

Mass support for Jeremy Corbyn rattles the right wing



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Socialist Voice

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INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST LEAGUE | INTERNATIONAL WORKERS LEAGUE - FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

£1

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Socialist Voice

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Join the International Socialist League!

1. Because the International Socialist League aims to build a party that represents the interests of workers and youth.

None of the main parties represent the interests of workers and the youth. Today the Tory government is unleashing one of the heaviest attacks on workers' rights in the post-war period. The ISL and our International, the International Workers League, knows the attack has to be met with strong resistance organised from below and genuine militant trade unionism united with community struggles.

2. Because capitalism has nothing to offer humanity: only crises, wars, poverty, racism, oppression and environmental destruction. Cameron's policies (and Labour's) are meant to solve the economic crisis in favour of industrialists and bankers. They are making us pay for their crisis.

The biggest fear for the rich, the industrialists and the bankers, is a loss of profits. That's why they have to criminalise our struggle and divide us Black against White, unemployed against employed, old against youth.

Yet a different social system, based on a planned economy and on the needs of the vast majority of humanity would eliminate hunger and unemployment internationally.

3. Because only the workers can build a different world, based on a different economy, able to guarantee everyone a decent life. Today there

are only two roads: either capitalism which will drag humanity towards destruction, or workers take in their hands the direction of the economy.

That's why it is necessary and urgent that workers organize themselves for a program of class independence from the rulers and its governments.

4. The perspective of class independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie and its governments requires the construction of another left, revolutionary, fighting socialist internationalist party. This is the aim of the ISL. It fights for unity of action in the struggle with workers, youth and other left forces.

A revolutionary party of workers is needed urgently. Patient work of construction, discussion, is required but it must be started now, we cannot wait passively.

5 Because our internationalism fights capitalism and imperialism. Which means fighting fascism, racism, homophobia and every type of oppression, because these ideological or physical attacks are meant to divide us and prevent the struggle against austerity.

6 An international revolutionary party is needed, as it is for example in Greece. No type of reformist party can led the struggle for workers control to end the dictates of the EU or the IMF. A proletarian International and a revolutionary party are needed for that!



We need your help with our financial campaign, cheques payable to ISL send to address above



LIFE OF THE IWL

Reform or revolution

Because of the capitalist crisis and the crisis of leadership in Europe the summer Marxist schools of the IWL in Italy, Portugal and Spain will be discussing reform or revolution. Our Italian, Party of Communist Alternative (PdAC) is organising two days of political discussion on 5 and 6 September.

Topics to be discussed will include:

- The mass struggle in Europe and the role of revolutionaries.
- The Syriza government and Communists.
- The EU and the revolutionary program: against the debt, austerity and the troika.
- The role of women in the struggles.

Jeremy Corbyn reflects anti-austerity feeling

But the fight against austerity must also fight Labour

The Labour party failed again to win the general election. The scale of the defeat was a shock for most people and importantly, it was a rebuttal of pro-austerity and anti-working class policies of the Labour Party.

Labour right wingers and most media continue to argue that fighting against austerity means becoming unelectable. The fact that Labour have been defeated twice is an answer to all those who are attacking Jeremy Corbyn. The election did not show mass support for austerity, only 24.4 percent of the total electorate voted Tory.

The Labour Party provoked massive discontent in Scotland because along with the Tories they supported the NO campaign for independence. The Scottish Nationalist Party, that won a land slide in the election, was able to portray itself as fighting for people's rights against austerity.

The prime reason for Labour's loss was its shameful electoral campaign they made against the working class and in particular against the immigrants and the poor.

In some areas there was an increase in voting for the Green Party. As with the Scottish Nationalist Party, the Greens pose as an alternative to austerity, however, in reality both support some cuts and have a capitalist programme.

The real alternative lies not in these smaller parties, but in building a workers' movement on the streets and building a party that is an integral part of the struggles from below, this is the only road to defeat austerity

The defeat of Labour has deepened the crisis of all the unions who support the Labour Party and who continually tie the class struggle to the remnants of Labour.

The biggest trade unions have been paralysing mobilisations against austerity since 2010, by diverting anger and discontent away from strike action. This happened with the strikes against pension reform in November 2011. Furthermore, demands to organise a general strike in 2012 or 2013, were just ignored.

In April 2014, Unite's union leader, Len McCluskey, warned that his union could break its links with Labour if the party lost the 2015 election. However, now the Corbyn campaign provides a breathing



The Labour party is not the answer as Labour councils push through cuts year after year that are now killing people and the right wing dominate the Labour Party machine.

space to rally all support they can, once again, for the Labour Party. In July 2015, McCluskey was under pressure by Unite branches in Scotland that submitted motions to a special conference in July calling for a formal break with the Labour Party. But support for Corbyn carried the day.

Jeremy Corbyn campaign

Due to the growing anti-austerity feeling, unions and Constituent Labour Parties came under great pressure to support Corbyn because he is seen as someone who is opposed to the right-wing and austerity.

The youth play an extremely important role for Corbyn. His support comes from agreement with his policies – re-nationalisation of the railways and utilities; publicly funded NHS; public sector wage increase; the abolition of tuition fees; opposition to the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

But his policies do not include a full programme of nationalisation and do not go as far as calling for nationalisation under workers control.

However the support for Corbyn reflects the mass desire to find an alternative and the deep anger against austerity, which is strongly felt by the youth and working class in Europe.

However, what you want and what you get is not always the same thing.

Corbyn declined to rule out campaigning for a no vote in an EU referendum on the grounds that David Cameron was intent on "trading away workers' rights".

However, just a week later, and under pressure from the pro-EU Labour, group he said, "Labour should set out its own

clear position to influence negotiations, working with our European allies to set out a reform agenda to benefit ordinary Europeans across the continent. We cannot be content with the state of the EU as it stands. But that does not mean walking away, but staying to fight together for a better Europe."

Corbyn has also promised to include all Labour tendencies in his shadow cabinet if he becomes leader, including supporters of privatisation and war. He does not call to drive the right-wing out of the party, but appeases them.

Sowing illusions in Labour

The Socialist Party and Socialist Workers Party are calling for a vote for Corbyn, even though they are outside of the Labour party. But austerity will not be defeated by a Labour left led party, if it wins the next general election.

The failures of the Labour Party and the trade union leadership betrayals have been forgotten by many sections of the left. But as can be seen with the retreats and betrayals by Syriza by their promises in relation to fighting austerity, the EU and imperialism, the path to a socialist working class struggle cannot be carried through by reformist politics.

A Labour Party government will not make any meaningful anti-austerity contributions should they win, no matter who the leader is. Because such a leader will face even greater pressures than Syriza. The USA, IMF and all the world's bankers and self seekers in the City of London would use the power base in London to attack any changes to their privileges.

As Syriza has shown no variant of

Fight benefit sanctions

SOCIALIST VOICE INTERVIEWED THERESA HOWARD, LIVERPOOL

reformism can defeat the combined weight of the national rulers, the EU and the IMF, only the working class with a Marxist revolutionary workers party and International has the possibility of victory.

Feeling for Corbyn is important but has to turn into action in support of strikes such as at the national gallery and rail and the fight against fascism and anti-cuts campaigns. Only a movement opposed to all cuts and austerity can mobilise the millions of youth and people who are now experiencing these harsh realities.

Everyone on the streets accepts that austerity kills poor people and that Labour councils are imposing these cuts. That means mobilising against the Labour party on the streets now and not just the Tories.

Due to the **capitalist** nature of the Labour Party it is an illusion to think a left Labour leader could change any fundamental issue.

Anti-austerity parties such as Left Unity or local groups such as Old Swan Against the Cuts in Liverpool (who came 3rd in Old Swan in the local elections in May with over six per cent) have to build themselves against the Labour Party and that cannot be done by campaigning for Corbyn.

The fight against austerity can only be successful if it is based on removing the stranglehold of the TUC and the Labour Party. Union members will have to base their struggle in the decisions and organisations of the rank file and mass meetings, and unite with communities in struggle.

One of the most important questions today is that Labour is far too deeply linked to the City of London, is subordinated to the establishment, and has capitalist members, Lords and right-wing MPs. Corbyn will not be able to change that.

The rise of anti-austerity movements across Europe, along with the tense political situation in Latin America and the Middle East, and the movement of the Black working class in the USA today, shows that the feeling against austerity, injustice and capitalism is rising across the world. The British ruling class will not escape these international storms.

The central question is the building of a revolutionary party in the working class - to build the ISL builds that fight. We call on the youth and activists to join us.

SV. I understand you were sanctioned twice, what happened?

The Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) said that I had not been looking for work for two weeks. I appealed against their decision by asking for a mandatory re-consideration. They agreed I had been seeking employment in the first week but that I had not done so in the second week.

I appealed against that decision and went to a tribunal. At the appeal their decision was overturned because the DWP could not prove that there were any jobs at that time that I could apply for.

While waiting for my tribunal, I was sanctioned again, this time for three months. But the length of that sanction meant they had assumed I was guilty of the first "offence". That means they make their decision by assuming a claimant is guilty until they are proven innocent.

SV. What happened when you were sanctioned?

My jobseeker's allowance (JSA) was stopped for four weeks over the Christmas period.

If that does happen to someone it is very important that they inform their local Council that they are not working and explain that they have been sanctioned and that that is the reason why JSA is no longer being paid.

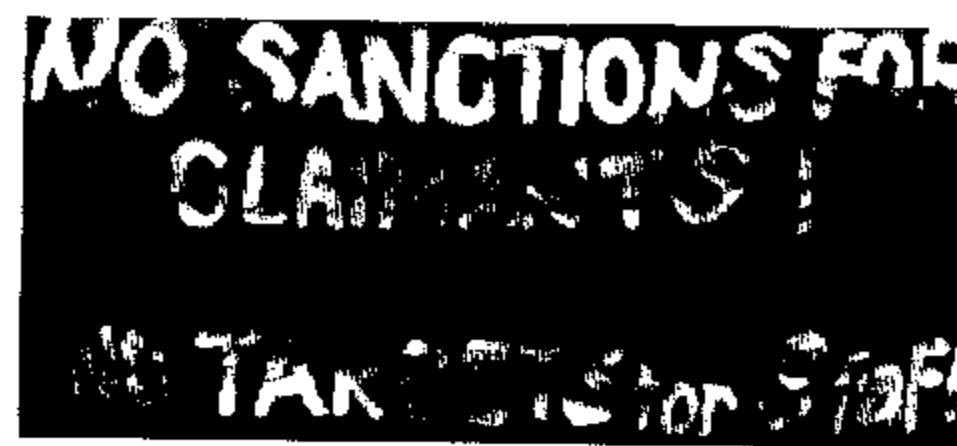
If you do not inform the Council they will assume you are working and they will stop your housing and council tax benefits and you will go deeper into debt.

Some people have been made homeless because they did not inform the council, rent was not paid by the council and the landlord evicted them.

I applied for a hardship payment, which I received. If you win your appeal against the sanction you get your JSA backdated but they also take back any hardship payment that you received.

SV. How would you describe your experience?

It feels like mental torture, it causes a lot of stress to the person and their family and to do it over Christmas makes the stress you are experiencing even greater.



The second sanction I received was in early January, I was sanctioned for the same reason, that is not applying for job vacancies. I rang up the Wolverhampton DWP office, because that is the office that deals with appeals, but they told me they had no information about my case, but my JSA was stopped.

Two years before this I had a bad experience with the DWP. During one interview with a DWP worker I said that I looked for work in the local daily newspaper. She told me not to apply for any jobs in that paper because they are not real jobs.

It appeared to me that this was a provocation. I raised my voice because I was angry and two security guards came over. They asked me to leave, but I realised I had not signed on and if you don't sign on you will not receive any money. I asked them if I could sign on and I was told by the DWP worker to go home for an hour and come back.

If I had not signed that day I would have been sanctioned.

These are some of the things that people on JSA are suffering from.

Every time we have been outside the Job Centre to hand out leaflets on how to appeal and call for an end to sanctions the security staff, who are employed by the private company G4S, or the DWP manager, call the police.

The police take the side of the DWP as they said we had been harassing claimants.

But many claimants wanted our leaflets and of course we never harass claimants.

SV. What should claimants do?

I think people have to fight together against sanctions, because low paid workers, unemployed, and those on casual contracts or zero hour contracts are facing the same threats. Do not accept the decisions of the DWP, fight them, appeal against them.

The unemployed workers should join a campaigning group and help build an unemployed movement.

End union victimisation stop the closures of Skill Centres



SOCIALIST VOICE INTERVIEWS UCU COMMITTEE SECRETARY AND NORTH WEST EQUALITY REP

SV: The chair of Liverpool City College has been suspended. Why? and how are you fighting it?

The Chair of City of Liverpool College, Dr Gary Duke was suspended, because CoLC stated that he had lied on his application form about the reasons for leaving a previous employer Salford University.

Dr Duke had not lied and given that he has worked in the college for 16 months, it seems odd that the college chose this time to get in touch with Salford regarding this.

Dr Duke left the employment of the University in 2009; both UCU CoLC Branch and Regional believe the disciplinary was brought simply because Dr Duke was instrumental in bringing a number of grievances against the college in response to the needs of its members.

The union has taken a proactive response to Dr Duke's suspension and has held a protest meeting outside of the LEX on a Wednesday lunchtime, this was well attended with a number of supporters from inside the college as well as supporters from other areas such as Liverpool University and Old Swan Against the Cuts.

The Union plans to continue these protest until Dr Duke is reinstated in his post and all allegations are withdrawn.

UCU within the branch held a mass meeting where members voted unanimously for strike action in support of Dr Duke and against what we see as

Trade Union victimisation by the college.

SV: The management are trying to close the last remaining 5 skill centres, what services do they provide. Will the communities and students support your fight?

The management plan to close the Community Learning provision which is based in five skill centres around Liverpool: Anfield, Fazakerley, Lee Valley, Parklands (Speke) and Bankfield (Old Swan).

Although ESOL provision is protected the closure of the Skills Centres mean that courses such as foundation math, English and ICT will no longer be provided by the college.

The proposals will restrict the learning opportunities for people in those communities who tend to be adults aiming to gain qualifications to progress into employment or onto further education courses.

People who tend to use the centres include: the employed, unemployed, parents with young children and carers. For a number of these students the Skills Centres offer them their first step back into education.

While the Adult Learning Service will continue to provide some of this provision we believe that the closures mean Liverpool will be left without an essential service which will affect hundreds of potential students in those areas.

We are hoping that by campaigning in

those areas we will gain support of local people as well as MPs and Councillors who will be able to apply pressure to the college to prevent these from going through. This is not just a case of preventing job cuts within the college but of preventing the closure of those services within the community.

SV: Does the UCU see this as part of the fight against government and management austerity?

The argument put forward by the College was that these cuts are as a result of a 27.9 per cent reduction in the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) budget. We knew that the Government was cutting funding to Adult Education by 24 per cent.

However, we feel that by targeting these areas in particular those in most need of the facilities and skills provided by the centres will suffer greatest, in this sense we view the closures as part of the Government's ongoing austerity measures.

Members of UCU within the college took part in lobbying their MP's in Parliament recently in an attempt to get them to support Adult Funding and oppose cuts.

We also had a strong contingent take part in the national anti-austerity march in London, at which Jeremy Corbyn spoke.

As a Union branch we strongly condemn the Government's austerity package and will continue to fight it.

The battle of Lime Street - August 2015

Massively outnumbered by anti-fascists the neo-nazi National Action Group "called off" their planned march through the city of Liverpool. The neo-nazis having previously threatened that "only bullets will stop us!" never got out of Lime Street railway station, after trying they ran into the left luggage area and pulled the shutter down.

They were forced back having lost their bravado after being attacked by eggs and bananas and realising that the police, who were also outnumbered, were unable to provide protection. National Action Group boasted the day would be a historic day for fascists. For the 30 or so who turned up it may well have felt like a historic day, but it will go down as a piece of history they will want to forget.

Two anti-fascist groups called for marches. One was a combination of the Anti Fascist Network, local anti-fascist groups, local activists and a majority being working class youth. They marched directly to Lime Street to block any movement by the fascists.

The second was led by Unite Against Fascism (UAF), with Unite, Unison and PCS leaderships, trade unionists, Black and Irish community, young and old. They congregated close to Lime Street station and **marched away from Lime station to the river Mersey!**

UAF gave a platform to the local pro-austerity Labour leaders, Joe Anderson and Labour councillors as they have done in the past and refused to include or co-operate with the local anti-fascist/anti-racist groups.

UAF and fascism

It became clear on the day, as has been the case in the past, that the UAF demonstration was not to oppose National Action from marching, because they marched away from the fascists down to Pier Head, where the "great and the good" gave their anti-fascist speeches, while the real opposition to "Fascism marching on our streets" was taking place in Lime Street station.

As news of the activities at Lime Street reached the Pier Head many returned to join their comrades, whilst UAF members implored people to stay with a promise of stopping a fascist rally where they were!

Meanwhile Labour councillors were



National Action put themselves into Lost Property in Station rather than march.

tweeting about the wonderful speeches at the Pier Head stopping a fascist rally and later tweeted messages suggesting that they had stopped the fascists!

Who are UAF? They are a front organisation of the Socialist Workers Party, that has support from many trade union bureaucracies. As became clear on the day, UAF are completely out of step with the mood of the movement. How to fight fascism is now a major question in unions and community organisations as the tactics of UAF must be questioned and a more democratic, inclusive and open organisation must be fought for.

UAF claims to be a united front but in reality it is a "bureaucratic front".

It is the refusal to organise open and democratic meetings and conferences where the rank and file are in charge that makes the UAF sectarian against the interests of the activists and working class.

Build a rank and file struggle against fascism

National Action and other far-right, neo nazi groups will not disappear but what happened in the battle of Lime Street shows they can be defeated by united actions on the street as they were by the people of Liverpool.

Only a socialist revolution will destroy the fascists, and they will rise as the working class begin to act and threaten austerity plans, so we must be vigilant, and build a working class struggle against fascism.

Some fascists, who may organise in the future, will be inside the Tory party, or inside UKIP now. The government attacks

and divides the working class with anti-trade union laws, immigration controls and anti-terror laws, diminishing, for the moment, the role for fascism.

So today, the fight against racism is urgent because racism and nationalism is a feeding ground for fascism.

Attacks on immigrants and the Black communities take place daily, legitimised by institutional racism, racist policies and practices that are normalised through stereotyping and criminalising minority groups and communities.

The ISL congratulates all the activists and organisations who stood up against fascism on 15 August 2015, in Liverpool preventing them from marching and shouting "Migrants in, Fascists out; That's what we are all about".

The ISL calls on workers and the left organisations:

- 1 Support all anti-fascists arrested including financial and legal help if necessary.
- 2 Oppose fascist marches with a broad alliance of community organisations, progressive organisations, TUs and other interested parties and organise in a democratic and inclusive way.
- 3 "No Platform for fascists, do not let them march".
- 4 Oppose all forms of racism including Labour party racism. End police harassment of Black communities.
5. End all immigration controls.
- 6 Going forward, an organising committee should be created for a conference in 2015 where the rank and file are in control.

Cambridge: The right to housing, not just Labour promises!

REKAI TOSASHI

Cambridge has become a den of housing and landlord speculators because the demand for housing is not being met, and there is a lack of affordable social housing.

Letting agents feel free to bleed tenants dry with fees and, knowing they are at the mercy of the market, continue to raise rents above inflation, year after year. Some letting agencies, such as Belvoir, one of the most ruthless, during the election period even sent letters to

A growing population needs more social housing

Cambridge is becoming an important science and technology centre in the UK. Some companies are moving there, and ones already based there are growing. A lot of workers and their families are moving to the city.

However, this industrial growth is not matched by a housing plan to accommodate the newcomers. County



the tenants warning against voting for the Labour Party.

During recent months there have been a number of protest actions, including a demonstration outside the Cambridge Property Exhibition.

On 23 May there was a protest, backed by Unite and the Cambridge and District Trades Council, at the doors of Belvoir to protest over the current housing situation. The main demands are, "build social housing" and for "rent controls". In June and July, there have been follow up protests in front of the office of various letting agencies.

The newly elected Labour MP offered apologies for not attending and sent a message that made a commitment to make housing a priority. But saying that is easy. In June and July, there have been follow up protests in front of the office of various letting agencies, but no Labour MP turned up.

If Labour was a workers party, they would address these concerns. In Cambridge, that means campaigning for housing until the issue is solved to the workers' satisfaction and fighting for militant demands over housing.

council data in 2012 and 2013, showed population growth was much higher than the growth in housing stock.

But Cambridge has also a lack of social housing, in south Cambridgeshire the waiting list has more than 1700 applicants. In Cambridge city area in December the number of empty houses was 3000, enough to solve the problem. But the only institutional responses to this situation are initiatives like the "Right to buy" that only deepen the problem.

The local newspaper has turned a blind eye on the topic. The fact that a big chunk of its funding comes from the advertisements by letting agencies, means the paper dances to their tune.

The only way to address the housing situation is:

- A social housing program for workers, houses built by the government and controlled by the workers' organisations.
- Imposing rent controls.
- Expropriate landlords housing who keep the properties empty - to prevent capitalist speculation

Remember the dead fight for the living

Socialist Voice interviewed John Leather, now retired, on the long struggle for Health and safety.

When I began work in the early 1960s, the unions were very strong and I joined the Amalgamated Engineering Union. So, I was a union member at 16 years of age.

When I was about 23 years old I worked on inspection of the safety of equipment and went to many engineering firms. I worked with a gang of riggers*, a rigger is someone who is involved in using the equipment necessary to keep a ship functioning: ropes, pulleys, winches, and cables.

And from these riggers I gained a lot of experience. And, like them, I always hated the bosses.

There were many accidents.

We would sometimes do an inspection of machines, for example at Bryant and May.

Normally we had a week to do an inspection, that is examining wire ropes, slings ancillary gear, electric housings, fittings and eye bolts. But they were always trying to cut the inspections time down. After one inspection that was shortened an eye bolt collapsed and fell on a worker. They then asked if I could alter the report so that Bryant and May could cover up what had happened. I did not.

At another inspection a welder was working under equipment suspended by wire ropes and when I examined one of them it was on its last string, he could have been killed. I was called into the office and was accused of stopping bonuses.

It is for reasons like this that Workers Memorial Day is very important, because so many workers have been killed over the years on building sites, engineering plants, mines etc. I totally agree with the understanding of Workers Memorial Day that we remember the dead but we fight for the living.

* The riggers had been on the seafarers strike for 16 weeks. The government was Labour and it declared a state of emergency a week after the nation's seamen strike began. It meant new emergency powers allowed the Royal Navy to take control of the docks. But the ports and docks came to a standstill.

What lies behind the reinstatement of diplomatic relations between USA and Cuba?

MARCOS MARGARIDO, PSTU, BRAZIL

“In Cuba there is poverty, but it's not like in Brazil. There are slums there; not here. Nor do we have beggars sleeping on the streets ... it's different”. This statement by a Havana resident was used in a documentary broadcast by the biggest Brazilian TV network, Rede Globo.

The programme said that Cuba has an education system that surpasses the Brazilian one, because all Cubans study in public schools and students demonstrate a higher cultural level. They also praised public health services, famous worldwide for a preventive medicine system and for sending Cuban doctors to many countries.

However, according to the documentary, Cuba is the victim of a US economic embargo that has lasted for 53 years that prevents the further development of the island, that is located about 300 km from the coast of Florida. These many compliments have one goal: to defend the reopening of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba and the end of the economic embargo.

The most important step in this direction was the reopening of the US embassy in Cuba and the reopening of the Cuban embassy in the United States. Something that was unthinkable for some people even a few years ago.

At first glance, it seems that the Rede Globo, famous for attacking the Brazilian workers and their achievements, is supportive of Cuban socialism and wants to help it. Is that the reason? Or is it just another one of the “global” traps devised by imperialism and their supporters?

A revolution that shook Latin America

First of all, the claim of the Havana residents and the comments of the TV documentary must be agreed with. Poverty in Cuba is different, health and education are public and of a high-standard and the food and housing are subsidised by the state.

In these and other aspects, a small country like Cuba has gone further than

the most developed in Latin America, such as Mexico, Brazil and Argentina.

But these achievements did not occur because Cubans voted for good government, which sought the best for the country. They happened because of a social revolution in 1959, that overthrew by force of arms the dictator Fulgencio Batista, a puppet of the United States.

Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, Camilo Cienfuegos and other revolutionaries organised guerrilla groups on the mountains that combined with the popular uprising in the cities. They took power and after a few years what had been a colony of the United States grew into a workers' state, where employers were expropriated – that is, they lost all their property and wealth – and foreign companies were nationalised. Furthermore, the economy was planned according to the needs of the population, foreign trade was controlled by the state and the land was nationalised.

All this meant increasing the standard of living, the end of poverty and of prostitution, jobs for all workers and the aforementioned achievements, which endure to this day, even after so many years of economic embargo.

The Cuban revolution encouraged the revolutionary struggle, and the dream of a socialist Latin America created hopes of revolutionary groups in all countries. Unfortunately, most of them copied the



Cuban model of guerrilla warfare in the countryside, even in industrialised countries such as Brazil and Argentina, and moved away from the working class.

It was easier for capitalist governments to defeat the guerrillas and prevent new revolutions on the continent. The United States, in turn, after failed attempts to overthrow the government of Fidel Castro, as in 1961, established the economic embargo on the country.

However, nothing is perfect or lasts forever ...

A workers' state under a leadership of bureaucrats

Many unions have bureaucratic leaders. These prevent the discussions in the rank and file, they call meetings without involving every member, they do not promote the organisation in workplaces and they make agreements with the bosses without the approval of the workers.

But no worker thinks of abandoning their union because of that. Instead, they organise opposition slates to topple the bureaucratic leader and take the union back to the rank and file.

The same thing happened in Cuba after the socialist revolution. Bosses were expelled and a state organisation was created to serve workers' interests but the new leaders of the country eventually

curtailed democracy, established a one-party system, prevented free organisation of workers in their unions and ruled with an iron fist.

Just as the scabs of the unions, the bureaucracy of the Cuban State used their posts to secure privileges for themselves and become richer by the administration of state owned enterprises, farms and plants.



A devastating economic crisis and the country's opening to foreign capital

From the late 1980s, Cuba went through an economic crisis that paralysed the country. But from 1994, major changes in the structure of the Cuban State began.

The Soviet Union ceased to exist, it was divided into several countries and the so-called "real socialism" ceased to exist. That is factories, banks, and land became private property again. In other words capitalism was restored in the country that had made the first victorious social revolution in the world.

Cuba had traded agricultural products for oil and manufactured products, which ceased to exist and a very difficult situation began.

The Cuban government, just like union bureaucrats, asked for help from capitalist countries instead of discussing with the Cuban workers options what to do to get out of that situation.

They instituted new laws in 1995, which opened the country to foreign capital inflows, allowed the export and import of products without the control of the state and the free remittance of profits abroad.

The entry of foreign capital occurred in virtually all sectors of production at a fast pace. Joint ventures (between the state and foreign capital) dominate 100 per cent of oil exploitation, iron ore, production of lubricants, telephone services, the production of soap, toiletries and export of rum; 70 per cent of agribusinesses and citrus and 50 per cent of nickel production, cement and tourism industry.

European capitalism also took advantage because US companies were prohibited from investing in Cuba due to the economic blockade. But now, President Barack Obama wants to reverse this handicap and allow the US

capitalists to make up for the lost time.

In 2013, a new Act for foreign investment was approved, which further facilitated the establishment of private companies in Cuba.

Aside from health, education and communication, all the others are allowed to receive foreign investments, which are tax exempted for eight years with the government assurance that it will not nationalise these companies. In addition, it no longer requires the State to be involved in joint ventures; they can be completely private.

In a nutshell, the country now has an economy subject to the international capitalist system.

Market laws, where what counts is profit-making, prevails over economic planning to meet the interests of workers. In other words, capitalism in Cuba, as in Russia, was restored.

The workers are the most affected

Many workers may think this is not bad. After all, private enterprise can offer new jobs and may even raise wages due to increased competition between them. Many Cuban workers defend the changes made by the government. But they always say: our system is socialist and must go on!

However, this is not true. To give an idea, in 2010, the Cuban government approved the dismissal of one million state workers. So far about 360,000 have been laid off and the damage to workers is beginning to be felt. The official unemployment rate is 3.8 per cent, but the actual rate is likely to be 18.5 per cent, because many say they are not looking for work and are not counted in the statistics.

The average wage of workers is \$20 and even if private companies pay more than that, the government, which plays the role of a "jobs agency", gets the surplus

value. In addition, in 2013, it passed a new labour law for private companies. This establishes a 44 hour working week, one day of rest per week and paid vacation of seven days per year.

This is a very backward legislation. In Brazil, for example, the labour law allows a 30-day vacation with a bonus of 1/3 of the actual wage.

In addition, it does not establish any compensation for dismissals, because workers are employed under limited term contracts. There is nothing advantageous for workers.

In addition there is no freedom of union association or the right to strike, Cuba has become a haven for the exploitation of workers by the bosses.

Cuba needs a new socialist revolution

That is why President Obama decided to reinstate diplomatic relations with Cuba and asked the US Congress to end the economic embargo. Opportunities for US companies are huge, but for now only the European, Canadian and Brazilian companies are taking advantage of it. The Brazilian construction company Odebrecht, charged with corruption in Brazil, is building the port of Mariel, which will be the Free Trade Zone gateway.

The bosses of the greatest capitalist nation in the world will not be left out of this deep assault on the country, which is supported by the Cuban government.

It is clear that workers around the world should advocate the establishment of diplomatic relations between these nations and the end of the economic embargo by a stronger nation against a weaker one. But it is our duty to warn that these actions are made by an agreement between the governments of the United States and the Cuban to increase the exploitation of Cuban workers and to transform Cuba into a US colony. The only beneficiaries are the bosses and members of the Cuban government, which are becoming a new bourgeois class.

It is necessary that the Cuban working class organise independently of the government, expel the union bureaucracy and build a revolutionary party to overthrow the current government of Raul Castro (brother of Fidel Castro) and conduct a new socialist revolution in Cuba, this time with democracy for all workers.

Bill Hunter 1920 - 2015

MARGARET MCADAM AND MARTIN RALPH

“To celebrate [my life] as a Trotskyist is the biggest thing I have...” speaking at an International Socialist League meeting in May 2010.

Bill was born in 1920, into a miner's family in Durham. His harsh experience of the slump and the effects it had on his family and community was an important factor in shaping who he was.

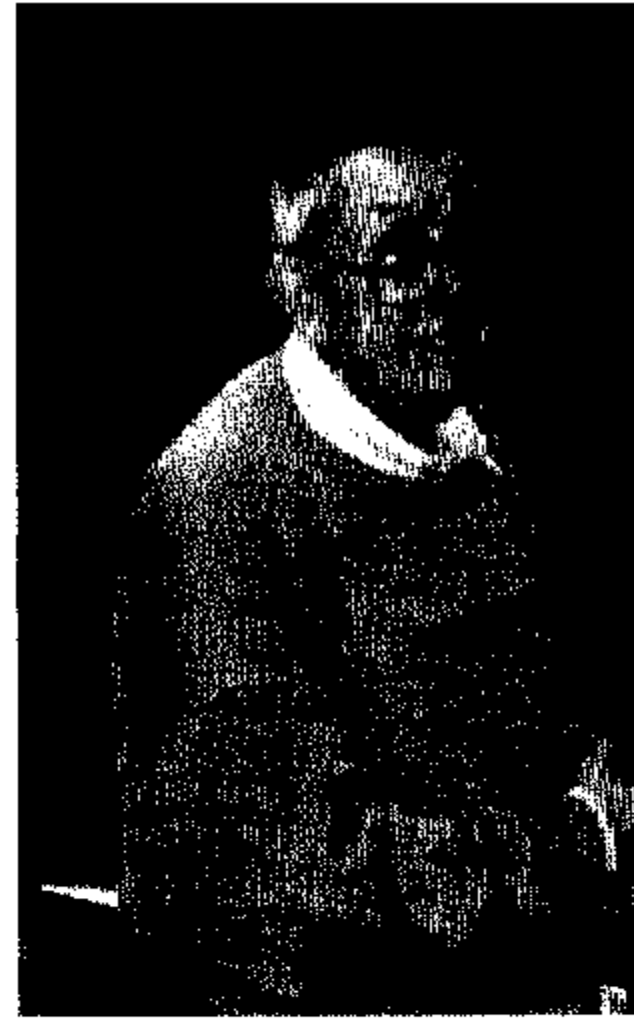
He told us many times that his father said repeatedly “Leaders always let you down”, referring to the 1920s, and the General Strike, of 1926, which the TUC called and then let the Tories starve the miners back to work.

Bill was a great story teller, and he never tired of telling the story of the plant pot, which is also in his autobiography. One day at his school a teacher pointed to the world map on the classroom wall and said “Look at the world map, everything that is red we own”. Bill went home and told his father what the teacher had said. His father pointed at a plant pot in the room and said “Look lad. The only part of the earth we own is in that pot”.

Moving to London

Due to mass unemployment Bill was sent to London under the Ministry of Labour transfer scheme and started to work in an engineering factory in London in 1936. In 1939, he joined a Trotskyist group. During the war Bill was a convenor in the Chrysler aircraft factory with a mainly female workforce.

In 1952, he was a borough councillor in Islington, and then in 1954, he, his wife Rae, Harry Finch and two others were expelled from the National Executive of the Labour Party for socialist opinions. They were part of the leadership of the Labour party in East Islington and in Norwood. They fought to have a socialist foreign policy and a domestic programme to end capitalism. They were expelled because they were Trotskyists and had fought to develop the Labour



Party left Socialist Outlook paper which linked with the class struggles.

He was secretary of CAV-Lucas Joint Shop Stewards Committee from 1966-72, and a delegate to Liverpool TUC, he remained an honorary member of Liverpool Trades Council. Bill had always retained a close connection with the dock workers movements and in particular its unofficial movements in the unofficial strikes from the 1950s, and helped in the break to the Blue Union in Merseyside and elsewhere. He was a staunch supporter of the Liverpool dock workers' dispute of 1995-98 and visited a dock workers union in Santos, Brazil, to build support.

In 1979, he helped form a Joint Trade Union Inquiry into Allegations of Police Violence, and was a member of the Liverpool 8 Defence Committee.

He won support in 1982 for a resolution against the Malvinas (Falklands) war in the Trades Council. Two years later he and Rae started the Liverpool 8 miners support group.

Founding the ISL

In 1988, he and Martin Ralph helped form the International Socialist League and left the Workers Revolutionary Party. The ISL joined the International Workers League-Fourth International because of the refusal of most of the WRP leaders to consider joining a real living International, and in line with the Transitional Programme and the Permanent Revolution

Bill was on the leading body of the IWL, the International Executive Committee, until the mid 1990s. He continues to be very much respected by those who knew him inside the IWL. The moving tributes and interesting tributes we received from

four continents illustrate the world wide respect held for Bill.

He travelled many times to Europe and Latin America and participated in the internal life of the IWL from the moment he joined, writing many documents in the struggle as he often said, “to turn to the questions of the mass movement.”

During the war against Afghanistan and then Iraq he participated in the first anti-war meeting in Liverpool in 2001, and attended regularly. He was one of the first to express opposition to the “war on terror” as a cover for the US and Britain's war for oil and control and saw the biggest terrorists in the world as the USA establishment, followed by Britain.

The fight against Reformism and Stalinism

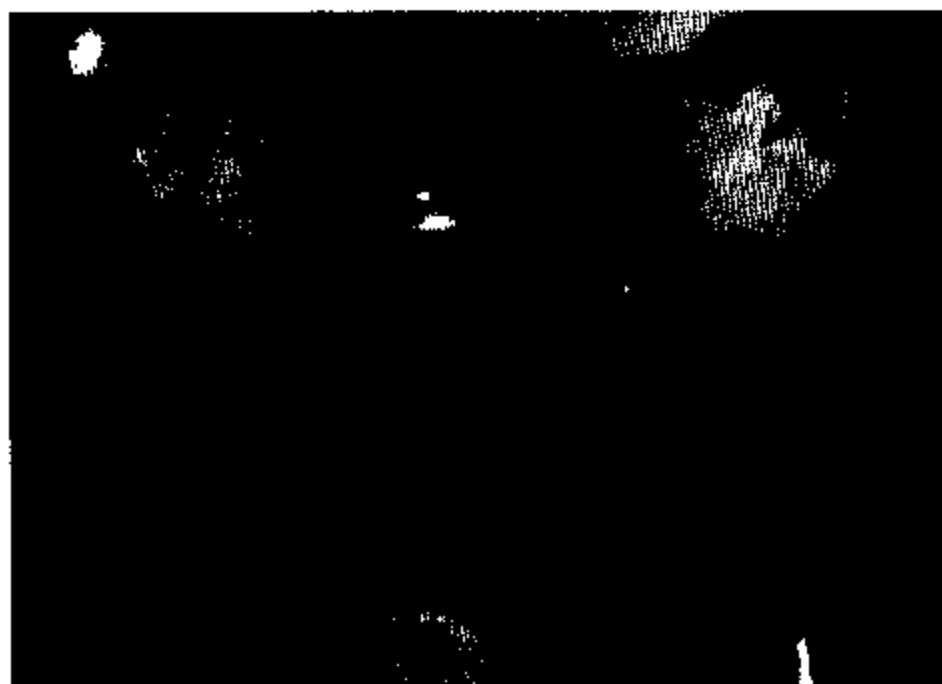
A 100s years since the 1917 October Russian Revolution, will be celebrated in 2017, and we will use Bill's material because he studied deeply and wrote extensively on the October revolution. In 1991 he wrote a pamphlet called “Towards Capitalism or Socialism”, when at the time it was not clear if the working class in Russia would, through their own struggles, be able to lead the struggle for socialism at that point.

The end of the Soviet Union had a profound effect on all those fighting for Marxism and Bill took up the struggle against all the bourgeois theories and the so-called “end of history” with the Trotskyist Tendency and in alliance with the Reconstruction Tendency inside the International Workers League. He was determined to continue to struggle for the outlook of the Permanent Revolution, a world organisation based on democratic centralism.

Bill's life was dedicated to the fight against capitalism, against the Labour Party, trade union and Stalinist bureaucracies and for the Fourth International.

We have in front of us as we write this obituary many of the writings of Bill Hunter, and many tributes that we have received. We thank all who wrote, they confirm that comrades living in many countries saw that Bill was a working class fighter, a Trotskyist and international leader loved by many comrades and friends who will continue Bill's life long struggle.

Bill never lost his faith in the working class, Marxism or Trotskyism or his humour.



Clarity begins with a truly international perspective and practice

The first time I became aware of Bill was in 1985.

In this particular instance I found myself listening to the party's General Secretary, Mike Banda.

Mike began to talk of how Trotsky in forming the 4th International in the 1930s had sown "Tigers teeth" but the harvest had been at best "Hen's teeth".

I remember listening with some interest to Mike when all of a sudden in the row behind me two people began shouting at him.

These two people turned out to be Bill Hunter and his wife Rae. My initial reaction was one of annoyance. Why couldn't they just shut up and let Mike speak?

It turned out that Mike was merely, if very eloquently, excusing himself from the movement, which he now considered worthless. However Bill and Rae refused to accept this.

Bill was to go on and analyse and write about the sudden decline of the WRF, which was because of what he saw as national-Trotskyism. Instead of being part of a true international the WRF had become a mere self-centred national organisation.

Peter Windeler, ISL

He always had time

A fundamental part of having overcome fear [of translating] was the fact that, behind the militant experience, serious, permanently worried, was someone pure 'sweetness' and full of generosity.

I remember, for example, he used to do something that few people do in these situations: before his speech, he used to call me aside and explain what he would say, contextualize the stories, write the name of the organisations and leaders he would quote and with a slap on the back encourage and reassure me.

But also, I remember fondly the conversations that we had in intervals. Even in the midst of meetings often complex and difficult, he always had time to tell stories of his life, the causes and jokes of the class struggle.

And, even more impressive, he always was interested in knowing what I thought.

Wilson, PSTU, Brazil, writing about the late 1980s

He denounced Malvinas (Falklands) war

He is a part of the history of the world labour movement. And he left a lot, in his books, in the memory of his comrades, not only of the ISL, but of the IWL-FI. The comrades of Argentina will never forget that he led the only political current in Britain that had a principal policy during the Malvinas (Falklands) war, which denounced the aggression of English imperialism.

Alicia Sagra, PSTU, Argentina

The loss of a Marxist giant

With the passing of Bill Hunter the international workers movement has lost a giant.

Bill gave his life to the workers movement and to the fight for Marxism and Trotskyism. On any issue he always fought to bring out the basic historical and theoretical questions, the basics of Marxism and historical materialism.

Bill was uncompromising on questions of principle and at the same time warm, generous, humorous and interested in all aspects of life, as reflected in his book about the anti-slavery poet Edward Rushton.

His books, including his powerful autobiography "A Lifelong Apprenticeship", and his numerous articles and polemics, are an imperishable contribution to Marxism, and his life is a powerful inspiration to everyone fighting for a just and socialist world.

Phil Sandford, Australia

An example of our morals and our programme

I have known few people so lively, so full of life, so loving of life and fighting for it. I couldn't help but think how the subject we were about to study was linked to Bill and his life. Bill's life was an example of our morals, a concrete expression of our program, and his life was inseparable to our movement's history.

His life was and is an example. I am profoundly proud to have had the opportunity to meet him, to have been in the same organisation (national and international) as him.

João Simões, PSTU, Brazil

(Continued from back page)

That is due to the huge obstacles created by the Labour government that workers face when claiming benefit, begin to reflect the draconian measures of the 1930s.

Criminalisation of Workers and Islamophobia

There are three laws that pose a great danger to the working class: anti-trade union laws, immigration controls and the so called 'anti-terror' laws. The main purpose of those laws is to reinforce and maintain the division of the working class, increase a climate of 'fear' and suspicion, and blame 'others' for the economic crisis, unemployment and destruction of services.

Anti-terror laws have been used against a picketing building worker, campaigners travelling to the Copenhagen climate change protest and other peaceful protestors.

However the majority of union leaderships have failed to respond and are ignoring these attacks. These laws are ready to be applied to each and every person in Britain and will be used to criminalise the whole of the working class when necessary.

Working Class Struggles

As this article was being written an unofficial strike began near Liverpool of shipyard workers who were opposing the threat of sackings due to declining orders. A number of strikes against attacks on education have been successful, which received huge support from the local communities.

British Airways cabin staff are about to carry out a five day strike, following a successful appeal on a previous judgement that the strike was 'illegal'. These and other currently unconnected struggles are an expression of the growing discontent that exists beneath an apparently 'tranquil' surface.

The period of slump with its ebbs and flows, driven by international developments and Britain's place in the world opens up a revolutionary period.

On the surface Britain appears a huge distance from that, but to base a prognosis on surface events would be to fall for the old enemy of Marxism, British empiricism.

The message to the working class hangs defiantly from the walls of the Greek Acropolis today "PEOPLES OF EUROPE - RISE UP"

Bill Hunter's Archives

Labour lost last time

In this issue we are celebrating the life of Bill Hunter, who died on 9 July. The following article was written in 2010 at the age of 90, on the failure of the Labour party to win the general election. The next two pages contain our tribute to Bill and a small selection of tributes from the many we received from across the world.

The British General Election of 6 May 2010 has produced a Tory and Liberal Democratic coalition government, the first such coalition since the Tory led coalitions of 1931 to 1945.

The election was followed by a week or so of deliberating and back room deals which resulted in the Lib Dems signing a deal with the Tories and in doing so jettisoning some of their long held 'principles' to form a Tory Lib Dem coalition government.

The Labour leadership campaign got immediately underway and candidates are talking about the 'next' Labour leader and 'confessing' that the previous mistakes made were not being strong enough on immigration, anti-social behaviour and welfare benefits. So with no change in direction, there is a continuity in moving further to the right.

This level of consensus between the three parties was clear, as was the intention to hammer the working class and making them pay for the financial crisis.

Alternatives

Results for the main left alternative parties were almost invisible that included the Trade Union and Socialist Coalition controlled by the Socialist Party and the Socialist Workers Party and the radical Respect led by George Galloway.

Both the British National Party (fascist party) and United Kingdom Independence Party (extremely anti-immigrant) gained a significant share of votes but did not win a parliamentary seat. However all the main parties supported strengthening anti-immigration laws, which are key questions that have to be addressed in the building of any movement to fight capitalism's attacks on the whole class.

The Crisis of Debt

The world and British financial and economic crash of 2008 was referred to throughout the election period as

AN APPEAL TO THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

★

Expelled for Socialist Opinions!

★

The Case of Five Expelled Labour Party Members

T. MERCER. D. FINCH E. R. KNIGHT
R. HUNTER. W. HUNTER

The Labour Party has been controlled by the right wing since the 2nd world war

something in the past with a slow recovery underway. There was no suggestion of the beginning of a new period of slump. The three main parties proclaimed publicly that the worst of the crisis is over. There was total agreement that the public sector and the working class will have to pay off the debt incurred by the banks and financial speculators, just differing over the speed of cuts.

Manufacturing Decline

After the second world war almost half of the workers in Britain were employed in manufacturing today manufacturing accounts for just 13% of the economy. Manufacturing, once accounted for almost 40% of the UK's output, now accounts for less than 20%. Manufacturing has been declining and has been declining steadily over the past 30 years. While the financial and service sectors grew with an extraordinarily increased level of speculative capital.

Labour Betrayals

Labour has become deeply unpopular with workers who feel betrayed and disenfranchised because of the number of increased privatisations, increasing inequality, the running down of the National Health Service (NHS), not fighting the anti-trade union laws, rising unemployment and insecure employment, wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the parliamentary expenses scandal etc.

Workers' right to strike has been increasing in an attempt to control growing discontent. Over the last year the transport union (RMT) had seven strike ballots which were declared illegal by the courts, and this year Unison, the public sector union, were forced to call off a strike which was for the same reason.

Unemployment

In Britain unemployment has continued to rise since the financial crisis of 2008, yet during the election campaign the 3 parties did not talk about unemployment when it is a central concern for the majority of workers. According to the Office for National Statistics "the unemployment rate for the three months to March 2010 was 8.0 %, up 0.2 % on the quarter", which is the highest figure since the three months to December 1994.

However that is just a snapshot because "the number of employees and self-employed people working part-time because they could not find a full-time job increased by 25,000 on the quarter to reach 1.07 million, the highest figure since comparable records began in 1992". The number of full time jobs fell by 103,000 and the number of part-time jobs increased by 27,000.

Those claiming unemployment benefit (Jobseeker's Allowance) decreased in the same period to 1.52 million, but the employment rate was 72%.

(Continued on page 11)