

workers power



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MONTHLY REVIEW OF THE WORKERS POWER GROUP

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Birth of a mass movement that can bring down the Tories

JOIN LABOUR

DEFEND CORBYN

FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

Jeremy Corbyns' stunning victory over the New Labour Establishment has launched a revolution in the Party and the labour movement. The TUC's call for a day of action against the Trade Union Bill and the cuts is an encouraging response to this change, opening the prospect not just of a one day strike and march, but hopefully of a campaign of industrial action against the Tory cuts and anti-union laws.

After a bit of public school sarcasm, now the Tories are really worried. Their mass circulation press – owned by a tiny handful of right wing billionaires – is spitting venom. Liberal papers that flattered Blair in his heyday are now giving full voice to the Labour right, predicting electoral disaster, and describing every one of Jeremy's policy statements as a gaffe, as if his job is now to abandon the policies he stood on and instead be guided by overpaid media gurus.

But despite them all Jeremy has started well, denouncing austerity as a deliberately anti-working class policy, attacking the Welfare Bill as punishing the poorest whilst the hand-outs go to the super wealthy. He has denounced the Anti-Trade Union Bill but acknowledged the role trade unions and socialists played founding the Labour Party. He has made it clear Labour will not support another war in Syria.

He has also refused to be black-

mailed by threats coming from the right wing majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party. On no account, they warned, must he appoint John McDonnell as shadow chancellor. He did.

He will be subjected to an endless series of such tests, demanding he express loyalty to the institutions and symbols of the ruling class and capitalism. So far he seems determined to pass different tests - loyalty to the

cont. p3

What we fight for



Workers Power is a revolutionary communist organisation whose politics are founded on the following principles

CAPITALISM is an anarchic and crisis-ridden economic system based on production for profit. We are for the expropriation of the capitalist class and the abolition of capitalism. We are for its replacement by socialist production planned to satisfy human need. Only the socialist revolution and the smashing of the capitalist state can achieve this goal. Only the working class, led by a revolutionary vanguard party and organised into workers' councils and workers' militias can lead such a revolution to victory and establish the rule of the working class in society. There is no peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism.

THE LABOUR PARTY is in a process of profound turmoil and transformation. It is a bourgeois workers' party – pro-capitalist in its politics and practice, but based on the working class via the trade unions and supported by the mass of workers at the polls. We are for the creation of a revolutionary socialist grouping in the Labour Party, based on a programme for the overthrow of capitalism and the implementation of socialism and workers' power.

THE TRADE UNIONS must be transformed by a rank and file movement to put control of the unions into the hands of the members. All officials must be regularly elected and subject to instant recall; they must earn the average wage of the members they represent. We are for the building of fighting organisations of the working class – factory committees, industrial unions, councils of action and workers' defence organisations.

OCTOBER 1917 The Russian revolution established a workers' state. But Stalin destroyed workers' democracy and set about the reactionary and utopian project of building "socialism in one country". In the USSR and the other degenerate workers' states that were established from above, capitalism was destroyed but the bureaucracy excluded the working class from power, blocking the road to democratic planning and socialism. The parasitic bureaucratic caste led these states to crisis and destruction. Stalinism has consistently betrayed

the working class. The Stalinist Communist Parties' strategy of alliances with the capitalists (popular fronts) and their stages theory of revolution have inflicted terrible defeats on the working class worldwide. These parties are reformist and offer no perspective for workers' revolution.

SOCIAL OPPRESSION is an integral feature of capitalism, which systematically oppresses people on the basis of race, age, gender and sexual orientation. We are for the liberation of women and for the building of a working class women's movement, not an "all-class" autonomous movement. We are for the liberation of all the oppressed. We fight racism and fascism. We oppose all immigration controls. We fight for labour movement support for black self-defence against racist and state attacks. We are for no platform for fascists and for driving them out of the unions.

IMPERIALISM is a world system, which oppresses nations and prevents economic development in the vast majority of third world countries. We support the struggles of the oppressed nationalities or countries against imperialism. Against the politics of the bourgeois and petit-bourgeois nationalists we fight for permanent revolution – working class leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle under the banner of socialism and internationalism. In conflicts between imperialist and semi-colonial countries, we are for the victory of those oppressed and exploited by imperialism. We are for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Ireland and all other countries. We fight imperialist war, not with pacifist pleas, but with militant class struggle methods, including the forcible disarmament of "our own" bosses.

FIFTH INTERNATIONAL We stand in the tradition of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky and the revolutionary policies of the first four congresses of the Third International. Workers Power is the British Section of the League for the Fifth International. The L5I is pledged to re-found a revolutionary communist international and build a new world party of socialist revolution. If you are a class-conscious fighter against capitalism, if you are an internationalist – join us!

Media hue and cry against Corbyn

The millionaires' media, backed by disloyal Labour MPs are trying to sabotage Jeremy



DAVE STOCKTON

They are at it already - sneering and jeering at Jeremy Corbyn in an attempt to suggest his leadership of the Labour Party is on the verge of collapse, before it has even begun. The lack of elementary self-restraint and standards of propriety indicates just how desperate they are.

In the lead must be the Sun's front page photomontage and headline 'COURT JEZTER' - accompanied by the shrieking sub-headlines 'Labour Hypocrite', and 'Leftie who hates Royals WILL kiss the Queens hand to grab £6.2 million.'

As so often with the Sun's famous front pages (the 1989 Hillsborough football tragedy, 'fans picked the pockets of victims, urinated on brave cops, beat up a policeman giving the kiss of life' etc.) this story is a total lie.

The £6.2 million is paid to every opposition party and is not connected to its leader being made a member of the Privy Council. Does the Sun know too that most leaders of the Labour Party, starting with Keir Hardie, have been republicans (even if they kept quiet about it).

But if no other paper can quite match the Sun's abuse of ordinary working people – the rest cannot restrain themselves from predicting the crisis and breakdown of Corbyn's leadership. The "Labour-supporting" Mirror talks of the first PLP meeting as "Angry MPs grill Jez on Cabinet" - one most of them refused to serve in.

To pass to the so-called quality press, the Financial Times carried - "Corbyn Fights Labour Turmoil amid dismay over McDonnell" on its front page and the Times - "Unions Join Attack on Corbyns Top Team".

The Daily Express, as might be expected - ties its story to baiting refugees: "Corbyn Madness: Now a Labour MP demands thousands more immigrants".

The Daily Mail tries a New Cold War angle: "Comrade Corbyn's Access to Security Secrets."

The Metro free sheet from the Daily Mail stable, tries a faux feminist angle - "Corbyn U-turn over his 'male and pale team'."

The ever liberal Guardian made a point of highlighting on its website that Jeremy Corbyn did not join in singing the national anthem at the Battle of Britain commemoration service. The old dirge is hardly a "national" anthem - it is little more than a royalist hymn that no atheist, republican or anti-imperialist should join in singing. Jeremy's enthusiastic singing of The Red Flag (by republican Jim Connell) has also been noted with disapproval.

The tiny clique of editors of the even tinier clique billionaire newspaper proprietors obviously regard it as a breach in the entire natural order of things that the party - founded and supported by unions representing millions of working people - should have elected a leader who rejects the agreed policy of Britain's bosses.

It just cannot be right that a major party opposes all austerity - making the working and the lower middle class pay the price of capitalism deepest post war crisis and weakest post-war recovery. It is outrageous that they want to make the super-rich pay the taxes they avoid, let alone pay more.

It cannot be right either that Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition opposes the New Cold War or a new "humanitarian" bombing spree in the Middle East. It is simply unthinkable for a Labour leader to even call into question membership of Nato or divert spending billions from Trident to desperately needed infrastructure, housing, schools or public transport.

Because Jeremy Corbyn has opposed every such war since he entered parliament and because shadow chancellor John McDonnell tells Jon Snow he wants to overthrow or transcend capitalism, our rulers believe they have no business to be leading the Opposition, let alone getting into power.

They will do everything in their power to stop this happening and we have to do everything in our power to frustrate their efforts at every turn. We have to expose their lies and plotting and use this to expose the anti-democratic nature of their entire system of rule.

There is, of course, no reason to be surprised and dismayed by this outpouring of bile - it is a tribute to their fear of militant anticapitalist or socialist ideas even in a reformist version, being considered by millions of working people who would not have heard them expressed for decades.

The new mass membership of the Labour Party and the wider labour movement will need to take to all the forms of media they have access to, to combat the lies of the mainstream outlets. But the ordinary print and broadcast journalists, via their union chapels, also need to launch a campaign against their lying and slandering management and owners. ●



A message to our readers

Thanks to all our readers over the last 38 years for supporting 385 issues of Workers Power, the most consistent voice of revolutionary socialism in the British working class movement.

This will be the last issue of Workers Power. But it is not the end of our work.

Jeremy Corbyn's quarter of a million votes for socialist leadership of the Labour Party has transformed the conditions facing the British working class movement. It also transforms the approach revolutionary socialists must take.

For this reason our supporters have joined Labour to fight to build and strengthen a mass, socialist, working class party. Working with friends in the Party, we are launching a new publication and a new initiative, advancing revolutionary socialism in these new times. You will be hearing from us very soon!

editorial

cont. from p1: institutions and symbols of the ruling class and capitalism. So far he seems determined to pass different tests - loyalty to the needs of the working class, claimants facing benefit cuts, excluded refugees, and the hundreds of thousands who have joined Labour and continue to do so (another 30,000 in three days after his election).

The Corbyn revolution must go on. To stop now would spell disaster - we should remember what happens to "those who make half a revolution".

We can all help. In a clear message to socialists of all ages, Jeremy said in his acceptance speech:

"I say to the new members of the party or those who have joined in as registered supporters or affiliated supporters, welcome, welcome to our party, welcome to our movement. I say to those returning to the party who were in it before and felt disillusioned and went away, welcome back. Welcome back to your party, welcome home."

Winning elections is not a matter of triangulation with Tory policies by claiming that that is what "aspirational people" want. The job of a political party is to win over the unconvinced and the uncommitted and not just through arguing for our ideas but through action and organisation. The founders of the Labour Party would have regarded this as ABC. Now it seems fresh and exciting to a new generation of young people because they have heard nothing like it in their lifetimes. Sneering at Corbyn for "going back to the 1980s" will cut no ice with them. Wasn't that the time when people fought back?

Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell have got mass popular backing to stand their ground against Cameron, Osborne and Rupert Murdoch. The greatest problem is within the "inclusive" shadow cabinet and the serried ranks of right-wingers in the PLP.

After stating in his address to the Trades Union Congress "the reduction in the benefit cap has the effect of socially cleansing many parts of our cities," he promised to "remove the whole idea of the benefit cap alto-

gether." But immediately Owen Smith, shadow minister for health and pensions, criticised Jeremy's position and defending a benefits cap. This will probably be the first of a series of such rebellions in favour of Tory policies. Key opponents within the shadow cabinet will be pro-Iraq war Hilary Benn and arch Blairite grandee Lord Falconer. Jeremy should demand cabinet responsibility around the policies the party voted for. It will be a miracle if such people stay the course.

The Tories will "test" Labour too on foreign policy issues on Europe and above all on war. Those like prominent Corbyn supporter Owen Jones who suggest not emphasizing opposition to the warmongering NATO alliance forget that the refugee crisis is in large measure a result of wars, and that the British people have rightly had enough of war. If we have the argument out, we can dent the right wing consensus on 'defence'.

Cameron is determined to take Britain back to war by bombing Syria. He will put Labour on the spot and Corbyn has made it clear he will not support it. But before the leadership election it was reported that Labour leadership were minded to support it this time around on the grounds that it would "help the refugees." Over the coming months we can expect the Labour right to break cover and the media to set up a hullabaloo about Labour's divisions on such issues. The answer to this is not to retreat or avoid the difficult issues but to precisely to mobilise support.

Owen Jones and other Corbyn

aides have suggested that it would be better to focus on the 'bread and butter issues' like poverty and tax and nationalization of the utilities that will make Labour more popular. Unfortunately if your enemy attacks you can hardly just change the subject, saying I want to talk about something else.

Whilst setting his own agenda Jeremy will have to defend his policy on the monarchy, on NATO, on militarism. If they claim that Jeremy disrespects the dead or by cutting military spending we put our boys at risk, he has to say no it was Blair and Cameron who put them in harm's way, not to defend their homes and families but the profits and power of the oil majors and the British ruling class. Yet when the wounded and maimed return, they cut their carers' benefits.

Of course it's important for left wingers in the media to help rebut the Tory slanders, but in the end mass action from the whole Labour movement will impact people far more than instant rebuttal units

Jeremy's strength is his 60 per cent mandate from Labour's members and supporters, his overwhelming support in the trade union membership, and a wave of active sympathy from young people across the country. Against this the MPs have their well-paid posts and the party apparatus. Jeremy's victory gives him the right to insist on his policies and impose them if need be on the shadow cabinet. If the rights don't like it they should be asked to resign.

This shows how important it is to set in motion a huge demo-

cratic movement in the parties and affiliated unions to transform Labour's programme, restore democracy to the members and the conference, and to replace those councilors and MPs who will not speak and vote for the democratically decided policies of the party. It will be said Jeremy rebelled against Blair 500 times. But these were rebellions under undemocratic leaders who ignored the wishes of Labour members, driving more than half of them out of the party in disgust.

After the Corbyn revolution there is a sort of dual power in the party - a radical and enthusiastic new membership that is still growing stronger every day. Then there is the entrenched power of the party apparatus inherited from the day of Blair, a result of the purges of Neil Kinnock. They dominate not just the party apparatus and the Westminster advisors but the constituencies that elected the right-wingers; the councils that vote through the cuts with scarcely a complaint. New activists need to come to the fore and replace the old right wingers. The process can be sped up by involving Labour parties in the anticuts movement at grass roots, making life uncomfortable for those who insist on selling council houses, closing libraries or voting for Welfare Bills and benefit caps.

We will all win if the members of the Party and the unions support Corbyn to the hilt in every clash with the Blairite and Brownite dinosaurs. For this the flood of new members needs to grow in size and militancy.

Existing socialists and trade union activists should be out in the workplaces, on the housing estates, in the colleges and schools, armed with copies of Jeremy's policies and membership forms and sign-up sheets. Meetings like the Jeremy for Leader rallies in July and August should now be held in every constituency.

All socialists and class fighters should join Labour now. And all Labour members who want to defend, deepen and extend left-wing policies into a revolutionary challenge to capitalism should rally now for the fight. ●

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Labour

A revolution in Labour

Corbyn's victory can be a turning point after decades of defeat for the left and working class



DAVE STOCKTON

Jeremy Corbyn's decisive victory amongst Labour's members, affiliated union members and registered supporters, opens a period of sharp class conflict inside and outside the working class movement.

The Labour Party leadership election unleashed an unexpected political development – a major revival of Labour's mass membership as young supporters and members turned to it for a fightback against austerity.

For nearly 20 years, including 13 years in government, it seemed that Labour had abandoned any active role as the political expression of the working class and the labour movement at large.

But then the shock election of a majority Tory Government threatened total destruction of the welfare state, public education, and the threat of new wars in the Middle East.

Straight after Jeremy's 12 September victory, he summed up his core message:

"The fundamental political issue of the campaign has been opposition to the politics and economics of austerity... Our campaign challenged the notion that the issue of the debt can be dealt with by punishing the poorest. Austerity was essentially a political agenda to roll back the state and individualise public services, rather than ensure their continued collective delivery."

People turn to Labour

In four months there was a huge expansion in the Party. Official figures show the leadership electorate reached 550,000 members and supporters. As the end of the election campaign approached these figures stood at 292,505 full paid-up members, 147,134 supporters affiliated through the trade unions plus 110,827 who paid a £3 fee.

The Labour Party's 2014 Collins reforms changed the way the leader is elected, replacing the electoral college with a 'one person one vote' system for members, registered supporters and members of affiliated unions. The purpose of the reform was to dissolve Party activists and union officials into a mass of individuals who, it was assumed, would be more receptive to the guidance of the leadership and influenced by the media in a conservative direction.

However this proved to be a serious miscalculation. Within a week of the election defeat 20,000 and within a month 40,000 had joined the Party. It was plain also from the militant demonstrations and big public meetings up and down the country, in the days and weeks following it, that the mood was one of resistance not resignation, a turn to the left not the right.

The shock of the Tory victory pro-

voked the reaction 'we must fight back'. This took the form of protests, culminating with the 200,000-strong 20 June People's Assembly demonstration. But it also took the form of a turn to Labour as the only available political weapon of resistance. This was transformed into a mass phenomenon when it became clear, in mid-June, that there would be an anti-austerity candidate on the ballot for Labour leader. For £3 anyone could vote for him.

Refusing to listen

Despite all this, the great majority of MPs and the Party's grandees were deaf to voices demanding that Labour join the fight back. They heard only the siren calls of the press and the Blairite old guard claiming Labour had lost because it did not adopt enough austerity and was too radical in its proposals. The very idea of "protest" against the Tories was denigrated as a diversion from "winning in 2020".

In short the Labour leadership's response to the Tory victory was not resistance but retreat. Labour's right wing fell over themselves to blame Ed Miliband's handful of progressive policies (the mansion tax, ending zero hours contracts, pursuing rich tax evaders) for defeat. Early into the fray was former Home Secretary Alan Johnson, who claimed that Miliband's attacks on the super-rich and his rejection of the Blair heritage were to blame for the defeat.

"The issue of aspiration in people's lives; we can no longer relate to them as a party of aspiration. And that was one of the big successes that won us three elections."

Blairite former culture minister Ben Bradshaw said the party and its next leader needed to "celebrate our entrepreneurs and wealth creators and not leave the impression they are part of the problem". (Both in Guardian 9 May).

Then came a statement by the interim Labour leader Harriet Harman – saying that she had talked to Labour voters who told her that they were relieved the Tories had won. Blairites and Brownites took up the theme that that Labour deserved to lose because Miliband had moved too far to the left. This was a shock to all those who had fought hard for the Party in May. Worse still Harman drew the conclusion: 'Labour must not oppose everything the Tories do.' And what she meant soon became clear, when she claimed the Tories had 'won the argument' for slashing welfare.

If they won the argument it was because Labour joined in on their side and because the Tory tabloids and the broadcast media (like C4 "reality" series Benefits Street, which claimed to show how people were 'exploiting' the benefits

system) did their usual job of creating an artificial public opinion to be registered by the polls.

But the most shattering miscalculation was Harman's instruction to the PLP to abstain on the second reading of the Welfare Bill. A massive 184 MPs obeyed her instructions – but 48 backed a motion totally opposing it.

Jeremy Corbyn got onto the ballot paper for the leadership elections, again due to the overweening confidence of the right wing. He became the voice replying to Harman 'No, we must fight all the Tories' reforms.' Centre-right candidate Yvette Cooper's statement that Labour must "get serious" about the next general election rather than become "a protest movement" summed up the leadership's focus on an election five years away when ordinary people immediately faced the Tory demolition of their jobs and services. This was parliamentary cretinism at its most crass and insensitive.

In contrast Jeremy Corbyn's message that Labour must become a social movement resisting austerity immediately struck a chord. Huge numbers spontaneously sensed that if the labour movement (the trade unions and the local and national anticuts campaigns) lost the battles to come, if the Labour Party sat out these struggles, the result would be even more demoralisation than in the final years of the Coalition. A Labour victory in 2020 would be even less likely. On the other hand if resistance hits the Tories, like that which hit Edward Heath in 1970-74, then they could be discredited and given their small majority ousted well before 2020.

Undoing Blair's revolution

So why was the PLP, right and centre-right, so confident in launching an assault on traditional Labour values after 7 May? Over the past 20 to 30 years they had systematically marginalised traditional ('Old') Labourism and reduced what used to be called the Bennite Left to a tiny rump of MPs (just nine members of the Campaign Group) and small minorities in the constituency Labour Parties.

Blair finally killed off Clause Four, Labour's constitutional commitment to "the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange", replacing it with the vacuous phrase "a community in which power, wealth and opportunity are in the hands of the many, not the few." Blair was a super-war-monger over Afghanistan and Iraq, dragging Britain into bloody occupations that exacerbated terrorism in the Middle East rather than quelling it. A huge movement against the Iraq brought two million peo-

ple onto the streets of London. Blair became, after Thatcher, the most detested Prime Minister in history and over half the party's membership left it by the end of his premiership.

At home Blair encouraged the penetration of the NHS by profiteers under the Private Finance Initiative and he enthusiastically promoted the break-up of national education system with academies. He did nothing to free the unions from Thatcher's anti-union laws. Trading on his years in office, after he retired he was soon a multi-millionaire.

This domination by Labour's right wing suffered a minor setback with Ed Miliband's triumph over his brother David, the recognized Blairite candidate, thanks to trade union votes. Though Miliband was not a left even such a limited setback infuriated the Blairites. He and his 'Blue Labour' advisers realized it was necessary to distance the Party from Blair's toxic legacy and re-deploy some of the old themes of social equality.

The Blairites thus remained a disloyal opposition throughout the 2010-2015 period, sniping at Miliband via the Tory press, but were content with Miliband keeping Labour well out of the struggles of the period.

Nevertheless he continued attacking the influence of the trade unions, especially Unite, throughout all the struggles against the Tories, culminating in the Falkirk debacle, which had the knock-on effect of provoking the defeat at Grange-mouth. The result was the leadership election reform, which was primarily aimed at reducing trade union influence. As we have seen it has spectacularly backfired.

In the local authorities Labour councillors voted through the Tories' cuts without resistance throughout the years of the LibDem-Tory coalition. Nevertheless Miliband's adoption of a few mildly progressive taxation policies in the election campaign of 2014-15 was dubbed by the Tories "the politics of envy" – a theme taken up enthusiastically by the Blairites and their media supporters after the election.

Labour's defeat – whose scale was almost entirely due to the near total loss of Scotland (due undeniably to Scottish Labour's right wing leadership and policies) – was still very far from a collapse. In fact Labour's vote was 650,000 higher than in 2010. Nevertheless the right and centre-right in the PLP – ignoring their own prime responsibility for the Scottish debacle – made the defeat the pretext for a huge onslaught by both on Ed Miliband's few leftist policies plus the noxious claim that Labour had not sufficiently addressed "fears on immigration".

It soon became clear that the post-elec-



tion analysis by the PLP leaders was in effect an attack on what remained of Old Labour values and would mean a sharp turn to accepting Tory policies on welfare designed to appeal to the selfish middle classes.

The right and centre-right assumed that the leadership race would crown somebody who would carry out a total reform of Labour in this direction. But so lookalike were the initial candidates (Blairites Tristram Hunt, Chuka Umunna, Mary Creagh, Liz Kendall, and Brownites Yvette Cooper and Andy Burnham) that sections of the right and centre establishment concluded it would be a good idea to put Jeremy Corbyn on the ballot. They were doubtless confident that he could not win and would likely be humiliated thus shutting up the Left for another five years at least.

A revolt or a revolution?

So what generated the massive reaction against New Labour? It was not simply an unintended consequence of the new electoral system, though without what turned out to be a plebiscite by the members and the wider labour movement this scale of change wouldn't have been possible.

What it revealed was a genuine change in the consciousness of a significant section of the working class, especially amongst young people, many new to politics. It also encouraged many of the surviving militants of the 1980s to, in Corbyn's words, "come back, come home."

At a series of meetings and hustings around the country, 99 in 99 days, enthusiasm for Jeremy and his message was overwhelming. When opinion polls indicated he was out in front, Labour leaders past and present were visibly shaken. The outrage and indignation of Tony Blair and Peter Mandelson were priceless, reminding one of Louis XVI's "Is this a revolt?" which drew the famous reply, "No sire, it's a revolution."

Corbyn's win is the biggest upset in British politics since the election of Margaret Thatcher as the Tory leader in 1975. Between 2010 and 2015 the "hard" Labour left in Parliament was virtually reduced to single figures. The PLP, it seems, gained further lefts on 7 May with figures like Richard Burgon (Leeds East) and Clive Lewis (Norwich South). Ten of the new intake signed a letter saying Labour needs a leader "who looks forward and will challenge an agenda of

cuts, take on the powerful vested interests of big business and will set out an alternative to austerity – not one who will draw back to the 'New Labour' creed of the past."

Social media and the internet allow for rapid mobilisations that were unknown in the past or took long campaigning by thousands of people. The combination of online mobilization with face-to-face old style political rallies, plus brilliant organization and 16,000 volunteers, brought together a political movement over a three-month period. No wonder the nastier right-wingers likened it to the ISIS advance and rout of the Iraqi army in 2014.

But to turn a revolt into a revolution you have to consolidate power in the hands of the revolutionaries not compromise with the counterrevolution. Already journalist Owen Jones is urging compromise and caution as the key to success. He advocates that the new movement

"... must love-bomb its opponents, and try to reach out to people who do not vote, to Ukip voters, SNP voters, Green voters and yes, Tory voters too."

He warns that "a political coalition cannot be built purely out of the poorest and the sympathy of others" and that Corbyn's leadership "must also reach out to middle-income and middle-class people."

This is completely the wrong advice. He middle classes will not be won to the side of the working class by compromises and soft soaping – that is a sure fire way to drive them to the right. Terrified by the disruption to their lives that the struggle between the great classes brings, the middle class will rally predominantly to whichever power looks stronger and more able to restore conditions for order and growth. That is why it is to be hoped that Corbyn and his advisors will reject Owen's advice and focus on promoting and explaining their policies and how they will bring an end to austerity and war, not backing down and looking weak.

If the Corbyn leadership is to consolidate its surprising victory love bombing the Blairites is a complete waste of effort – they are bitter enemies who will stab Corbyn in the back the moment they have the chance. Look what they did to the milk-and-water Miliband.

The social movement that Corbyn unleashed is integrally related to fighting the Tories' offensive not wooing Tory voters with moderation and concessions. It means Jeremy Corbyn's leadership

working all out to transform the Labour Party into a mass fighting organization, taking on the cuts, proud to defend strikers and young activists when they take mass direct action, and strengthening not weakening its links to the unions.

This will depend on carrying on the process of mass recruitment into the party and the unions. All the new supporters should sign up as members. Labour Party branches should take to the streets, go 'on the knocker' in the housing estates, to recruit those not reached by Facebook or twitter. Affiliated supporters and members should build branches in all large workplaces. As the universities, colleges and school, the can be mass recruitment not only to Labour Students and Young Labour but to the Party itself.

The 16,000 activists of the Corbyn Campaign will be needed to organise the new recruits into units where political debate and involvement in anti-cuts activity will make them permanent activists.

A vital issue too is to restore the democratic gains of the early 1980s. The right of branches to submit resolutions to all party bodies up to and including conference without vetting by bureaucrats. A review of the thousands purged during the Corbyn Campaign. The restoration of membership to all socialists wishing to join the party, whatever left parties they may have supported in the Blair years. Blair's wretched Clause Four should – as Jeremy has suggested – be replaced with one that reinstates a pledge to socialize the means of production and end exploitation. Policymaking and control of Labour's Programme must be taken back into the members hands. MPs and councillors that serve capital and not the workers should be up to be deselected.

And Jeremy will need to win the party, through the pressure of its mass membership, to adopt all his anti-austerity measures.

The Labour Party Conference (27-30 September) will be a first test of the changing balance of forces. It will not fully reflect the recent changes in the membership. But it will hardly be immune the winds of change blowing through the Party structures.

The success of the Corbyn campaign in more than doubling the size of Labour's membership and supporters can and should be reproduced in the trade unions. In the context of the Tory Anti-Trade Union Bill we need not just to appeal for defence of our rights but to

counterattack with a mass recruitment – a back to the unions campaign. Like the Corbyn Campaign this requires simultaneous democratization campaign so that the new members and old really own their own unions.

Left Outside?

So what should be the attitude of revolutionaries outside the Labour Party being to these developments?

First they should recognize them as an immensely positive "step forward of the real movement" (Marx), providing they consolidate (and we should do all in our power to help them to do so). This means exercising our right to be members of the party of the trade unions, for Marxists' ideas to be heard and considered in a party that claims to be a "broad church" or a "big tent" of all socialists.

Second we need to reassert our overall class struggle perspective in Britain – the struggle to defeat the Tories, stop their austerity programmed, and if possible drive them from power.

Third we need to warn - drawing on the lessons of Greece and Syriza - that whenever the class struggle against austerity reaches the level not just of strikes but of a political crisis for the parties of the ruling class. Whenever there is a real possibility of the election of a left government then a "broad party" - one which includes not just a right wing like the Blairites but leaders who would consider a betrayal on the model of Syriza leader Alexis Tsipras - is just not good enough.

This means above all that socialists need to be in the Labour Party and constituting a revolutionary socialist centre in the Party. One that can challenge right wing Progress and soft left Compass and the other backward looking pressure groups. One that builds the party and defends everything progressive in Corbyn's policies. One that deepens and extends party policy in a revolutionary socialist direction.

The work ahead for revolutionaries is finding and rallying forces that want the working class to take power, not just win office in elections. It means welding these forces together, fusing them with workers in the frontline of the class struggle against the Tories.

If we do this, then Corbyn's victory can be the decisive turning point after decades of defeat and stagnation for the working class and the left. ●

Labour

Corbyn's programme

An analysis of the attractions and limitations of the policies that brought Jeremy to power



DAVE STOCKTON

Jeremy Corbyn's programme for a future Labour government contrasts dramatically with the austerity-lite policies that lost Ed Miliband and Ed Balls the general election.

They are miles more radical and coherent than the mish mash offered up by Jeremy's rival candidates in the Labour leadership election. In their own right, they are as radical as anything presented by past leaders of the Labour Party in its left wing periods in the 1930s or 80s.

In 2015, when we are used to hearing every politician repeat the same Tory mantra that austerity is inevitable, Jeremy's modest call for an end to cuts and "a publicly-led expansion and reconstruction of the economy" sounds ultra-radical.

For a revolutionary socialist, the purpose of a programme is to meet the immediate needs of the mass of the working class, to mobilise a mass movement to resist the ruling class's attacks on our living standards and our futures, and to link measures addressing the needs of the day with the fight for a revolution that can end capitalism and create a new socialist society. We support anything that works in that direction.

For these reasons Workers Power supports key elements of Jeremy Corbyn's programme. We believe all socialists should join the Labour Party, defend and promote Jeremy's progressive demands, and work to extend and deepen these policies in a revolutionary socialist direction.

We will be working collectively in the Labour Party, hand in hand with others, to advance that cause.

The opportunities for revolutionary socialism to grow in influence are huge. Critical to success will be a frank, fair and accurate assessment of Jeremy Corbyn's programme.

Growth

Jeremy's programme centres on increasing public spending, boosting investment in industry, services and construction. The aim is to end the downturn that followed the 2008-10 crisis and stop the austerity that Labour and Tory governments imposed to pay for the bank bailouts.

The Bank of England, he says, should continue to print money - he calls it People's Quantitative Easing - for "new large scale housing, energy, transport and digital projects". Jeremy says this would create "a million skilled jobs and genuine apprenticeships with knock-on boosts for the supply chain."

The promises of re-nationalisation

are limited to the public utilities: rail, water, electricity supply. He wants to create a national investment bank but does not explicitly call for the nationalisation of the banks, though he does propose a windfall tax on their profits. A consistently socialist programme would reject paying compensation to the former owners of big businesses and would insist that they be run under the control of workers, not just by highly paid senior civil servants and managers. However, Jeremy Corbyn's programme does say a nationalized rail company would be run by a body representing "passengers, workers and government".

On the housing crisis he says a Labour government should encourage and fund major local council building projects. To stop exorbitant rents charged by private landlords these will be regulated to an level linked to local average earnings. The bedroom tax and the benefit cap will be abolished. Jeremy has also pledged to eradicate PFI deals from the NHS, though by using government money to buy them out.

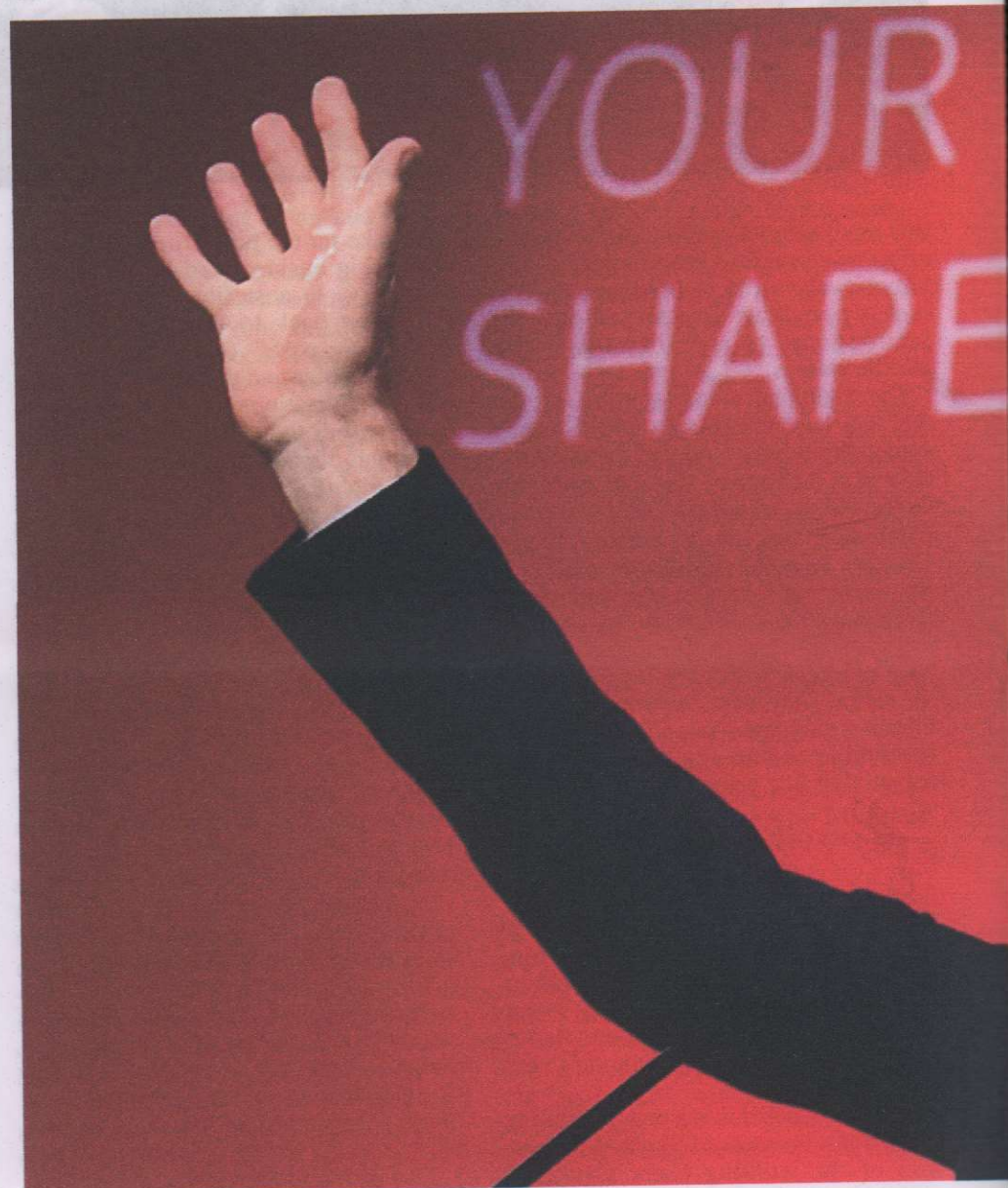
For Jeremy fighting climate change means the "socialisation of our energy supply", which can only mean nationalising the oil, gas and electricity companies. This will be a step towards ending the era of fossil fuels, creating a green, resource-efficient economy with a million new climate jobs.

He has pledged to defend the welfare system, saying "the disabled, the unemployed and the retired have all been portrayed scroungers and layabouts and as a result immense damage has been caused by cutting the money given to those who need it the most." He denounces the cruel and vindictive benefits cap.

Jeremy praises and supports people fighting to defend benefits like DPAC (Disabled People Rising against Cuts) and Boycott Workfare. This is in sharp contrast to the former Labour leadership, which was set to join attacks on claimants rather than challenge media and Tory scapegoating.

Jeremy outlines plans for a National Education Service; like the NHS, it would be universal and free at the point of use, starting with free childcare and expanding funding for adult education. This would mean an end to all tuition fees in further and higher education, the restoration of student grants, and an Education Maintenance Allowance plus a Disabled Students Allowance. He wants to bring the free schools and academies back under local authority control.

Other measures for young people include reducing the voting age to 16 years, bringing back student grants and



an increased Education Maintenance Allowance, a ban on zero hour contracts and a statutory £10 an hour living wage for all workers, no matter what their age.

Internationalism

Corbyn's programme calls for a "radically different international policy", based on "political and not military solutions". He is still resolutely opposed to air strikes in Iraq and Syria and military intervention in the region. He also says he would work to withdraw Britain from NATO, the US-led military alliance which is threateningly building up its forces in Eastern Europe today.

On the European Union, like most of the Labour Left Corbyn was once in favour of withdrawal. He now says he supports the UK remaining in, but wants to see major reforms in the op-

posite direction to Cameron, away from the pro-market and privatizing rules that have caused so much suffering in southern Europe. He wants to use the renegotiation of Britain's role in the EU to strengthen workers' rights, not undermine them. He refuses to guarantee that Labour will campaign to stay in until he sees if Cameron succeeds in negotiating away protections for workers. He is totally opposed to the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

Paying for it

Jeremy has pledged to cut spending on weapons and would abandon the commitment to NATO's two per cent of GDP target. He would cancel the Trident nuclear missile system, and to save jobs there would be a diversification plan agreed with local communities and workforces affected.

He also talks of making large reduc-

Labour

tions in the £93 billion corporate tax relief and subsidies to big business. These funds will be used to establish a National Investment Bank to head a multi-billion pound programme of infrastructure upgrades and support for high-tech and innovative industries.

To make the tax system progressive, a Corbyn-led Labour government would cancel Tory tax cuts for the rich and collect £119bn (2013-14 figures) in evaded business taxes. This will mean reversing cuts to staff at HM Revenue and Customs and Companies House.

the health and education services, to build hundreds of thousands of council homes a year, identifying how we raise it from the enormous unearned wealth of the super-rich.

To guarantee the funds are there for this programme it will be necessary to break the Old Labour rule of compensating the billionaires for their nationalised property. After all they already accumulated profits from the unpaid part of the labour of their workers. We've already paid them – why pay them again?

All in all Corbyn has presented, what

hospital trusts, threatening them with bankruptcy.

Corbyn and McDonnell's proposed People's Quantitative Easing has been attacked, most recently by Yvette Cooper, for threatening to cause runaway inflation by simply printing money. Of course, she knows full well that the Brown and then Cameron governments authorised a massive Quantitative Easing programme, but to put money in the hands of the banks, not to fund jobs and services.

In a televised debate with Corbyn, Cooper highlighted inflation concerns

Corbyn came to power the capitalists would find it absolutely intolerable. If it is included in Labour's programme and 2020 manifesto, the bosses will denounce it as 'Marxist' and 'revolutionary' and mount a frenzied campaign against it.

This raises a simple question: what power could force the capitalists to pay-up on taxes, or hand over their enterprises. A left-wing Labour government, if it was armed with no more than mandate and a majority in the House of Commons, would be faced with sabotage and revolt: by the bond markets, the stock exchanges, by a run on the pound, by a flight of capital. In short it would be faced by the enormous economic power of the 1%.

Like the Syriza government in Greece in July, it would have to face the choice of either giving in like Alexis Tsipras has done, or going further, breaking with its self-imposed legal limitations, and nationalising the banks, confiscating the property of the economic saboteurs. This would bring it into a head on clash with the unelected parts of the establishment, not just in the boardrooms but in the state, from the judges and the police chiefs and the military high command and the monarchy.

So what attitude should revolutionary socialists take to Corbyn's programme? Certainly we should defend its many positive goals, against the Labour right and the Tories. Indeed the left in the Labour Party and in the trade unions should do all in our power to get these policies adopted by Labour's conference, to make it obligatory for the MPs and councillors to defend them and include them in election manifestos too.

At the same time we need to start up a debate on the shortcomings of the programme and in particular what forces we need to mobilise to implement it. The great economic power of the capitalist class and the repressive power in the hands of its state cannot be successfully defied, let alone broken, by electoral mandates alone.

Only the huge numbers and organisations of the working class and the youth, rallying to our side any progressive sections of the middle class, can match and master the power of business and the state. The working class can win and exercise control over production, distribution and via the banks finance and the exchanges. We can organise mass self-defence against the state forces when they repress strikes and demonstrations, let alone when they threaten a coup, as they would undoubtedly do against a radical Labour government.

But this mass mobilisation cannot be called up at the last minute - after a Left government gets into trouble. The process of building up our forces has to start now: during the resistance to the cuts and the anti-union laws. By creating democratic bodies for mobilisation, councils of resistance at local and national level, by creating instruments of workers' control of production and services, we can not only shorten the life of this Tory government. We can create the basis for a new type of government altogether: not just a parliamentary Labour government encircled by the institutions of capital, but a workers government determined to break the power of the bosses, the bankers and the generals for good. ●



Deepen and extend

Jeremy Corbyn says frankly that this platform is far from revolutionary, telling one recent rally: "None of what we have said on this platform today would be seen as remotely exceptional, extreme or left-wing in Germany where they proudly have public investment in all kinds of industries and don't feel ashamed about it."

So while supporting the proposals above, revolutionary socialists can identify ways they can and should be strengthened. We will fight for this is the party.

On tax, far reaching as Jeremy's pledges are compared with the policies of recent Labour governments, increasing the number of tax inspectors alone will not recover the funds needed. Only opening the books of the monopolies and their owners to inspection by their workers will really uncover and recover these sums.

The starting point needs to be a public audit of how much we need to save

is historically a modest left reformist programme. In some respects, most obviously nationalisation, this programme was exceeded by some previous Labour governments, not just Attlee's in 1945-51 but also Harold Wilson's in the 1960s and 1970s.

It is Blair and Brown's conversion to liberal economics in the 1990s that makes today's reassertion of old Keynesian Labour programmes look so radical. Instead of nationalising a few monopolies in the private sector like their predecessors, post-1997 Labour opened up the public sector to private profiteers via the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). They started the break-up of the national education system with the new Academies, which took schools out of local authority control, handing them over to "faith bodies", consortia of businessmen and middle class parents. It is true that under Labour's PFI there was significant investment in hospitals and schools, but it was very expensive money. The result has been crippling debts for the

by pointing out that Corbyn proposes to 'print money during a recovery'. Now normally of course this would cause inflation, except for two things. First, the very sluggish and low growth British recovery takes place against the threatening backdrop of the China and 'emerging markets' slowdown which even the capitalist economists agree is likely to cause another global recession. And, second and even more important, inflation can be fought: with a sliding scale of wages, indexing them against price rises, paid for by confiscating the property of the multinational corporations and the super-rich.

The capitalist class abandoned Keynesianism for neoliberalism nearly 40 years ago. Depressed rates of return on investment compel it to look for fresh sources of profit wherever it can find them, especially by opening up and breaking up public services. If however modest his programme of renationalisation might appear when viewed in a longer historical context, if

Solidarity with refugees

The labour movement must defend and welcome migrants and refugees



JEREMY DEWAR



Over 100,000 people marched through the streets of London on Saturday 12 September under the slogan, "Refugees Welcome Here". It was the biggest pro-migrant demonstration we have seen for many years.

Not only did the crowd cheer every point that brand new Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn say, but it also gave notice to David Cameron that his attempt to draw a line under this simmering crisis has not succeeded.

After days of briefing the press that Britain would finally succumb to public, European Union and United Nations pressure to admit its share of refugees fleeing wars and dictatorships, David Cameron told Parliament earlier this month that the UK would help just 20,000 Syrians relocate on our shores over the next five years.

That amounts to only 4,000 a year. In fact it has since emerged that it will take nearly a year for the first refugees to arrive, so bureaucratic are the rules governing the scheme. On the same day, France agreed to welcome 24,000 refugees over two years: a grossly inadequate response but still three times Cameron's offer.

To put both these figures in perspective, the previous weekend Germany opened its doors to 18,000 asylum seekers, nearly matching the UK's five-year target, in just two days. Angela Merkel's government says it expects to receive 800,000 refugees this year alone, a number that it admits could grow to 1 million.

Cameron's Con

To add insult to injury, the prime minister said not a single one of the refugees who have risked life and limb, clambering aboard unseaworthy dinghies, walking miles along railtracks, or boarding airtight lorries at Calais, would be allowed into Fortress Britain.

Instead, he would only admit "those most in need", the very young or the very old, the infirm or the victims of torture, who remained in camps in Turkey, Lebanon or Jordan, via the Vulnerable Persons Relocation (VPR) scheme. Those who managed to escape the humanitarian crisis that traps millions in destitution will be punished.

Is this the same Tory party that chides the unemployed for sitting back and expecting a handout? It appears that the "get on your bike" clarion call and peons to the "aspirational individuals" are a cynical pretext for cutting benefits and sanctioning the jobless. In reality the Tories simply hate the poor.

The VPR is in truth a wretched get-out clause that few countries even bother to explore. Under its rules, a mere 216 Syrians have been granted asylum in Britain since March 2014. The oft-quoted figure of nearly 5,000 Syrians who have been relocated here actually refers mostly to Syrians already living in the UK who cannot return home. Shamefully, 145 Syrians have been deported back to Syria since 2011.

Cameron referred to this initiative as the "modern equivalent of the Kinder transport". Although schools generally

teach this as an example of "British values", it only rescued 9-10,000 mainly Jewish children in 1938-40. Yet 6 million Jews were killed in the Holocaust; Britain, along with the USA, refused entry to Jewish people who escaped the Holocaust after 1945. Unknowingly for sure, perhaps Cameron is right to make the comparison. Pitiful.

Raiding foreign aid

The immediate response from councils around the country was to ask how the government would help them cope with the new refugees, many of whom would be orphans or traumatised and so needing significant support. The financial crisis among local authorities has become especially acute after years of cuts in central government grants and the Downing Street enforced cap on council tax.

George Osborne therefore came up with the proposal that money could be diverted from the foreign aid budget to help pay for the housing and local service costs in the first year; what happens after then was left unanswered.

The question posed by this accountancy wheeze is, who will suffer as a result of the foreign aid budget being effectively cut? Why, among others, the very same refugee camps on Syria's borders that the Tory government claims it is trying to relieve.

The United Nations suddenly announced in early September that its agencies were broke and they could no longer provide the meagre \$13 food vouchers they were handing out each

month to the 3.79 million refugees on Syria's borders; 189 health clinics in Iraq have already closed.

The reason was simple. The world's richest countries, including the UK, had not fulfilled funding promises, while an average 42,000 refugees a day were swelling the camps. As one Syrian father told the BBC, "What am I supposed to do? I would rather take my chances travelling to Europe with my children and risk sudden death than watch them die slowly from hunger." Who wouldn't agree with that?

Former Lib Dem leader Paddy Ashdown was the unlikely highlighter of a further problem with VPR status refugees. He tweeted, "Refugee orphans and children brought in under Cameron's scheme will be deported at age 18."

Although the government denies this, it certainly has been the case so far that many vulnerable children, denied full refugee status, have been "sent back" on turning 18, often to devastated countries they can barely remember and where they know no one. Cameron has deliberately kept this option open, claiming Syrians can apply for full refugee after five years without guaranteeing their success.

Who knows what the political situation will be like in 2020? Maybe this target of 5,000 refugees will be long forgotten and the Tories will be able to bury news of their failure to meet it in a written response to Prime Minister's Questions.

Maybe, as seems likely at the moment, the European Union will have shut its

doors and its ears to the cries of those displaced by its military and economic policies.

Germany for one quickly changed her tune, sending troops to her borders to repel a further 40,000 refugees, and “temporarily” re-instating its border with Austria, thus placing the Schengen agreement in jeopardy.

Of course, it was Britain which torpedoed attempts at an equitable distribution of asylum seekers and encouraged European powers to pile up refugees at border

Yet Cameron cynically coupled his announcement on the 20,000 refugees with the news that the RAF had executed, by means of unmanned drones, three ISIS fighters in Syria who were British citizens. This poses a number of serious questions, which acting Labour leader Harriet Harman ducked, but Jeremy Corbyn has promised to raise.

First it appears to defy a parliamentary vote back in August 2013, when former leader Ed Miliband led a rebellion that blocked British military action in Syria.

or install pro-Western regimes like Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States and Egypt that can secure the oilfields for investment and profit, and deny free access to the strategically important region to its imperialist rivals, Russia and China.

Saudi Arabia, the deeply sectarian dictatorship which receives billions in military aid and weapons from the West and its arms manufacturers, is concurrently heading a coalition of Sunni Arab states to intervene in Yemen’s civil war. The UN accuses it of war crimes, deliberately

introduced to tighten regulations and squeeze living standards for those claiming refuge.

It has to be said that even Jeremy Corbyn chose to sidestep the issue with vague remarks, rather than be seen to come out clearly in support of opening the borders.

The response of the working and popular classes, however, has been tremendous. The massive march in London on 12 September reflects the mass activity of thousands of people donating tents, clothing and medical supplies, and making the



crossings and rail terminals. It was Britain which first put up fences and refused entry to 3-4,000 refugees and migrants in Calais.

How dare they cast aspersions on Hungary, when the UK is equally vile, more so if you consider their leading role.

This could become a huge blow to the project of political union across Europe and a significant shift to the right; racism and xenophobia would rise as the far right and racist populists claim “victory” for their policies of exclusion.

Military aggression

The Tories’ response, however, poses a bigger danger than even this. Cameron has used the refugee crisis as an excuse to justify renewed British military attacks on ISIS in Syria, in the regions from which people are fleeing. He suggested that if Britain were to engage in bombing Syria, as it is presently bombing northern Iraq, this would contribute to solving the refugee problem.

Leave aside the fact that it was Britain’s invasion of Iraq, as the major ally of the US, that helped create ISIS in the first place; their bombing is unlikely to defeat ISIS in any case. Worse this “pin-point bombing”, as we know, kills many more civilians than fighters.

In addition it has provided a pretext for the repressive Islamist regime and Nato ally Turkey to “fight ISIS” by attacking the Kurds of the PKK whose equivalents in Syria (Rojava) have proved the most determined and effective fighters against ISIS.

Then Cameron told the Commons, “It is very clear to me the British parliament, reflecting the view of the British people, does not want see military action. I get that and the Government will act accordingly.” Now he appears not to “get it”. The fact that it was an “unmanned” aircraft does not make any difference to the fact that it was a British finger that pulled the trigger – or pressed the button.

Second, it signals that Britain is prepared to join the ranks of Israel’s Mossad and the Pentagon in asserting their right to assassinate opponents, anywhere in the world, with neither parliamentary permission nor UN resolutions.

As with Israel, the plea of self-defence also bears no relation to reality. The only two “plots” Cameron claims the Islamic State supporters were instrumental in were supposed to take place in May and June this year. Since neither amounted to anything, is this really proof of their “threat to Britain”? Of course the merit of extra-judicial killings – for the regimes that prefer them – is that these claims are never tested either in parliament or in a court.

Third, stepping up military action in Iraq and Syria will do nothing to bring about peace in the region. It is precisely Western onslaughts on states and horrendous “collateral damage” to innocent civilians that radicalises young Muslims in the Middle East and in Europe or North America. On the contrary, it will fan the flames that are devouring the region. It will create more refugees.

Britain’s motives in the Middle East remain as they always were: to prop up

bombing civilian targets and infrastructure.

The only reason you don’t see Yemeni refugees in Europe is that Saudi armed forces have holed them in on the southern tip of the peninsula. They have nowhere to go.

The tragedy for the Syrians is that they live in a battleground between these rival powers. Russia back and arms the murderous Assad regime and America and its local allies fan the flames of Islamist terrorism until it turns on them. Those Syrian revolutionaries and Kurdish nationalists caught in the middle receive no support whatsoever.

Opposition

The response from Labour’s front bench has been totally inadequate. Acting leader Harriet Harman, following her discredited strategy of not opposing the Tories for fear this made Labour look too distinct from the winners of last May’s elections, said that the government was doing the “right thing”. Her only quibble was that 4,000 a year might be too low a figure.

In an attempt to boost her chances of topping the leadership poll, the Parliamentary Labour Party gave Yvette Cooper the honour of putting a number to this policy: 10,000 in the first year.

Two problems with this: first, 10,000 is clearly too low a figure to make any significant difference; second, Cooper has no track record in supporting migrants and asylum seekers – in fact she voted for every single Bill Tony Blair’s government

journey to Calais to deliver them.

In the process, hundreds of new activists are meeting migrants and refugees, hearing their stories and learning that this is not an isolated moment or reducible to Syria; “migrants” from Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan and Eritrea are also deserving of a welcome and a safe home in the UK, and the right to work, settle and raise their families here.

As well as schools, churches and mosques, socialist organisations and trade union branches have been central to this upsurge of charity. The task now is to translate this into real, lasting solidarity.

Trade unionists and socialists must link up with the migrant and refugee organisations in the camps, providing European working class support – and cover – for their protest actions. They should contact and support sister organisations in Calais, France and the rest of Europe in any actions they can take to highlight the plight of the refugees, including strikes and mass demos.

Finally, the Labour Party should urgently review its policy – not through cossetted forums, nor under the hegemony of the unrepresentative MPs – but through a grassroots discussion in the wards, constituencies and affiliated union branches.

In this debate thrown up by the crisis, socialists should argue for:

- No immigration controls – all refugees welcome here
- For all migrants to enjoy full citizenship, the right to work and to vote
- No to military action in the Middle East – troops, aircraft and ships out of the region now. ●

greece

Syriza split creates Popular Unity

Can Greece's newest left wing party succeed where Syriza failed?



DAVE STOCKTON

When Syriza's Alexis Tsipras resigned as Prime Minister, on August 20, he triggered a new general election, which will take place on 20 September. This enabled him as Leader to choose the entire electoral list of his party. He made it clear that he would not include the 32 Syriza MPs who had voted against the Third Memorandum and the terms of the €86 billion bailout from the IMF in Parliament on August 14.

The snap election also aborted the calling of a Party conference before the election, thereby ensuring there would be no democratic decision by the membership. This virtually obliged the left wing of Syriza to break away from the party. On August 21, the party's Left Platform launched an electoral challenge to Tsipras at the upcoming polls. To do this they formed Popular Unity.

Like Syriza before it, this has a substantial majority of left-reformist socialists, plus far-left organisations and individual activists from social movements. It also has individual political celebrities like Zoe Konstantanopolou, the outgoing Speaker of the Hellenic Parliament who has a very erratic political record. As yet, it is less than a political party but more than an electoral front and, if anything, it is more politically heterogeneous than Syriza.

Conflicting views over the fundamental strategy on which to build a party; either accepting elections as the road to 'power' or focusing on the class struggle to bring down the austerity regime and replace it with a workers' government, will sooner or later be put to the test of building mass resistance to the new austerity government. Whether that government is headed by Syriza (whose position is sliding in the polls since August) or New Democracy, we will soon see. ND has replaced the unpopular Antonis Samaras with a new leader, Vangelis Meimarakis, and is now neck and neck with Tsipras and Syriza at around 26 percent of the vote. Popular Unity is trailing far behind with 3.9 per cent, lower than the Communist Party (KKE), which has reconsolidated its traditional 5 per cent. The fascist Golden Dawn has likewise partly recovered from its mauling by the Greek state.

The bulk of Popular Unity's membership come from the two components of the Left Platform in Syriza; the Left Current, headed by Panagiotis Lafazanis, and the smaller Red Network around DEA/Workers' Internationalist Left. In addition, there is the Movement for the Radical Left, a network of antiracist, pro-migrant, and LGBT activists. The Communist Tendency (International Marxist Tendency) has also said that it will "actively participate in the establishment of the new political entity along



ALEXIS TSIPRAS

with the comrades of the Left Platform". However, PU has also been joined by two groups from Antarsya (Anticapitalist Left Cooperation for the Overthrow) which stood aside from Syriza during the years of its rise and political crystallisation; these are ARAN (Left Recomposition) and ARAS (Left Anticapitalist Group) both of which have Althusserian-Stalinist origins.

Incredibly, the new party has adopted a name, Popular Unity, which will be forever linked to Salvador Allende's Chilean Road to Socialism in the years 1970-73. Central to that strategy was the formation of an alliance with the Christian Democracy, a powerful bourgeois party which quickly became an obstacle to reforms and then went on to pave the way for the coup and dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet.

Greece, of course, has its own experience of a "left" populist government, overthrown by the King and then the army (the regime of the colonels). It seems that social democrats and Stalinists, as in Einstein's famous description of insanity, insist on doing the same thing, over and over again, each time expecting a different result.

At the moment, it is unlikely that any serious capitalist parties or figures will step forward to play the role of the "patriotic" or "progressive" bourgeois that this scenario requires. Nonetheless, by restricting the programme of a new party to measures that might be acceptable to such forces, such a strategy would, as in

Chile, fatally exclude the anticapitalist measures and the workers' government that should be fought for by working class parties and trade unions.

Popular Unity defines itself as "a social and political front to overturn the memoranda, predatory austerity, the negation of democracy, and the transformation of Greece into a European colony by means of indebtedness". It has published a programme that includes many demands that are necessary and supportable but which, as a whole, do not form the basis for a government that can solve the economic crisis or force the surrender of the capitalist class either at home (the oligarchs) or abroad (European bankers and bureaucrats).

Popular Unity's Emergency Programme

PU proclaims it is fighting to build a "great popular patriotic front" based on a number of key policies:

- Abolition of the memoranda and freeing Greece from the deadly overlordship of the imperialist centres
- Suspension of Greece's debt repayments and loan agreements
- Repayment of the Greek loan the Nazis exacted during their occupation of the country
- An immediate end to austerity and redistribution of social wealth to working people at the expense of the oligarchs
- Restoration of medical and pharmaceutical cover and power, water, heating etc. for all
- Support for wages and pensions, and social expenditures for free public edu-

cation, popular health care, and culture

- State support for wages, pensions, and social expenditures, for free public education, popular health care, and culture. Gradual wage increases in step with economic growth

- Abolition of the Uniform Property Tax, a tax system introduced hitting only very large-scale fixed property

- Abolition of punitive taxation against farmers and the self-employed. Establishment of a permanent, socially just, and redistributive taxation system

- Nationalisation of the banks under a regime of social control, with guarantees for the savings of ordinary people. The new nationalised banking system, will underwrite the cancellation of household debt and liquidity for small and medium businesses.

- Restoration of free collective bargaining and agreements and a clamp-down on unfair treatment by employers, stricter limitations on, and fines for, dismissals, activation and strengthening of labour inspectorate

- An end to predatory privatisations of enterprises, networks, and infrastructure (power supply, natural gas, harbours, airports, real estate in the public sector, etc.).

- Reorganisation of the demolished national health system and of public hospitals, with institution of a first-rate, high-quality, health system, accessible to all, in urban centres and in the regions.

Popular Unity's economic policy clearly envisages a controlled and redirected capitalist economy.

- It talks of shifting from consumption of imported commodities to industrial and agricultural production of high quality goods and strengthening the state-run and private sector along with the social economy (cooperatives, self-managed enterprises that have been abandoned by their owners, solidarity networks, etc.)

- Exit from "the monetary prison of the Eurozone" and a break with the neoliberal policies of the EU. The re-introduction of a national currency.

- Opposition to the new "Cold War" and the division of Europe with the erection of new walls against Russia

The programme is based on the neo-Keynesian prediction that such measures will; "Foster job creation through a programme of necessary public productive investments, developmental initiatives from the big publicly owned enterprises, support for the social sector of the economy, and restoration of credit for small and medium businesses. Abolition of the unjust taxation and other burdens, imposed on lower-income households simply to service the unbearable debt, will boost demand and stimulate development."

This reformist economic program is developed in more depth by Stathis Kou-

velakis on the website of LAE where it is clear that LAE really thinks that by leaving the euro, import-substitution and currency devaluation they could revive Greek capitalism.

The absurdity of this perspective is demonstrated in this article by the fact that Kouvelakis presents Argentina as a positive example of driving a better deal with the financial markets/institutions by "regaining monetary sovereignty". In fact, after a brief bubble of growth, Argentina has shown very clearly that, given the crisis-mode of the global economy and the aggressiveness of the financial markets, let alone, the financial institutions, an "independent" monetary policy in a capitalist, highly indebted semi-colony is a pure fiction. Indeed, the monetary and general economic crisis in Argentina, which is caught in the trap of severe stagflation, makes even the economic situation in Greece look comparatively relaxed.

Last, but not least, the programme advances the goal of "a government supported by the power of the organised people and their own specific institutions, in the workers' movement, the youth movement, local and environmental movements, movements of solidarity, forms of popular self-organisation".

This is indeed very close to the language of Allende's Popular Unity. It, too, insisted on popular mobilisation and mass support under the deceptive slogan "a people united will never be defeated". In fact, a disarmed people, facing a fully armed and controlled state machine, will always be defeated since the capitalist tiger does not allow itself to be skinned alive whilst it has its teeth and claws. Only a workers' government, installed by the forces of an embryonic workers' state (workers' councils and militia) will be able to do this. The negative proof of this has just been provided by Syriza's capitulation.

In Greece, the road to a coup, constitutional or military, would be paved by the inevitable failure of Keynesian measures hemmed in by pressure of world markets, not least the run on the restored drachma, and the Greek and foreign capitalists. The only effective response to this would be dictatorial measures against capital and the disbanding of the forces of the state and their replacement by the armed workers and other popular classes. But, if that is what is going to be needed, then that needs to be said now. It is blatantly deceitful to cover this up and just wait for the development of the situation in which they are needed. By then, as in Chile, it will be too late.

Revolutionary party

The increasing contradiction between an objective situation, which calls ever more urgently for revolutionary solutions, and the current political stance of the Greek left becomes ever more obvious. The left-reformist strategy of Syriza and the ultra-left sectarianism of the KKE, are two sides of the same coin; a complete rejection of the potential for revolution in the present period of crisis.

The KKE's refusal even to march together with other working class forces is not revolutionary intransigence but passive abstention from the effective common action needed to fight the austerity government. Popular Unity, though it does not obstruct unity in the same way, does not appear to be ready to mount any fundamental challenge to the essential

weakness of the former Syriza strategy.

The far left forces, if they are to be at all effective, must openly challenge the reformist, neo-Keynesian, programme of Lafazanis. Many of these smaller socialist groups and currents, like the CWI section, Xekinima, were part of the OXI campaign and are now part of PU. They must avoid the strategic mistakes that the Left Platform made in Syriza; they must challenge the programme of the leadership.

There can only be a socialist alternative to austerity and the Memorandum as part of a socialist programmatic alternative for the Greek working class. Other-



PANAGIOTIS LAFAZANIS

wise, the same reformist illusions that came from Syriza will now be spread by PU. It is the duty of all socialist or revolutionary organisations to stand for a socialist and anticapitalist perspective and programme inside and outside the PU. The arguments for being in Popular Unity are, however, nowhere near as compelling as they were for being in Syriza from 2012-2015.

In that period, Syriza grew to be a mass force in the working class, one to which workers and youth turned to oust the Memorandum governments. It was crucial to have been alongside them in this process, sharing their struggles but not their illusions. Alongside participation and support for Syriza against PASOK and New Democracy should have gone remorseless criticism of its whole programme and not just of its support for the EU and the euro.

Now, Popular Unity is reduced to the size and electoral impact of Syriza before it began its ascent. Nothing guarantees that it will repeat this rise. In the elections between 2012 and January 2015, we argued that the right tactic for revolutionaries was to give critical support to Syriza whilst warning of the crisis that would arise when it reached the inevitable impasse with the European bankers and governments.

This exclusive concentration on Syriza does not apply to its lineal successor, Popular Unity. Indeed, if it were to realise its wish for a block with bourgeois forces it would not be possible for revolutionaries to give it such support. Today, however, critical support should go to

PU and/or Antarsya, depending on the situations in the different districts. The purpose is to maximise the vote for a united fightback against the austerity government.

All this points to the key issue, the crucial problem facing the Greek working class, the absence of anything approaching a genuinely revolutionary party. Here, we have to address the remaining parts of Antarsya as well as the far left in PU. Antarsya was certainly one of the most active and militant components of the protest movement against the Memorandum and organised an important part of the most militant class fighters in

endium campaign and Tsipras' betrayal only three days later.

Today, the decisive need is to form a working class united front of all those parties, groups and trade unions, especially their workplace units, to fight the new government and the Third Memorandum. The militancy of the first three years of the crisis needs to be regenerated as the impact of the new austerity begins to become clear and the undeniable confusion and demoralisation caused by Syriza's betrayal begin to lift. A decisive factor in this process will be the subjective one; whether there is an agency for winning vanguard fighters to a strategy that avoids the twin evils of adaptation to reformism and passive propagandistic leftism.

The revolutionary left groups need to seek unity with one another on the basis of an analysis of the past period and the collapse of Syriza, a balance sheet of their own strengths and weaknesses and the adoption of a programmatic foundation.

Action Programme

That foundation must be an action programme whose starting point is resistance to the Memorandum and the (likely) left-right coalition government that will try to impose it. This element needs to include the call for united front organisations of struggle that link all the trade unions at a local and workplace level with community and student organisations and the workers' parties. It needs to focus not only on the burning needs facing ordinary people but go on to raise solutions to them which do not respect the property rights of the oligarchs or the foreign investors, indeed, which exert workers' control over them and meet the needs at their expense.

Last, but not least, such a programme must set as its goal a government committed to taking anti-capitalist measures from day one. These would include throwing out the EU commissioners, nationalising all the private banks, imposing a state monopoly of foreign trade, nationalising under workers' control the enterprises of the Greek "oligarchs" and appealing to workers across Europe to take action to stop the EU leaders blockading Greece, throwing it out of the euro or conspiring to bring down the workers' government. Obviously, it would also have to prepare an emergency currency if the present rules and treaties governing the euro and the dictatorship of the ECB still exist.

- For Workers', not Popular, Unity in alliance with the small farmers and family businesses; end the futile and reactionary search for a bloc with the "patriotic" bourgeoisie.

- For direct action up to and including an indefinite general strike to break the Memorandum and kick out the Memorandum government.

- For a Workers' Government taking anticapitalist measures

- For a united revolutionary socialist party on a transitional programme

- For Europe-wide solidarity with the Greek workers and youth to break the plundering and blockading of Greece by rulers of the European Union.

- Open the gates of Europe and all its states, without exception, to the refugees from the wars in the Middle East and Africa.

- For a Socialist United States of Europe. ●



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Organise to Kill the Bill

We need unity and coordinated action to defeat Tory anti-union Bill and make it unworkable



BERNIE MCADAM

Britain's anti union laws are already the most repressive in the European Union. Thanks to the new Tory Trade Union Bill, they are now set to get much worse.

Liberty, Amnesty International and the British Institute of Human Rights are the latest organisations to condemn the Bill as 'a major attack on civil liberties'. This was in response to proposed changes that would require unions to appoint a picket supervisor and submit the names and contact details of pickets to the police.

In a joint statement they say "it is hard to see the aim of this Bill as anything but seeking to undermine the rights of all working people". Indeed. But it is much more than this.

Tory business secretary Sajid Javid has launched a vicious attack on trade union rights every bit as draconian as the rash of laws implemented in the 80's and 90's. The Bill constitutes a dire threat to the right to strike and is a major plank in the Tories' strategy of rolling back the welfare state, whose public sector unions constitute the bastion of trade unionism in Britain.

The provisions of the Bill include: To outlaw ballots with a turnout of less than 50 per cent. In key public services a total of 40 per cent of workers eligible to vote must vote for action.

'Intimidatory' picketing would become a criminal rather than a civil offence.

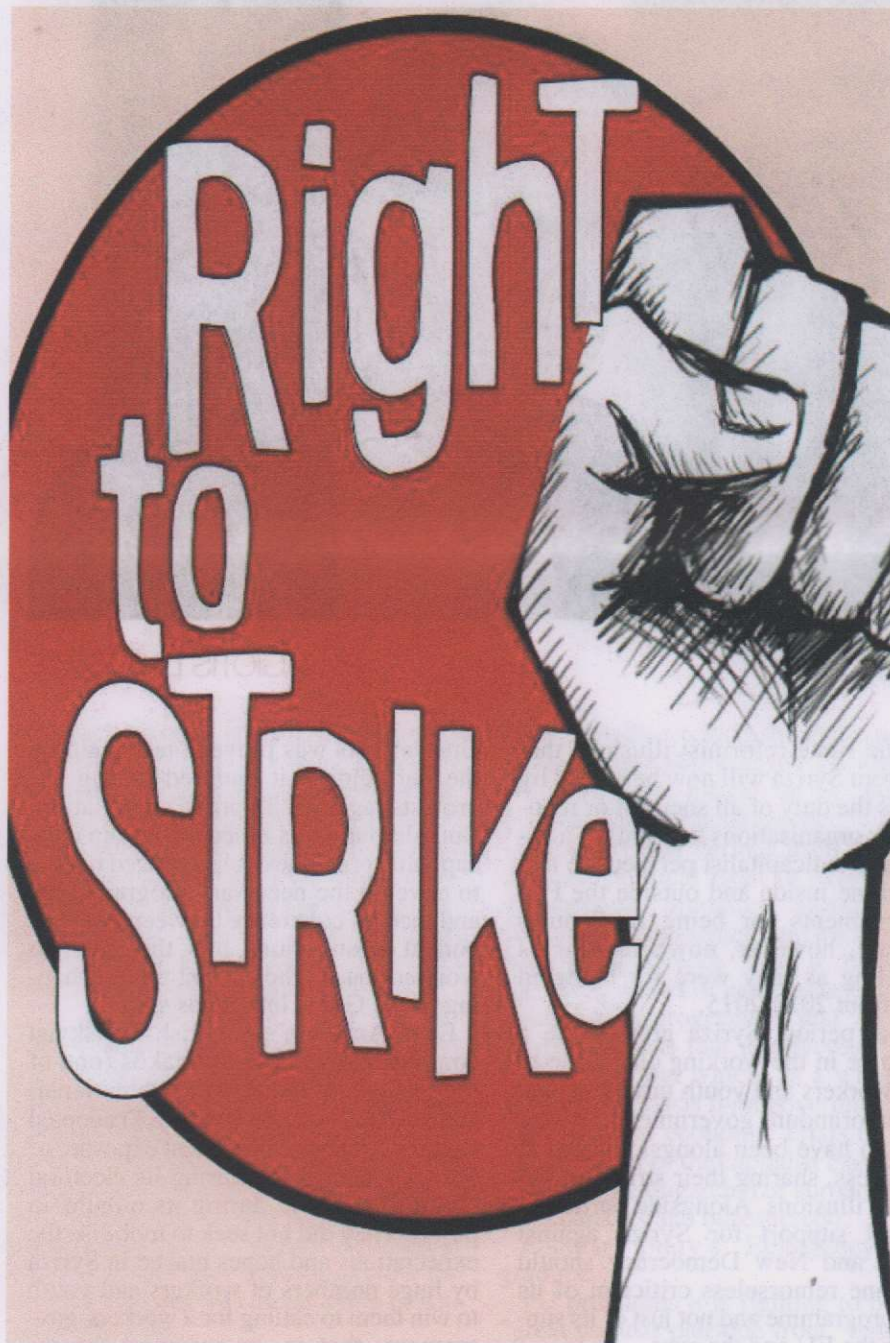
Bosses will be given the right to hire agency staff as strike breakers and the legal notice for the start of industrial action will be doubled from seven to fourteen days.

Unions will be compelled to renew their strike mandates with fresh ballots within four months.

The government will be empowered to set a limit on the proportion of working time any public sector worker can spend on trade union duties.

Give the government certification officer powers to fine trade unions as much as £20,000 for breaches of reporting rules including an annual audit on its protests and pickets. The certification officer will also have power to initiate investigations and will be funded by a joint levy of unions and employers.

A description of the trade dispute and the planned industrial action on the ballot paper giving the courts liberty to invalidate ballots on spurious grounds.



In an attack on Labour Party funding the Bill will require all unions, not just Labour affiliated ones, to ask all members to 'opt in' to the political levy.

The Bill is a continuation of Thatcher's class war against working class organisations and their ability to protect their members. Thatcher was the architect of laws that reduced the effectiveness of picketing and regularly used the courts and police to brutally attack strikers. This time round the target is the public sector

unions, the last line of defence in the struggle to safeguard our public services from cuts and privatisation.

The right of workers to withdraw their labour is the main weapon workers have against the overwhelming power of the bosses. It is the employers that own and control industry. When challenged they can rely on the courts and the police to enforce their property rights. The only protection an individual worker has is when collective action is organised at the workplace.

The Bill seeks to undermine collective action. The ballot thresholds are a gross interference in the affairs of unions and smacks of Tory hypocrisy. If they were applied to parliamentary elections then the present Tory government with only 24.3 per cent of potential voters would fall and 274 out of 330 Tory MP's would have missed the 40 per cent threshold.

Kill the bill

Trade union leaders like Len McCluskey have talked about the need to break the law 'if necessary'. Jeremy Corbyn has said he would repeal what he called 'was a naked attack on all working people' if he led a Labour government. All well and good.

However as the Bill is passes through Parliament with an expected Tory majority we need to ensure that a mammoth campaign is mounted throughout the labour movement to stop the Bill in its tracks right now.

The recent TUC Conference decision to call a national day of action and back the RMT's call to 'consider generalised strike action' in the event of the Bill being used against unions is a good start.

But the tepid response of the union leaders so far shows we cannot rely on our leaders to organise an all out battle against the Bill. We should call on the TUC and individual unions to organise demonstrations and industrial action up to and including a general strike.

The Right to Strike Campaign could provide a lead to build from the grassroots and coordinate action to overcome the debilitating disunity caused by the existence of four competing campaigns. We urgently need one coordinated campaign across all the unions, one which also seeks to draw unorganised workers into activity.

Pledges to defy the Bill and other anti union laws should be promoted in every union. If one section of workers is picked off then there must be instantaneous solidarity action. A political strike of this nature will necessarily flout already established laws. Therefore it is vital that the labour movement deploys its full weight in scuppering this Bill and extending the action to repeal all the anti union laws.

The simple message is organise to strike if you want to defend the right to strike! ●