

A paper of Marxist polemic and Marxist unity



weekly **worker**



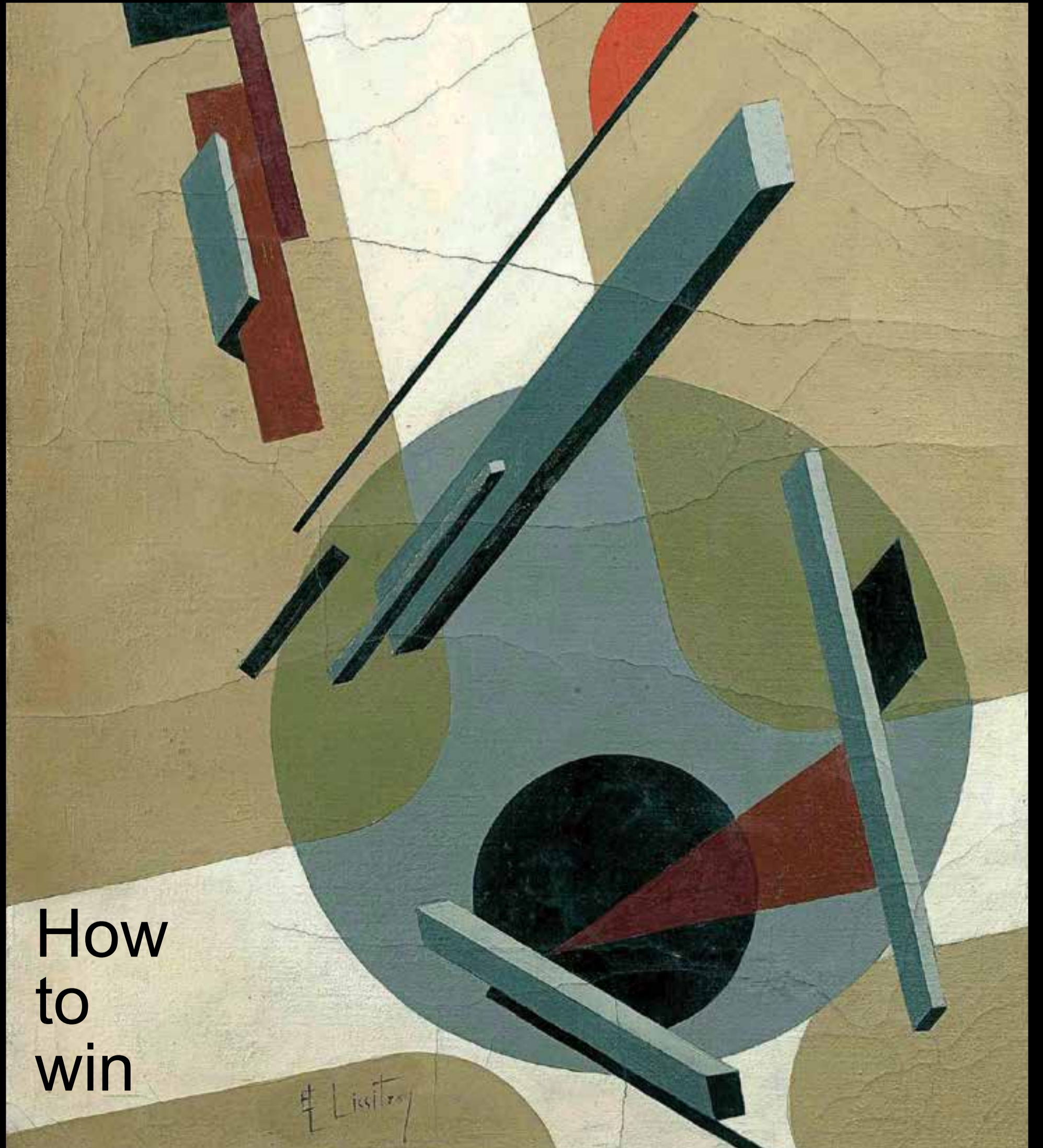
**The 1967 turning point:
Norman Finkelstein on
the holocaust industry**

- Liverpool conference
- Jewish Labour Movement
- South African students
- Junior doctors

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Towards a Communist Party of the European Union

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How
to
win

#Lisitzoy

LETTERS



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

Momentum

If the Labour Party conference has proved one thing beyond doubt, it is the weakness of the Labour left. Far from being the well-oiled, scary machine that takes over one Constituency Labour Party after the other, fighting for the deselection of rightwing MPs and pushing for revolutionary politics (as the bourgeois media want us to believe), Momentum has shown itself to be an utterly toothless tiger.

In its attempt not to give ammunition to the right and bourgeois media, Momentum has failed to organise leftwingers to become branch delegates, stand for AGM positions or, as was painfully evident over the last few days, become conference delegates.

In fact, after Corbyn's first election in 2015, Momentum went into something of a self-satisfied hibernation mode. Unless there was a group of local lefties pushing a Momentum branch forward, local groups followed the advice of Jon Lansman and made Momentum meetings as boring and unorganised as possible. No democratic elections, no agendas, no transparency, no campaigns of any kind and, crucially, no organised intervention in the local Labour Party.

Then, when the coup started, the tiger had to be shaken awake. It slowly came back to life to organise rallies for Jeremy Corbyn. But, while speakers, sound systems, leaflets, etc were organised with a few days' notice, Momentum members where then told ... to not mention Momentum.

While electoral law is responsible for Momentum fundraisers being asked to shelve their collection buckets in favour of those featuring "Jeremy for Labour", this does not explain why Momentum members were instructed to take down stalls or move them outside the venue or to the back of a rally. When pressing national and regional Momentum representatives for the reason, local members were told that Momentum was now regarded as a "a toxic brand", citing in particular the involvement of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty and the Socialist Party in England and Wales (the latter is, of course, not really involving itself, apart from selling their paper outside meeting venues).

It seems that Jon Lansman and Jeremy Corbyn are unsure as to what to do with the organisation. There is talk of a "discussion paper on the future of Momentum" being produced for the next (second, third?) meeting of the national committee of Momentum, which has just been pushed back to November. Apparently, a national conference is planned for February. What kind of conference? An AGM which all members can attend? Delegates only? How should these be chosen? Will motions be allowed? Nobody knows. The organisers will do everything to stop Corbyn being embarrassed by the involvement of Labour Party Marxists or even the tame AWL.

In the meantime, bureaucratic overkill in the organisation is rife: local membership lists have been taken over by Momentum nationally, who do not share the info with local organisers. All emails going out from any Momentum branch have to be vetted by the national organisation, often leading to delays of many days. It is almost impossible to send out emails to, say, members of a particular Labour Party branch or CLP.

Politically, the message is as conservative as ever: do not call for the mandatory selection of candidates; go and canvass for even the most rightwing of council candidates; declare Jeremy Corbyn utterly 'electable'; stop talking about civil war in the party and instead stress the need for 'party unity'.

A hopelessly naive strategy that is clearly leading to failure, as we have

witnessed in Liverpool - and one which is coming increasingly under attack in local Momentum meetings. In the light of the victories of the right, and in particular the new rightwing majority on the national executive, it is becoming increasingly important for the left to organise properly within Labour Party branches and CLPs and fight for principled socialist politics. Questioning and challenging the old tactics of the Labour left must be part of that cultural revolution: we should not canvass and leaflet for rightwingers; we should openly fight for mandatory selection of candidates as a democratic principle and we must warn that electoral defeat is likely because of the right's sabotage, even if Corbyn gives up one principled position after the next.

Carla Roberts

Labour Party Marxists

Right winning

Despite Corbyn's second win, the Labour right are winning the battle in the Labour Party. The left have not organised seriously for the fight. Thousands of socialists have been expelled or excluded from the party with little organised protest. The leadership of the Labour left continues to deny the anti-socialist and anti-democratic nature of the right and attempts to conciliate them.

This can't succeed, since the right are determined and have the backing of British capital and its state for the fight to retake the Labour Party. It is imperative for the British capitalist class that it not only controls the government, but also the opposition. Deselection is downplayed or dropped by the left leaders. Nato and Trident are promoted and attempts are made to convince the capitalist class that it has nothing to fear from the Labour left. This watering down of left policies will produce demoralisation among the working class supporters of Corbyn and aid the right. If this continues Corbyn, will be sidelined and removed within the year and the Corbyn movement will end in failure.

The only way forward would be for the new left to organise itself to take on and remove the Labour right from positions of power within the labour movement. This would mean democratic debate within the left and the election of a left leadership accountable to the membership of the left (Momentum?). But the left leaders don't want to do this because it would further antagonise the Labour right, and the capitalist class and its media, and, importantly, provide the basis for a new class-struggle left leadership to emerge that would not be under the control of the left bureaucrats.

Sandy McBurney
email

Waste of time

I've been reading the *Weekly Worker* online for a while now and can see that there are plenty of pro-Corbyn articles in it. Well, it's not hard to miss! But, if you could sum up *Das Kapital* in a paragraph - admittedly not easy - it would be:

'Capitalism cannot be made to work in the interests of the majority and any attempts to reform it are futile. This is because capitalism will subvert any attempts to reform it, so it's better to replace it with socialism.'

Maybe I've got it all wrong, but that seems to be the clear message from Marx. Given that, it seems a total waste of time to campaign for a Corbyn victory, as, even he gets elected, so what? Capitalism has nothing to fear.

Heck, he even talks about full employment. LOL, as they say. From a capitalist point of view that is great - everyone who can work will work, earning surplus values and the welfare bill will be cut. Win-win for capitalism. But, of course, no politician can guarantee to reduce unemployment, and I don't think anyone still believes that.

But I liked the article on the UK Independence Party's new leader ('Where next for Farage?', September 22), while the Socialist Workers Party are giving it

the old 'Tories in disarray' line. Oh well, they told the guys in the trenches they'd be home for Xmas. Guess this is their version - they say it every year. Are they also saying that Labour will romp home in 2020 and end austerity? Now, not even a member of the SWP would believe that.

Steven Johnston
email

Citizen Blake

Today I hit depression again in a way that is not strange to me, as it happens after any major event that I have been to. I think it's the terrific highs and then the lows that come after. This time is different, though, as I see a very close friend suffering in a similar way.

There have been many highlights at Momentum's 'The world transformed' over the last few days, including an amazing 'Save Liverpool women's hospital' march, anti-fracking nanas, a samba band, scooter riders singing 'We are the mods', avoiding being interviewed by the BBC and Channel 4 News, an amazing injustice event at the Casa dockers' bar, and meeting some beautiful, amazing people.

What stands out for me, though, and why I am writing this, is something that I saw and am still seeing today in my highs and lows. I saw over the last few days how a dear comrade is struggling and suffering with life - capitalist life. We went to see Ken Loach's new film *I, Daniel Blake* and what stands out is how true to life it actually is and impacts on us in reality when claiming benefits. We are actually living what is in the film every day - we live it. When I came out of the cinema, I was taken by a friend to the bombed-out church where outside fantastic volunteers were feeding lots of homeless human beings. Humbling is not the word. I was overwhelmed with emotion at the humanity of people and how this can actually happen to us.

My friend cried in Liverpool at an event last night. She is one of the strongest women I know, but the enormity of life is getting to her. In between jobs, with debts rising and a cupboard full of qualifications that cost thousands in money, energy and sacrifice. We watched around the conference and saw suits. That's all we could call them - just suits. I'm not saying they are good, bad or indifferent people, but they surely were nice suits.

The distance from being an activist and a suit seemed like from here to the moon, I can tell you. A hole in your pocket and hoping not to get asked for your ticket on the train and hearing from another terrific activist friend that she had to tell a child to pretend they are younger than they are in order to get a cheaper ticket. And the child asking after, can she go back to her real age now?

Momentum events were fantastic and amazingly uplifting and showed us an energy that we really do need if we are to change society for the better for so many people and future generations.

So here I am thinking of my friends who are thinking of me and others in the same boat. My glass is half full and on occasion half empty. Tomorrow is another day.

In the spirit of Daniel Blake, I am a citizen.

Tony Broxson
Wigan

Whither LU?

Labour is not the only party holding its 2016 annual conference in Liverpool. The Left Unity party will have its conference there at the end of October. Left Unity will not succeed unless it redefines its aims, strategy and programme. If it continues promoting the 'Spirit of 45' it will not survive and will not deserve to survive. Whilst the Labour Party is undergoing its own internal 'revolution', LU must show it too can change. It has to become a different kind of party or fade away.

Thirty years of neoliberal politics from Thatcher to New Labour have left the UK ripe for radical democratic change. It is not just electoral reform. The whole Westminster system has failed. Westminster-style parliamentary democracy works for the political class. The constitution of the 'crown-in-parliament', with its massive centralisation of state power in the hands of the crown and its ministers, ensures the policies of the City and major corporations are imposed on the people.

The bureaucratic power of the crown, fronted by Thatcher, Blair and Cameron, has been disastrous for the health and welfare of the people. This has produced a widespread anger against Westminster politics as such. Since 2008 the long fermenting dissatisfaction with the political system has become sharper. Poor election turnouts have shown how little confidence people have that voting can change anything. In 2014 Scotland came close to leaving the UK. In 2016, angry voters in England and Wales voted to exit the European Union, blamed for the democratic deficit.

If the political system is broken, it has been unable to reform itself. The UK needs a democratic revolution - the means by which the people outside parliament are mobilised to take power. People must force radical, democratic change against the vested interests in Westminster and Whitehall. Real democracy, not least in England, needs an alternative to the corrupt politics in the Palace of Westminster.

Consistent democracy is not an end in itself. In England it is the means by which a real social democracy - the Commonwealth of England - can be won, in alliance with democratic forces in the rest of the British Isles. The problem lies with the left in England, which does not fight for a democratic programme or mobilise for a democratic revolution. It is wedded to the politics of Labour.

The Labour Party is not and never has been the party of democratic revolution. It is not and never has been a republican socialist party. It has always been a party of social reform working through the crown-in-parliament and dependent on the bureaucracy of the crown. Labour's greatest period of social reform was a response to massive popular support for change as a result of wartime radicalisation. It was channelled through His Majesty's Labour government (1945-50), a safe space for the ruling class.

LU was one political response to New Labour - defending the ideas of 'old Labour', socialist Labour and the 'Spirit of 1945'. Between 1996 and 2010 those who wanted to fight New Labour publicly and electorally, rather than purely internally, tried to build a socialist Labour Party on the outside. Beginning with Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party, it went on to the Socialist Alliance, and Respect. It ended with the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition and Left Unity.

In 2015 it came as a great surprise to Jeremy Corbyn to find himself the leader of the Labour Party. Suddenly the idea of socialist Labour and the 'Spirit of 45' came alive inside the party. Now with Corbyn's second and bigger victory, the politics of Tusc and LU have been overtaken by events.

The writing was on the wall last year, when Corbyn was first elected leader. In Liverpool, Left Unity has to ask fundamental questions about the world after the Scottish and EU referenda and the rise of Corbyn. What is the Left Unity party now for? As the membership of LU shrinks, the same questions from last year's conference repeat themselves. Can LU become a different kind of party - a militant, republican socialist party, the party of democratic revolution? In Liverpool

we will see whether LU has any real future in the new world now unfolding.

Steve Freeman
Left Unity and Rise

Not serious

In an extraordinary bad and excruciating interview on one of the main TV channels on September 26, shadow chief secretary to the treasury Rebecca Long-Bailey MP attempted to claim that putting an initial £100 billion into Labour's proposed new National Investment Bank would somehow magic up or create an additional £250 billion for public investment.

This was apparently on the basis that commercial banks always have loans considerably greater than the size of their actual cash assets in their vaults. She was attempting (badly) to pray in aid the 'fractional reserve' theory of banking, that banks somehow create new money out of thin air.

This is complete and utter nonsense. Commercial banks have to have the actual cash assets in the first place in order to give these to people seeking loans. Reserve ratios are simply a calculation as to how much cash a bank needs to have on its premises at any one time to pay out to depositors who may want to withdraw their money, and not get caught out, as did Northern Rock. This includes assessment of repayments of current loans and advancing of new ones. It is in essence about cash flow. Real money coming in and out.

So, if Labour's new National Investment Bank was given £100 billion by the government or private capital (even that is not clear in the Corbyn-McDonnell proposal), how would they be able to advance £250 billion - £150 billion of which they don't have - to potential borrowers? Simple answer: they couldn't. It's a complete nonsense and ridiculous. If they are advanced £100 billion of cash in the first place, that is precisely how much they can lend out.

The only body which can literally create new money is the central bank, the Bank of England. Traditionally, government borrowing from the BoE has resulted in increases in the money supply. Nowadays, it is slightly more complex and it is called quantitative easing. The risk of creating new money is that too much money chases too few goods and services, and generates inflation. In fact, without increasing the money supply, you can't have genuine inflation.

Corbyn-McDonnell once proposed (last year) a "people's quantitative easing", which did actually make more economic sense, as it would be new money spent on infrastructure, which in turn would be spent with actual suppliers of products and services, generating additional profits and wages, which would then increase total real demand and overall economic growth. Higher rates of economic growth would therefore mop up any inflationary potential and deliver real gains. That would be far better than actual quantitative easing, which pumps new money into financial assets, values and debt, and as an economic lever is, as once Keynes characterised it, as effective as "pushing on a piece of string".

If Corbyn-McDonnell-Long-Bailey were suggesting, for example, that the £250 billion be created through a combination of private capital (seeking longer-term economic returns) - some degree of seizure of cash being held on corporate balance sheets, public taxation, printing of money - then that could command genuine credibility, respect and support.

But majoring on an economic programme which has at its centre piece a £250 billion (what happened to the £500 billion?) investment fund, and appearing to have no clue as to where this will come from, and which a 10-year-old numerate child could dismiss, is really not good enough and is not serious politics or economics.

Andrew Northall
Kettering

LABOUR



Momentum: main hall

Front-line dispatch

The rift between the Corbynistas and the right is irreconcilable. Simon Wells reports from Liverpool

There were numerous fringe events at the Labour conference in Liverpool, ranging from Defend Council Housing to the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers - and you could even go along to a sea shanty session with Associated British Ports. In addition, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy produced its daily 'yellow pages' bulletin in association with *Left Futures* and *Labour Briefing*.

Watching the event on television or reading about it in the mainstream press is one thing, but being there is something else. The media give the impression of a Shakespearean drama, as the main protagonists face off in the conference hall. However, that provides a very distorted perception of events taking place on the ground. Nevertheless, underneath everything there was a buzz, a sense of optimism - or resignation, depending on which side of the Labour spectrum you are on. For all the ascendancy that the right may have had in previous years, the left is on the rise again.

I was interested in discovering what is really going on inside the minds of the right. It was for this reason that I attended several fringe events organised by the so-called 'moderates'.

The first was organised by Labour First, set up in 1988 and now led by Luke Akehurst, who ran the 'Anyone but Corbyn' campaign in the leadership election. Similar to many left meetings, this was held in the upstairs room of a pub. It was packed out and an overflow had to be arranged, with speakers shuffling between two rooms. Its purpose was to discuss the reaction to the leadership election and gather ideas for "the next steps for Labour moderates". The speakers were resolute in their determination to fight for 'their' party - like Gaitskell and Blair before them, today they are the representatives of the "moderate majority".

They were appalled at the actions of Momentum. Many good people who had for years been working selflessly on behalf of their communities are now being threatened with deselection. But it was clear to me that the civil war has only just started: just as Momentum has been signing up new supporters, so groups such as Labour First are attempting to recruit those who are "frightened" by the Momentum surge.

One of the speakers was Angela Eagle, whose voice is not the loudest. She struggled to make herself heard in the packed-out meeting. But it got worse as she was talking, because we began to hear chanting, which got louder and louder until it almost drowned out Eagle's voice. Outside we could see a protest passing the pub, with people carrying *Socialist Worker* placards, union banners and those of other groups. The conjunction of these two events was a storyteller's dream. As you might have assumed, the speakers at this meeting emphasised that Labour has to become respectable, it has to be electable.

Demonstrations, marches and speaking to the converted does not win you power.

The other rightwing meeting I attended was organised by Progress, the Blairite pressure group, whose theme was the "new information economy". As I arrived, Owen Jones was speaking and he told the audience that, despite being associated with the left, he had spoken at a Progress meeting a year ago too - he is one of those who thinks we can accommodate the right. He spoke about the achievements of the last Labour government and said that we need to create an "entrepreneurial state". While the audience appeared to approve of such phrases, it seemed to me that, for all the talk from Jeremy Corbyn and Owen Smith about reconciliation, events are too far gone, the differences are too big.

This was summed up by an anecdote a delegate told me. Having arrived by train in Liverpool, she asked a taxi driver to take her to the conference. The driver responded, "Which one?" The other conference - a distraction put on by 'extremists' if you read the mainstream press - was that organised by Momentum about a 20-minute walk from the main Labour Party event.

Irreconcilable

The Momentum event, called 'The World Transformed', ran concurrently with the Labour conference and was described as a "four-day celebration of politics, art, culture and community". The main hall featured the sort of stalls that you find at the Socialist Workers Party's Marxism summer school or a Socialist Party event, where you could buy books, Corbyn T-shirts and snacks - or wander over to the 'media response unit'. Smaller rooms accommodated the numerous meetings and workshops.

I went along to a session entitled 'Chakrabarti inquiry: does Labour have an anti-Semitism problem?' Speakers included Jackie Walker, vice-chair of Momentum, who had been suspended from the Labour Party, but subsequently reinstated; and Jeremy Newmark, chair of the Jewish Labour Movement. The chair of the meeting told us that this was a space where we could air our differences and try to come to some agreement. Comrade Walker said that, because her social media comments, which led to her suspension, had been taken out of context, she would be reading from a prepared script. For those familiar with her story there was nothing new, but what has happened to her over the past year was shocking nonetheless.

However, the main draw was Jeremy Newmark and I have to say that if the organisers' idea was to come to some kind of reconciliation with the right over the alleged anti-Semitism within the Labour Party, that was quickly dispelled. Newmark had a total lack of sympathy for what Jackie Walker has had to suffer. For example, he stated that some in Momentum thought it was a good thing that only 5.6% of Jewish people supported

the Labour Party. Incredibly he continued to insist that Jackie Walker's original post about the involvement of some Jews in the slave trade was anti-Semitic. He said that we should not sever links with the Israeli Labor Party, as this would only strengthen Netanyahu's hand. For this writer there is never going to be any reconciliation with the JLM, which has nothing in common with Labour apart from the word.

Back in the main hall the atmosphere was buoyant. There was a constant stream of music, and from the walls hung many banners, including those of Black Activists Rising Against Cuts, Save Our Women's Hospital, Liverpool dockers and the Justice for Brian Douglas campaign. There was a rich mixture of people of various ages and backgrounds. Since 'A World Transformed' had been portrayed as a conference of the 'hard left', the media were in attendance too. For example, I saw *Newsnight* presenter Evan Davis speaking into the camera about the vitality of the Corbynistas. And this was certainly the case.

Matt Wrack, general secretary of the Fire Brigades Union, talked at another meeting about beginning to build a mass movement that was separate from the Westminster bubble, and about a thoroughgoing democratisation of the Labour Party that will shift the debate to involve "ordinary people". This was met with loud cheers. Comrade Wrack said that, while there had been a lot said about deselection, the debate should be about accountability. For me this is all about words. Neither the left nor the right wants to be the one that is accused of launching the next phase of Labour's inevitable civil war.

Meanwhile, back in one of the coffee bars at the corporate hotel next to the conference centre, the atmosphere was different. That is where the right could be seen relaxing - and avoiding the paper sellers and leafletters of the 'hard left', as the mainstream press puts it. But snatches of conversation could be overheard that reflected the sombre mood - if there was laughter, it seemed to result from a kind of gallows humour, as the Labour right prepared for the speech of "our glorious leader".

Everything about the two sides is different - from the power dressing of those at the Labour First meeting to the casual style of Momentum supporters; from the corporate, PR language of the right to the plain-speaking Ian Hodson of the Bakers Union at the Labour Representation Committee event. The contrast was profound - just as the outlook of the two camps over Labour's future direction is irreconcilable.

In that sense, the mainstream media are correct: there is no going back and all talk of accommodation is superficial - it is not going to happen. For some this is the death knell of the Labour Party; for the majority of members it is only the beginning ●

ACTION

London Communist Forum

Sunday October 2, 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 8 ('The challenge of appeasement'), section 1: 'Parliamentary opposition'. Organised by CPGB: www.cpgb.org.uk; and Labour Party Marxists: www.labourpartymarxists.org.uk.

Radical Anthropology Group

Tuesday October 4, 6.45pm: Introduction to human origins, Daryll Forde seminar room, Anthropology Building, 14 Taviton Street, off Gordon Square, London WC1. 'The prehistory of sex'. Speaker: Chris Knight. Organised by Radical Anthropology Group: <http://radicalanthropologygroup.org>.

People's Assembly

Saturday October 1, 10.30am to 5pm: Anti-austerity conference, Birmingham town hall, Victoria Square, Birmingham B3. Organised by People's Assembly: www.thepeoplesassembly.org.uk/peoplesconference.

Austerity has failed

Sunday October 2, 11.30am: National demonstration, Victoria Square, Birmingham B1. Organised by People's Assembly: www.thepeoplesassembly.org.uk/toryconf_demo.

Guantanamo justice

Monday October 3, 5.30pm: Organising meeting, PCS HQ, 160 Falcon Road, London SW11. Speaker: Yvonne Ridley. Organised by Guantanamo Justice Campaign: www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxNH4FICEXQ.

We Shall Overcome

Monday October 3 to Sunday October 9: Hundreds of events up and down the country raising food, cash and clothing for those suffering under austerity. Organised by We Shall Overcome Weekend: <https://weshallovercomeweekend.com>.

Teesside People's Assembly

Tuesday October 4, 7.15pm: Annual general meeting, St Mary's Centre, 82-90 Corporation Road, Middlesbrough TS1. Organised by Teesside People's Assembly: www.facebook.com/events/1845946215642062.

Isle of Wight Momentum

Wednesday October 5, 7pm: Inaugural meeting, Riverside Centre, the Quay, Newport, Isle of Wight. Speaker: Jackie Walker, national vice-chair. Organised by People's Momentum: momentumwight@gmail.com.

And end to conflict

Thursday October 6, 6.30pm: Public meeting, Hilton London Euston, 17-18 Upper Woburn Place, London WC1. Speakers: Federico Mayor Zaragoza, Former director-general Unesco. Organised by Uniting for Peace: www.unitingforpeace.com/index.html.

Stand Up To Racism

Saturday October 8, 10am to 4pm: Conference, Friends Meeting House, 173-177 Euston Road, London NW1. Organised by Stand Up To Racism: www.facebook.com/Stand-Up-To-Racism-485067858271721.

15 years of 'bombing for peace'

Saturday October 8, 10am to 5pm: Anti-war conference. TUC Congress House, 23-28 Great Russell Street, London WC1. Organised by Stop the War Coalition: <http://stopwar.org.uk>.

Battle of Cable Street

Sunday October 9, 12 noon to 5pm: 80th anniversary march and rally. Assemble Altab Ali Park, Adler Street, London E1. Organised by ANPI London: www.facebook.com/ANPI.London.

Marxism and nature

Saturday October 15, 10.30am to 5pm: Conference, Student Central, Malet Street, London WC1. Organised by *International Socialism*: <http://isj.org.uk/marxism-and-nature>.

Remembering the International Brigades

Tuesday October 18, 7pm: Panel discussion, Marx Memorial Library, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1. With professor Paul Preston and Dr Richard Baxell. Organised by Marx Memorial Library: www.marx-memorial-library.org.uk.

Blair's crimes and the Chilcot report

Tuesday October 18, 7pm: Meeting, committee room 1, Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham B1. Guest speaker: Peter Brierley. Organised by Birmingham Stop the War Coalition: www.facebook.com/BStWC.

The meaning of imperialism today

Saturday October 22, 1pm: Public meeting, Arts Centre, Aberystwyth University, Penglais Campus, Aberystwyth SY23. Speakers: John Rees and Ken Booth. Organised by Stop the War Coalition: <http://stopwar.org.uk>.

No war! No austerity!

Thursday November 24, 6.30pm: Rally, Student Central, Malet Street, London WC1. Speakers include: John McDonnell, Tariq Ali, Kate Hudson. Organised by Youth and Student CND: www.facebook.com/yscnd.

CPGB wills

Remember the CPGB and keep the struggle going. Put our party's name and address, together with the amount you wish to leave, in your will. If you need further help, do not hesitate to contact us.

LABOUR

How to win

Jeremy Corbyn's triumph was predictable. So were the olive branches waved about from both sides. However, says **James Marshall** of Labour Party Marxists, the civil war will continue till one side or the other wins

Well, this time, the pollsters got it exactly right. Comrade Corbyn trounced citizen Smith by a resounding 62%-38% margin. That despite the media, the gerrymandering exclusion of 130,000 newer members and the witch-hunting expulsion or suspension of thousands of others. If they had not been denied their democratic rights, the margin would have been more like 75%-25%.

Inevitably, following the announcement of Corbyn's predictable victory, we saw the waving of olive branches. But on both sides the olive branches came mixed with thorns. The Parliamentary Labour Party majority generously offered to elect the shadow cabinet. In other words, sack John McDonnell and Diane Abbott and leave Corbyn utterly isolated. No surprise - Corbyn declined that particular 'peace offering'. Meanwhile Corbyn says come back ... on my terms.

Obviously, the national executive committee will be a vital field of struggle. The right seems to have gained a narrow majority. After chair Paddy Lillis rode roughshod over the Liverpool conference, Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale and Welsh Labour leader Carwyn Jones can now appoint their own NEC representatives. Of course, Corbyn had his alternative: two more trade union seats, plus a councillor and a Scotland and a Wales NEC seat ... *elected by the membership*. The left would have been expected to win the lot. But Corbyn and the left were outmanoeuvred and for the moment the right has made an important gain.

Reselection

Then there are the constituencies. Given our numbers, drive and raw enthusiasm, the left ought to dominate every Constituency Labour Party. CLPs are responsible for selecting a new candidate for the next election ... if there is a vacancy. Many in the Corbyn camp seem to imagine that with boundary changes, due to be introduced in 2018, we are presented with a golden opportunity to sweep away traitors from the Parliamentary Labour Party. Probably wishful thinking.

While some 25 Labour seats are to be abolished outright, 200 other Labour seats - more than 85% of our total - are affected by the parliamentary boundaries review. However, things are far from straightforward. The procedure for dealing with reselections after boundary changes has yet to be decided. But let us assume that a right majority on the NEC will base them on the 2011 rule book. A sitting Labour MP will then have the right to seek selection in any seat that contains 40% or more of the electors in their existing constituency.

If an MP's constituency is divided up so much that no single seat contains 40% of their old electors then they have to apply to the NEC to be given a claim on another seat. If they are the only sitting MP seeking selection they are nominated through the *trigger ballot process*. If more than one sitting MP seeks the nomination in a new seat there is a ballot to choose between them.

As I understand things, under those circumstances, there will be three options - MP one, MP two, and an option to reject them both and have an *open contest*. But the open contest must get 50% or more to happen. So if

MP one gets 41%, and an open contest gets 45%, MP one will be deemed as officially selected. Obviously, in most cases the left has every interest to argue for an open contest.

However, the trigger ballot process favours the trade union bureaucracy and well connected MPs, not ordinary members. Introduced in the early 1990s, the rules give each trade union branch, party branch and affiliated organisation (Fabians, the Co-op, etc) a single yes/no vote. In other words, rightwing trade unions - eg, GMB and Usdaw - can arrange things so that they affiliate more branches to a CLP than the actual party has. Eg, a CLP with 1,000 individual members might have four local branches, while the GMB affiliates four and Usdaw affiliates three branches. This gives the 1,000 individual members four votes between them and the trade unions seven votes. And, whereas local party branches have to meet and come to a 'one member, one vote' decision, a single trade union official - maybe someone who does not live in the constituency - can take the decision on behalf of all their affiliated branches.

That is why we in LPM advocate a one member, one vote (OMOV) mandatory reselection process: Jeremy Corbyn is wrong on this issue; Len McCluskey is right.

Mandatory reselection terrifies the right. It was mandatory reselection, "even more than nuclear disarmament and membership of the European Community, that became the main catalyst for the launch of the breakaway Social Democratic Party".¹ Progress, Lord David Sainsbury's party within the party, furiously denounces mandatory reselection as "a weapon of fear and intimidation".² Yes, mandatory reselection is viewed as an affront by every wrecker, every hireling, every parliamentary bighead. The odious Frank Field urges Labour MPs to leave the party and stand against Labour candidates *en masse* ... if a single rightwinger is deselected. His proposal has been met with a distinct coolness - career suicide does not appeal.

It is worth looking at the background. Interestingly, and with some foundation, we read on the Progress website that mandatory reselection carries "echoes of the Paris Commune, and of the Russian soviets, where delegates were subject to recall if they displeased their local citizenry. It rests on the idea that leaders will always be tempted to sell you out, once they get power."³ Well, surely, that is what history actually shows.

For decades, sitting Labour MPs, certainly those in safe seats, enjoyed a job for life (or for as long as no better offer came along). They might visit their constituency once or twice a year, deliver a speech to the AGM and write an occasional letter to the local newspaper. Meanwhile they lived a pampered, middle class life, frequented one of London's various gentlemen's clubs and spent their weekends in the countryside with Lord this and Lady that. Despite such evident moral corruption they were automatically the candidate for the next election. Unless they were found guilty of an act of gross indecency or had the party whip withdrawn, they could do as they pleased.

With the rise of Bennism, that situ-



El Lissitzky: 'Proun' (Project for the Affirmation of the New)

ation was challenged. The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, founded in 1973, committed itself to a range of internal reforms - crucially mandatory reselection of MPs, which was finally agreed by Labour's 1980 conference. What this saw, however, was not a Labour Party equivalent of the Paris Commune or the Russian soviets. There was no right to instantly recall. Nevertheless, once in each parliament, our MPs had to get the endorsement of their local general management committee. Note, GMCs were made up of delegates elected by local party and trade union branches. They were sizable bodies, typically consisting of 80, 90, 100 or even more.

At the prompting of the bourgeois media and desperately seeking acceptability, Neil Kinnock sought to remove trade unions from the voting process altogether. He failed, but accepted a compromise. A local electoral college for the selection and reselection of candidates was introduced. Ordinary

members were given a direct vote for the first time, leaving GMCs with the right to nominate and shortlist only. This electoral college system gave unions and affiliated organisations up to 40% of the vote, with ordinary members having some 60% (the actual balance was different in each seat, depending on party and union membership).

Trigger ballots were a product of the 1990s. Formally honouring conference's "desire to maintain reselection", they made it significantly "easier for MPs to defend their positions".⁴ Trigger ballots allowed for a sitting MP to be subject to a full-scale ballot of the membership. But only if they lost a trigger ballot.

Of course, the conference arrangements committee voted not to allow a proper debate at the Liverpool conference. A motion on mandatory reselection had been submitted by South Shields CLP (now suspended till January 2017 after the compliance unit supposedly found problems of

"bullying and intimidation"⁵).

The CAC made its ruling using the standard argument that there had been similar motions in recent years. Our rules say that motions cannot be voted on more often than every three years. Supposedly this is to avoid the same topics being discussed repeatedly. In reality it is an undemocratic device introduced by the right. Note, the CAC consists of five trade union delegates plus Gloria De Piero MP and former MEP and TV personality Michael Cashman ... both elected by members. That Jon Lansman and Katy Clark failed to get onto the CAC shows that the left is malfunctioning organisationally and failing to engage the new mass membership base in the ongoing structural battle. We should be winning, but, though we are very many and they are far fewer, we aren't.

Indeed, Liverpool shows that the right is far better organised than the left. As "exclusively" reported in *The Independent* a group of rightwing Labour officials and MPs worked secretly for months to ensure that it was their people who got elected as delegates. One unnamed MP told the paper that the drive to get rightwing delegates "became more critical as it became clear Mr Corbyn would be re-elected." The MP also boasted: "It was all pretty well organised. The parliamentary party had an MP who acted as a sort of sergeant major, keeping an eye on the delegates that all the MPs' constituency parties were choosing to come to conference."

We discover that for "constituency parties that had no MP, a similar job was done by people within the Labour structure." Another "party insider" said that stopping the left being elected is "made easier because in many seats, even those experiencing an influx of new Corbyn-supporters, it is still the Labour members who predate the current leader's reign who are most active." The same source said: "A fair number of the new-joiners, people in Momentum and so on, are 'clicktivists', happier online rather than on the streets knocking on doors or at meetings going through technical stuff." He added: "Momentum have talked themselves up. It serves the media narrative nicely that there is some sort of unstoppable herd trampling across the political plains, and of course it suits Momentum. But in a lot of places they are being beaten. In others they are being slowed down."⁶

There is an important lesson here. The left needs to be better organised than the right ... of course, impossible without democracy.

Ghosts

There has been much wild talk in the media about a PLP split. Frankly, it will not happen, certainly not this side of 2020. True, John Ferrett, former leader of the Labour group on Portsmouth council, has quit the party. This "top councillor" is urging the right to "create a new political party" as a "democratic alternative" to the Corbyn-led Labour Party. He accuses Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell of endangering "national security".⁷ But do not expect anyone much to follow this political irrelevancy into an even further political irrelevancy.

Okay, suspend disbelief. Imagine a split. Most traditional Labour voters would be expected to remain loyal to

LABOUR**Palestinians: an oppressed and colonised people**

Enemy of working class

The JLM, like Zionism itself, has no place in the labour movement, argues **Tony Greenstein**

In 1920 Poale Zion, the 'Workers of Zion', became an affiliated society of the Labour Party. In 2004, realising how toxic its name had become, PZ rebranded itself as the 'Jewish Labour Movement'. But, as Jesus observed, one should beware of false prophets in sheep's clothing who are in reality "ravening wolves".

Even its name, like everything else about the JLM, is a lie. The organisation is Zionist, not Jewish. That is why many non-Jewish supporters of Progress have joined, whereas Jewish anti-racists and anti-Zionists would not touch it with a barge pole.

There was a Jewish Labour Movement once, but today's JLM is a mockery of that movement. The history of the Jewish Labour Movement began with the massive Jewish immigration from Russia from the 1880s to 1914, fleeing not only the pogroms, but the poverty and discrimination, which confined them to the Pale of Settlement. The British labour movement reacted with hostility, at first using arguments which are not unfamiliar today. The TUC passed resolutions in 1892, 1894 and 1895 calling for immigration controls and anti-alien legislation.²

It was because of this that Jewish workers formed their own trade unions. The Jewish Workers' Tailors Trading Society, formed in Leeds in 1876, was said to be the world's first Jewish trade

union.³ By 1896 there were 13 Jewish unions, rising to 32 by 1902.⁴ Examples were the Hebrew Cabinet Makers Society, Manchester Jewish Tailors Union, the London Jewish Bakers Union⁵ and the Leeds Amalgamated Jewish Tailors, Machinists and Pressers Trade Union.

Anti-alienist

Jewish workers faced the anti-alienist prejudices of non-Jewish workers. The arguments used then have a familiar ring. It was said that the Jewish workers were lowering British workers' wages. The answer of the Jewish working class, despite the best efforts of the rabbis, the Jewish bourgeoisie and the Zionists, was to become the most militant section of the British working class. It was this which won over non-Jewish trade unions. In 1903 Manchester Trades Council became the first labour movement body to oppose the 1905 Aliens Bill. In 1889 and again in 1912 the Jewish Tailors Unions spearheaded massive strikes. In 1912 the action was totally successful and provided an example to non-Jewish trade unionists. The East End dockers also went on strike that year and the bonds formed between Jewish and non-Jewish workers - in which Jewish workers took into their homes non-Jewish children, whom their parents could not afford to feed - created bonds which lasted until the Battle of

Cable Street in 1936, when 100,000 workers, including thousands of Irish Catholic dockers, came onto the streets to defeat Oswald Moseley.

In December 1900 William Stanley Shaw set up the British Brothers' League, which campaigned against Jewish immigration. It quickly gained the support of people such as William Evans Gordon, MP for Stepney. This was the beginning of a popular racist organisation which in turn would give birth to fascist organisations in the East End of London, culminating in Moseley's British Union of Fascists.

This was a movement which was controlled by the elites. Its leaders were wholly sympathetic to Zionism. Shaw gushed:

I am a firm believer in the Zionist movement, which the British Brothers League will do much incidentally to foster. The return of the Jews to Palestine is one of the most striking signs of the times ... All students of prophecy are watching the manifold signs of the times with almost breathless interest ...⁶

Christian Zionism and anti-Semitism went hand in hand, as they do today.

In his autobiography, Chaim Weizmann, leader of the Zionist Organisation and Israel's first president, understood and sympathised with

Gordon and the anti-Semites:

I think our people were rather hard on him. The Aliens Bill in England and the movement which grew around it were natural phenomenon which might have been foreseen ... Sir William Evans-Gordon had no particular anti-Jewish prejudices ... he was sincerely ready to encourage any settlement of Jews almost anywhere in the British empire, but he failed to see why the ghettos of London or Leeds should be made into a branch of the ghettos of Warsaw and Pinsk ... Sir William Evans-Gordon gave me some insight into the psychology of the settled citizen ...⁷

In 1900 and again in 1906, the fledgling English Zionist Federation had issued a circular supporting all the anti-Semitic East End Tory candidates who campaign in favour of alien immigration controls.⁸ The candidate for Whitechapel, David Hope-Kydd, described the Jewish immigrants as "the scum of the unhealthiest continental nations", but nonetheless coupled his desire for an aliens' immigration bill with heart-rending support for the infant Zionist movement.⁹ None of this stopped the Zionists supporting Kydd and his fellow anti-alienists, but in 1906 the Jewish populace voted heavily and overwhelmingly against the Tories and

two Jewish Zionists who supported the Aliens Act.

Theodor Herzl, president of the World Zionist Organisation, came to speak to the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration in 1903 in support of restrictions on Jewish immigration and met with the then colonial minister, Joseph Chamberlain. Jewish voters overwhelmingly opposed the Tory candidates and in the East End in 1906 they were overwhelmingly defeated. In Manchester Arthur James Balfour, whom Chaim Weizmann and the Zionists supported, nonetheless lost his constituency. The majority of Jews, however, voted Liberal and, as Geoffrey Alderman notes, this was "a telling verdict upon Zionist influence at the time".¹⁰

Labour Zionism and Poale Zion arose as a means by which the Zionists could gain a footing in the Jewish labour movement. In this they were remarkably unsuccessful. William Fishman describes the committee which was set up to organise a demonstration against the pogroms which had been organised by the tsarist regime in Kishinev. The representatives of Henry Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation made it a condition of participation that the Zionists should not be invited.

Rudolph Rocker of the Jewish anarchists opposed this "presumptuous

demand". He did so not because of any sympathy for the Zionists - quite the contrary:

The Zionists had no following of any consequence at that time in the Jewish working class movement. Besides, the Zionist press had accused the revolutionary movement in Russia of being in a way to blame for the pogromist activity of the Russian government. For this reason no invitation had been sent to the Zionists and they for their part had made no attempt to be represented at the conference ... It would have been absurd to adopt a resolution excluding an organisation which was not seeking to be represented.¹¹

Likewise in the account of Joe Jacobs of the Communist Party concerning the fight of workers and the unemployed in the East End for unionisation and against fascism the Zionists do not make so much as an appearance.¹² When Jewish workers fought for decent conditions and against fascism, the Zionists were aligned with the Jewish bourgeoisie.

Progressive?

Today's JLM is unique in that it is the only representative of another party inside the British Labour Party. The reasons for this lie in the fact that historically the Labour Party was not an anti-imperialist party - quite the contrary. In 1920 colonialism was seen as a means by which 'backward' peoples could be civilised. Whereas the Conservatives were quite open about the fact that they intended to delay any advance towards self-government as long as possible - Churchill fought a rearguard action all his life against Indian independence, resigning from the Conservative shadow cabinet on the issue - Labour's Fabian traditions saw the colonies as a form of trusteeship, in which we exercised power on behalf of the indigenous population.

Just as much of the left had identified with the Afrikaner settlers during the Boer War, so too many British social democrats saw in Zionism a progressive political tradition. They accepted the assertion by the Zionists that the opposition to Zionist colonisation came from the reactionary feudal Arab leaders, who were misleading their own peoples.

The Zionists spoke the language of the Fabian imperialists - people like the Webbs. Zionism was seen as a progressive, western movement. Their kibbutzim were portrayed as socialist enterprises. No-one thought to mention that Arabs were excluded from them. The true reasons why the Palestinian Arabs objected to Zionism were ignored.

After the 1929 riots in Palestine Ramsay MacDonald's government commissioned the Hope-Simpson enquiry into the causes of the outbreaks. Its report is worth reading today. It was extremely clear on why Palestine's Arabs objected to Zionist colonisation and it had nothing to do with feudal religious bigotry or anti-Semitism, as the Zionists asserted. In the section, 'The effect of the Zionist colonisation policy on the Arab', the report concluded:

... the result of the purchase of land in Palestine by the Jewish National Fund has been that land has been extra-territorialised. It ceases to be land from which the Arab can gain any advantage either now or at any time in the future. Not only can he never hope to lease or to cultivate it, but, by the stringent provisions of the lease of the Jewish National Fund, he is deprived for ever from employment on that land.¹³

Historically the Labour Zionist movement, which established and ran the Zionist project from 1904 until 1977, was fiercely antagonistic to any cooperation with the Arabs. It was equally opposed

to socialism, which it saw, quite rightly, as involving the joint struggle of Jewish and Arab workers. The Zionists set their face against such cooperation.

Speaking of the "evil of mixed labour", David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, described the employment of Arabs as "class hatred of intelligent Jewish labour".¹⁴ Ben-Gurion opposed the unity of Jewish and Arab workers, reassuring Zionism's backers that "Nothing is further from the mind of Jewish labour than to engineer disputes, with all the material and political loss in their train."¹⁵ Socialism was merely "a tool for the advancement of national objectives".¹⁶

It was Ben-Gurion who coined the slogan, 'From class to nation' - the class role of the Jewish worker was redefined as one of hostility to the 'feudal' Arabs. Labour Zionism consciously undermined and ignored Palestinian trade unionists. Instead they chose to strengthen the most reactionary elements, such as the mufti of Jerusalem, who could then be presented as an example of the Arab enemy.

As early as 1906, Ben-Gurion had urged Poale Zion in Jaffa to oppose Savransky and others who wished to organise rather than exclude Arab labour.¹⁷ David HaCohen, managing director of the Histadrut (Zionist 'trade union') building company, Solel-Boneh, explained the dilemma of a 'socialist Zionist':

I had to fight my friends on the issue of Jewish socialism, to defend the fact that I would not accept Arabs in my trade union, the Histadrut; to defend preaching to housewives that they should not buy at Arab stores; to defend the fact that we stood guard at orchards to prevent Arab workers from getting jobs there ... to pour kerosene on Arab tomatoes; to attack Jewish housewives in the markets and smash Arab eggs they had bought ... to buy dozens of dunums from an Arab is permitted, but to sell - God forbid - one Jewish dunum to an Arab is prohibited; to take Rothschild, the incarnation of capitalism, as a socialist and to name him the 'benefactor' - to do all that was not easy.¹⁸

Racist campaign

The role of today's JLM is no different from its predecessors - to justify the Zionist colonisation of Israel/Palestine. Jeremy Newmark, the JLM's chair, has recently taken to claiming that the group opposes the Jerusalem Programme of the World Zionist Organisation, to which it is affiliated via the World Labour Zionist Movement. The Jerusalem Programme¹⁹ speaks of "the centrality of the state of Israel and Jerusalem, its capital, in the life of the [Jewish] nation". This assertion - that the real homeland of Jews, including British Jews, is in Israel rather than the countries where they live - is itself anti-Semitic. It has long been an anti-Semitic rallying cry that Jews do not belong in the countries where they live.

Newmark has been among those in the JLM who have waged a nasty, racist campaign against the black-Jewish vice-chair of Momentum, Jackie Walker. She has been subjected to an unprecedented series of vicious, vitriolic and racist tweets and abuse by the Jewish Labour Movement's Zionist supporters. Her offence? Alleging that the Jews financed the slave trade. As crude as that. In fact she was taking part in a private conversation with friends about the fact that that black people too suffered a holocaust, known as the slave trade.

The campaign of incitement against Jackie has been a campaign unprecedented in its nastiness. Her offence was that, unlike Naz Shah, she has not shown 'contrition' - she has not accepted that she is guilty of the lies

levelled against her. The whole affair is proof that, once a lie gains circulation, it is difficult to put it to bed. The liberal Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* penned a vicious, lying article entitled 'Blame the Jews for the slave trade: Labour's latest anti-Semitic slander'.²⁰

The JLM campaign has based itself on the racist trope that, because Jackie is black, she cannot be Jewish. This is a common belief in Israel and amongst the orthodox. In Israel many people deny that the Falashas, Jews from Ethiopia, are really Jewish.²¹ When they first came to Israel in the 1990s, the chief rabbinate forced the men to undergo new circumcisions because they were not accepted as Jews. This never, of course, happened to white Jews from Russia, many of whom were Christians, because the Russians were the right racial stock.

Although the JLM dearly wishes to see me expelled from Labour, I have not been made into a hate figure in the same way, because I am white and therefore the JLM cannot challenge my Jewishness - as the child of an orthodox Jewish rabbi, I am kosher. This is despite the fact that I support Ken Livingstone's remarks that the Zionist movement collaborated with the Nazis during the holocaust.

I have also restated Jackie's thesis that there was considerable Jewish involvement in financing the slave trade. That is a fact. Jews were not the only people - there were Quakers, Methodists and, of course, the Church of England, which ran its own plantation in Barbados, Codrington. But that there was Jewish involvement in the slave trade is indisputable. One of the world experts in the slave trade is Seymour Drescher, who says that at one time, Jews controlled 17% of the Dutch slave trade.²²

On September 25, the JLM held a 'Rally against anti-Semitism', at which John McDonnell agreed to speak. Following criticism from Zionists that he had spoken on the same platform as Jackie, he was called upon by Newmark to explain himself. A number of us therefore wrote to McDonnell and drew up a petition calling on him to withdraw from the JLM's racist rally. We are pleased that he did indeed pull out.

The Jewish Labour Movement's only concern with 'anti-Semitism' is when Israel is on the agenda. Hence its proposed Labour Party rule change, which defines a racial incident in terms of the perception of the 'victim'. This means that any Zionist, facing criticism of Israel, can shout 'anti-Semitism' and they must be believed. The JLM, which like all Zionist organisations, has never played a part in anti-racist or anti-fascist work in this country, has borrowed from the struggle of black people over the death of Stephen Lawrence to cynically distort and misuse the findings of the Macpherson enquiry.

Macpherson does not say there that the victim of a racial incident should be automatically believed, yet the JLM would have those subject to allegations of 'anti-Semitism' automatically condemned without any investigation. As Shami Chakrabarti said in her enquiry report,

The principle that an incident should be recorded as 'racist' when perceived that way by a victim may indeed have some useful application outside the policing context ... However, the purpose of the approach is to ensure that investigators handle a complaint with particular sensitivity towards the victim. It is to suggest the seriousness with which a complaint must be handled, but in no way to determine its outcome. If I complain to the police that I have been the victim of a racist attack on the street, I should expect my complaint to be so

recorded. However, investigation and due process must, of course, then follow and it is perfectly possible that an investigator, prosecutor or magistrate will subsequently find either that no attack took place at all, or that its motivation was something other than racism ... However, it will be for the investigation and any subsequent process to determine whether my complaint was ultimately well-founded.²³

The JLM proposed:

Where a member is responsible for a hate incident, being defined as something where the victim or anyone else think it was motivated by hostility or prejudice based on disability, race, religion, transgender identity, or sexual orientation, the NEC may have the right to impose the appropriate disciplinary options from the following options ...²⁴

The JLM is essentially proposing that an accusation is as good as a conviction! Clearly it is mistaking Israel's 'justice' on the West Bank for what remains of British justice.

The JLM amendment subtly tries to define anti-Zionism as anti-Semitism. Its 'supporting argument and rationale' states:

This rule change would recognise that it is not acceptable to use 'Zionism' as a term of abuse or to substitute the word 'Zionist' for where the word 'Jew' has been commonly used by anti-Semites, such as alleging Jewish political, financial or media conspiracies and control.

Of course, this is rank hypocrisy, coming from those who defend the actions of a 'Jewish' state, which also happens to be Zionist. It is a good example of having your cake and eating it. On May 11 a short piece appeared on the JLM's website complaining that a letter from about 100 anti-Zionist Jews, making a distinction between Zionism and anti-Zionism had been published. It complained: "... it appears that some of those signatories only identify as Jews for the purposes of taking such contrary positions". In other words, anti-Zionist Jews are not real Jews. The particular piece was quickly taken down, but not before we captured it!

At one and the same time as complaining that if anyone misguidedly conflates being Jewish with being Zionist, the Zionists do their best to make such a comparison. Newmark and friends tried to prove in the Fraser v University College London employment tribunal that Zionism was an inherent part of being Jewish (a 'protected characteristic'). The judgment found, unsurprisingly, that Newmark had lied on oath:

Para 148: We regret to say that we have rejected

as untrue the evidence of Ms Ashworth and Mr Newmark concerning the incident at the 2008 congress ... Evidence given to us about booing, jeering and harassing of Jewish speakers at congress debates was also false, as truthful witnesses on the claimant's side accepted.²⁵

In reality, the JLM exists in order to defend the state of Israel, right or wrong. Despite its pretensions to radicalism, we are not surprised that its new director, Ellie Rose, has come straight from being in the employ of the Israeli embassy! Such is the radicalism of the Jewish Labour Movement ●

Notes

1. In Brighton non-Jewish Progress supporters like council leader Warren Morgan and councillor Emma Daniels are members.
2. See WJ Fishman *East End Jewish radicals 1875-1914* Nottingham 2004, pp78, 86, 216 - though in 1895 the resolution met with much opposition.
3. *The strikes of the 80s*: <https://theedsbigbookend.wordpress.com/2014/05/02/the-strikes-of-the-80s>.
4. WJ Fishman *op cit* p276.
5. See L Wayne *Union bread: bagels, platzels and chollah - the story of the London Jewish Bakers Union* Socialist History Society/Jewish Socialists Group.
6. *Jewish Chronicle* November 8 2001.
7. C Weizmann *Trial and error* New York 1949, pp90-92.
8. 'Zionism and anti-Semitism' *Return* No1, March 1989; and 'Redefining anti-Semitism - the false anti-racism of the right' *Return* December 1990.
9. G Alderman *The Jewish community in British politics* Oxford 1983, pp68-75.
10. G Alderman *op cit* p96; see also pp68, 75, 93.
11. WJ Fishman *op cit* pp250-51.
12. J Jacobs *Out of the ghetto - communism and fascism in the East End 1913-1939* London 1991.
13. 'Palestine - report on immigration, land settlement and development' October 1930: www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/hope.html.
14. D Ben-Gurion *Rebirth and destiny* London 1959, p74.
15. *Ibid* pp75, 77, 79.
16. Z Sternhell *The founding myths of Israel: nationalism, socialism and the making of the Jewish state* New York 1999, p177.
17. Offenburg cited in N Weinstock *Zionism: a false messiah* London 1979, p87.
18. N Weinstock *op cit* p63.
19. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem_Program.
20. www.haaretz.com/opinion/premium-1.722769.
21. 'Israel detains and deports American Jews because they are black': <http://mondoweiss.net/2015/07/detains-american-because>.
22. 'How culpable were Dutch Jews in the slave trade?': www.jewishjournal.com/articles/item/how_culpable_were_dutch_jews_in_the_slave_trade.
23. www.labour.org.uk/page/-/party-documents/ChakrabartiInquiry.pdf.
24. See <http://freespeechonisrael.org.uk/labours-deputy-leader-endorses-mccarthyite-antisemitism-rule-change-proposal>.
25. www.judiciary.gov.uk/judgments/fraser-uni-college-union.



Jackie Walker: misrepresented

HISTORY

Explaining the holocaust industry

Norman Finkelstein recalls how the official narrative on the Jews and Israel has changed over his lifetime. This is an edited version of a speech given to Communist University 2016

Let me begin with the origins of the holocaust industry and how it came to be. There is a famous remark by the Hungarian Marxist, Georg Lukács - whose *History and class-consciousness* was mandatory reading when I was a student - which is helpful to me when thinking about these issues. He said that it is important to see the present as history.

This always leaps to my mind when I think about, or recall, the holocaust industry. When I was growing up, the Nazi holocaust - and this may sound strange to those who are not of my generation - literally did not exist in American consciousness: there was no Nazi holocaust. That might sound even stranger, given that both of my parents were survivors of the holocaust (and real survivors, at that - not like so many of those today who claim that they are second-generation or even third-generation survivors). If I ever went up to my mother and claimed to be a second-generation holocaust survivor then she would have smacked me in the face: and I would have probably deserved it!

But the fact is that there were very few survivors of the Nazi holocaust, for it was exactly as we are told it was: systematic and methodical assembly-line extermination. Very few survived. The serious estimates put the number of Jewish survivors at around 100,000. Being a survivor back then was understood as somebody who survived the ghettos, the labour camps or the extermination camps. In many cases it was all three.

My parents, for example, were in the Warsaw Ghetto until April 1943. There were about 20,000-30,000 people who survived the uprising, and they were among them. They were then transported to Majdanek, which was a death camp and a labour camp. My father was subsequently deported to Auschwitz and, as I understand it, was in seven other camps, because they continued to shift the inmates, as the Russian and American fronts advanced. My mother was then in two slave-labour camps.

This is what survival was understood to be: ghetto, labour camp and death camp. Very few survived because you had to be of a particular age cohort. Fundamentally, the Nazis wanted people who could work. If you were elderly, or a child, you would be sent to the gas chambers. Those that survived were roughly in their early 20s at the time.

This may come as a surprise, but it was a great shame to be the son of holocaust survivors back then, because the assumption was that if you survived the Nazi holocaust then you must have done something dirty. I recall my mother being rather indignant when invariably the question was asked, in complete innocence, "How did you survive?" She understood such a question as a dig! The assumption was either that she did something of which she ought to be ashamed, or that we - the Jews - went like sheep to the ovens. This was the other aspect of shame: the assumption that we did not resist or fight back and thus went like sheep to our deaths. To be the child of a holocaust survivor was a badge of shame, not of honour. It was never talked about.

Making it

When I was growing up back then, in the 1950s and 60s, Jews were beginning to make it in the US. I would not claim that things were terrible before, but there were aspects of discrimination against



Judith Dazio: 'Daily life in Warsaw ghetto'

the Jews in US society up until the end of World War II. There were quotas at the best universities and law firms, for example. After World War II, for reasons which have not yet been adequately explained in the scholarship, all the quotas fell away.

Now Jews were making it in American society. And they were making it in a very ambitious and confident manner, in that, of course, the US is a meritocracy and we, the Jews, are the best! Nothing was going to stop us. In this sense, Jews were not looking back at how we had suffered. No. We were looking forward in an attempt to conquer American society, because we are the best: the most ambitious, the most intelligent and the most determined. As the American pop song put it, 'There ain't no stopping us now!' The Jews were not interested in contemplating their past. They were looking to the future... a golden future.

So when I was growing up, I moved with the fast crowd: all my friends were remarkably intelligent. At that point in time the most respected profession was that of the doctor (no longer the case, of course) and - no exaggeration - 90% of my friends became medical doctors, some of whom were at the top of their profession (several teach at Harvard Medical School). My high school produced people such as the current senator for New York, Charles Schumer, who will probably be the senate majority leader if Hillary Clinton becomes president; Bernie Sanders and five Nobel laureates - all of them Jews. It is an incredible achievement.

So nobody bothered with the Nazi holocaust: that was just something in the past that had been forgotten. I can say, with no fear of contradiction, that, even though I hung out with the best and the brightest, and even though we lived in the highly politicised times of the 1960s and 70s, where everybody cared about history and politics, not a single friend - or a parent of a friend - asked a single question of me or my parents about what they had been through. Nobody was interested in it.

Some of you may accuse me of

relying solely on personal anecdote, so let us take a look at the bigger picture. Up until the mid-60s, there were only two scholarly studies of the Nazi holocaust in the English language. Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* was written in 1963. If you look at her bibliography, she can only find two books in English: one by Gerald Reitlinger (*The final solution: the attempt to exterminate the Jews of Europe 1939-1945*, published in 1953) and Raul Hilberg's monumental study *The destruction of the European Jews*, which appeared in 1961. Two studies! It is estimated today that there are about ten thousand scholarly studies of the Nazi holocaust.

When Raul Hilberg set out to write his PhD dissertation, his advisor at Columbia University, the German-Jewish sociologist, Franz Neumann (author of *Behemoth*, which is still read today), famously remarked that writing a doctoral dissertation on the extermination of the Jews in World War II would be "your funeral". Neumann was convinced that Hilberg would never get a job if he wrote on such a topic. Why? When I was writing *The holocaust industry*, I went through all of the standard Jewish publications of the time. Jews, after all, have a very literate and intellectual culture and had their own publications, which included most of the publications of the left. There were a number of magazines such as *Commentary*, *Dissent* and *Partisan Review*: 95% of the left and centre journals were Jewish. I went through them for the whole period from 1947-67, but the Nazi holocaust is never mentioned.

The most famous Jewish sociologist is Nathan Glazer. In 1957 he wrote a classic study entitled *American Judaism*, in which he remarked that the Nazi holocaust "had remarkably slight effects on the inner life of American Jewry". I would even go as far to say that it had no effect. It simply did not exist. The only possible exception was that in grade school we read Anne Frank's diary, but we did not read it as a Jewish story - rather as one of human

suffering. For better or for worse, the Jewish element was extirpated. I should point out that I went to all-Jewish schools from grade school to college. I hardly met any non-Jews.

McCarthyism

So why did Neumann think that Hilberg was effectively digging his own grave by choosing to write his doctoral thesis on the destruction of the European Jews? The answer is that it was highly political. After World War II, the US's main ally in Europe was the Federal Republic of Germany. For perfectly obvious reasons, with the exception of Konrad Adenauer at the top, the German government was made up of former Nazi bureaucrats. After all, it is not possible to create a new government bureaucracy overnight.

It is the same reason why, tangentially, if Trump gets elected - or even if Sanders had been elected - the government would not look very different: there are simply not enough people who can take over, so that it is necessary to draw on the old elites with the knowledge and expertise. The same dilemma faced the Germans after World War II (although there is, of course, much debate over exactly how much of a dilemma it was).

The Soviet Union capitalised on the fact that the German government was made up of a large number of former Nazis by pointing out that the revanchist German regime was full of Nazis! One of the Nazis' biggest crimes, of course, was the holocaust, and to bring up the question of the Nazi holocaust was to open yourself up to the accusation of being a communist, because it was the communists and the Soviet Union who kept reiterating the point that the US's new ally, the Nazis, were the ones who killed the Jews! So to talk of the holocaust was to open you up to the charge of serving Soviet propaganda. And it is in fact true to say that many of the Jews who did raise the issue were left-wing communist Jews.

So the last thing Jews who intended to make it in the US wanted to be seen as were 'communists' who were 'aiding

and abetting the Soviets' against the new German government. In quiet ways, US Jews would express their discomfort at the new German regime. One way in which they would do so would be to refuse to buy German products, such as the Volkswagen car. My parents felt very strongly about this. But the majority did not want to be seen as bringing up the holocaust, because they did not want to be seen as communists. And indeed, at this point in time the commemorations of the destruction of the Jews were organised by forces in and around the communist movement.

The Jews also had the fear of being tainted as communists because it was the McCarthy era and repression was forthright. My parents adored the Soviet Union for the role that it had played in defeating Nazism and to their last days dismissed any criticism of Stalin as opportunist. I respected them for that, because they felt a sense of gratitude for what had happened. But, when my father came over to the US, one of the conditions was agreeing to put your name to a statement saying that, in the case of war, you would fight the Soviet Union. He was very torn. In 1953, when Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were accused of being communist spies and were eventually executed, my parents wanted to sign a petition in defence of the Rosenbergs, but they were too afraid.

So for practical-political reasons, the Jews were looking forward to taking over the country... and they did. They are by far the wealthiest ethnic group in the US. If you look at the ruling establishment in the US, their success is a reality. Chelsea Clinton, the daughter of Hillary, married a Jew. Donald Trump's daughter also married a Jew... an orthodox Jew. In both cases, the marriages were viewed as boosting their social status. The success of the Jews has been phenomenal. In US society now, of course, the new Jews are the Chinese, who are winning all the maths competitions and outcompeting the Jews in other areas of academic success.

But anyway the question is: what changed? How did this holocaust industry come into being if I am accurate in claiming that mention of the holocaust was close to absent in post-World War II American Jewish life? The answer shows once more the importance of having to understand the present as history. The answer, oddly enough, is Israel.

Dual loyalty

The founding of Israel in 1947, surprisingly enough, also played a very minor role in US Jewish life, at least until 1967. It did not figure at all in the life of US Jews, apart from as an object of charity: occasionally money would be raised to grow a tree there or some other such project. That was about it. Nathan Glazer, whom I quoted above, also claimed that Israel had almost no effect on US Jewish life.

Why this was the case was obvious. Historically, Jews have often been charged with so-called 'dual loyalty': ie, that they are loyal to the state in which they live, but they are also loyal to this entity called 'world Jewry'. The assumption was that, if push came to shove, then the Jews would align themselves to 'their people' before they would align themselves with the people in the country where they exercised citizenship. Now, after 1947, with the creation of the state of Israel, the notion of dual loyalty was no longer a speculative one: it was a factual

reality. Whereas the notion of 'world Jewry' was rather speculative, there was now a state which claimed to be the embodiment of the Jewish people.

American Jews now faced the very real problem that dual loyalty had become a reality. Who are you loyal to? The US (when it comes to American Jews) or this state, which claims to represent you? For obvious reasons, US Jews are obviously loyal to the US, because they are making it there! Israel, by contrast, is this strange backwater in the Middle East - very poor and very simple. True, while it appears to embody an ethos which many Jews just a couple of decades earlier strongly identified with - namely the kibbutzim and austere, communal ways of life, with many labour leaders modelling themselves as Bolsheviks. Ben Gurion and all the rest viewed themselves as Jewish Bolsheviks. So there was an appeal of Israel to the youthful sensibility of the Jews and the 1920s proletarian organisations and movements in which the Jews participated *en masse*.

But now we are in a different context. In post-World War II US society, the Jews are becoming professionals and suburbanised. They do not want to go back to the past. And so Jews had no interest in Israel in a double sense: neither a material one, nor in the sense that it was something from their past and their youthful flirtation with radical politics. But the depression is over; they are no longer living in lower East Side tenements, but are moving on up. For these reasons, Israel did not figure in US-Jewish life.

Just before the 1967 war, Elie Wiesel - the preposterous Israel apologist, who has just passed away - was asked what he thought about the fact that American Jews appeared to be becoming very secular and were losing connection with their Jewish identity; and how he thought that it would be possible to reach American-Jewish youth. He replied: "The Jewishness of Jewish youth can still be reached. But not through Israel. Perhaps through the problems of Jews in Russia, perhaps through questions about the holocaust, but not through Israel."

Israel was a dead letter for American Jews. I do not recall a single conversation about Israel: I remember discussing the civil rights movement, the war in Vietnam and so on. But I do not recall a single conversation about Israel. We were America! The most powerful country on earth! And we were going to take it over! Who wanted to talk about some country in the middle of the desert?

So how do Israel and the holocaust intersect? I think that the key turning point is the June 1967 war, because after this war Israel became the religion of American Jews. So what happened? And how is it connected to the Nazi holocaust?

Nasser and Israel

In 1967, Israel inflicts a major defeat on one of the US's major adversaries on the world scene. The Middle East contains the most precious resource for the industrialised world. The US was controlling the region, except for the phenomenon of what came to be called radical Arab nationalism. This basically meant this weird idea, which had seized the distorted imagination of the Arab people, that the resources beneath their feet belonged to them! (There was obviously some sort of mass hysteria involved...)

The figure who embodied this phenomenon was Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt. He was the galvanising force of this movement. Originally, the US tried to buy him off, making all sorts of overtures, including promising to finance the Aswan dam. Nasser proved not amenable to those overtures, to the extent that they had to attempt to constrain his ability to foment radical insurgencies in other parts of the Middle East. Nasser's main antagonist

was the Saudi regime and he played a very much similar role to that of Castro in the 1960s, but with much more serious consequences, because in Latin America there was no resource at stake of the same magnitude as in the Middle East.

Nasser was unwilling to tie his hands behind his back, when it came to spreading the notion of pan-Arabism, so by the time of the Kennedy administration the US gave up on any hope of weaning him away from his 'radical' ideas. Following that failure, the aim was to get rid of him. In 1956, the French, the British and Israel tried to dispose of Nasser. The Brits allegedly did so because he nationalised the Suez canal, but really they tried to do so because he was fomenting discord on British turf in the Middle East.

The French had a different reason. At the time, they were convinced that the insurgency in Algeria was being orchestrated and coordinated in Egypt. This was not true. Israel became involved due to its hatred of the Arabs and the hope that, were it to get rid of Nasser, then it could get its slaves back. The US opposed what was called back then the tripartite invasion of Egypt. However, the US president of the time, Dwight Eisenhower, and secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, opposed it only because of the timing: they were convinced that Nasser was too popular and so the forces that wanted to overthrow him had to bide their time. And, as it came to pass, it was not the US, the British or the French who took out Nasser, but the Israelis.

Through a concatenation of events which I think are poorly understood to this day, I think that the case for Egypt was infinitely stronger than Israel's in 1967. The two basic facts about 1967 are that Nasser had no intention to attack, and that it was understood by everybody across the board that if he attacked - and even if he attacked in concert with the neighbouring Arab states - then, as Lyndon B Johnson told an Israeli representative visiting the US at the time, "You will whip the hell out of them". This assessment was based on various information from a host of intelligence agencies at the time, and this is indeed exactly what happened.

It is known as the Six-Day War, but in fact it was all over in a couple of minutes, once the Israelis had knocked out the Egyptian air force. The only reason it lasted longer is because Israel wanted to take more territory: after taking Gaza immediately, it then proceeded to seize the West Bank and the Golan Heights. If it were simply a matter of defeating Nasser, then it was over in the blink of an eye.

So Israel had done the deed. It had accomplished a significant victory and had removed the 15-year threat posed by radical Arab nationalism. This secular movement was now finished and came to be replaced by radical Islamic movements. And now Israel became the US's strategic ally in the Middle East.

This had a number of consequences. American Jewry no longer had to fear identifying with Israel, because it no longer posed a problem of dual loyalty: Israel now connoted super-loyalty to the US, because Israel had defeated the US's main rival in the region. So now, if you were Jewish, you were proud to identify with Israel, because it was waging - and winning - American wars.

Remember, this was during the time of the Vietnam war, when the US was being humiliated by those diminutive Vietnamese, who were humbling the most powerful army in the world. And then along comes Israel, with general Moshe Dayan, who was seen as mainly responsible for the swift military victory. It is worth reading Isaac Deutscher's last interview with *New Left Review* on Israel. Deutscher had an extremely sharp political eye, and describes wonderfully how now there suddenly emerges a Jew as the most

revered general in the western world! Very strange, because the image of Jews was either that they went like sheep to the slaughter or some version of Woody Allen: bookish, nerdy 'losers', to use a term deployed in the great battle for American masculinity. And here was Moshe Dayan, sporting an eye patch and seducing women, left, right and centre. For a Jew, it was the greatest thing since sliced bread!

And there was no longer a conflict of interest for the American Jews. Dayan was being called in as an advisor on how to defeat the Vietnamese. This heroism was stamped with the Israeli brand, so that now it was not only safe to be pro-Israel: it was a bonus for Jews. There is a kind of irony involved here. Zionism began with the idea that they can never assimilate into western/European societies: Jews would never be accepted, because fundamentally there was a kind of physical repulsion that Gentiles felt for Jews. This was why we needed to found our own state. The irony was that the product of Zionism was Israel and, after 1967, this country actually facilitated American-Jewish assimilation. We now became real Americans, because we Jews were soldiers and fighters defending US interests.

When the Jewish survivors of the Nazi holocaust went over to Israel after the war and settled on the kibbutzim, they were given the nickname, 'soap'. The reason for this was based on two widely-believed falsehoods: that the Nazis made lampshades from the skin of Jews and soap from their fat. And so the Israelis called the Jewish survivors 'soap' in order to humiliate and degrade them and portray them as weaklings. One of the reasons why the Israelis hated Raul Hilberg was that he claimed that it was true that there was no Jewish resistance to the holocaust: there was an element of heroism to the Warsaw ghetto uprising, but resistance? The Red Army could barely defeat the Nazi army, and now people are claiming that ghettoised Jews, who had been starved for years, are going to defeat the German army?

All of this was a myth created by the Israelis to enforce their martial values. There was a period when the Israelis were fighters, but now - and I have no problem saying this - they are the most cowardly army on earth. There is nothing as cowardly as the Israeli army. Who do they fight? When they were in Lebanon in 2006, they were terrified of engaging in hand-to-hand combat with the Hezbollah fighters. I have met some of these fighters ... the Israelis were right to be terrified! These giants of men simply could not wait to fight the Israelis, as you can imagine, because they had been under occupation from 1978 to 2000. But the 'heroism' of the Israeli army mainly extends to their involvement in Gaza ...

'Anti-Semitism'

So where does the holocaust fit into this? Two things happened in 1967. Israel achieved what appeared to be a huge military victory, but it also entered into an occupation, and the international community was not prepared to sanction the occupation: in the United Nations there was a prolonged debate in 1947 about how to resolve this conflict: the longest-standing one in the history of the UN. The UN played the principal role in the first stage, which was the partition resolution, and the eventual creation of the state of Israel.

Now, after the 1967 war, we were into round two. And the international community, as embodied in the UN, was determined to resolve the conflict, and there ensued a high-quality debate over the issue, in which two major blocs emerged: the Latin-American bloc and the Afro-Asian bloc. The latter, which was pro-Soviet, argued that it was inadmissible for a country to acquire territory by war, as Israel had done. Thus, according to international law, the Israelis should

withdraw. UN resolution 242 thus begins with the phrase, "Emphasising the impermissibility of the acquisition of territory by war ...". So the position of this bloc, with the Soviet Union behind it, was that there has to be an unconditional and immediate Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories.

The Latin-American bloc - and behind it the US, albeit not in a dictating role - was of the view that there had to be a *quid pro quo*. The US agreed to Israeli withdrawal, but this had to be conditional on the Arab states accepting Israel's existence - namely as a member of the UN. According to law 2 of the UN charter, states are allowed to live in peace with their neighbours, and therefore Israel can no longer be the object of belligerency on the part of the Arab states. This view came to be encapsulated in the formula of 'land for peace'.

As it happened, the Latin-American position won out at the UN. This did not mean that Israel could retain the territories it had acquired, but it did mean that the acquisition was conditional on the renunciation of belligerency by the Arab states. To cut a long story short, Israel simply had no intention of withdrawing; it did not care whether the Arab states recognised it or not. It claimed that - just as every other country had acquired its borders through war or through wars - we too will have our borders based on the territories we won.

In many ways, the international community felt that it had been duped, because it had deferred to the Israeli demand that it would not have to withdraw unless the Arab states recognised it. But it quickly became clear that Israel would not withdraw, even if the Arabs recognised its existence as a state. Israel, which had accumulated a tremendous amount of good will from the international community, was extremely lucky in this regard. The cold war had already begun in 1947, but by one of those great flukes of history, from which the Zionist movement benefitted, the Soviet Union and the US - despite being at loggerheads over pretty much everything - both voted for the partition resolution to create the state of Israel. Indeed, by far the most eloquent speech given at the UN on the occasion of Israel's founding in 1947 was given by Vyacheslav Michailovich Molotov, Soviet foreign minister at the time. It talks of the suffering of the Jewish people and how they deserve a state. This is perhaps one of the few issues where the Soviets and the US were on the same side during the entire cold war.

But, after 1967 and its refusal to withdraw from the territories, Israel was alienating the international community and now started to invoke the holocaust: one claim in particular, which became the mantra of the Nazi holocaust, was that the Nazi holocaust was unique (or what came to be known in the popular literature as the 'uniqueness doctrine'). This basically said that never before in the history of humanity has a crime been committed of the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the Nazi holocaust. It belonged to a category all of its own.

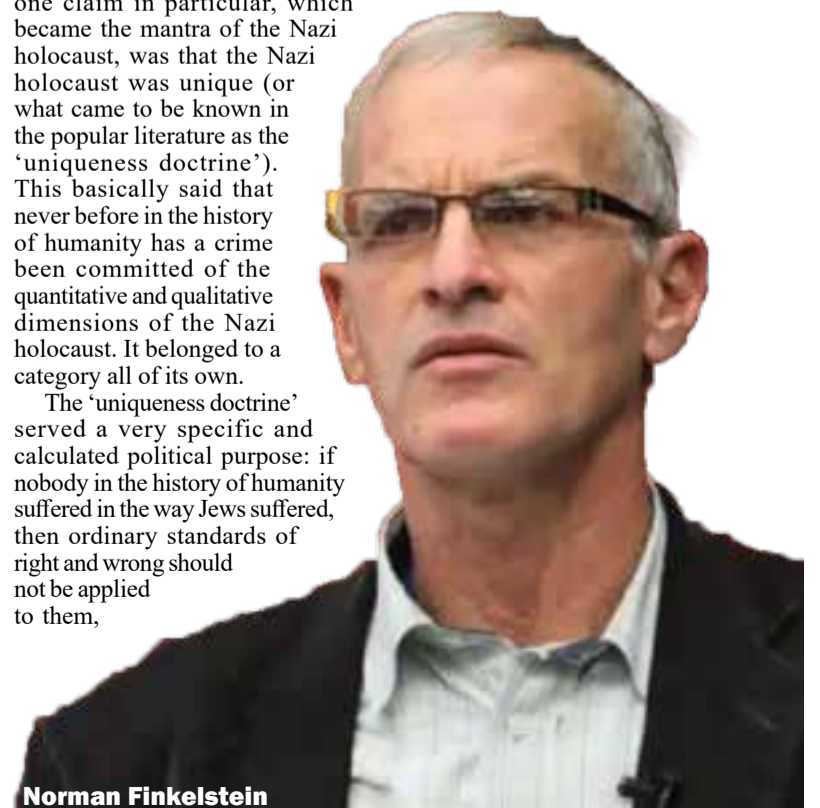
The 'uniqueness doctrine' served a very specific and calculated political purpose: if nobody in the history of humanity suffered in the way Jews suffered, then ordinary standards of right and wrong should not be applied to them,

because such norms are designed for ordinary circumstances and situations. But the Jewish situation is *not* ordinary, and therefore, you cannot hold 'us' - meaning Jews in general and Israelis in particular - to these ordinary standards. So, whenever Israel moved to commit another atrocity and gross violation of international law, the standard refrain became, 'Remember the holocaust!' And so the Nazi holocaust became an ideological weapon to delegitimise criticism of Israel.

The second aspect of this was that the Nazi holocaust was the climax of a millennial, irrational Gentile hatred of Jews. The Nazi holocaust was the mere culmination of anti-Semitism. So if the holocaust was irrational, anti-Semitism must be irrational. If anti-Semitism means dislike of Jews, then this must also be irrational - which means that anybody who criticises Israel must be doing so for irrational reasons. Thus any criticism of Israel is based on their hatred of us. As such, all of the criticism of Israel has nothing to do with the actions of the Israeli state: they hate us; they have always hated us and that is the real cause of the criticism of Israel. This leads to the ubiquitous claim that lurking behind any criticism of Israel - whether subtly or blatantly - is anti-Semitism.

This became a very convenient explanation of the holocaust and the thinking behind it - and an excuse for Israeli conduct: we are not doing anything wrong; it's just that they hate Jews! The most vivid elucidation of that idea, which was quite popular in the 1990s, was by the semi-maniac, Daniel Jonah Goldhagen (*Hitler's willing executioners*), whose main thesis was that all Germans wanted to exterminate the Jews, Hitler came along and gave them the green light to do so, and they did. In Goldhagen's book, the Germans were really just a stand-in for the Gentiles and their desire to exterminate the Jews. Thus the Nazi holocaust became a weapon to delegitimise criticism of Israel.

Israel always had a holocaust industry - a little cottage industry by the name of Yad Vashem, its holocaust museum. It hardly had any impact and hardly anything was written about it. But now the huge resources and power of American Jewry - which is very substantial in key sections of public opinion, such as publishing, journals and Hollywood - were mobilised in order to turn it from a cottage industry in Israel into a global industry. I am not a huge fan of movies, but recently friends of mine got me onto Netflix. Go through the movies there: every third one is on the holocaust. Comedies: holocaust! Action: holocaust! Classics: holocaust! It's crazy! ●



Norman Finkelstein

SOUTH AFRICA

Lock up the thugs

Once more, the SACP finds itself on the wrong side of the class divide, writes Peter Manson

Again protests are sweeping South Africa's universities. Students are waging a militant campaign against the African National Congress's announcement of an above-inflation rise in tuition fees.

Following fierce clashes some dozen universities have been forced to close. Police have attacked student protestors using batons and rubber bullets, while in revenge buildings and vehicles have been set alight.

After last year's moratorium forced on the ANC, when fees were held at the 2014 level, the department for higher education has come back with a hike, insisting on an eight percent rise in fees. As the students point out, fees are already unaffordable for the majority - and certainly an impossibility for the children of the unemployed and shack-dwellers. By European standards last year's annual fees - ranging from R30,940 (£1,736) to R47,740 (£2,678) - seem rather modest. But for most South Africans such sums represent a fortune.

The protests have been led by the Fees Must Fall group - a name that has caused some misunderstanding, since the demand is not for a *reduction*, but for *free* tertiary education. In other words, fees must "fall" in the sense that they should be abolished. In response, the ANC states that things are just too tight - and the abolition of fees is certainly out of the question.

And in charge is the minister for higher education - a certain Blade

Nzimande, who just happens to be general secretary of the South African Communist Party! Desperately trying to face both ways, Nzimande has expressed "sympathy" for struggling students, and promised a commission of inquiry into the "feasibility of free education". However, he insisted: "Those throwing stones and burning libraries are nothing more than criminals. Let the rest of the students also take a firm stand and say, 'No, not in our name!'" The message should be: "Do not destroy our universities; transform them and defend our democratic heritage".

As for the protestors, whom Nzimande claimed were led by the "ultra-left" and the left-populist Economic Freedom Fighters, "We also welcome the stance being taken by our magistrates to lock up suspected thugs for seven days, until they appear in court."

Nzimande's September 23 speech at the commemoration event for one of his antecedents - Moses Mabhida, the SACP general secretary from 1978 to 1986 - understandably focused on the current unrest. But not before he reminded the audience that, if we want to achieve socialism, what is now called for is a "second, radical phase" of the "national democratic revolution" (NDR).

Two enemies

Interestingly, Nzimande identified two class enemies which are apparently completely separate entities: the "parasitic bourgeoisie" and "monopoly capital". And there is no doubt

as to which of the two is the primary opponent at this time: the "looters" of the "parasitic bourgeoisie", who are "building an empire of oligarchies by means of looting our state-owned enterprises through contracts and tenders". If they succeed, they are "going to destroy the strategic capacity to face off with monopoly capital".

So first we need to deal "a decisive blow to the parasitic bourgeoisie, the most dangerous class to the unity of our movement, but also to our revolution internally". In fact, "There will be no second, radical phase of our democratic transition, should the corporate capturers and the parasitic bourgeoisie win the day." In fact the SACP openly states that the NDR is led by a cross-class alliance that *includes* the representatives of capital - it seriously wants us to believe that, having helped defeat the corrupt "looters", "monopoly capital" will continue to cooperate in the "second, radical phase", even though this will eventually open the way for its own demise.

But, in the meantime, what about the workers - not to mention the students? According to Nzimande,

The call for free higher education for all is not inherently a revolutionary call - it could as well be a reactionary stance that is inconsiderate of the objective conditions, in particular to social relations of class inequality that we are yet to and must eliminate. What must happen after we have radically reduced or eradicated class inequality must not be confused for what must happen towards

successfully realising the goal.

So the students will just have to pay up - although, just as he did last year in response to the protests, Nzimande has offered a substantial concession. He announced that the eight percent increase in fees would not apply to families with an annual income of less than R600,000 (£34,200) - in other words, "more than 70% of undergraduate students in our universities".

This was not quite the position taken by another senior SACP figure: Gwede Mantashe, the former SACP national chair, who is now secretary general of the ANC. Mantashe's reaction to the turmoil in the universities was: "I'm not the minister of education. Because if I was, my first reaction would be to close them for six months." Incredibly Mantashe is still a member of the SACP central committee.

In fact, the SACP is now positioning itself well to the right of other ANC components. The ANC Youth League, for instance, issued a statement on September 20 which demanded another moratorium on all university fees "pending the outcome of the presidential commission on free education". Two days later, the Young Communist League replied, claiming that the ANCYL statement was marked by "hypocrisy" and "lies". It added: "It can't be that we are expected as the working class to fund education for the rich." Fees must *not* fall!

Meanwhile, there is increasing tension between the SACP and the organisation that it once completely dominated: the

Congress of South African Trade Unions. Cosatu general secretary Bheki Ntshahintshali had criticised calls within the SACP for the party, as a response to the corruption at the very top of the ANC, to consider contesting the 2019 general election under its own name (up to now, SACP members have always stood as ANC candidates).

The two organisations met in a "two-day bilateral" last week and issued a statement afterwards, which reassured its supporters that "Our immediate tasks include strengthening our organisations, salvaging the African National Congress ... , uniting the ANC-led alliance [to] ensure that it rigorously defines the basic content and strategic tasks of the second, radical phase of our democratic transition." But no mention was made in the subsequent joint statement of the previous public disagreement.

What, for example, does the SACP think of Cosatu's call for a "one-day national strike" on October 7 as part of "this year's International Decent Work Day"? This general strike, however token, will, among other things, be "in defence of our jobs and against retrenchments", to "protect our collective bargaining agreements", for "compliance with occupational health and safety standards in all workplaces" and - last, but not least - to "demand the implementation of free education"!

No doubt this action has been called as a counter to the influence of a rival trade union federation that is due to be launched next year. The country's largest union, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, was expelled from Cosatu in 2014 for having the audacity to break with the ANC and SACP, and has now gathered around it some three dozen unions, including several current Cosatu affiliates.

The crisis enveloping the ANC-SACP-Cosatu 'triple alliance' continues to deepen ●

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Student anger

NHS

Danger of disillusionment

Junior doctors have been left in the lurch, writes **Richard Galen**

Many junior doctors were left in shock on September 24 after their union, the British Medical Association, called off an impending series of five-day strikes, intended to be the next step in escalation against imposition of a new “unsafe and unfair” contract by health secretary Jeremy Hunt. Several immediately took to social media to vent their frustration, having heard the news indirectly rather than from their own union.

The decision came from an all-day meeting of the union’s junior doctors committee (JDC) - the first held by the newly elected leadership team, including its new chair, the “militant” (as termed by the red tops) Ellen McCourt. Until now she had been the interim leader following the resignation of Dr Johann Malawana in the wake of the rejection by BMA members of the amended contract negotiated by the leadership.

This all follows the recent cancellation of the first planned strike, originally meant to go ahead in the week beginning September 12. Ostensibly this was done due to patient safety concerns, with the union’s late decision only giving hospitals two weeks to prepare; and pressure from professional bodies, including the General Medical Council, the public body which controls the register of doctors, to postpone or cancel the industrial action due to the impact on patients.

Of course, while it is true that patients do indeed suffer inconvenience and delay when doctors go on strike, that impact was greatly exaggerated in one sense - available scientific research shows no discernible increase in death rates, especially as our action has never affected emergency cover. Concerns about public support also appear unfounded, as, although it had dropped since previous polls in the summer, a narrow majority remained in favour of industrial action, with only 48% voicing overt opposition to the planned strikes.

A much more pertinent reason may be the feedback received following the BMA-led referendum in July, aimed at gauging members’ opinions on further action in opposition to the new contract. Although what exactly was discussed in the JDC meeting has not been revealed by the union, following the decision, the South Thames regional JDC released the results of its own survey of members. This showed 53% stating that they would *not* be taking part in the next planned strike, with 28% of them citing feeling that this was too long a duration, and a further quarter of respondents voicing concerns about financial difficulties and meeting training requirements. There was a further suggestion in the report that this was among the highest levels of regional support for the planned action.

This is in stark contrast to the levels of support seen with the previous strikes and the 98% ballot in favour of industrial action last year. There are a number of important factors to note, however, including the fact that almost 70% of those same respondents were in favour of shorter-duration strikes.

The low response rate was also an issue, with only around 22% participating in the released survey. This is particularly pertinent, as some surveys were sent with an ironic indication that a lack of response would be taken as unwillingness to take part in further strikes. Finally, with the lack of details regarding the JDC discussions, it is impossible to say whether these trends were representative of the membership as a whole, especially since many members stated that they had not actually received their own survey to complete.



In search of a viable strategy

All of this raises significant questions about the course of action chosen by the BMA leadership, when there was a period of almost two months after the rejection of the negotiated contract by members in which no real announcements were made regarding future plans. With the abandonment of what many members regard as a hastily put together and poorly thought out programme of strike action, and the lack of information available about how and why the JDC made its decisions, backlash against the union has been evident across junior doctor forums - “spineless” and “omnishambles” being among the terms aimed at the union’s leaders.

The final straw for many was the announcement on September 27 that, following the abandonment of the strikes, the BMA would be inviting Hunt to an “open symposium” to discuss issues regarding the current standards of care in the NHS. This is a man who has repeatedly refused to openly discuss his “seven-day NHS” plans with junior doctors despite multiple invitations - the announcement was immediately ridiculed on social media, and swiftly followed by many members stating that they would be cancelling their subscription to the BMA - some even posting pictures of their direct debit cancellations.

Disillusioned by the JDC and their handling of the dispute, many medics have voiced opinions in favour of joining other public-sector unions to continue the fight, including the Medical Practitioners Union (part of Unite), which has stated its opposition to the strike cancellation, and had planned to provide £35-a-day strike pay for its members. The argument in favour of Unite is that it has greater expertise in protecting the general interests of public-sector workers, and would help to facilitate coordinated action with other healthworkers.

Other junior doctors had been pinning their remaining hopes on an ongoing legal challenge to the imposition of the contract by the group, Justice for Health, which is independent of the BMA, whose case was heard at the Royal Courts of Justice. However, on September 28 came the announcement that the court had rejected the move to have the new contract overturned. The judge was not persuaded that Hunt had acted

outside his powers as secretary of state - although, interestingly, he ruled that Hunt had no right to impose it on local trusts.

So what happens next? In particular, where does all this leave trainees in obstetrics and gynaecology, for whom the new contract imposition is scheduled for October 5, the earliest of the planned implementation dates? They now seem to have very few avenues left to fight it. Some have proposed that we agree to ignore the new contract and continue working to the old rotas instead, but this would require an unlikely level of organisation and solidarity among juniors, given the uncertainty it would create in future salary levels and in meeting new training requirements.

It would also be severely hampered by the many existing ‘rota gaps’ - where there are simply not enough junior doctors employed to fully cover departments at the times required - a massive problem in itself that the new contract does nothing to attempt to remedy. The threat of mass resignation

- a further suggested ‘strategy’ - would suffer similar problems, to say the least.

Ultimately, the decision to cancel the forthcoming strikes is a signal to the government that junior doctors can be cowed into submission if put under enough pressure. It also paves the way for further renegotiation of other healthworkers’ contracts, with the imposition of similarly unsatisfactory terms and conditions, including increased unsocial hours for poor remuneration. Consultant doctors are next in line, with nurses, radiologists, physiotherapists and others soon to follow, as laid out in the department of health’s ‘Agenda for Change’ plans.

A move towards solidarity with other public-sector workers is encouraging, but firm plans are needed to take the campaign forward. Unfortunately this is looking increasingly unlikely to come from the BMA. For the sake of all health sector employees, as well as for the future of the NHS, we cannot allow the fight to die with this decision ●

Fighting fund

Needed in two days

This week saw three large donations, which helped take our fighting fund nearer our £1,750 target for September. But there are only two days left, so we could really do with some more of the same!

The donations in question consist of PM’s standing order for £100, the £50 bank transfer from RK and the £75 cheque from EW. The last-named comrade writes: “You are the only serious publication when it comes to a genuine working class politics outlook”, but, to be honest, I think that might be overdoing things - although we’ll accept the praise (and the cash!).

There were other standing orders amounting to £70, plus two PayPal gifts for £5 from regular donors JW and PM - they were among the 2,781 who read the *Weekly Worker* online last week.

Finally there was the £24 handed over in cash by London comrades, which took the money raised since last week to £327 and the total for September to £1,519.

Which means we have just two days to close the £231 gap between that sum and the £1,750 we need. That in turn means that comrades need to act speedily if you’re to see us over the line. Please click on the PayPal button on our website or - better still, since it avoids any fee or commission - make a bank transfer (sort code: 30-99-64; account number: 00744310).

We need your help - quick! ●

Robbie Rix

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

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

The left must
put away the
olive branches

Victory and retreat

Despite the talk about 'wiping the slate clean', Jim Grant of Labour Party Marxists expects the war to continue

So the inevitable came to pass: Jeremy Corbyn is re-elected leader of the Labour Party. By the last week of the campaign, even Owen Smith was talking about it basically in the past tense; he had been beaten, fair and square - or, rather, beaten *despite* the most strenuous efforts among his supporters and compromised elements of the party apparatus to rig the game in his favour.

It is, to be sure, the end of something - possibly the most ham-fisted attempt at a political defenestration in modern political history. There are recent contenders, of course - one thinks of Matthew Oakeshott's catastrophic coup attempt against Nick Clegg towards the end of the last parliament, which succeeded only in speeding his exit from the yellow benches (and nearly in sacrificing his friend, Vince Cable). That coup, however, was at least launched and botched within a week; then it was over, and Oakeshott got on with his life (Wikipedia tells us he was later spotted in a red rosette on some campaign trail or other).

Three months, now, have passed since the referendum result deployed as the plotters' shabby pretext; two weeks less than that since it became clear that Corbyn would not voluntarily resign. At the end of all that, with every dirty trick in the book deployed, smears cast around like machine-gun fire, what have they to show for it? That's right - a *weaker* position *vis-à-vis* the Corbynites. Worse: there has *never* been a moment during the contest proper when a crushing victory for Corbyn looked less than inevitable. The right has essentially spent the last month and a half or more parading its impotence and moral turpitude before the nation.

This is hardly lost on those queuing up to conduct the autopsy of the Labour right's dead-duck coup - we were amused to find some analysis from William Hague in *The Daily Telegraph*, who believed that the coup "was launched too soon. In the Conservative Party, where the overthrow of leaders is an art form nurtured and treasured over two centuries, we would never have made this error" (September 27).

Burying the hatchet

For Hague, then, the problem is partly a matter of training: Labour rightwingers are essentially lightweights. When they have a whole apparatus behind them to bludgeon them through a selection meeting, they're golden; but, left to their own devices with a backstabbing to organise, they come up spectacularly short. So we end up almost back to square one: a Labour conference - of (essentially) *two* Labour Parties - tiring rapidly of sharing the same body.

For now, of course, the talk is for the cameras, and is of peace. Before the formal announcement of his victory, Corbyn told the BBC's awful Laura Kuenssberg that it was time to "wipe the slate clean and move on", and such has been the tone from his quarter ever since. So, for now, it is among the more sensible rightwingers - after

all, what else can they do, having been whipped like a red-headed mule for the second time in a year? Stephen Kinnock, Sadiq Khan and others are on message (barely): we need to concentrate on beating the Tories in the next election! Those who made the most unambiguously Braveheartish war-cries over the summer (Alan Johnson, say) are mostly choosing circumspection.

There is the exception of Peter Mandelson, who now welcomes an early election - and presumably a Labour defeat - "so we can deal with the awful situation in the Labour Party earlier than 2020" (*The Times* September 27). Mandelson is likely a better representative of the actual underlying temper of the right, but most of them have their precious careers to consider. So we have before us the rather ridiculous dance of both the leadership and the right making peace offerings that, upon closer examination, are merely, as the saying goes, war by other means.

Stephen Kinnock, for one, believes that Labour can win the next election - provided, of course, that the parliamentary party is granted the right to elect the shadow cabinet. That has been the constant refrain. It is only fair, apparently, to grant all power to the losing side in a leadership election, provided the right is the losing side, otherwise the leadership (as Tony Blair's notoriously intolerant operation demonstrated) shall decide absolutely everything. Clear? I hope so.

The leadership, of course, is perfectly happy to discuss the composition of the shadow cabinet, but not in those terms. The idea has been floated of a tripartite structure - a third elected by the PLP, a third by ordinary members, and a third chosen by the leader. It has all the appearance of a compromise, but, of course, an unacceptable compromise is no compromise at all, and the idea amounts - under current conditions - to a two-thirds majority for Corbyn. Moreover: who gets to choose who is shadow home secretary, and who gets the much coveted mental health portfolio?

The two sides are deadlocked on this point, as I write; but a big old pile of rule changes have gone through conference already, including - it is fair enough to say - something for each side. For the left, there is the 'clarification' that an incumbent leader is automatically on the ballot in the case of a challenge; for the right, there is the addition of representatives of the Scottish and



Amidst left celebrations the right organises

Welsh Labour leaders to the national executive committee, which for the time being gives the balance of power on that body to the right. That, to put it mildly, is unfortunate - we direly need an NEC that will take on those parts of the Labour apparatus that are plainly the factional property of the right (first and foremost, the Orwellian compliance unit). It would be good if our Celtic comrades could find the time to redress the balance ...

For a demonstration of the ridiculous logic of the pseudo-truce, we need look no further than the problem of Trident, as it has farcically surfaced at conference.

The shadow defence minister - for the time being - is Clive Lewis, who is (necessarily, given the past few weeks) close to the leadership. He has been rather left in the lurch, however: for a planned announcement that Labour would not abandon its support (or non-opposition) to Trident renewal was apparently pulled at the last minute from his speech, and then (of course) readmitted to the formal policy agenda after the whole thing was inevitably leaked to the press amid dark murmurings about the Stalinist games of press officer Seumas Milne. We rather suspect that things have been blown out of all proportion, so far as the competence issue goes (a lot of people are treading *very carefully* at the moment, with the concomitant last-minute changes of heart), but the political issue bears a little more examination.

At first glance, it seems like a wholesale retreat. Indeed, from our point of view, it *is* scandalous, and the

symbolic value of the Trident issue makes the whole thing worse. But look at what is actually being offered here - basically, the redefinition of nuclear weaponry as a matter of 'conscience', on which the party shall not impose its official view. That formal position was not challenged at this conference, true. Yet Corbyn and McDonnell (and - who knows? - Clive Lewis) have reserved for themselves the right to speak like the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament members they are. This is a sell-out, but it is a sell-out that has already been made - over Syria last year, for example, when a licence to betray was granted to Hillary Benn and 'Saint' Jo Cox. Will the right be satisfied with a formal position in favour of Trident renewal, when the leadership of the party continues to vocally oppose it? We doubt it.

Split unlikely

So, with neither side giving in *enough* to resolve matters - yet - we must ask, again, what path forward for the vanquished?

Hague offers some advice, which is not uninteresting. First of all, the right must get organised, forming "a party within a party". So far, so typical. Hague has slightly higher sights, however:

... they need leaders and a philosophy. No political movement can succeed without those two attributes ... Such leaders need to write the books, pen the pamphlets and make the big speeches that show there is some point in being a moderate, centre-left leader. They need to say what they would do about combining the benefits of globalisation with looking after the

people who can miss out on its riches.

The plan should be to oust Corbyn in 2018, when "he will be tired", and if that fails then,

yes, they should be prepared to launch a new political party. Haunted by the failure of the SDP in the 1980s, this is anathema to them. But this is 30 years on, and voters are more flexible about change than they were then, just as the position inside Labour is even worse.

We draw attention to Hague's comments not because they are exceptional; indeed, they must touch on the dilemma for many Labour rightists. Where *is* the 'vision thing', brothers and sisters? What are you all *for*, besides feathering your own nests and restricting any and all political horizons to what is acceptable to a rampant City?

In truth, it might actually be in our interests for the right to follow Hague's advice. A right that was organised in a "party within a party" - anti-democrat-speak for a *faction* - would at least give its opponents the advantage, as we have had with Progress over the years, of being able to point and say, 'Look, *there* the bastards are.' A right with some sort of *theory* and substance to it might provoke the left into upping its intellectual game - or at least would strengthen the hand of those of us who think it must anyway. A contest over ideas is preferable, in general, to a contest over fatuous soundbites and slivers of bureaucratic territory. And a split of the right - a *split!* Oh happy day ...

The latter, alas, will not happen (certainly, not on a large enough scale to make much difference to the maths): for it would be a walk into oblivion for any who dared. As Hague notes, the Social Democratic Party experience is pertinent for most of the would-be splitters, but at least the SDP could be absorbed into a then resurgent Liberal Party. "Voters are more flexible about change," he blithely reassures potential splitters; one thing no more 'flexible' than it was in the mid-1980s, however, is the *electoral system*, thanks in some part to Hague himself. He was part of a Tory front bench that fought tooth and nail against even the modest change of an alternative vote system in 2011 (at a time, admittedly, when an electoral system that would tend to produce more Liberal Democrat MPs was a hard sell to the electorate).

No, comrades: this one is set to run and run ●

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