas campaign by UoL ancillary workers.

ULU is the only cross-London body that fights on issues like housing, international students, discrimination, and students who work. We are very often the only student union to organise around things like the closure of fire stations and NHS cuts.

So the first reason is relatively simple: we are pesky and anti-management, and if UoL can get away with shutting us, they will.

Meanwhile, the University of London is abolishing itself, bit by bit. The University's decision-makers are its Colleges. Many of these Colleges — in particular the larger ones — now want to go their separate ways. Imperial College left in 2007.

UoL used to receive all of the Colleges' government grants. It used to teach students directly, and it used to award all the degrees. Now UoL is really a shell, teaching only a few hundred students and mostly focussing on its highly lucrative International Programmes global brand.

Although students still value it, many managers see it as a waste of energy. For many College heads, abolition of ULU is another logical step towards the end of UoL.

It's fair to say that ULU is unique in its federal nature. But if you can get away with abolishing an SU by fiat, you can get away with abolishing an SU by fiat.

Other institutions may not be able to legally abolish their student unions, but they will be able to take away all of their services and spaces and leave them with an underfunded shell.

The politics of space will become more prominent. Student unions in the UK have a remarkable amount of officially sanctioned space and off-message aesthetic and political independence, and especially where they are run by the left, managements will seek to undermine them and take over their stuff.

They can do this only if student unions are demobilised and weak; and any attempt to moderate unions' politics or independence will make them weaker. But that is precisely the route that many in NUS [the National Union of Students] will want to go down.

Give these people an inch, and they'll take your whole building. But unions across the country have been progressively trained to give ground — ideologically and in terms of cuts and material conditions — by national bureaucracies.

We are organising around three demands. The first is the defence of union autonomy; the second is better conditions for the cleaners on campus — who will be on strike in November when we march — and the third is the democratisation of universities and fighting for education as a public service.

I should stress that the primary aim — i.e. keeping ULU as a student-run thing — is explicitly not a campaign for the status quo; we are demanding that the building be handed, rent-free, to a new pan-London organisation which represents all students in the city — including students at newer unis and in Further Education.

**We'll be organising a referendum of all ULU's 120,000 members on the plans for closure.**

Save ULU demonstration: 13 November, 1pm, from ULU, Malet St, WC1E 7HY

# Don't flirt with Tories on EU!

**Right-wing Tory backbencher Adam Afriyie says that in mid-November he will force a vote in Parliament over an in-or-out-of-the-EU referendum in 2014 by tabling an amendment to a private member's bill calling for a referendum in 2017.**

Former Labour Party chair Tom Watson says he may support Afriyie. The Labour front bench previously said it would back a

referendum only when there's a big shift in British-EU relations. Now it says it will “make a decision when it sees the text of the amendment”.

To try to embarrass the Tories in Parliament is good. But there are many other ways to do it. And the call for a referendum on the EU is, here and now, only a disguised call to get Britain out of the EU and re-raise barriers between countries

in Europe.

Whatever the capitalist and bureaucratic evils of the EU, Britain has plenty of equally capitalist and bureaucratic evils of its own, and re-raising barriers between countries in Europe adds further evils.

**Support, or semi-support, for the Tory right on this issue is short-sighted opportunism.**