



weekly **worker**

**Suspended at instigation
of British branch of
Israeli Labor Party**

- Letters and debate
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- Francesco Lorusso

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Towards a Communist Party of the European Union

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LETTERS



Letters may have been shortened because of space. Some names may have been changed

Modern-minded

Let's be honest: any organisation regarding itself as genuinely leftwing and properly socialist which highlights its unequivocal support for the insights and responses to the current trumped-up 'anti-Semitism' row in the UK provided by professor Norman Finkelstein on his blog site will be doing nothing much more than living up to their basic humanitarian obligations, not to mention remaining appropriately faithful to their internationalist principles. Most notably the smears relate to accusations directed against Corbyn's Labour Party and - it could well be said, far more damagingly and therefore even more scandalously - against the new president of the National Union of Students, Malia Bouattia.

The CPGB has very astutely abided precisely by that genuinely progressive outlook. For my part, I admire the organisation for that. Moreover, in light of such consistent, solid and arguably somewhat courageous positioning, I continue to see the CPGB and the *Weekly Worker* as a prominent and essential element in the ongoing struggle to raise the consciousness of working class partisans.

The purpose of that process, needless to say, is to finitely expose capitalism's sickeningly double-dealing and hypocritical practices; its immutably aggressive and imperialistic structure; its fundamentally undemocratic - not to mention disgracefully inhumane - nature and substance. Both thereby and thereafter to achieve a modern-minded Marxist-Leninist party that will secure capitalism's revolutionary overthrow.

Bruno Kretschmar
email

Obsessed

Twenty pages of *Socialist Appeal's* May edition and nothing on the anti-Semitism nonsense. Twelve pages of *Weekly Worker* and we get six pages of it (including the letters page). Are you becoming a little obsessional?

You are following the main media tune. They decide what you're writing about. It was good to read the articles but you have other obligations as a supposed workers' paper. It had no effect on Labour's vote. As I told you, no-one in the chattering masses is taking about this at all. We have a complete disconnect between the national media and the common people. It's a media system that the people aren't listening to. Imagine large newsreel broadcasts in cinema halls around the country. And they're all empty. That's our national media today.

The crime syndicates behind this insane media are funding a system that is not delivering for them. Let's wait and see. The Labour vote is not cracking. It's secure and disciplined. The enemy state is cracking up. It has a party in power that can't get its major legislation through the houses of parliament. Its extreme legislation can't be pushed through with the slender majority they have and a determined Labour Party opposing them alongside the Scottish National Party and Liberal Democrats. The Lib Dems may have only eight MPs, but they have over 100 lords. A government that can't enact its legislation is a government without a mandate.

Defeat after defeat after defeat despite the most totalitarian news system in the world can only lead to one end: the resignation of the government and early parliamentary elections. This could come by the end of 2017. No wonder their media is bombarding the Labour Party. They are frightened of a defeat at a general election they must know is coming sooner than most people think.

Labour don't have to win a majority; they could rule with 270 seats in an *ad hoc* agreement with the SNP. As long as the Tories lose their majority - that must be a key aim for Labour. Then everything is up for grabs. It's about stopping an extremist government in its tracks. Surely we should all be concentrated on that. Let us choose our own tunes.

Elijah Traven
Hull

By the book

I've just been reading two books: *Why the Tories won: the inside story of the 2015 election* by Tim Ross, and *Five million conversations: how Labour lost an election and rediscovered its roots* by Iain Watson.

Both are very interesting. However, whilst the book by the BBC's Iain Watson gives a day-to-day account of Labour's 2015 general election campaign, Tim Ross's is the better of the two, giving an insight into the secrets behind the Tories' success.

Labour's ill-fated campaign is summed up by Will Straw, Labour's parliamentary candidate for Rossendale and Darwen in Lancashire, who between 2010 and 2015 knocked on 20,000 doors in snow, sleet, rain and summer heat. These 20,000 conversations didn't make any difference. Will Straw failed to win the seat.

The book by Tim Ross explains the highly secret, behind-the-scenes work of the Australian, Lynton Crosby - more commonly known as the 'Wizard of Oz' - who was the Tories' campaign guru and strategist, having been given complete control by David Cameron. The Tories targeted 100 seats - 50 Tory marginal and 50 marginal Labour and Liberal Democrat seats - by using direct mail, telephone calls and sending thousands of mainly young volunteers to these 100 seats at weekends. Lynton Crosby shrewdly saw that the way to getting a Tory majority government was to destroy the Liberal Democrats, especially in the south-west of England, but also in seats where the Lib Dems had substantial majorities.

The Tories were helped by the largely unknown campaign to target potential supporters via Facebook. By spending £100,000 a month on adverts on Facebook, the Tories gained the email addresses and postal addresses of 1.5 million potential Tory supporters. Of these 1.5 million, 100,000 mainly young people became volunteers. At weekends, the Tory Party sent thousands of these young volunteers to the 100 target seats by coach and train. They were put up at hostels and hotels on a Saturday night and were supplied with a curry and beer following a day's canvassing and delivering direct mail in one constituency in the morning and another constituency in the afternoon. The cost of putting up thousands of young volunteers at hostels and hotels on a Saturday night together with curry and beers has already led to eight Tory MPs being referred to the police for undeclared election expenses.

Iain Watson's book explains the disastrous campaign by Labour, with its so-called 'five million conversations' on the doorstep being a waste of time, because canvassers were only interested in finding out where confirmed Labour supporters lived rather than trying to win over floating voters. Watson also explains the disastrous decision to rule out a pact with the SNP, who said that "together we can lock David Cameron out of Number 10". Similarly, the famous 'Edstone' was seen more like a gravestone with its bland statement of Labour's six key election pledges.

Tim Ross's book explains how Lynton Crosby earned his keep by masterminding the Tory campaign. Crosby had access to highly secret private polls, which said that the Tories were ahead in the 100 target seats.

He kept his nerve when other public polls said that Labour and Tories were neck and neck, which turned out to disastrously wrong.

Labour needs to learn from these books. In 2020 it needs to target voters in these 100 marginal seats, using Facebook with real conversations and targeted direct mail and phone calls to both Labour supporters and, more importantly, floating voters.

John Smithee
Cambridgeshire

Airbrushed

Miah Simone writes praising the Communist Party of the USA, which formed with 20,000 militants and calling for a 'party of the working class for socialism' (Letters, May 5). Typical!

It is only by starting the clock in 1919 that the Socialist Party of America can be airbrushed from our history. The SPA reached 120,000 members and 6% of the national vote at its peak in 1912, beating even the CPUSA peak membership of 80,000 in 1944.

Miah's "criminal destruction of a great opportunity" might be an apt description of what the CPUSA tried to do to the SPA, including CPers beating SPA members at the SPA's 1934 Madison Square Garden rally (although the most damage to the SPA was done by World War I).

There's more to be learned from the SPA presidential campaign than from the CPUSA, not least candidate (and Bernie Sanders' avowed hero) Eugene Debs' famous quote:

"I am not a labour leader; I do not want you to follow me or anyone else. If you are looking for a Moses to lead you out of this capitalist wilderness, you will stay right where you are. I would not lead you into the Promised Land if I could, because if I led you in, someone else would lead you out. You must use your heads as well as your hands, and get yourself out of your present condition; as it is now, the capitalists use your heads and your hands."

Jon D White

Socialist Party of Great Britain

No plan B

Jack Conrad asks the important question of why Lenin made a 180-degree about-turn between 1914 and 1915 in relation to the 'United States of Europe' slogan ('A highly serviceable political weapon', May 5). Lenin started off by supporting the slogan and later opposed it.

The answer to Jack's question is both political and economic. The general consensus was that the war would lead to revolution, something which the opportunists were not looking forward to. Opportunism began to hide behind the argument that socialism must be international for it to succeed. The end - ie, international socialism - was being used to avoid making revolution in one's own country, because, you see, socialism must be international. For Lenin, a correct position related to the end became incorrect when related to the beginning.

In Lenin's new position, the United States of Europe slogan misled the left into believing that "the victory of socialism in a single country was impossible", and Lenin argued that it may also create misconceptions as to the relations of such a country to the others (*CW* Vol 21, p342).

In the post-Lenin period, Trotsky and his followers used a similar argument to oppose those building socialism in one country and later founded a movement on this basis. For Trotsky it was *either socialism in one country or world revolution*. He lacked a dialectical understanding of the relationship between the two - ie, the particular and the universal - and was viewed, by those who gathered around Stalin in the party, as a dangerous defeatist, in a situation where the world revolution

was moving slower than expected. Trotsky was removed from power because his defeatist position was a direct threat to the Soviet regime: 'If we can't build socialism in one country, why are we here?' Trotsky had no plan B in a situation where the revolution was delayed.

Having made the above points, this doesn't mean that Lenin's withdrawing support for the 'United States of Europe' slogan in 1915 is still valid today, in 2016. The struggle for a democratic socialist society is both national and international in a global situation where the significance of uneven development is far less important than it was 100 years ago in Lenin's day.

Tony Clark
Labour supporter

Centenary

I have offered to help Suzi Weissman publicise the documentary she's making on Trotsky, which will coincide with the centenary of the October revolution next year.

I thought you might be interested in the film's website and the *Kickstarter* campaign to raise the money to finish the film off. The links are: www.trotskyproject.com; and www.kickstarter.com/projects/trotskyproject/the-most-dangerous-man-in-the-world.

If you feel you can make a small donation I am sure this will be welcome.

Paul B Smith
Merseyside

Engagement

I read Miah Simone's letter last week with interest - and I'll confess that I was somewhat confused by it! If I understand it correctly, her position is that the American left is mistaken to continue to

pin their hopes so exclusively to Bernie Sanders.

In that much I can agree with her. It would be entirely wrong-headed to see Sanders as the messiah of American socialism, which is clearly how some have come to view him. Though the Socialist Alternative petition seems opportunistic, Sanders remains a *current* figurehead for socialism on a mainstream stage. We cannot ignore the fact that it's via *his* campaign that so many have become politically activated. Would this have occurred with another left candidate? Perhaps, but, with things as they are, he is the star attraction for an audience whose loyalty is still mostly tribal rather than cognisant - consider the indiscriminately angry Sandernista, Jim Marchwinski, from my article, 'Don't support Clinton' (April 21).

Sanders has, thankfully, opted to fight Clinton all the way to the convention. The importance of consolidating the gains of his campaign after that point is, of course, indisputable, but it would be foolish to think that he should have absolutely no part to play in this himself. No, we don't think we should forget ourselves and get on board the Bernie bandwagon, but we do encourage him to leave the Democrats (his campaign has already been conducted almost entirely outside of party structures) and engage in dialogue with those of us to his left.

It is only through such an engagement that we as Marxists can hope to expose those activated masses to broader political ideas - transforming them from tribal Sandernistas into educated and well-prepared socialists.

Tom Munday
@Tommundaycs

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ELECTIONS

Making history?

How did the left do on May 5? Peter Manson reports

Predictably the results for the non-Labour left on May 5 were not exactly outstanding. Of course, we are accustomed to a poor showing for left candidates, but in current circumstances, where the main political battle that is being fought out right now is surely taking place in the Labour Party, what was, for example, the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition trying to achieve?

Yes, we know that Tusc was opposing austerity, and therefore standing against Labour - whose candidates were committed, however reluctantly, to implementing the cuts to services imposed by Westminster. But I seem to recall that Tusc's big idea was not just that of a single-issue anti-austerity campaign, but to take forward the project of a new "mass workers' party". And, in the first place, that party would not be committed to a revolutionary Marxist programme (however defined), but to a 'broad' platform, which all sections of the workers' movement could support: in other words, a Labour Party mark two.

Of course, the main driving force behind both Tusc and the idea of such a Labour Party mark two has been the Socialist Party in England and Wales (the Socialist Workers Party, for its part, while always supporting Tusc at election time, has never given it the same priority as SPEW). And SPEW has been contending for the best part of two decades that Labour is no longer a bourgeois workers' party, but a bourgeois party pure and simple. So the first step, according to this mindset, must be to win the unions to disaffiliate from Labour and sponsor instead a new party, of which Tusc would be the forerunner.

However, as this paper has previously pointed out, the election of Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader completely and definitively exposed SPEW's bourgeois party theory as completely spurious. Corbyn convincingly saw off his four rivals, with just under 50% first-preference support from Labour members and an even larger vote from supporters, not least union members. At the very least this overwhelming victory should have given SPEW cause for thought.

It is true that SPEW, like the rest of the left, welcomed Corbyn's victory and even admitted that a new situation had opened up. According to Tusc's post-election report, "These were elections fought in a completely different context, compared to that in which previous Tusc campaigns have been conducted, with Jeremy Corbyn's Labour leadership victory last autumn transforming the political situation."

In that case, what is the point of Tusc now? Everyone knows that there is not a cat in hell's chance of any trade union coming on board its 'new mass party' project - not that it ever had much going for it, of course. Yet, despite all this, Tusc candidates stood in 289 council wards in England (312 candidates had originally been listed, but clearly a couple of dozen Tusc contests did not materialise).

The Tusc statement continues:

Tusc has been clear that it would not stand candidates against Labour politicians who have backed Jeremy Corbyn and resisted austerity in the Scottish parliament, the Welsh assembly or local councils. But the big majority of Labour's elected representatives, from parliament to the local council chamber, did not support Jeremy Corbyn for leader and still continue to implement cuts to jobs and services.

So this confirms that Tusc is now just a single-issue campaign. Tusc declares that Labour candidates "should get the message from Thursday's elections that,



Results need a magnifying glass

if they continue to attempt to undermine Jeremy Corbyn and implement the Tories' austerity agenda, they can expect more challenges - in workplaces, in communities and on the streets, but also at the ballot box". And how exactly does this electoral 'tactic' help defeat Labour's pro-capitalist right and give backbone to the Corbyn-McDonnell leadership?

Tusc states that its candidates won an average of 3.2% of the vote and a total of 43,309. However, this average is raised considerably by good performances in a handful of wards. For example, ex-Labour councillor Kevin Bennett "narrowly failed to be re-elected in his Fairfield and Howley ward on Warrington borough council, polling 921 votes, just 76 votes behind the third-placed Labour candidate".

And in Coventry Tusc won over 5% across the city, including 19.8% in St Michaels - the ward where SPEW leader Dave Nellist was a councillor from 1998 to 2012 (before that he had been a Labour MP representing Coventry South East from 1983 to 1992). The next best results were in Knowsley's Shevington ward (23.5%), Poulton in Warrington (20.8%), Halewood South in Knowsley (17.3%) and Monk Bretton in Barnsley (13.7%), while in all 59 Tusc candidates polled over 5%.

Another candidate to exceed that score was Roger Bannister, who was standing for mayor in Liverpool. Comrade Bannister picked up 4,950 votes (5.1%), coming fourth behind Labour, the Liberal Democrats and the Greens, but ahead of the Tories, who polled a mere 3,533 votes.

Nevertheless, as *Socialist Worker* states, most results were "disappointing" (May 10). In Wales in particular, the three Tusc candidates for the regional lists were very poor - in fact even the *Morning Star* boasts: "The Welsh Communist Party won 2,452 votes across the four regions, ahead of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition on 2,040" (May 7-8).

In Scotland, Tusc won a total of 3,540 votes in six constituency seats, gaining between 1.3% (Renfrewshire North and West) and 3% (Glasgow Cathcart). By contrast both Solidarity and Rise (Respect, Independence, Socialism and Environmentalism, whose main slogan is: "For independence and socialism" - in that order, obviously) contested the regional lists only. Solidarity did slightly better, its 14,333 total (0.6%) causing it to remark, "we are stronger than before and increased our share of the vote!"¹ Hmm. Equally unimpressive was the result for Rise - 10,911 votes (0.5%), while the Communist Party of Britain won 510 votes, standing in North East Scotland alone (0.08%).

Mind you, the prize for hyperbole goes to George Galloway, whose May 7

general email was headed: "Thank you for making history". He was referring to his performance in the London mayoral election, where he was standing for Respect. Comrade Galloway states that he won "more than 210,000 votes", which was "the highest vote for a socialist party in British history!"

First of all, both "socialist" and "party" are problematic in describing the tiny Respect group. Secondly, Galloway's 37,007 first-preference votes represented just 1.4%, and even if you add his 117,080 second preferences that comes to rather less than "210,000". He only arrives at that total by including the 41,324 London-wide votes for Respect, plus 17,010 constituency votes - ignoring the fact that everyone had three votes anyway.

The CPGB recommended a first-preference vote for Galloway as a protest at the 'anti-Semitism' smear campaign against Labour members - most notably Ken Livingstone - that Sadiq Khan enthusiastically supported, calling for Livingstone's expulsion. We were pleased to be amongst those giving comrade Galloway our first preference, in view of his robust opposition to the witch-hunt - even if we consider that his "making history" comment is ever so slightly overstated.

Finally, a mention of the elections to the Northern Ireland assembly, where, following its success in the south, the People Before Profit Alliance had two candidates elected on May 5: Gerry Carroll in West Belfast and Eamonn McCann in Foyle, two staunchly republican areas. In West Belfast, comrade Carroll actually topped the poll when it came to first preferences, with 8,299 (22.9%), but it has to be said that the Sinn Féin first preferences were split between its four candidates, who picked up a share ranging from 9.7% to 13.1%. All were eventually elected in this six-member constituency, along with the sole candidate representing the Social Democratic and Labour Party.

Under the complicated proportional election system in place in the Six Counties, comrade McCann picked up 4,176 first preferences (10.5%), the fifth highest total, and squeezed home on the eighth count, behind two candidates each from SF and the SDLP, plus one from the Democratic Unionist Party.

Obviously this form of PR makes a big difference to the chances of smaller groups, but the level of support for comrade Carroll in particular is nevertheless a cause for celebration ●

peter.manson@weeklyworker.co.uk

Notes

1. www.tusc.org.uk/17246/10-05-2016/super-thursday-elections-the-tusc-results.
2. http://solidarity.scot.

ACTION

CPGB podcasts

Every Monday we upload a podcast commenting on the current political situation. In addition, the site features voice files of public meetings and other events: <http://cpgb.org.uk/home/podcasts>.

London Communist Forum

Sunday May 15, 5pm: 'The left and anti-Semitism' - see advert, p.5.
Sunday May 22, 5pm: Weekly political report from CPGB Provisional Central Committee, followed by open discussion and reading group. Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Road, London WC1. Study of Ralph Miliband's *Parliamentary socialism*. This meeting: chapter 5 ('The general strike'), section 1: 'Red Friday - and after'. Organised by CPGB: www.cpgb.org.uk; Labour Party Marxists: www.labourpartymarxists.org.uk.

Radical Anthropology Group

Tuesday May 17, 6.45pm: Introduction to social and biological anthropology, Daryll Forde seminar room, Anthropology Building, 14 Taverton Street, off Gordon Square, London WC1. 'We were like sisters: collective ritual practices among women sharing direct sales cosmetics.' Speaker: Elena Fejdiova. Organised by Radical Anthropology Group: radicalanthropologygroup.org.

Living under military occupation

Wednesday May 11, 7.30pm: Meeting, Friends Meeting House, Upper Goat Lane, Norwich NR2. Speaker: Kate Cargin, recently returned from Jerusalem. Organised by Palestine Solidarity Campaign: www.palestinecampaign.org.

The Russian Revolution

Saturday May 14, 10am to 5pm: Critique conference, Student Central, Malet Street, London WC1. Preparing for and discussing next year's centenary. Organised by *Critique* journal: www.critiquejournal.net.

Nakba

Saturday May 14, 10.30am to 4pm: Day conference, NUT HQ, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1. Organised by Palestine Solidarity Campaign: www.palestinecampaign.org.

Stop the Infidels

Saturday May 14, 1pm: Counterdemo against far-right North East Infidels. Assemble Byker metro station, off Conyers Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE6. Organised by Newcastle Unites: www.facebook.com/events/1699453340321182.

March for mental health

Saturday May 14, 1pm: Protest. Assemble St Helen's Square, York YO1. Organised by York People's Assembly: www.facebook.com/groups/149179345271110.

Artists against war

Sunday May 15, 3pm: Protest, Trafalgar Square, London WC2. Organised by Arts For Action: www.artsforaction.org.uk.

Trump, Clinton and Sanders

Tuesday May 17, 7pm: Public meeting, Friends House, George Fox Room, 173-177 Euston Road, London NW1. Phyllis Bennis in conversation with Amir Amirani. Organised by Stop the War Coalition: www.stopwar.org.uk.

Remain or leave?

Wednesday May 18, 7pm: Public debate, Room 3, John Smith House (Unite the union), 145-165 West Regent Street, Glasgow G2. How should socialists vote in the EU referendum? Leave - Vince Mills; Remain - Sandy McBurney. Organised by Glasgow Momentum: www.facebook.com/Momentum-Glasgow-897198747033154.

Remember Grunwick

Wednesday May 18, 7.30pm: Film screening and discussion, North Walthamstow Trades Hall and Institute Club, Hoe Street, London E17. 40th anniversary meeting. Bar and refreshments available. Organised by Walthamstow Constituency Labour Party: <http://walthamstowclp.blogspot.co.uk>.

Save Lewisham libraries

Saturday May 21, 12 noon: Protest. Assemble Lewisham library, 199 Lewisham High Street, London SE13, for march to town hall. Organised by Save Lewisham Libraries: www.facebook.com/SaveLewishamLibraries.

No to austerity

Thursday May 26, 6pm: Launch of Bedford Momentum, Queens Park Community Centre, 52 Marlborough Road, Bedford, MK40. Special event with John McDonnell MP. Organised by Momentum: www.peoplesmomentum.com.

Unofficial war artist

Ends Monday May 30: New exhibition of Peter Kennard's work, Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London SE1. Free entry. Organised by Imperial War Museum: www.iwm.org.uk/exhibitions/iwm-london/peter-kennard.

1820 Yorkshire Rebellion

Saturday June 25, 1pm: Meeting, Red Shed, Vicarage Street, Wakefield WF1. Speaker: Shaun Cohen (Ford Maguire Society). Admission free, including light buffet. Plus bar with excellent real ale. Organised by Wakefield Socialist History Group: www.theredshed.org.uk/SocialHist.html.

Imperialism centenary

Thursday June 16, 7pm: Lecture, Marx Memorial Library, 37A Clerkenwell Green, London, EC1. Speaker: Andrew Murray, marking 100 years since Lenin wrote *Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism*. Organised by Marx Memorial Library: www.marxlibrary.org.uk.

CPGB wills

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ELECTIONS

Party of lost causes

Eddie Ford looks at the prospects for Ukip

Apart from the possible exception of Sadiq Khan, there were no crushing victories or humiliating defeats in last week's elections - you could call it an inconclusive draw.

Disappointingly for the Labour right and its allies, the results for Jeremy Corbyn were not disastrous. Was the 'anti-Semitic' smear campaign for nothing? In the end, for all the dire predictions about losing 150 or more council seats, Labour was down overall by only 18, as opposed to the 48 that the Tories lost. According to Tom Watson, Labour's deputy leader, a leadership challenge at this time is now "about as likely as a snowstorm in the Sahara".

Then there is the United Kingdom Independence Party, which only last year got 12.7% of the popular vote (3,881,099). With questions of immigration and 'national security' in the ascendancy and the European Union referendum only six weeks away, Ukip seemed well placed. Indeed, it made something of a breakthrough in the Welsh assembly elections - getting around 13% of the overall vote and scooping up seven seats under the closed party list system, which is elected under a proportional basis. Luckily for Wales, the election marked the return to active duty of the disgraced ex-Conservative MP, Neil 'Cash for Questions' Hamilton and the former Tory turncoat, Mark 'I'm not weird' Reckless, who was ditched by Kent voters last year.

However, on closer examination, Ukip's results are not particularly impressive: its vote was no greater than at the general election, with lots of close second places last week, suggesting that the party is still struggling to develop the organisation needed to consistently turn votes into seats. For instance, in 2014 Ukip gained 161 seats in local elections, but this time round only picked up an extra 25 in England, and failed to gain control of any council. In London, Ukip still remains a fringe player and in Scotland, of course, it barely registers statistically.

And even in Wales, the seven seats came from the Tories and the Liberal Democrats rather than at Labour's expense - which is where Ukip needs to make gains if it is to significantly advance its position. In fact the *Express* headline, "Ukip surge to boost Brexit" (May 6), looks a little premature.

What next?

Obviously, Ukip has done everything it can to take advantage of the hole that David Cameron dug himself into with his EU referendum promise - which he actually had to follow through after unexpectedly winning a parliamentary majority last year. The gods are cruel. In that sense, Ukip is quite right to claim that there would not be a referendum at all if it was not for them - its strong showing in opinion polls spooked Cameron into taking that course of action.

But it is questionable as to whether Ukip will gain any lasting benefit from the referendum itself. For all the excited speculation in rightwing newspapers, the most likely outcome next month is 'remain' - perhaps by a relatively comfortable margin. The reasons for that are simple enough. Firstly, referendums generally favour the status quo - especially in the last leg of the campaign, where conservative instincts and fears tend to take over. Secondly, the establishment and big business as a whole are strongly in favour of 'remain' and will use their considerable resources to get the result they want. We had another volley from Project Fear at the beginning of the



Nigel Farage: what of the future?

week, having us believe Brexit would increase the risk of Europe descending into war. Cameron invoked the spirit of Winston Churchill, of course, and used the battles of Trafalgar, Blenheim, Waterloo and the two world wars as 'evidence' that Britain cannot pretend to be "immune from the consequences" of events in Europe. Voting 'remain' is your patriotic duty.

Most opinion polls have the two camps neck and neck - the latest ICM survey has 'remain' on 44% and 'leave' on 46%, whilst YouGov has them respectively on 42% and 40%. But the *Financial Times*' poll of polls tracker has 'remain' ahead by three points on 46%, and this writer would expect that lead to increase, as the propaganda offensive from the pro-EU camp gets louder and louder. Maybe sadly for Farage, England is not like Scotland, where pro-independence sentiment is now a permanent feature of the political landscape. The Scottish National Party is now stronger than ever despite losing the referendum in 2014. But after June 23 it is more than likely that opposition to the EU will return to what it had previously been: a slightly peculiar hobby horse of sections of the right and left, without any solid or stable mass backing.

Of course, you cannot rule out the possibility of a victory for the 'leave' camp - but would that be such a bonanza for Ukip? No doubt Farage and company would have a field day exposing the hypocrisy of prime minister Boris Johnson's latest 'fundamental renegotiation', after he returns from Brussels waving yet another worthless piece of paper and getting essentially the same "rotten deal" as Cameron. But when 'remain' romps home in a second referendum - the most likely result, given Johnson's authority - what then for Ukip? It is hard to see it having a renaissance or a massive electoral revival: quite the opposite, if anything. More the case that its support starts to dwindle, as it starts to look like a party without a cause or direction.

John Mills, deputy chair of Vote Leave and a major Labour donor, recently mused in *Newsweek* about Ukip being a "big worry" for the Labour Party - Ukip's "intention" is to

"try and get something off the ground" in the UK like the Five Star Movement in Italy, he said, which would see it "try and peel off substantial amounts of largely Labour but other political support as well".¹ Mills went on to remark that "one of the problems" about having "such a Europhile party" (ie, Labour) in the House of Commons is that this "doesn't reflect the views of large numbers of Labour-leaning potential voters and it's opening up schisms" - "a lot of Labour supporters" were "puzzled" by the fact that Labour "hasn't really got a positive series of policy changes" that "working class voters would like to see". In other words, Labour needs to court the chauvinistic, Eurosceptic, anti-migrant vote.

Similarly, Matthew Goodwin - academic expert on the far right and writer on Ukip² - told the Politico website about a "secret" post-referendum plan for the party which hopes to emerge from the defeat with a "new movement" that has "much broader appeal", just as the SNP "went on to force a complete realignment of politics" in the 2015 general election despite experiencing defeat only a year earlier in the referendum.³ However, Ukip is currently treading water at between 10% and 15% in the opinion polls.

It is hoping to build, in Goodwin's words, a "younger, more active support base", but so far it has made little to no way headway among younger voters, nor has it made many inroads among women or minorities: it remains overwhelmingly a party of disgruntled, white, older men, who regret that the empire no longer exists. But, Goodwin writes, were the "new movement" to "press the same buttons as radical right parties in other European states - populist attacks against banks, tax evaders, corporate cartels and the excesses of globalisation - then it could be a very different story".

Frankly, this is extremely unconvincing - more an imaginative exercise than political science. The space for a British version of Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement seems extremely limited, if not virtually non-existent, with our first-past-the-post system and deeply entrenched political

parties. The Conservative Party has its right flank securely covered and ditto for Labour on its left - even more so now that Corbyn is leader. Such a "new movement" would have a Herculean task to convert any possible support into votes and actual seats in parliament. Even in Wales there is no evidence that Ukip managed to "peel off" a substantial amount of Labour voters. Indeed, far from securing its position, Ukip in Wales seems to be in a state of civil war - with Neil Hamilton, who does not even live in the principality, seizing the leadership of the party's group in the Welsh assembly from Nathan Gill, despite Nigel Farage's opposition.⁴ Gill described the events as "bizarre" and an unhappy Farage blasted the 'coup' as "unjust and an act of deep ingratitude".

Mainstream

As this paper has pointed out many times before, far from being an 'unBritish' extremist menace, Ukip - this or that populist gesture aside - is actually part of the *mainstream nationalist consensus*, which contends that immigration is a problem. Therefore Nigel Farage's chances of morphing into Beppe Grillo are, as Ton Watson might well say, as likely as a bush fire in the Arctic. Ukip is very, very British.

The latest issue of *Socialist Worker* reiterates for the thousandth time that "Ukip gains", such as they are, should act as a "warning" to "keep fighting racists" (May 10). But, whatever the Socialist Workers Party might tiresomely insist, Ukip is *not* a racist organisation in terms of its formal programme (insofar as it has one) or the outlook of its leadership - even if some of its members, including quite prominent ones, do have racist and other prejudices. But, then again, you can say the same thing about the Tories - yet to accuse Cameron of being a racist would be utterly absurd.

Ultimately, Ukip's strident anti-migrant message does not fundamentally differ from the mainstream ideology, which combines bourgeois or institutional anti-racism with British nationalism. Ukip just has a more virulent petty bourgeois version, peppered with a visceral hatred

for the 'politically correct', same-sex marrying, anti-foxhunting, *Guardian*-reading, metropolitan liberal elite and feckless 'scroungers' - whether migrants or not. In that sense Ukip hates white people too. There is no reason to scornfully laugh when Ukip says it is a "non-racist" party - Nigel Farage wants all Britons, including previous immigrants and their descendants, to unite around the union jack against non-British outsiders - Poles, Romanians, Bulgarians, Syrians, etc. Just like Gordon Brown, Farage wants 'British jobs for British workers', regardless of their ethnic background.

Farage has long argued, like George Galloway and others, for a points-based immigration system like the one in Australia. If you are a skilled Pole, African, Chinese, European or whoever, white or black, then you may well be welcome. But for Farage unskilled Poles, Africans, etc have come to "take our resources" - which is "not a race question", but instead a matter of "our country's needs". Robotically, the SWP comrades call this a form of disguised or "sophisticated" racism - presumably to be contrasted to the crude master-race stuff you used to get from British National Party and National Front. But surely this is rather a manifestation of 'common sense' *national chauvinism* - which is something rather different.

Actually, Farage can play the official anti-racist card as much as the next bourgeois politician - hence his fulminations against the "Jew-hating" extremists who have "taken control" of the Labour Party, and his attacks on Jackie Walker, the latest victim of the 'anti-Semitic' smear campaign directed at the Labour Party. According to Farage, she is a woman "full of hatred and anger", who "regularly shrieked and ranted at myself and Ukip activists whenever given half the opportunity".⁵ Now "she herself has just been suspended from the Labour Party for blaming Jewish people for an 'African holocaust', claiming that they are 'chief financiers of the slave trade'". So here we have the leader of a 'racist' party joining in the smears - the Ukip leader has actually added his voice to demands that such 'anti-Semites' be purged from the Labour Party.

The Stand Up To Ukip popular front was ridiculous when it was launched and it is equally ridiculous now. We were told by the SWP that it wants "people of goodwill" to come together and say no to Ukip's "racism" - "regardless of our differing views on Europe or other political issues". We can only assume that this was an invitation for Tories, Lib Dems, SNPers, etc, to come on board and fight the Ukip menace. But come on board they haven't. They are too busy fighting Ukip where it matters - standing in election and winning votes. Meanwhile, they are more than happy for the SWP to get childishly excited and keep shouting 'racist, racist, racist' at every passing Ukip supporter. What a farce ●

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Notes

1. <http://europe.newsweek.com/brexit-labour-john-mills-ukip-five-star-movement-444541>.
2. He is the author of *Ukip: inside the campaign to redraw the map of British politics* Oxford 2015.
3. www.politico.eu/article/eurosceptic-movement-plan-what-comes-after-ukip-brexite.
4. www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3582996/Cash-questions-ex-Tory-Neil-Hamilton-LEADER-Ukip-Welsh-Assembly-despite-living-England.html.
5. www.breitbart.com/london/2016/05/05/farage-for-breitbart-hard-left-jew-hating-anti-israel-extremists-now-run-the-labour-party.

AGGREGATE

Fragmentation of election picture

CPGB members have been discussing the May 5 elections and the forthcoming EU referendum. Mickey Coulter reports

On an unusually hot Sunday in early May, CPGB comrades came together in a members' aggregate last weekend to discuss the political situation following the recent council, mayoral, Scottish parliament and Welsh assembly elections and in the run-up to the European Union referendum.

Mike Macnair of the Provisional Central Committee led off on the post-election political landscape. For comrade Macnair the artificial 'anti-Semitism' smear campaign generated by the bourgeois media, in which the Labour Party stands accused of harbouring a pronounced anti-Jewish trend within it, was inseparable from the latest council and mayoral elections.

While this angle of attack upon the left will continue to be relentlessly pursued, one thing that has changed, explained the comrade, is what could previously be understood as the 'British' political dynamics. These now appear to have broken down more or less completely into distinct cantons; London, the rest of England, Wales and Scotland - each affected now by differing elements.

This realignment is most apparent in Scotland, where the parliamentary results were dire for Labour. The Scottish National Party is holding on to what used to be the traditional Labour vote, and the Conservatives have leapfrogged over Labour to become the second largest party at Holyrood. The constitutional question seems to remain most important in Scotland, and we can conclude that Jeremy Corbyn's leadership of Labour and thus its move to the left has not dented the SNP vote, so tarnished by its past rightwing domination is Scottish Labour.

In Wales comrade Macnair noted that Labour lost a little ground to Plaid Cymru, and also to the UK Independence Party. Robert Paul, a Welsh comrade, suggested in the following discussion that the success of Plaid in previously staunch Labour areas such as the Rhondda was due more to the personality and hard work of the PC leader, Leanne Wood, and the fact that there is no longer the clear red water between Welsh Labour and the national party, that protected it from some of the taint to Blairism, now that it stands as a more centrist element in comparison with the Corbyn leadership. For the same reasons comrade Macnair was doubtful that the same kind of catastrophe that befell Labour in Scotland at the hands of nationalists would be replicated in Wales.

London saw a resounding win for Labour centre-left and Corbyn critic Sadiq Khan, though it was, in the comrade's view, a vote for the party rather than for Khan personally. As for the Conservative Party, it has badly damaged itself with its racial dog whistle campaign in a city like London (where white British make up only 44% of the population) and Goldsmith's attempts to woo the Indian community with anti-Muslim sentiment sank like a lump of fool's gold. As for the rest of England, it was almost a 'no change' scenario, said the comrade.

Anti-Semitism

Seeking to dissect the politics of the media's fraudulent 'anti-anti-Semitism' campaign, comrade Macnair judged that here is an issue that the right within Labour can cohere around, while it has hit



A disunited kingdom

a nerve amongst the left, which is accustomed by reflex to react against any and all accusations of racism, the sin above all others. Here, capital was exploiting the decades long-march of the left into the warrens of identity politics, safe spaces, immediate suspensions based merely upon accusation, and so on.

Here the Labour right, the Tories and the press could bank on Corbyn, McDonnell and the Labour left to collapse immediately - which much of it has - rather than concocting loudly and publicly the concocted frame-up job. The timing is too perfect, and the digging up of sometimes years-old comments, social media postings and so on too great for all this to be a series of spontaneous events.

Concluding, comrade Macnair drew an analogy between the battles undertaken by Labour's bourgeoisie wing to reclaim the party during the 1980s and the present situation: from the point of view of the right, a meltdown on the scale of 1983 was the realistic minimum needed to get rid of Corbyn, given that - as Tony Blair himself has pointed out - Corbyn almost certainly cannot be kept off the ballot for any new leadership election. As an aid to this, it would be necessary for Ukip to do well, so as to take votes from Labour in its areas of traditional support.

We cannot expect the 'anti-Semitism' push to stop either. Rather, as Jack Conrad noted in the following discussion, it will be pressed home all the more, moving up the Labour ranks from lowly members nobody had heard of until recently, through people like Livingstone and eventually, they hope, to the head of the party itself. After all, Corbyn has over the years made many anti-Zionist comments and if Ken had to go for his comments, the logic runs, what about the leader himself?

Stan Kelsey noted that two relatively new Labour MPs who had previously supported Corbyn had now had a change of heart and decided they no longer agreed with his approach. For Jack Conrad the election votes across the board were

predictable: he observed that the success of the media in creating a new 'common sense' - that Labour really does have a problem with Jews - has been a stunning success. He was disgusted at the way much of the left had folded over the issue without even lifting a finger, noting that the Labour Representation Committee and Jon 'Don't mention Zionism' Lansman were particularly bad examples. They were content merely to be an echo chamber, or fan club, for the new Labour leadership. But their behaviour exposed the failed thinking behind their 'Labour victory in 2020' strategy - as if this, rather than intransigent opposition and a communist programme, was somehow a greater source of strength for the working class. Ben Klein doubted that a resurrection of Ukip was on the cards, and many others agreed with him in thinking that after the EU referendum Farage's party would lose steam.

Providing an uncharacteristic ray of sunshine amongst the gloom was Phil Kent, who suspected that, whatever else, the kind of polarisation we are seeing in the USA in opposition to the 'moderate' establishment would follow in the UK too - he thought there was a fair chance that the Conservative Party would implode over the European Union, shaking politics up further. Dashing our raised hopes, however, he then speculated that if the Tories do not implode a 2020 election for Labour would be a disaster, as it would have to manage the inevitable crisis of capitalism that is looming.

EU referendum

On the subject of the EU, Jack Conrad emphasised in his report that referenda are generally a bad thing, tending to divide parties. Corbyn's change of heart on Europe and subsequent refusal to go for 'leave' has confused and split the left.

Ben Klein later noted that referenda also create strange alliances, such as that between George Galloway and Nigel Farage. Likewise, going for the

lesser evil in a straight 'yes' or 'no' poll often means having to prettify one side or the other. So the existing EU suddenly appears responsible for all sorts of progressive things, according to people like Luke Cooper, while support for Brexit is equally based on fantasy thinking, for both left and right. The left imagines that, instead of seeking to build up real strength through the fight for a serious unified party, it can settle for merely trying to 'bugger things up a bit' for David Cameron.

Capital in Britain had not been demanding a referendum, noted comrade Conrad. It had resulted from what is purely internal manoeuvring within the Conservative Party, which threatens to blow up in their faces. What seemed before to Cameron merely a way of dealing with Ukip and his own right wing has become a terrible reality, albeit a farcical one. There is no post-Suez style reorientation of British power in the world going on here, and the idea that Britain would actually leave the EU was "bullshit". The arguments of the 'leave' campaign that the UK could free itself from EU 'red tape' are bogus, said comrade Conrad, and Obama's remarks about Britain about going to "the back of the queue" post-Brexit were basically correct.

No, what this is really all about is

a choice between David Cameron and Boris Johnson. If 'remain' wins you keep Cameron; if 'out' is victorious you get Boris. He was scathing about the Socialist Workers Party, which, among others, imagines that Brexit would somehow represent a blow against 'British imperialism'. In the following debate Paul Demarty was even less kind, commenting that the SWP's ambition does not even reach the heights of bugging things up a little for imperialism, and in fact the organisation itself says that a 'leave' victory would be good only for getting rid of Cameron. Apparently replacing him with Johnson would be a victory for socialism. The UK will stay in the EU one way or another, even if Boris ends up atop the Conservatives.

In the following discussion Mike Macnair stated that the right's 'back to the 1950s' level of independence was utopian nostalgia. What independence Britain had then was a dead letter due to the more or less explicit handover of power to the USA during World War II and was confirmed by the 1956 Suez crisis.

Comrade Conrad concluded that it was unimportant which side won. Instead of taking one side or the other, the left should prioritise the development of an international strategy based on a genuine Marxist programme ●

The left and anti-Semitism

London Communist Forum

Sunday May 15, 5pm

Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Road, London WC1.

How should we react to the establishment smear campaign?

Speaker: Israeli communist Moshé Machover

Organised by CPGB: www.cpgb.org.uk;
Labour Party Marxists: www.labourpartymarxists.org.uk.

ANTI-SEMITISM



Exploiting the Nazi holocaust for the sake of petty politics

Recipe for disaster

Labour's election results have given Corbyn only a temporary reprieve, predicts **Tony Greenstein**

Those who welcomed the victory of Jeremy Corbyn in the Labour leadership campaign and want to see him become prime minister in 2020 have to fact up to the fact that he is drinking in the last chance saloon. The vultures are circling and it is a matter not of if, but when, they strike.

Labour "hung on", in Corbyn's words, in the local elections last week despite, not because of, Labour's election campaign. The only reason that Labour only lost 11 local council seats was because of the Tories' own near political collapse. Part of the desperation of the false 'anti-Semitism' campaign was motivated not just by the local elections, but the referendum campaign. It is conceivable that the Tory Party could go into meltdown and even split on the issue. In such circumstances Labour could be expected to almost walk into power. It is this scenario above all others that haunts those who are behind the current 'anti-Semitism' campaign. We should not underestimate the sense of determination of Corbyn's foes.

Labour did terribly in Scotland, it stood still in Wales and improved its percentage of the vote slightly in England. Overall it gained 31% of the vote, which is nowhere near enough to win a general election. Of course, the results in Scotland were a legacy of Blairism and what is called Red Toryism.

With the Tories in disarray politically, Labour should have done far better. The Tories were forced into a series of U-turns on cuts to disability benefits, tax credits and school academies. Iain Duncan Smith resigned, the cabinet is split over Europe and the junior doctors' strikes have rocked the government and forced health secretary Jeremy Hunt back into negotiations. Why then was Labour unable to capitalise on all this?

Blame the right

There is one primary reason. The right of the party - not least in the shape of John Mann and Wes Streeting - did their utmost to ensure that the Labour Party did as badly as possible. It was a case of deliberate sabotage. John Mann's farcical confrontation with Ken Livingstone at the doors of parliament was staged-managed specially for the cameras. The only thing we learnt from this is that Mann has apparently read *Mein Kampf!*

Instead of immediately withdrawing the whip from Mann, the leadership suspended Ken Livingstone for making some undiplomatic but essentially correct statements.¹

Ken was suspended at the instigation of the British branch of the Israeli Labor Party, the Jewish Labour Movement and Labour Friends of Israel, in conjunction with the *Jewish Chronicle* and the Israeli embassy,

whose ambassador, Mark Regev, was previously a spokesman for Israeli prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu, as well as a polished PR apologist for Israeli war crimes. Regev has been busy this week speaking to the press on Labour's crisis.

Indeed Isaac 'We aren't Arab lovers'² Herzog, leader of the Israeli Labor Party, threatened in a supreme act of irony to break all links with the Labour Party because of its 'racism'³ Unfortunately there is little chance of him keeping his word!

Max Blumenthal shows⁴ how what we are seeing is a live version of Chris Mullin's *A very British coup*, where Harry Perkins was the Jeremy Corbyn character. The difference is that Perkins was a former steelworker with nerves of steel, whereas Jeremy Corbyn seems to have a spine made of rubber. Corbyn has been pushed from pillar to post by the right with barely a squeak.

I have showed⁵ how the campaign over 'anti-Semitism' has actually nothing to do with anti-Semitism and everything to do with destabilising Corbyn and Labour's election campaign. It is a witch-hunt, in which every past utterance by those targeted is held up to the light and distorted. What we are seeing is not the rise of anti-Semitism, but an informers' charter, in which people are afraid to speak their mind for fear that they will cross

an invisible boundary. In practice it is not racism, but anti-racist discourse, which is being scrutinised. All the worst practices of McCarthyism have come to the Labour Party, presided over by Corbyn and McDonnell, who are seemingly oblivious of what is happening around them. No-one will dare debate any controversial issue - least of all Palestine, Zionism or anti-Semitism - for fear of falling foul of the modern-day equivalent of the Salem witch-hunt.

Support Palestinian resistance? That's 'terrorism' and you will be denounced as readily as America's communists (and many who were not communists) were to the FBI. Under John Stolliday's compliance unit denunciation will result in automatic suspension in Labour's version of Arthur Miller's *Crucible!* Instead of the House UnAmerican Activities committee, we have Labour's national constitutional committee. Asa Winstanley on *The Electronic Intifada* website has showed how virtually all the 'anti-Semitic' incidents that have led to suspensions from the Labour Party have been invented or embroidered.⁶

Corbyn is steadily ceding ground politically to the right. Indeed at times he shows signs of political incoherence. John McDonnell has already had to go through the embarrassment of agreeing to Osborne's fiscal limits last autumn

and then reversing his position.

It was embarrassing to watch Corbyn at the May 4 prime minister's question time being taunted by David Cameron over his description of Hamas and Hezbollah as 'friends'. Instead of rebutting the suggestion that Hamas and Hezbollah were genocidal anti-Semites and terrorists, he simply wilted, merely repeating his condemnation of anti-Semitism. He could have responded that Hamas has indeed condemned the holocaust,⁷ He could have thrown back Cameron's accusation, pointing out that it was Cameron who was aiding terrorism - state terrorism - by the vile Saudi Arabian regime, with arms supplies that have killed thousands of Yemeni people. He could even have pointed to Cameron's anti-Semitic friends in the European Conservative and Reform group, to which Tory MEPs belong.

Corbyn seemed to forget entirely all those speeches of his about Israeli confiscation of land, its ill-treatment of Palestinian prisoners, its apartheid laws, etc. It is as if everything he has said on Palestine for the last 30 years was just meaningless waffle. He could have pointed out that Hezbollah would not have existed but for Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon that killed 20,000 people and injured over 80,000.

Corbyn might, with people like Seamus Milne briefing him, have pointed out that it was Israel

that helped create Hamas as a counterweight to secular Palestinian nationalism.⁸ It should not be beyond Corbyn's intellect to work out that the suspensions of up to 50 people on anti-Semitism charges, including myself and Jackie Walker, has been got up by the right and the Israel lobby as part of their campaign against him.⁹ Yet all he has done is to ritually condemn 'anti-Semitism', even though his opponents have a very different definition of anti-Semitism from him.

Given Corbyn's experiences of being accused of consorting with holocaust deniers over the summer,¹⁰ it would not take a genius to work out that all this had more to do with political calculation and destabilisation than a sudden outburst of actual anti-Semitism in the Labour Party. For anti-Semitism is not a word game played by Labour's thought police: it is hatred, discrimination and violence against Jews (there is not one single example of anyone Jewish being abused in this way in the Labour Party), married to overarching conspiracy theories. It is not calling Israel a racist state or Zionism a racist ideology. Anti-Semitism is not calling racist Zionists 'Zio' on Twitter (where everything is shortened because of the 140-character limit). It is not discussing Jewish involvement historically in the slave trade. Nor is it Naz Shah, a Muslim woman - who was horrified at the murder of over 2,000 Palestinians in Operation Protective Edge, including 551 children - dreaming of how all this might put Labour in danger of breeding a generation of Matthew Hopkins.

Hypocrisy

Perhaps it is Norman Finkelstein, the American Jewish, anti-Zionist professor, who has best summed up the hypocrisy and cynicism of Labour's witch-hunters:

Finkelstein was asked about Shah, whom the absurd John Mann MP has compared to Eichmann,¹¹ posting an image that has been presented as an endorsement of a "chilling 'transportation' policy".¹² Finkelstein responded that Mann's comparison was "obscene":

It's doubtful these holocaust-mongers have a clue what the deportations were, or of the horrors that attended them.

I remember my late mother describing her deportation. She was in the Warsaw Ghetto. The survivors of the Ghetto uprising, about 30,000 Jews, were deported to Majdanek concentration camp. They were herded into railroad cars. My mother was sitting in the railroad car next to a woman who had her child. And the woman - I know it will shock you - the woman suffocated her infant child to death in front of my mother. She suffocated her child, rather than take her to where they were going. That's what it meant to be deported.

To compare that to someone posting a light-hearted, innocuous cartoon making a little joke about how Israel is in thrall to the US, or vice versa - it's sick. What are they doing? Don't they have any respect for the dead? All these desiccated Labour apparatchiks, dragging the Nazi holocaust through the mud for the sake of their petty jostling for power and position. Have they no shame?¹³

"Desiccated Labour apparatchiks" is a fitting description of Labour's Blairite general secretary, Iain McNicol, and his hatchetman, John Stolliday. Yet it is symptomatic of his leadership that Corbyn has failed, as Jon Lansman has told me, to reign in and control the Labour Party civil service.

There is only one thing that will instil the fear of god into Labour's right. That is deselection. It is

rumoured that Corbyn did not want to suspend Livingstone, but was forced into it by the threat of shadow cabinet resignations. If true then he should have called their bluff and made it clear that they would face the consequences. It is still possible for Corbyn to confront the right. It is still possible for Momentum to stop sitting on the sidelines doing nothing. But for that to happen Jon Lansman must be removed and a democratic structure put in place.

Instead of John McDonnell saying, 'Of course we don't want reselections', Momentum should declare war on the hard right. Those who voted to bomb Syria should be top of the list, with John Mann suspended for bringing the party into disrepute.

At the moment the right are winning the battle for delegates to the annual party conference. The left has not organised. Neither the Labour Representation Committee nor Momentum. Momentum has seen its vice-chair, Jacqueline Walker, suspended over the same 'anti-Semitism' charges as myself. Apparently a black-Jewish member of the party is not allowed to discuss the black holocaust of the slave trade, still less Jewish involvement in it, even though the latter is a fact.¹⁴ What we are seeing is the political equivalent of book burning.

Ken Livingstone's comments about Hitler's support for Zionism were tactically inept, but they were not anti-Semitic and they were pretty near the truth too. He did not say that Hitler was a Zionist nor that the Nazis supported the Zionist project. What he meant was that the Nazis supported the Zionist solution to Germany's Jewish population - which was that they should be sent to Palestine primarily. It is a fact that the Zionists collaborated with the Nazis.

AWL distortion

Those on the left who attack Livingstone and even support his expulsion are not merely betraying Ken, but they are ultimately betraying Jeremy Corbyn. Ken Livingstone has given fulsome support to Corbyn since his election. The right would dearly love to see his expulsion and anyone on the left who goes along with that - and it would appear that Jon Lansman and Owen Jones are willing to do so - is the political equivalent of Judas Iscariot. The only difference is that it has not been necessary to bribe them with 30 pieces of silver, since they are willing to offer their services completely free of charge.

Particular mention should be made here of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty. The AWL is in a dilemma. Its main person in Momentum, Jill Mountford, has been expelled. The AWL itself is a victim of the right's slow witch-hunt - a witch-hunt that Jeremy Corbyn has done nothing to prevent or put a stop to. The AWL cannot therefore be seen to be supporting the witch hunt.

On the other hand, it has been guilty for nearly 30 years of conflating anti-Semitism with anti-Zionism, and now Labour's Zionist witch-hunters are doing the same thing. In the case of Ken Livingstone it is unable to let its opposition to a witch-hunt get the better of an ingrained hostility to Livingstone. Hostility to Livingstone, and particularly George Galloway, is almost its *raison d'être*.

In a textbook exercise in mendacity and Stalinist distortion, AWL leader Sean Matgamna writes: "If the enemies of the Labour Party and of the left have found a soft target, it is a legitimate target."¹⁵ This is nothing less than crossing class lines. Livingstone is the target of the right as a whole, not merely the Zionist right. To let your own vicious sectarianism come before unity on the left is a disgrace. It is the equivalent of scabbing on a strike.

Matgamna, who is a self-declared

Zionist, continues: "A big part of the pseudo-left believe or assert that 'Zionists' (that is, for practical purposes, most Jews) are historically tainted by Nazism." Having bound his organisation hand and foot to imperialist politics, he finds it necessary to reflect and ape the distortions of the bourgeois press. Socialists and anti-imperialists make a sharp distinction between Jews and Zionists - unlike the Zionists and their echo chambers. Nor does anyone I know suggest that Jews are "tainted by Nazism". It is true that Zionism today is indeed tainted by Nazism, whether it is the poster of the Israeli far-right group, Lehava, that declared that Hitler had got the wrong nation (it should have been the Palestinians) or the welcome given to Heinz Christian Strache, leader of Austria's formerly neo-Nazi Freedom Party.

Matgamna continued by suggesting that anti-Zionists have argued that "the Zionists" 'collaborated' with the Nazis in making the holocaust and share responsibility for it". Again a perfect example of the worst kind of bourgeois distortion, worthy of the *Daily Mail* and *Sun* newspapers. No-one I know has ever suggest that the Zionist movement "collaborated" with the Nazis in making the holocaust or that they "share responsibility for it". Certainly the Zionists collaborated with the Nazis. This really is indisputable. What Matgamna is saying is a bit like suggesting that Marshall Pétain collaborated with the Nazis in the invasion and occupation of France. Of course, once the Nazis had occupied France, he collaborated with them, but no-one has suggested he collaborated in *helping the Nazis invade*.

Matgamna approaches the outer reaches of lunacy in suggesting we argue that "the Zionists" manipulated even the Nazis during World War II and especially share responsibility for the Nazi murder of one million Hungarian Jews in 1944-45". There is a very serious argument that collaboration in Hungary increased the number of those Jews who died. Instead of 430,000, it could have been far, far less, if, for example, the Zionist leadership under Rudolf Kasztner had not suppressed the 'Auschwitz protocols' - a detailed account of the workings of Auschwitz by two escapees, Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzler. As even Israeli holocaust survivor professor Yisrael Gutman has conceded, Kasztner received a copy of the protocols in April 1944, but he had already made a decision, with other Jewish leaders, "not to disseminate the report in order not to harm the negotiations with the Nazis".¹⁶

The suppression of the protocols - in order to preserve an agreement with Eichmann regarding the provision of a train carrying 1,684 of the Zionist and Jewish elite out of Hungary, is a matter of fact. The Jerusalem district court, in 1955, found that Kasztner, in testifying for a leading Nazi, Kurt Becher, after the war at Nuremberg, had indeed collaborated with the Nazis.

I should therefore be grateful that the AWL has called for the lifting of my suspension! Its article states:

Tony Greenstein is himself Jewish. He has been an often strident critic of anti-Semitism, including on the left [not completely true - I do not agree with the concept of 'left anti-Semitism' - TG]. He also adheres to an extreme version of that strand of far-left politics on Israel/Palestine which exceptionalises Israel as a uniquely evil state and Jewish nationalism as a uniquely reactionary nationalism. He has long been hostile to Workers' Liberty on issues to do with Israel [the last sentence is true!].

His comments, if

they are indeed the subject of the allegation, were rhetorically wild. They were not in and of themselves anti-Semitic, but that is not to defend them: Greenstein will be well aware of the way in which anti-Semites, including left anti-Semites, often hyperbolically and cynically compare Israel to Nazi Germany, in a deliberate attempt to instrumentalise the collective trauma of the memory of the holocaust against Jews. His comments feed into that discourse.

Nevertheless, that does not justify his suspension, the manner of which is an affront to any basic notion of justice. Those accused of a misdemeanour have, at the very least, a right to be informed by their accuser what it is!¹⁷

As Toad said of his defence lawyer in Kenneth Grahame's classic, *Wind in the willows*, "It's not much of a defence"!

No appeasement

The right has no intention of allowing Corbyn to lead Labour into the general election. The only question is when they will strike. That is why they have to be defeated. Appeasement is a recipe for disaster. The local elections results have given Corbyn a temporary reprieve. But Sadiq Khan has begun the attacks.¹⁸

The question is whether Corbyn uses the time to mobilise his forces or whether he is going to continue to be a willing hostage of the right. The only possibility of Corbyn remaining leader is if those Labour Party members who joined in the wake of Corbyn's victory are mobilised. At the moment the new members are not attending what are frankly the boring, routine meetings of the Labour Party. Labour's rhythms are electoral, not political. It centres around activities such as canvassing, even though most canvassing is a waste of time. People do not decide whether to vote and who to vote for on the basis of doorstep chats, but because they are convinced that the party is going in the right direction and has the right answer to their problems.

There is no possibility of Labour being in a position to convince anyone it is a serious, credible anti-austerity party unless it removes from the Labour Party the influence of the Prince of Darkness, Peter Mandelson, and his

cohorts. And if anyone should be expelled it should be the old war criminal himself, Tony Blair.

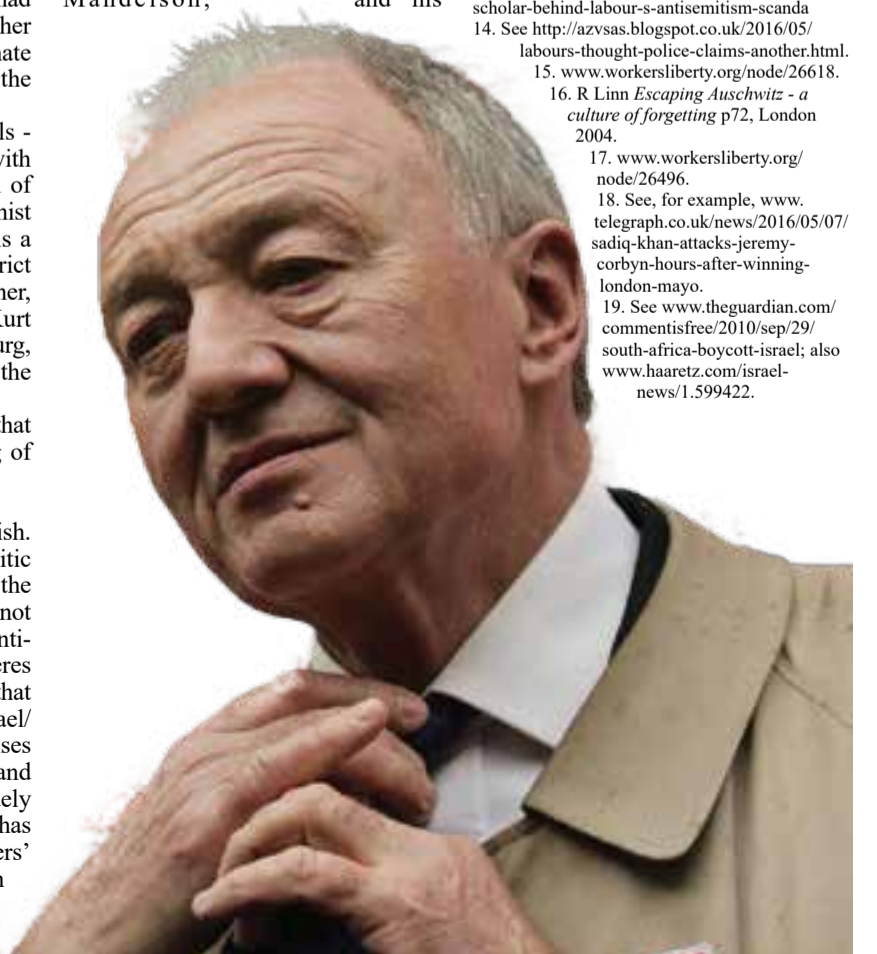
Good party activists are being accused of 'anti-Semitism' and suspended by those who supported the Iraq war and who are indelibly associated with Islamophobia. It is the representatives of the racist regime in Tel Aviv who are calling the shots. By the logic of the Zionists and the Labour right, people like archbishop Desmond Tutu and Ronnie Kasrils, the Jewish African National Congress former police minister, are also anti-Semites. Indeed most of the ANC are anti-Semitic for supporting boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel.

Tutu and Kasrils have condemned Israel's system of identity cards and checkpoints in the West Bank as being worse than anything that was experienced in the days of apartheid¹⁹ - South African anti-apartheid activists know what Israel is really like because they were confronted with apartheid security forces, who had been armed, equipped and in many cases trained by the Zionist regime in Israel.

It is time to fight back, but the breathing space afforded by the elections will not last long ●

Notes

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3. www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/herzog-considering-breaking-ties-with-uk-labour-party.
4. www.alternet.org/grayzone-project/corbyn-coup.
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6. <https://electronicintifada.net/content/how-israel-lobby-manufactured-uk-labour-partys-anti-semitism-crisis/16481>.
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8. See 'How Israel helped create Hamas': www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/07/30/how-israel-helped-create-hamas/; and 'How Israel helped to spawn Hamas': www.wsj.com/articles/SB123275572295011847.
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10. www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3187428/Jeremy-Corbyn-s-links-notorious-Holocaust-denier-revealed.html.
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14. See <http://azvsas.blogspot.co.uk/2016/05/labours-thought-police-claims-another.html>.
15. www.workersliberty.org/node/26618.
16. R Linn *Escaping Auschwitz - a culture of forgetting* p72, London 2004.
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18. See, for example, www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/07/sadiq-khan-attacks-jeremy-corbyn-hours-after-winning-london-mayo.
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Global unity of the working class: Jason Husmillo's 'Rose of hands', 2014

Without monarchies or standing armies

Jack Conrad explores Leon Trotsky's strategic thinking

Comintern's draft programme - published in May 1928 under the signatures of Nikolai Bukharin and Joseph Stalin - excluded all mention of the United States of Europe. This was no oversight, but a consequence of the headlong retreat away from the goal of world revolution. Not surprisingly, given the effective closure put on genuine debate, the draft was agreed without any substantial alterations at the 6th Congress, meeting over July-September 1928. From now onwards official hopes rested on the Soviet Union catching up and overtaking the advanced capitalist countries and the dead-end theory of socialism in one country.

Leon Trotsky - architect of the Red Army's victory in the civil war - subjected the whole draft to a detailed and devastating analysis (punishment soon followed - internal exile became

exile abroad). The 'United States of Europe' slogan featured prominently: "There is no justifying the omission," protested Trotsky.¹

His trenchant defence of the slogan - not only in 1928, but as far back as 1914 - deserves serious study. Apart from the lunatic fringe, Trotsky nowadays has a secure reputation as one of the 20th century's foremost Marxist thinkers.² Any socialist who fails to engage with the highest achievements of Marxist theory - not least Trotsky's programmatic and strategic ideas, including, of course, the United States of Europe slogan - disarms themselves. Certainly, when it comes to the forthcoming referendum, such socialists will achieve nothing more than constituting themselves as a trivial leftwing rump. Eg, on the 'remain' side, 'Another Europe is possible', backed by Left Unity,

the Alliance for Workers' Liberty and the Green Party; on the 'leave' side, 'Lexit', promoted by the *Morning Star's* Communist Party of Britain, Socialist Workers Party and Counterfire.

Equally worthless, when it comes to the class struggle, are those wedded to the parrot-like repetition of various formulations plucked from Trotsky. Yet truth that is frozen perishes. The results owe everything to theology, nothing to science (ie, rational debate and testable investigation). Once upon a time such an approach might have had certain justification - guarding the flame of Trotsky's Marxism against the calumnies and quackery of the Stalinites. But if we are to avoid the trap they have unintentionally fallen into of turning Trotsky's Marxism into its opposite - fought over by warring sects using calumnies and quackery -

there must be *critical* engagement.

Fatherland

Trotsky responded to the outbreak of World War I in a broadly similar fashion to the Bolsheviks. Having escaped from Vienna in August 1914, he found safety in Zurich and immediately took to writing his pamphlet *War and the international* - first published in serial form by *Golos (The Voice)*, the Paris-based daily paper of Jules Martov's Menshevik Internationalist faction. Incidentally, Trotsky went on to collaborate with Martov in Paris ... that despite Martov's wobbling, sliding and backtracking over decisively and irrevocably splitting with the Menshevik social chauvinists.

Basically Trotsky argued that capitalism, having *economically* outgrown national borders, had inevitably triggered a horrific struggle

between nations. Under these circumstances,

the working class, the proletariat, can have no interest in defending the outlived and antiquated national 'fatherland', which has become the main obstacle to economic development. The task of the proletariat is to create a far more powerful fatherland, with far greater power of resistance - the republican United States of Europe as the foundation of the United States of the World.

Trotsky concluded that "peace should be concluded - the peace of the people themselves, and not the reconciliation of the diplomats" - on the basis of three key demands. Firstly, "no reparations", secondly, "the right of every nation to self-determination", thirdly, "the

United States of Europe - without monarchies, without standing armies, without ruling feudal castes, without secret diplomacy”.

These three demands were highlighted in the Zimmerwald manifesto of September 1915 (drafted by Trotsky). Significantly, there was a Zimmerwald left, which constituted, in effect, the precursor of the Third International. “N Lenin, G Zinoviev, Radek, Nerman, Hoglund, Winter” voted for the stirring, but rather vague manifesto. However, in an agreed addendum, they put on record their two main objections. No condemnation of “opportunism”, barefaced or shamefaced, no willingness to spell out the necessity of using revolutionary “methods” in “fighting against the war”.³ In short, the Bolsheviks and their Zimmerwald left allies advocated revolutionary defeatism and a new International purged of all opportunism.

Of course, in August 1915, Lenin published his article, ‘On the slogan for a United States of Europe’ - and in 1928 Stalin and Bukharin were using this text to attack Trotsky. I discussed this in my last article and came to the conclusion that Lenin wrongly “gave away” the slogan because of its close association with Karl Kautsky.⁴

Suffice to say though, Kautsky was not Lenin’s sole target. While he did not say it openly, Lenin also had his sights on Trotsky - who during this period can best be described as a left centrist. Lenin attacked the unnamed Trotsky with cutting remarks about the ‘United States of Europe’ slogan being employed as a cover to excuse revolutionary inaction.

Trotsky, as readers of the Bolshevik press knew, had appeared to suggest that there must be a simultaneous revolution across the whole European continent. That or nothing. How did Trotsky respond?

In his ‘The programme of peace’ (written as a series of articles over 1915-16, but republished, in revised form, in June 1917 by the Bolshevik press) Trotsky shows that he and Lenin were actually very close politically.

“[A] halfway complete and consistent economic unification of Europe coming from the top by means of an agreement of the capitalist governments is sheer utopia,” Trotsky declares. “Here, the matter can go no further than partial compromises and half-measures.” He continues: the “economic unification of Europe, which offers colossal advantages to producer and consumer alike, and in general to the whole cultural development, becomes the revolutionary task of the European proletariat in its struggle against imperialist protectionism and its instrument - militarism.” Hence for Trotsky the “United States of Europe - without monarchies, standing armies and secret diplomacy - is therefore the most important integral part of the proletarian peace programme.”⁵ Remember this was written during World War I when Germany and Austria-Hungary were still ruled by autocratic monarchs.

To serve his argument, Trotsky imagines a German victory - unlikely, but an outside possibility, at least within the first six months of hostilities - and its consequences for Europe:

German imperialism would have doubtless made the gigantic attempt of realising a compulsory military-tariff union of European states, which would be constructed completely of exemptions, compromises, etc, which would reduce to a minimum the progressive meaning of the unification of the European market. Needless to say, under such circumstances no talk would be possible of an autonomy of the nations, thus forcibly joined together as the caricature of the European United States.

Trotsky admits that certain “opponents

of the programme of the United States of Europe have used precisely this perspective as an argument that this idea can, under certain conditions, acquire a ‘reactionary’ monarchist-imperialist content”. Yet, he says, “it is precisely this perspective that provides the most graphic testimony in favour of the revolutionary viability of the slogan”.

Say German militarism did succeed “in actually carrying out the compulsory half-union of Europe”: would this be in any way essentially different from Bismarck’s Prussian “half-union of Germany” in 1871? Under such circumstances how should Marxists proceed? Trotsky asks if they would call for the “dissolution of the forced European coalition and the return of all peoples under the roof of isolated national states”. Would they demand the restoration of “autonomous tariffs, national currencies, national social legislation, and so forth”? Certainly not, thunders Trotsky. No, he says, the programme of the European revolutionary movement would be:

The destruction of the compulsory anti-democratic form of the coalition, with the preservation and furtherance of its foundations, in the form of complete annihilation of tariff barriers, the unification of legislation, above all of labour laws, etc. In other words, the slogan of the United States of Europe - without monarchies and standing armies - would under the indicated circumstances become the unifying and guiding slogan of the European revolution.⁶

An absolutely correct approach in my opinion and surely highly relevant when it comes to current debates on the left about the half-democratic European Union.

Russia

Looking back, the Trotsky of 1928 readily concedes that there had been no example of working class rule in a single country, nor any theoretical clarity on this possibility amongst Marxists, till the reality of Soviet Russia. So in 1915 the ‘United States of Europe’ slogan “might” have given rise to the notion that proletarian revolution could only take place simultaneously across the whole of Europe. But he pleads not guilty to advocating any such thing. Indeed Trotsky quotes himself from 1915, insisting: “Not a single country must ‘wait’ for the other countries in the struggle.” Moreover, in 1915 he lambasted the idea of substituting temporising international inaction for “parallel revolutionary action” - conclusive proof if it was needed. Trotsky unhesitatingly called for beginning and continuing the revolutionary struggle on “national grounds”, in the conviction that all initiatives provide inspiration and will enhance the “struggle in other countries”.⁷

Trotsky considered that an isolated revolutionary Russia might well take the lead, but could not indefinitely hold out against counterrevolutionary Europe. The same applied, he said, to an isolated Germany. Yet by 1928 any such suggestion had become heresy. For Stalin such “Trotskyism” went hand in hand with “lack of faith” in the inner forces of the Russian Revolution. Trotskyism had already been officially deemed antithetical to the new party-state cult of Leninism. Of course, Trotsky could, and did, cite Lenin on any number of different occasions saying exactly the same kind of things as he did. Eg, “Without a revolution in Germany, we shall perish”, etc.

Stalin rested his case ‘theoretically’ on the undeniable fact that capitalism develops unevenly - supposedly a brilliant discovery made by Lenin. True, Lenin’s writings are full of rich observation about uneven development. But the same can be said for those of

Marx and Engels - eg, in regard to their native Germany.

Anyway, according to Stalin, uneven development - supposedly brought about by imperialism - virtually precluded simultaneous or parallel revolution. Furthermore, as revolution would typically break out in one country at a time, the primary task of communists lay not so much in spreading the conflagration. Instead of international socialism he preached national socialist construction. His island socialism in the USSR would become a paradise on earth and henceforth the object of unalloyed admiration by the whole of humanity. The USSR’s success would thereby stimulate attempts at emulation - that truly dreadful book *Imagine* (2000) written jointly by Tommy Sheridan and Alan McCombes has exactly the same premise.

Needless to say, Stalin was radically shifting the political-linguistic meaning of the term ‘socialism’. Socialism, according to Stalin, is post-capitalism and entailed little more than the universal nationalisation of industry and agriculture. He had at his command the full might of the Soviet state to give a crushing authority to his every pronouncement.

The Soviet Union, he famously stated in the second edition of his pamphlet *Foundations of Leninism* (late 1924), did not simply aspire towards socialism - previously understood as the rule of the working class, plus substantial moves towards global communism. No, Stalin maintained that the Soviet Union, in isolation, possessed everything required by way of human material and natural resources to proceed all the way to a national communism.⁸ Note, in the first edition of *Foundations of Leninism* (early 1924) he had emphatically discounted such an idea.⁹

In the mid-1930s Stalin triumphantly proclaimed that the Soviet Union had achieved full socialism. The high road to national communism now lay wide and open before its happy peoples. Actual reality was, however, altogether different: counterrevolution within the revolution.

The Soviet Union expropriated capitalists and landlords and set itself on a course of rapid accumulation. But, with 1928 and the first five-year plan, the working class were forcibly reduced to an exploited slave class. As for the peasants, they were effectively re-enslaved. The Soviet Union was post-capitalist, but had become anti-socialist.

Admittedly, Trotsky continued to categorise the Soviet Union as a workers’ state - albeit a degenerate one - till his murder by Stalin’s agent, Ramón Mercader, in August 1940. Indeed some of his epigones - eg, in Socialist Resistance and Workers Power (now Red Flag) - actually maintained that Boris Yeltsin’s Russian Federation was still some kind of workers’ state, because 50% of the means of production, or some such figure, remained nationalised. These supposed conquests of the October Revolution in reality had as much to do with socialism as does Railtrack in today’s Britain.

But let us pick up the main thread. Trotsky explained Lenin’s rejection of the ‘United States of Europe’ slogan in 1915 as being of a “restricted, tactical and, by its very essence, temporary character”. That, says Trotsky, is best proven by the “subsequent course of events”.¹⁰

And, the fact of the matter is that in summer 1923, at Trotsky’s urging, Comintern agreed to couple the slogans, “a workers’ and peasants’ government”, and “a United States of Europe”.¹¹ If, as Stalin maintained, the slogan of the United States of Europe was unacceptable on the basis of principle, why did Comintern adopt it? Why didn’t Lenin object?

In point of fact, the slogan

prominently featured in Comintern’s perspectives well into 1926. Eg, Comintern’s executive committee, in an extended plenum, February 17 to March 15 1926, agreed a long resolution which included a four-fold explanation about how the United States of Europe should be envisaged by communists.

Firstly, as a “political organisation uniting and controlling the relations between the soviet socialist republics of Europe, which will come into being as a result of a victorious proletarian revolution in the European countries”. Secondly, the victorious proletarian revolution in Europe should not necessarily mean a “simultaneous revolution throughout the whole of Europe”. Rather the revolution may be victorious “first in separate countries” and only later extend to “all the countries of Europe”. Thirdly, a “federated United States of Europe” will proceed on an “entirely voluntary basis”. There will be the right of nations to self-determination. Fourthly, the victory of proletarian revolution in Europe “carries with it at the same time the liberation of the colonial and semi-colonial countries”. Crucially:

[T]he United States of Europe in alliance with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, in alliance with the oppressed peoples of the world, in alliance with the socialist nucleus of the American proletariat, would represent a tremendous force, against which imperialist America would be helpless ...¹²

Comintern’s publishing house issued *The United Socialist States of Europe* (1926). Written under the name, John Pepper (aka the Hungarian communist, József Pogány¹³), the pamphlet polemicised against the “bourgeois-social democratic slogan” of a ‘pan-Europe’ to be brought about peacefully under capitalism. Communists, the author advised, must not only demolish the “fraudulent pacifist” content of the ‘pan-Europe’ slogan, but should set up against it a “positive slogan”. For the “next period” the “slogan of the United States of Socialist Europe” is to serve as the “comprehensive slogan for the European communist parties”.¹⁴

However, as it turned out, the slogan quickly fell from grace. Factional consideration saw it expunged. Firstly, it was now closely associated with the pariah, Trotsky. Secondly, it ran completely against the Stalin-Bukharin national socialist programme.

German crisis

Let us examine Trotsky’s case for the ‘United States of Europe’ slogan in 1923. Responding to the French occupation of Germany’s economically vital Ruhr region and the nationwide political crisis it provoked, Trotsky wrote a short discussion piece, dated June 30, for *Pravda*. In his ‘Is the slogan of the “United States of Europe” a timely one?’ we find Trotsky’s application of that slogan to the immediate post-World War I conditions in all its strategic richness.¹⁵

Defeat had reduced Germany from a rabid oppressor nation, bent on the reorganisation of Europe under its militaristic domination, to the status of victim. The country underwent involuntary surgery - the amputation of whole wedges of territory - under the terms of the Versailles treaty. West Prussia, Poznan, Upper Silesia, Alsace-Lorraine, the Hultschin (Hlučín) and the Memel districts. France, Poland and Denmark benefited. Danzig (Gdańsk) became a ‘free city’. The Saar region was placed under League of Nations administration for 15 years and a plebiscite was ordered in Northern Schleswig. All colonies in Africa passed to Britain.

Severe limits were also put on Germany’s armed forces. No more than 100,000 men. No tanks, no planes, no submarines. Fortifications along the Rhine were demolished. Merchant

ships, fishing boats, railway wagons and locomotives were confiscated too. Furthermore, the allies imposed onerous reparations. In 1920 the Boulogne conference fixed the sum at 269 billion German goldmarks to be paid over in 42 annual instalments.

That proved impossible. In January 1923 Germany announced that it could not pay. Mass unemployment, hyperinflation and political violence threatened mayhem. Compared with 1913, industrial production stood at around 50%. France cynically used the failure to pay the reparations as a pretext to seize the Ruhr. A victor’s aggression that triggered massive protests throughout Germany.

Initially fascist bands and far-right nationalists were to the fore. France was the traditional enemy dating back to well before Napoleon Bonaparte. Even Wilhelm Cuno’s conservative government called for defiance. Strikes in the Ruhr were purportedly financed through the government’s printing presses. Adolf Hitler dared take what the US historian William Shirer calls an “unpopular line”: “No - not down with France, but down with the traitors of the fatherland!” “That must be our slogan,” insisted the National Socialist leader.¹⁶ Hitler admits he was “attacked no little” over this by men whose “national attitude” was nothing but an “outward sham”.¹⁷

The Communist Party of Germany (KPD) - born amidst the tragic failure of the November 1918 revolution - sought to outflank all such forces. Under the so-called ‘Schlageter line’ - a strategic reorientation promoted by Karl Radek and named after the Freikorps nationalist gunned down by French occupation forces after he was spotted planting a bomb - there was a brief “experiment” in what might be called ‘antagonistic cooperation’ between the KPD and the Nazis.¹⁸ Radek, speaking to the executive committee of Comintern, declared that “the great majority of [Germany’s] nationalist-minded masses belong not to the camp of the capitalists, but to the camp of the workers”.¹⁹ A mass KPD rally in August 1923 included a speech by a well known Nazi.

Obviously sharing a platform does not imply any softness, any conciliation, let alone signal agreement - it can, however, provide a close-quarter line of attack. Eg, I have spoken alongside Stalinites, Tory MPs, Blairites and AWLers. The KPD had fought Nazi violence with proletarian violence. But it soon became obvious that fascism had to be beaten ideologically. The KPD therefore sought to win over honest members of the rank and file, especially students who formed one of the bastions of the Nazis. So, despite the occasional rhetorical excesses of the Schlageter line, there was no wish to “collude with Nazism”.²⁰ Indeed, “hostility” to and “denunciation” of Nazi doctrines and actions were intensified, reports EH Carr.²¹ Germany’s national oppression was linked with the KPD’s social programme and willingness to agitate for militant methods, such as the political general strike.

Minds in the Kremlin reawoke to the prospect of revolution in Germany. Trotsky - who was at the time being levered out from the topmost summit of power - was therefore understandably prone to flamboyant gestures. He volunteered to put himself at the service of the German comrades “as a soldier of the revolution”.²² Trotsky did, after all, possess proven qualities, when it came to organising an uprising. Understandably, the ephemeral Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev triumvirate was unwilling to allow Trotsky the chance of leading the German revolution - and thus giving him either heroic martyrdom or an unassailable position of world influence. Nevertheless, given the objective balance of forces, plans for an uprising spluttered out into a humiliating fiasco. The KPD was a minority even in the working

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class. Hence the *real task* was gaining an *effective* national majority - not an immediate assault on the citadels of state power. Inevitably divisive recriminations followed.

For our purposes, though, what matters is Trotsky's overall analysis of Europe and the political solutions he offered. World War I was in essence, he said, a European war. US and Japanese participation did not alter this fundamental fact. Germany in particular - populous and economically dynamic - needed to reach out globally and expand its markets. However, Germany found itself blocked by Britain's vast official and semi-official empire, on the one hand, and the customs barriers that restricted and divided Europe, on the other. World War I showed that the continent had to be radically reorganised - only the working class could perform that task, using civilised and humane methods.

Germany's great rival, Britain, had little concern for Europe. Blooded, battered and drained by World War I, what was once the biggest creditor nation found itself in hock to the US. Assets had been sold off in order to finance the titanic struggle against Germany. South America effectively changed hands. From being a British sphere of influence it became a US one. The posturing Monroe doctrine of 1823 at last came to fruition. Britain licked its gaping wounds, and looked to its Asian and African empire, together with the Canadian, Australian, New Zealand and South African dominions, as the source of recovery.

France could aspire to nothing more than keeping Germany permanently bled white. In any armed conflict the much more numerous and industrially developed Germans would always win. France therefore demanded - and got - debilitating peace conditions. France also encouraged the fragmentation of middle Europe. The Austro-Hungarian and Turkish empires - allied to Germany between 1914 and 1918 - were splintered into innumerable petty states, none of them capable of anything serious. The same applied to those national areas shorn from Russia - Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, etc.

American century

The US now ranked as the world's leading economic power. Yet, rather than pressing for the dismemberment of the creaking British empire and risking another cataclysmic war, so as to impose its will on the globe, the US proved quite content to let the old world slowly decay. Ruling circles in Washington were convinced that the 20th century was eventually going to be theirs. Patiently bide one's time until chaos in Europe reached the point where American wealth could buy up and reorganise the whole continent - that sums up US strategy in the 1920s and 30s.

Surveying the sorry mess, Trotsky said that "our unfortunate continent" had been cut up, exhausted, disorganised and "Balkanised" - unlike Charlie Kimber, Peter Taaffe, John Rees, Alan Thornett, Colin Fox *et al*, he did not welcome the break-up of existing states. Europe had been transformed into a "madhouse", he mourned.²³ Nothing positive could develop from within the petty states and tariff walls created by Versailles. Europe must either remove these barriers or face the threat of complete decomposition.

The methods used by the ruling class to overcome frontiers - total war and military conquest - had left millions dead and inadvertently exacerbated already constricting divisions. Another bourgeois attempt to organise unity would result in either the destruction of European civilisation or US counterrevolutionary domination.

On the basis of this exceptionally far-sighted assessment, Trotsky had no hesitation in declaring that only



Leon Trotsky: consistently defended the 'United States of Europe' slogan

the proletariat could save Europe. He therefore proposed the old call for a United States of Europe, brought about by the efforts of the workers themselves. Such a route alone offers "salvation for our continent from economic decay and from enslavement to mighty American capitalism".²⁴

Could this play into the hands of pacifists and bourgeois reformists? Trotsky mocked such silly notions. Like a federal Britain and a united Ireland, or a Sixth Republic in France, or the reunification of the Indian subcontinent, the idea of a United States of Europe could, yes, be taken up by any number of different political parties, causes or trends - that is undoubtedly true. However, the slogan was to be advanced not as a panacea, not as a thing in itself, but as an additional component, or plank, within the overall communist programme.

Trotsky displays an admirable optimism. The rightwing social democrats are losing support. Communist parties are growing in size and experience. Whereas the likes of Philip Snowden, Gustav Noske, Karl Renner, etc, yearned for piecemeal reform delivered from above, Trotsky wanted the communists to combatively link the 'United States of Europe' slogan to the tasks of furthering world revolution.

His reasoning is straightforward. The revolutionary wave that exploded in 1917-18 had by 1923 subsided. Communists must actively encourage a fresh upsurge by restoring the confidence of the European working class and overcome their real fears about whether they too would share the awful fate of the workers and peasants in Russia - wars of intervention, misery, blockade, famine and epidemics (the shrivelling of effective democracy was

another source of apprehension).

The loss of class nerve - produced by genuine worries about making revolution on diminutive national ground - was to be assuaged by the perspective of the United States of Europe. This was an extensive continental ground and would, moreover, be free to join together with the Soviet Union to form a mighty combination that could realistically facedown US threats, sanctions and plots.

Europe, for Trotsky, is rightly conceived not as a mere geographical expression. Europe is thought of as a reality, built on layer upon layer of criss-crossing commonalities that long predate capitalism. Hence the US can temporarily stand aloof from Europe. But Germany cannot stand aloof from France. And France cannot stand aloof from Germany: "Therein lies the crux, therein lies the solution to the European problem," Trotsky maintained.

What of unevenness? The continent consists of many different state units, all displaying marked variations one with another. And yet Europe moves according to a rhythm different to the other side of the Atlantic. Compared to the US, European countries, taken together, exhibit a definite *evenness* economically and politically due to geography, culture and history. Put another way, European unevenness is relative. Europe exists on one scale of unevenness, the US on another. That is why a general strike or a constitutional crisis in France has a far bigger impact on Germany than it will on the US. Certainly a revolutionary situation in France will touch Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal and elsewhere in Europe in a profound way - something that cannot be said about the US.

In general, Trotsky is of the opinion that, although no-one could

predict when exactly Europe would be united under the leadership of the revolutionary working class, the sequence of events would almost certainly put Europe ahead of the US. That, and population numbers and economic weight, is why what happens in Europe is, in the final analysis, of decisive importance for the US as well. Revolution in Europe will surely disabuse those in the American ruling class who believe that they possess a god-given mandate to rule the world.

The United States of Europe is

conceived by Trotsky as an historically necessary stage that must be passed through. This *transitory* stage arises from the real situation: ie, the profoundly different conditions faced by Europe and the US, not only before, but after, World War I. To deny unevenness by pretending that everywhere is equally ripe, or unripe, for socialist revolution denies reality and obscures the actual path that must be taken.

Naturally the spread of working class power will not stop at a European phase. Trotsky believed that the Soviet Union plus a United Europe would exercise a magnetic attraction for the oppressed peoples of China, India, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. Such a mighty bloc would confidently call upon an ever more conscious US proletariat - comrades, you alone in America can finish what October 1917 began ●

Notes

1. L Trotsky *The Third International after Lenin* New York 1982, p10.
2. *The Daily Worker* - forerunner of today's *Morning Star* - greeted the assassination of Trotsky under the headline, 'A counterrevolution gangster passes' (August 23 1940).
3. www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1914/war.
4. *Weekly Worker* May 8 2016.
5. www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/fi/vol05/no09/trotsky.htm.
6. www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/fi/vol05/no09/trotsky.htm.
7. *Ibid* p12.
8. *JV Stalin Works* Vol 6, Moscow 1953, pp110-11.
9. This is what Stalin wrote in May 1924: "... can the final victory of socialism be obtained in a single country without the joint efforts of the proletariat of several advanced countries? No, it cannot. In order to overthrow the bourgeoisie, the efforts of a single country are sufficient; this is proved by the history of our revolution. For the final victory of socialism, for the organisation of socialist production, efforts of a single country, and particularly of such a peasant country as Russia, are inadequate; for that the efforts of the proletariat of several advanced countries are required" (quoted in L Trotsky *The challenge of the Left Opposition 1926-1927* New York 1980, p157).
10. L Trotsky *The Third International after Lenin* New York 1982, p15.
11. L Trotsky *The first five years of the Communist International* Vol 2, London 1974, pp341-46.
12. Quoted in XJ Eudin and HH Fisher *Soviet Russia and the west, 1920-1927* Stanford CA 1957, pp332-33.
13. For an account of Pepper's eventful life see T Sakmyster *A communist odyssey* New York 2012.
14. Quoted in L Trotsky *The Third International after Lenin* New York 1970, p309n.
15. L Trotsky *The first five years of the Communist International* Vol 2, London 1974, pp341-46.
16. Quoted in W Shirer *The rise and fall of the Third Reich* London 1968, p88.
17. A Hitler *Mein Kampf* London 1992, p625.
18. EH Carr *The interregnum* Harmondsworth 1969, p191.
19. www.marxists.org/archive/radek/1923/06/schlageter.htm.
20. P Broué *The German revolution 1917-1923* Chicago 2005, p728.
21. EH Carr *The interregnum* Harmondsworth 1969, p192.
22. I Deutscher *The prophet unarmed* Oxford 1982, p111.
23. L Trotsky *The first five years of the Communist International* Vol 2, London 1974, p341.
24. *Ibid* p342.

Fighting fund

Consolidate

The last couple of weeks have seen a sharp rise in the number of online readers of the *Weekly Worker* - up by over a thousand compared to previously. The last seven days saw another increase (of well over 200) to 3,917. Could this be connected to our coverage of the 'anti-Semitism' row in the Labour Party?

And I'm pleased to report that this was also reflected in the number of readers who made an online donation via PayPal - there were five of them, ranging from HJ's fiver to PL's £25, with NW adding his usual £20 and both YG and DF giving £10.

Talking of our Labour Party coverage, FT commends us on our "clear position" on the latest smears and, to show she means it, adds an extra £20 to her annual

subscription. For his part, CJ donated a brilliant £50 by cheque.

Finally there were the standing orders - exactly £150 came from nine of those since last week, including from RK and GD (£25 each), DV (£20) and NR (£18). All of which helped to boost our May fund by £280, taking our running total up to £568.

But we need to consolidate April's success by hitting our £1,750 target once again this month, and there are less than three weeks to go. Please play your part in ensuring we get there ●

Robbie Rix

Fill in a standing order form (back page), donate via our website, or send cheques, payable to *Weekly Worker*

REVIEW

Struggle and postmodern

Andrea Hajek *Negotiating memories of protest in western Europe: the case of Italy* Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, pp220, £53

This book has a very misleading title. It cannot be treated as a serious attempt to discuss memories of protest in western Europe as a whole, even if it makes some reference, largely in its earlier chapters, to Germany, France and Great Britain¹ in the 1960s and 1970s.

Nor can it be seen as a detailed study of "the case of Italy" - even if there is some, at times simplistic, discussion of the different ways in which the 1968-80 period is remembered in Italy "within official and vernacular memory communities" (p53). The bulk of the text (pp63-176) is devoted to the Bolognese events of March 1977 and their aftermath, particularly in the form of a 'divided memory' of these events.

To some extent this incongruous and slightly pretentious title is probably the result of advice from the Andrea Hajek's publishers or their editors - her original 2011 PhD thesis, on which the book was based, had the rather more accurate title: *Narrating the trauma of the 'Anni di Piombo': the negotiation of a public memory of the 1977 student protests in Bologna (1977-2007)*². Nonetheless, the title is indicative of the vast distance between the author's extremely academic approach and the life and violent death of the political activist, Francesco Lorusso (October 7 1952-March 11 1977), around which the memories discussed in the more specific chapters of the book revolve.

The book is part of a series - the Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies - that now includes at least a couple of dozen titles and reflects a new academic genre of "memory studies" with its own theoretical jargon. However, one might nonetheless have expected it to tell us a bit more about Lorusso and to provide us with a more accurate picture of the revolutionary organisation, Lotta Continua, of which he was a member. Lotta Continua's protest against what Hajek cryptically calls "the Catholic student organisation, Communion and Liberation" (p64),³ led to him being shot dead by the policeman, Massimo Tramontani. Tramontani was, needless to say, allowed to escape legal punishment by the Bologna public prosecutor, despite efforts by both the courageous examining magistrate, Bruno Catalanotti, and Lorusso's parents to have him tried for manslaughter.

In the course of the book we are told that Lorusso was a medical student, that he had a brother and that his father had been "an army colonel" (p81) at the time of Francesco's death in 1977. But we are told very little else about any member of the Lorusso family apart from their understandable involvement in a justice campaign for three or four decades. Hajek says her book is

not concerned with establishing the truth behind Francesco Lorusso's death nor does it aim at (re)telling the history of the movement of 77. This is why I opened this book with an account of how I got involved in this project: that is, the assertion that a 30-year-old incident still mattered so much, even to people who weren't even born in 1977⁴ (p172).

According to Hajek's account in the introduction, she first became aware of that incident in 2004, when a friend pointed out "a plaque recalling the violent death of a certain Francesco Lorusso" (p1). So far as you can deduce from the text of this book, there is no political commitment behind her choice of subject matter - she is a feminist, heavily influenced by post-



Painting tribute to Francesco Lorusso

modernism, but in no sense a Marxist. This deduction is reinforced by the totally bizarre mistranslation of the Italian word *compagni* as 'companions' on almost every one of the dozens of occasions when it appears in this book - there are only a handful when Hajek translates it, correctly, as 'comrades'.⁵ Hajek, who was awarded her MA by the University of Utrecht in 2007 for a thesis connected with Italian music and popular culture, herself falls into the category of "people who weren't even born in 1977".

At the risk of falling into the trap of what Hajek somewhat pejoratively calls "possessive memory"⁶ (and becoming somewhat anecdotal), I will point out that I first became aware of Francesco Lorusso's violent death back in 1978 when I read *Italy 1977-78: 'living with an earthquake'*, a Red Notes pamphlet published in London⁷ and made a passing reference to Lorusso's killing in my 1985 *New Left Review* article, 'Judging the PCI'. Therefore, I may have had rather different expectations concerning the provision of empirical detail about Lorusso and his fate, when I started reading this book, than those practitioners or students of 'memory studies' who are, perhaps, its target readership.

However, even from a purely academic point of view, the confusion and inaccuracy in this book about the organisation of which Lorusso was a member - Lotta Continua - has to be severely criticised. Alarm bells started ringing for me when I found it was always translated here as 'Continuous Battle' in contrast to all other Anglophone texts I have ever read, which either translate it as 'Continuous Struggle' or, more rarely, 'The Struggle Continues'.⁸

But there was much worse to come. On p61, immediately after discussing the dissolution of Potere Operaio in 1973, Hajek claims that "in the same period the second major extra-parliamentary group of the 1970s (LC) also broke up", whilst on p125 she goes to the opposite extreme, claiming: "In the years following the events of March, the remnants of the Movement of 77 split up into various groups, mostly Lotta Continua (LC), AO⁸ and the Workers' Movement for Socialism (Movimento Lavoratori per il Socialismo)." Therefore, at one point in this book it is being claimed that LC dissolved in 1973 and at another that it still existed as a substantial nationwide organisation in 1978 or later. It is noteworthy that nowhere in the text, the hundreds of end-notes or the extensive 15-page bibliography is there even a single reference to the two full-length histories of the organisation - Luigi

Bobbio's *Lotta Continua: storia di un'organizzazione rivoluzionaria* (Rome 1979) and Aldo Cazzullo's *I ragazzi che volevano fare la rivoluzione 1968-1978: storia critica di Lotta Continua* (1998). Both books had a second edition published before Hajek wrote either her 2011 thesis or her 2013 book. So any diligent researcher would have tracked down one or both of them.

The generally accepted view, put forward by this duo and other authors, is that LC was dissolved by its leader, Adriano Sofri (who, astonishingly does not appear in Hajek's index), at its Rimini congress in 1976. The daily newspaper *Lotta Continua* continued to be published until at least 1980 by a group of journalists aligned with Sofri and increasingly closer to the politics of the petty bourgeois libertarians of Marco Pannella's Partito Radicale⁹ than those of the historic LC, which had been a soft or 'spontaneous' Maoist group. As far as one can tell from Hajek's account (pp127-29), a cohesive group of Bolognese LC members published material commemorating Lorusso around the time of the first and second anniversaries of his death in March 1978 and March 1979 in *Lotta Continua* and in a separate pamphlet, published as a supplement to the paper in 1978 with the title *Parliamo di Francesco*.¹⁰ It remains a mystery as to whether this Bolognese group had any connection with a small national organisation called Lotta Continua per il Comunismo, which rejected Sofri's rather sudden and authoritarian dissolution of the original LC.¹¹

Hajek's book does make some interesting and useful points about the often very different ways in which Lorusso's death was or is remembered - by his family, by his former LC comrades, by the autonomists (both the veterans of 1977 and a younger generation imbued with what Hajek rather affectionately calls "progressive nostalgia"), by the Partito Comunista Italiano (and its successor organisations), by the university that summoned the police who killed him and by various other political actors. However, it is sad to see the life and violent death - through a police bullet in the back - of a revolutionary militant buried in a mass of often unhelpful, postmodern jargon •

Toby Abse

Notes

1. Hajek writes: "... if we exclude the Troubles in Northern Ireland" (p28) - which she to a large extent does, despite brief references to Bloody Sunday scattered through the book - so that her use of 'Great Britain' rather than 'United Kingdom' is a conscious one. In the German case she frequently conflates West Germany with Germany as a whole; East Germany is barely mentioned.

2. *Anni di Piombo* ('Years of Lead' - ie, bullets) is a description of the Italian 1970s adopted by the right and most establishment commentators. Even if one were to categorise the decade purely in terms of political violence and terrorism, which strikes me as a bit one-sided, this label blots out the indiscriminate bombings with large-scale civilian casualties carried out by the neo-fascists in 1969, 1974 and 1980.

3. Typically there is no discussion in this book of Communion and Liberation's reactionary political role in the 1970s or its subsequent growth into a powerful and frequently corrupt political and economic actor under the patronage of Wojtyla, the Christian Democrats and Forza Italia.

4. As somebody who was involved in the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Battle of Lewisham in 2007 and is currently involved in ongoing plans to mark the 40th next year, I think Hajek's comment is more revealing about herself than about those who continue to remember Lorusso.

5. *Compagno* - or the female form, *compagna* - can mean 'companion' in the sense of a sexual or romantic partner, but it never crops up in this sense in Hajek's book.

6. Hajek engages in a tirade against "the possessive memory of the 1968 and 1977 generation" (pp50-51). It is not clear whether the relatively small number of people who gave her interviews about 1977 in Bologna was a consequence of her disdain for "possessive memory" or whether she adopted this view as a result of her lack of success in employing an oral-history methodology in the treatment of her chosen topic.

7. The Red Notes collective emerged out of Big Flame and at this stage, like Big Flame a little earlier, regarded Lotta Continua as their sister organisation in Italy; it was only later that some of those involved, most notably Ed Emery, gravitated towards Toni Negri and autonomism.

8. Hajek uses AO as an abbreviation for Autonomia Operaia, not Avanguardia Operaia, another major far-left group of the 1970s, and the largest component of the membership organisation created in 1978 out of some of the surviving groups that were originally part of a 1976 electoral cartel - Democrazia Proletaria. Since there is no reference to Avanguardia Operaia anywhere in this book, she may well be blissfully unaware of any potential ambiguity in the use of these shared initials in relation to the Italian far left in the 1970s.

9. At this stage the Partito Radicale, which had played a major role during the referendums on divorce and abortion, could have been seen as criticising the PCI from the left. I personally witnessed its participation in a Florence demonstration against nuclear power, which also involved supporters of both Lotta Continua per il Comunismo and Autonomia Operaia, in 1980. By the early 1990s Pannella had aligned them with Berlusconi's Forza Italia, and, despite subsequent twists and turns, they cannot now be categorised as on the radical left.

10. Hajek claims that "the supplement attempts to create an image of Lorusso as an 'ordinary guy', with whom a wider public may identify, and hence to create a more 'shareable' public memory of Lorusso, which is disconnected from his ideological ideals" (p129) - which seems a very cynical view of his friends and comrades. She appears to have more sympathy with the way the autonomists took over his memory for their own ends.

11. When I asked Hajek about this at her presentation of this book (which at that stage I had not read and had only very recently heard of) at a London University Institute of Historical Research seminar in January 2016, her response suggested that she had never heard of Lotta Continua per il Comunismo. Some internet sources claim that LCC survived for more than a decade and dissolved into Rifondazione Comunista after 1991, but I know that the Pisa branch had certainly ceased to have a public existence some years earlier.

What we fight for

■ Without organisation the working class is nothing; with the highest form of organisation it is everything.

■ There exists no real Communist Party today. There are many so-called 'parties' on the left. In reality they are confessional sects. Members who disagree with the prescribed 'line' are expected to gag themselves in public. Either that or face expulsion.

■ Communists operate according to the principles of democratic centralism. Through ongoing debate we seek to achieve unity in action and a common world outlook. As long as they support agreed actions, members should have the right to speak openly and form temporary or permanent factions.

■ Communists oppose all imperialist wars and occupations but constantly strive to bring to the fore the fundamental question - ending war is bound up with ending capitalism.

■ Communists are internationalists. Everywhere we strive for the closest unity and agreement of working class and progressive parties of all countries. We oppose every manifestation of national sectionalism. It is an internationalist duty to uphold the principle, 'One state, one party'.

■ The working class must be organised globally. Without a global Communist Party, a Communist International, the struggle against capital is weakened and lacks coordination.

■ Communists have no interest apart from the working class as a whole. They differ only in recognising the importance of Marxism as a guide to practice. That theory is no dogma, but must be constantly added to and enriched.

■ Capitalism in its ceaseless search for profit puts the future of humanity at risk. Capitalism is synonymous with war, pollution, exploitation and crisis. As a global system capitalism can only be superseded globally.

■ The capitalist class will never willingly allow their wealth and power to be taken away by a parliamentary vote.

■ We will use the most militant methods objective circumstances allow to achieve a federal republic of England, Scotland and Wales, a united, federal Ireland and a United States of Europe.

■ Communists favour industrial unions. Bureaucracy and class compromise must be fought and the trade unions transformed into schools for communism.

■ Communists are champions of the oppressed. Women's oppression, combating racism and chauvinism, and the struggle for peace and ecological sustainability are just as much working class questions as pay, trade union rights and demands for high-quality health, housing and education.

■ Socialism represents victory in the battle for democracy. It is the rule of the working class. Socialism is either democratic or, as with Stalin's Soviet Union, it turns into its opposite.

■ Socialism is the first stage of the worldwide transition to communism - a system which knows neither wars, exploitation, money, classes, states nor nations. Communism is general freedom and the real beginning of human history.

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weekly worker

**New mayor is
main rival to
Corbyn**

Fixer turns chancer

Sadiq Khan has wasted no time positioning himself for the Labour leadership, notes Paul Demarty

Last Thursday's election results fell out more or less as predicted by opinion polls over the last few weeks and months.

All eyes were, of course, on Labour, for the first serious polling-day outing in the Jeremy Corbyn era. And, for Labour, the results are mixed (again, mixed more or less in the predicted proportions). A truly awful showing was had in Scotland, with the Scottish National Party only missing out on an absolute majority of MSPs thanks to a Tory revival, which pushed Labour into third place. Despite the latter's cosmetic left turn at leadership level - Kezia Dugdale is actually from the right - the SNP's grip over a good slice of the traditional Labour vote remains firm. A great deal of work will be necessary to repair the damage done by Labour's hand-in-glove alliance with the Tories over the Scottish independence vote.

The English local results (and, for that matter, those for the Welsh assembly) were lukewarm, but better than expected, especially given the colossal sabotage campaign around 'anti-Semitism', which seems to have had almost no impact at polling stations at all.

The most significant result, however, was in London, where Sadiq Khan won the mayoral election. It was significant for many reasons: the London mayor was the biggest single job up for grabs, apart perhaps from Scottish first minister, and strong signals had been sent out to the effect that a Labour defeat would immediately incite a coup against Corbyn. Most of all, though, Khan's victory has presented Corbyn with his first serious rival for the top job.

On the surface, the conditions under which Khan went into polling day were similar to those for the Labour Party nationally - that is, under a barrage of scurrilous accusations as to his fitness to hold office. In fact, if anything, he has suffered more egregiously this election season than anyone else.

Truly, the Tory campaign was characterised by the most barrel-scraping, poisonous smears we have seen in recent history. Somehow, Khan - a thoroughly 'sensible' politician, was painted by Tory hopeful Zac Goldsmith, the cabinet and the *Evening Standard* almost as Osama bin Laden. The awful truth was that his sister's ex-husband was an ex-Islamist, and that as a human rights lawyer he had defended people charged with terrorism offences. And, er, that was about it. On that basis, Londoners were supposed to feel threatened.

Goldsmith went further, however. He specifically targeted the weak seams in multiculturalism, attempting to exploit Sikh, Hindu and other bigotry against Muslims. His moves in this direction were as ham-fisted as they were contemptible - consisting, for example, in mass mailouts to everyone in London named Singh, thus touting his friendliness towards Sikhs against the implied Muslim



Sadiq Khan: eyeing up top job

menace, without attention to whether all these Singhs were actually Sikhs, never mind possessed of religious and ethno-communal hostility towards Muslims. The word 'racist' is overused by leftists and liberals these days, but I cannot think of a more appropriate one for the foul antics of the Goldsmith campaign, and many senior Tories wasted little time in excoriating it when the result became clear. Khan's victory, if nothing else, is at least a minor triumph for common humanity.

Flirtations

Khan, however, is nothing if not ambitious. The period since May 5 was marked, first of all, by the great pseudo-drama of why Corbyn was not around to formally congratulate him. Since then, the new mayor has spent a great deal of time expounding on the reasons for his victory, in terms that can only be - and have, duly, been - interpreted as a coded attack on the Labour leadership.

Foremost among these little sallies is a bland op-ed for *The Observer* (May 8), in which he enjoins the Labour Party to "face outwards and focus on the issues that people care about", and "reach out and engage with all voters - regardless of their background, where they live or where

they work". Those issues in full: "the lack of affordable housing, transport infrastructure and fares, the NHS, the need for real neighbourhood policing and pro-business policies".

The latter phrase about "pro-business policies" rather sticks out in the list, but it has been a feature of Khan's campaign shtick since the beginning. In all, his argument, coupled with his criticism of alleged 'pick a side' electoral propaganda elsewhere in the country, amounts to placing his hat in the ring for the leadership, at some point in the future. By happy coincidence, his term as mayor will end just in time to sneak back into the next parliament, should Corbyn's days look numbered in the run-up.

There have been many names touted as a potential ouster of Corbyn, but we feel that Khan is the first *serious* one. Most of the others are obviously identifiable with the Labour right, which is at a nadir of popularity with the broad Labour membership. They are not 'big beasts', although the press is often to be found puffing them up as such - hence the supposed magisterial statesmanship of that greasy gasbag, Hilary Benn, or the swooning before Dan Jarvis, apparently some kind of great soldier-philosopher.

If Khan was not already a big beast, however, he certainly is now. The mayor's office has proven itself a fine shop window so far - Boris Johnson is the obvious comparison, viewed as little more than a lovable twit before 2008, but after eight years in City Hall, is now the most likely pretender to the Tory leadership.

As for attachment to the right, while it is impossible to call Khan's recent statements anything other than flirtatious towards Blairites, that is not his history. He was instrumental in rallying union support behind Ed Miliband in 2010. He retains close links with the union tops, and enjoyed their enthusiastic support for his mayoral bid, as opposed to the Blairite Tessa "Kylie" Jowell, and the ill-starred left candidacy of Diane Abbott. He is good at making deals, rather as his new nemesis, Donald Trump, claims to be: a fixer rather than an ideologue, but one with at least some attachment to Labour politics beyond pure careerism.

Thus we must characterise him, in Labour terms, as a left centrist, with the emphasis on centre - a Brownite rather than a Blairite, and a courtier of Ed rather than David Miliband. In the current situation, this makes him a much more serious threat than an idiot like Benn; with the hard right isolated

within the party, they must make a bloc with the centre. The centre, on Khan's evidence, is certainly interested. If he can get the support of the right as a contender for the leadership, glowing encomia in the very papers recently smearing him as a terrorist sympathiser will surely follow.

We should point out, for form's sake, that the conclusions he draws from his own success are entirely spurious. He claims to have been a candidate of 'unity', but did that message *really* get out, what with the whole world trying desperately to connect him, however tenuously, with Islamic State? Were his success down to his own greatness, then it should have come as a *surprise*. A series of bad results in London, finally overcome by a heartfelt commitment to affordable housing and business-friendliness - that would point to Khan as an electoral alchemist.

Of course, nothing of the kind is the case. Labour has been on the rise in London for many years. In general elections, the metropolitan area has fallen, borough by borough, before the red rosette. Boris Johnson's re-election in 2012 is an outlier, not a trend, and probably *does* say something about him over and above the Tory Party. Otherwise, let us be serious: Tessa Jowell would have won this election, or Diane Abbott - especially given the wretched character of the weirdo, Goldsmith. It was a victory for *Labour*, reflecting Labour's growing strength in the capital.

The left has taken a rather soft attitude to Khan thus far - both in widely supporting his nomination in the first place, and now that he has won. We pick, for old times' sake, on Left Unity, which "welcomes Khan's victory" as an implicit endorsement of Corbyn's leadership, and a triumph over racism.¹ There is truth in these things, for sure; but it is not our job to support literally anyone who triumphs in the face of bigotry. (Benjamin Disraeli must have faced some obstacles on his way to the top, as well.)

Given that Khan's plain ambition is to reverse the tenuous gains made by the left in the wake of Corbyn's victory last year, we ought to be gearing up to *fight* him ●

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Notes

1. <http://leftunity.org/left-unity-welcomes-sadiq-khans-victory>.

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