

Free West Papua



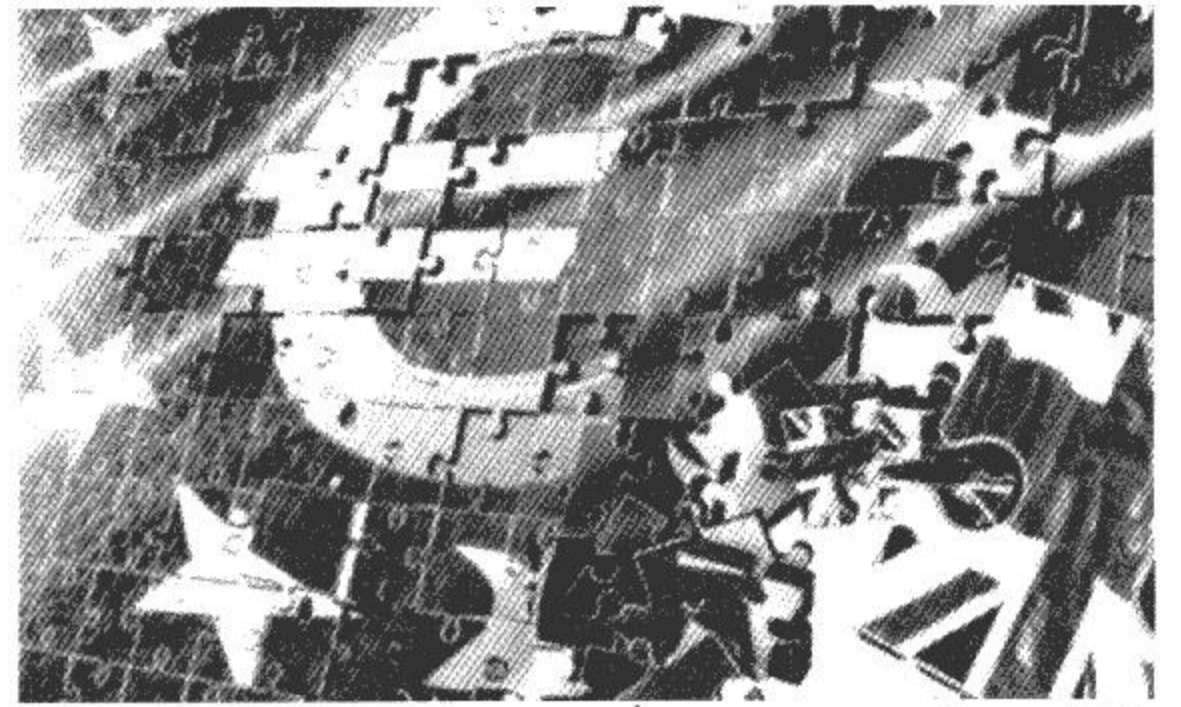
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Political and Black struggle in Brazil



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A workers and peoples Europe is possible without the EU



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Socialist Voice

Number 25 September/October


INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST LEAGUE | INTERNATIONAL WORKERS LEAGUE - FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

£1

Build the resistance save the NHS

March for the Women's Hospital
For all our sisters, mothers, daughters & babies

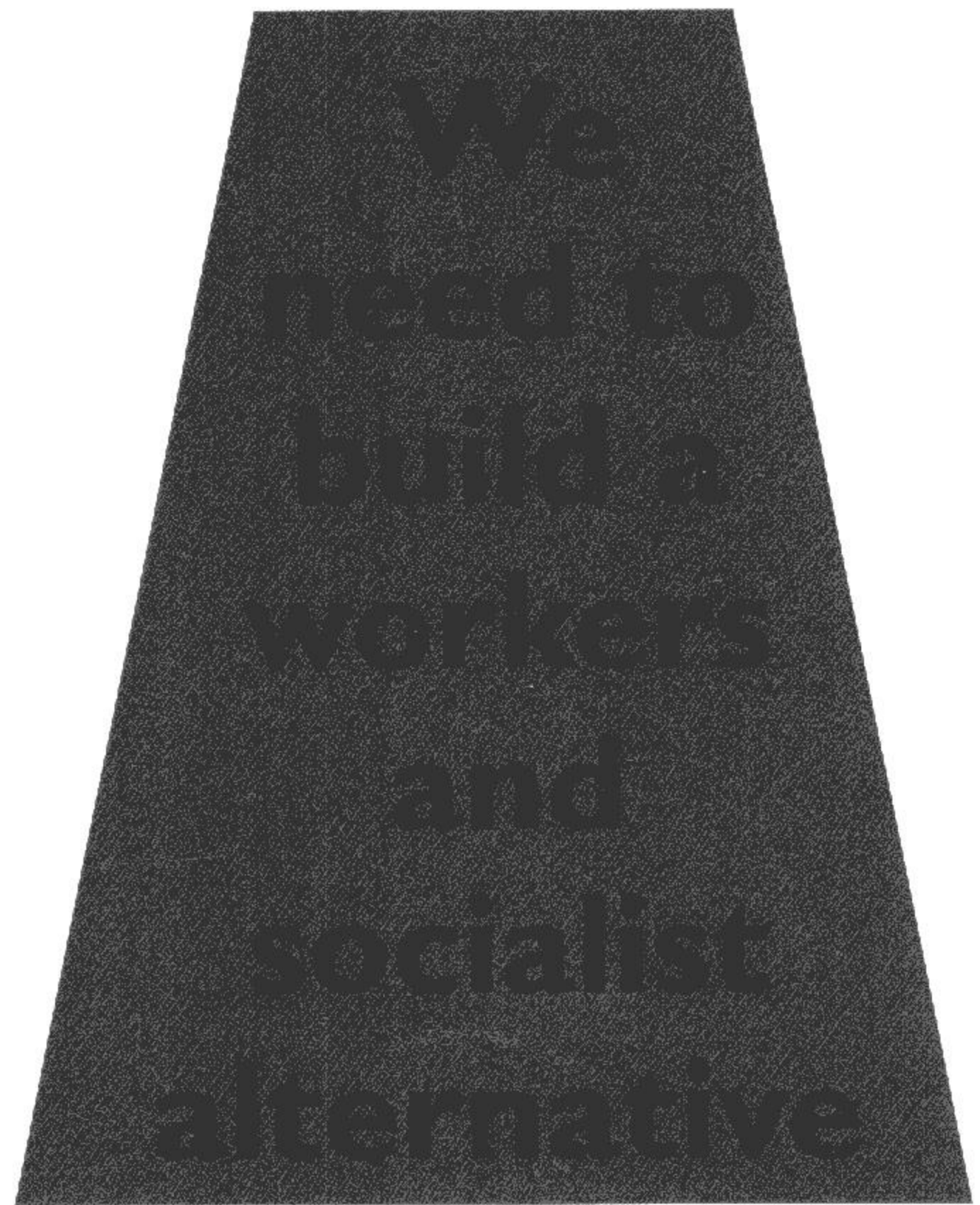
25th September 2016
Assemble at the Women's Hospital,
walk to the water front.



**No to Privatisation or Cuts.
No to loss of beds.**

Save-Liverpool-Womens-Hospital
email: SaveLWH@outlook.com

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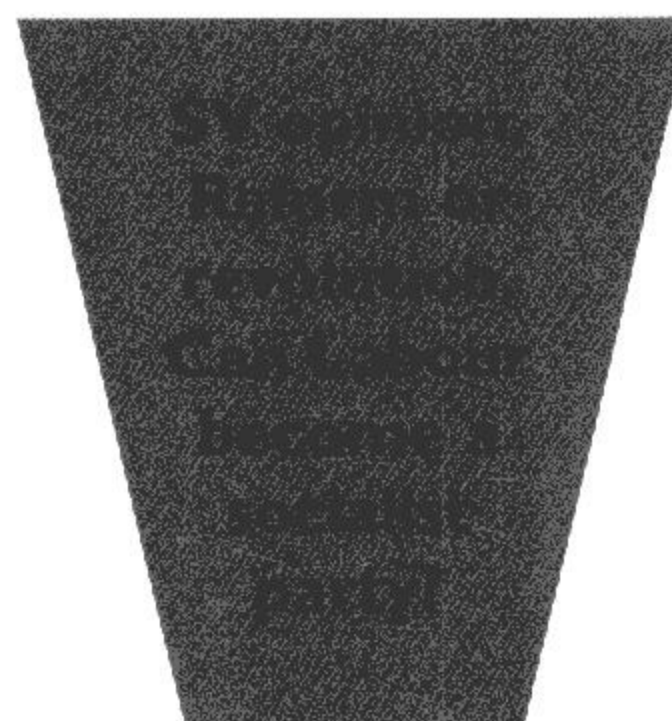


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**£2000 appeal fund to
help build the ISL**

**Celebrate the centenary
October
Revolution in 2017**

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1960 Heffer proves his worth to the establishment



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Socialist Voice

Newspaper of the ISL

International Socialist League
British section of the IWL-FI
(International Workers League
Fourth International)

Editors

Margaret McAdam
Martin Ralph
Peter Windeler

Layout

Martin Ralph

Write to us

We would like information about working class struggle and we want to know your opinion about our newspaper.

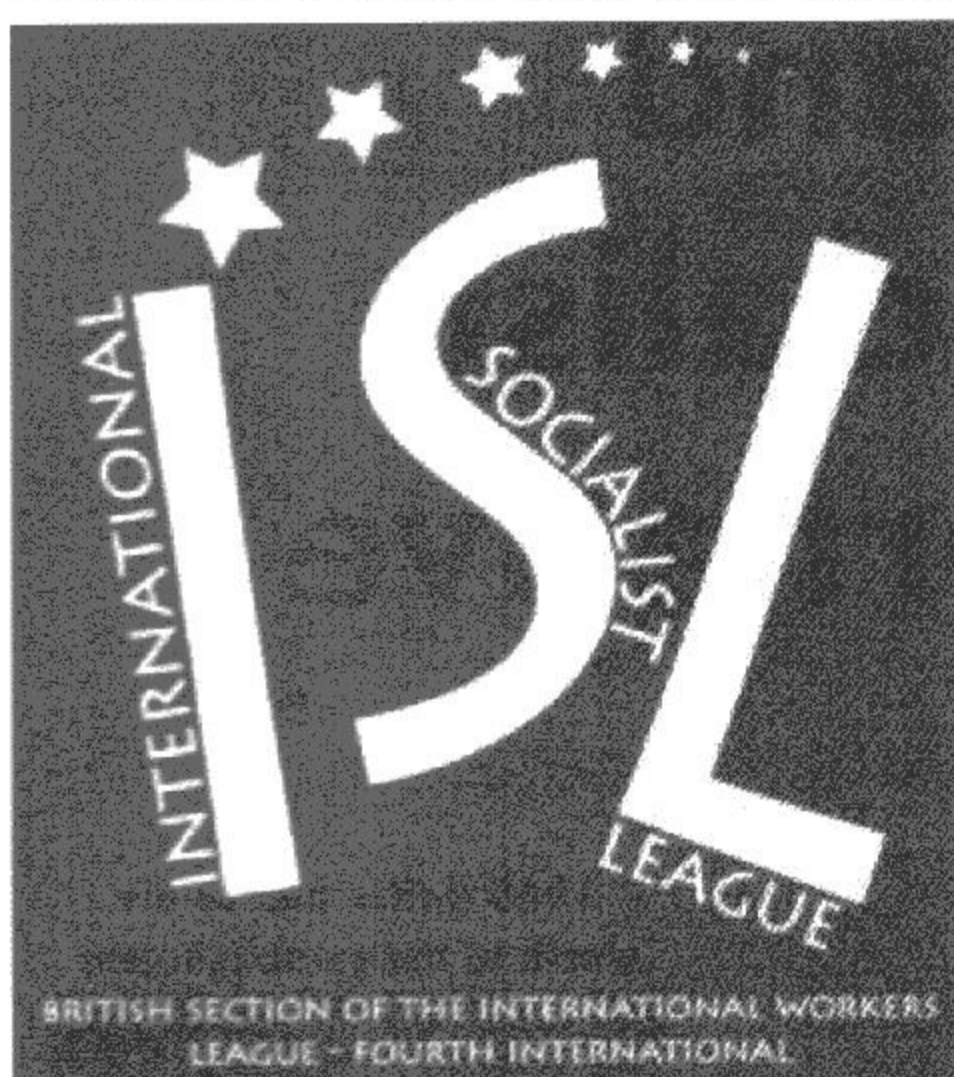
Write to ISL at c/o "News from Nowhere", 96 Bold Street, Liverpool L1 4HY

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islinfo@talktalk.net



Help build the International Socialist League!

£2000 appeal fund to help build the ISL

This is a special financial appeal to help us celebrate the centenary of the 1917 October revolution. We need to update our publications and newspaper technology as we intend to publish early next year some of Bill Hunter's writings on the Russian revolution, its subsequent history and what happened in the early 1990s and we want to reprint his material on the history of the dock workers' struggle.

Why support and join the ISL?

1. We aim to build a party that represents the interests of workers and 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. Capitalism has nothing to offer humanity: only crises, wars, poverty, racism, oppression and environmental destruction. Tory policies are meant to solve the economic crisis in favour of capitalism. They are making us pay for their crisis.
3. The biggest fear of the rich, the industrialists and the bankers, is a loss of profits. That's why they have to criminalise our struggle and divide us using many ways such as 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, unemployment and oppression internationally.

4. 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.

5. 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 and discussion is required but it must be started now, we cannot wait passively.

6 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.

7 An international revolutionary party is needed. Labour Party socialism means reformism and the belief that gradual changes through parliament can bring socialism. But no type of reformist party can lead the struggle for workers control to end the dictates of capital and its international institutions. A proletarian International and a revolutionary party is needed for that!

Cheques payable to International Socialist League, c/o "News from Nowhere", 96 Bold Street, Liverpool L1 4HY

Brazil, 22 years of a revolutionary party

An exciting celebration of the PSTU was held on 30 July with 1,800 people from across the country, with workers, young people, black, female and LGBT, including construction workers, steelworkers, teachers, students and activists like the residents occupations of the Garden Union of São Paulo.

Luis Angel Parra, from Corriente Roja, section of IWL in the Spanish State, spoke about the relevance of Marxism and the struggle for socialism and the importance of PSTU. "After 22 years of the party it reaffirms that its reason for existence is the struggle for revolution and socialism by the working class."



We need to build a workers and socialist alternative

Statement by International Socialist League

Jeremy Corbyn is receiving huge support outside of parliament. His anti-austerity perspectives resonate across the working class in opposition to the mainstream political system of the Tories, the capitalist media and constant right-wing Labour attacks on Corbyn.

Corbyn is seen to be giving a voice to voiceless and an alternative to the disenfranchisement from Labour that came from the Blair and Miliband years.

Labour's right-wing group of 170 Labour MPs made their move to oust Corbyn after the Brexit result, which they used as an excuse in calling a vote of no-confidence, just 40 MPs defended Corbyn.

However this has backfired and increased opposition to the right-wing. All of this comes from deep opposition to eight years of austerity that has also been implemented by the Labour Party as not a single Labour Council has opposed the Tory onslaught against the poorest and most vulnerable. All have implemented cuts – even under Corbyn's leadership. Enough is enough!

There is intense interest and discussion in this Labour political struggle, and those who stand with Corbyn think and hope he will be different.

Fight cuts and bosses now!

So far the campaign has been limited to an internal election debate. No one has made the call to fight now and take to the streets against austerity.

Strikes taking place involving railway, education, cleaning, energy, oil and delivery workers, show that workers are ready to fight. There is also an important emerging fight against the rapid dismantling of the welfare state and NHS.

Many workers are calling on Corbyn to use his election campaign to support their strikes and mobilisations. He has expressed sympathy with some struggles, and attended some picket lines, but there needs to be a strong clear call for mass mobilisations for all strikes and anti-cuts struggles from Labour's left leadership.

The International Socialist League



thinks it is essential for all workers now to build and join the mobilisations against austerity including those who support Corbyn.

Councillors who support Corbyn have to stop following the Labour controlled councils right-wing policies. So far they have all voted for council cuts and closures, it's time to vote against

We call on all left Labour MPs and councillors to fight the cuts now! To their supporters we say make them fight now!

We need to make a front of action in all struggles and build mass actions, for example, to save the NHS left Labour leaders and activists should be making public their support for current mobilisations,

Action not pledges

In August Corbyn announced 10 pledges but without a single mention of welfare, even in its broadest sense which includes social security, working and child tax credits, sanctions, child benefit, homelessness and pensions.

With the number of homeless and levels of poverty set to rise significantly when the benefit cap is lowered in November 2016, action is needed now not promises for the future.

On the housing pledge the building of 1mn new homes in five years with at least half of them council homes is not enough. Furthermore construction is left in the hands of private profit making companies.

Another pledge will, "Put the public back into our economy and services: includes renationalising railways and bringing private bus, leisure and sports facilities back into local government control." The banks and trans-nationals control the economy so without removing their power by nationalisation under the control of workers this pledge means very little. It has been explained that rail nationalisation will only take place after the current franchises are completed, so as stated by the Economist "Nationalising franchises as they expired would also take a painfully long time: only around one-third would be in state control by 2025." (3 October 2015.)

Critically it can be said, the ten pledges are vague, and without a concrete programme to fight now they remain meaningless. We need to fight austerity in deeds not by words with mass action today, as the only way to defeat austerity.

We need to build a workers and socialist alternative

such as the one in Liverpool 25 September and help build them – against right-wing support for closures. Constituency Labour Parties (as 84 per cent voted to support Corbyn) should promote these mass mobilisation.

Capitalism will find many ways to block any progressive policies unless they are forced through by mass action. Without workers' struggle on the streets nothing will be achieved. Movements need to be built now.

Fight Labour's right-wing

The fight against austerity cannot be made with right-wing Labour. In response to 246 Labour councillors endorsing Corbyn, 1,000 signed a letter of support for the opposition, Owen Smith.

That also means about 4,750 have not taken sides! This indicates that a majority in councils are for the status quo.

Corbyn has retreated on some of the promises he made in the first leadership contest, in order to appease the right-wing such as dropping the demand for energy nationalisation, retreating on ending student fees and refusing to vote for proportional representation.

If left Labour's opposition against austerity is to develop into action they must adopt a policy of de-selecting right-wing MPs and councillors who continue to vote for cuts and other capitalist policies. But the left leaders are against re-selection.

Nationalise bank of England

In a BBC Radio 4 interview 4 July John McDonnell on 4 July, stated that under a Labour government the Bank of England would remain "independent" but independent of whom we must ask?

The Bank of England is the central institution that determines the fiscal and monetary policy that pro-austerity British capitalism wants. We demand its nationalisation and the opening of all the financial books, including of those that lead to offshore banking.

A socialist programme will demand that banks be taken over by workers control and administration for the needs of society.



Mass action now

To remain with Labour's right wing MPs and councillors will paralyse Corbyn's struggle against austerity, a break has to come.

ISL proposes that left Labour Party members and supporters join anti-cuts groups, and where necessary create new ones with workers democracy that can link unions and communities together in struggle.

Left MPs and councillors must stop colluding in the implementation of austerity. They should call open city wide conferences to discuss a programme against austerity and cuts now.

To those who think Labour can become socialist we say let's make a common front of action against austerity. Socialism will be fought for on the streets, in strikes and the centre of that struggle will be the class struggle outside of parliament.

That means building a struggle that goes way beyond the confines of bourgeois parliamentary democracy. The centre of gravity of the socialist struggle is not parliament but the streets and the independent struggle of workers.

Reformism or Marxism

Lenin wrote many years before the 1905 revolution that "to limit the

activities of the proletariat under any circumstances to peaceful 'democratisation' alone is arbitrarily to narrow and vulgarise the concept of working-class socialism." A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social-Democracy 1899.

"...We have no parliament, but then there is no end of parliamentary cretinism among the liberals and of parliamentary licence among all the bourgeois deputies.

"The workers must thoroughly master this truth if they want to learn how to use representative institutions for promoting the political consciousness, unity, activity and efficiency of the working class" (Capitalism and "Parliament" 17 June 1912).

Lenin insists on the independent struggle of the working class as the basis of socialism.

The ISL believes that an experience of persistent struggle will show that to break from all the class collaborationist and pro-capitalist policies of the past that Corbyn will have to break from the Labour party and take with him all those who want to fight austerity.

The International Socialist League will be at the frontline supporting and helping to build a real working class alternative including a new working class party, and proposing that it be socialist, revolutionary and internationalist.

Can Labour become a socialist party?

Martin Ralph

Peter Taaffe, leader of the Socialist Party, recently expressed their thinking on Jeremy Corbyn and whether or not the Labour Party can become a workers, anti-austerity and socialist party.

The first thing to point out is that SP theory on the Labour Party fluctuates depending on their own tactical needs. Following their expulsion from the LP the characterisation they developed was that Labour was a "bourgeois party".

"The channels through which the working-class base of the Labour Party could hold the leadership in check have been cut off, and the party has made the transition to an openly bourgeois party." (Socialism Today, 2000.) However, Taaffe now believes that it could become a socialist party.

The Labour Party remains a bourgeois workers party (as characterised by Lenin) as trade unions can affiliate and are represented in the Labour Party and at its conferences.

In the same article Taaffe relates that this year's Unite conference passed a motion calling for the mandatory re-selection of MPs.

Yet, published in the post conference Unite magazine Len McCluskey (General Secretary) talks about reuniting Labour saying, "There must be a reconciliation with the PLP. We must re-establish mutual respect and unity".

Similarly John McDonnell in a BBC

radio interview in July stated that they would never break from the Labour Party and that both he and Corbyn are against re-selection.

So, neither the union bureaucracy nor the Labour left leadership want a break from the right-wing.

The editorial issue of *The Socialist* (issue 912) talks of a civil war between the Labour right and Jeremy Corbyn and repeats Momentum's position and that of the left MPs, who see the central axis as the struggle in the Labour Party and in the leadership contest.

Civil war

The civil war in Britain is between capitalism and the working class.

The attacks on Black people and immigrants, Prevent legalisation targeting Muslim communities and left activists, immigration controls, zero hour contracts, anti-trade union laws, benefit sanctions and poverty are all weapons in this "civil war".

The Tories are destroying the NHS, education and the welfare system through privatisation which is a central strategy of this war from above (a continuation of Thatcher and Blair's strategy).

There is much confusion on the LP and there needs to be a struggle for clarity on what Corbynism is and where it is going.

The writings of Rosa Luxembour, Lenin and Trotsky on social democracy and its right and left wing can provide

essential assistance.

Marxism for these socialists was a guide to action on how to fight capitalism and the opportunist currents within the working class.

The centre of struggle for Marxism is not parliament but the independent mass actions of workers and workers' candidates in parliament and councils should promote struggle, but real change will come from class struggles outside of parliament.

It was an anti-austerity and anti-status quo feeling that created the mass support for Corbyn.

But he has failed to mobilise the working class into any struggle, when the need to unite the strikes of public and private sector workers is urgent.

Instead he gives pledges for what a Labour Government would do, if they win the next general election, which is likely to be 2020.

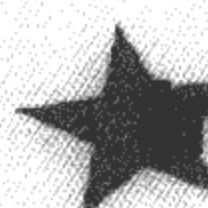
Taaffe says that Corbynism opens the road to Socialism, but Socialism cannot be achieved through elections and gradual reforms in parliament!

The Labour lefts adjust verbally to the mass struggles that take place but they twist and turn because they cannot face the question of working class power.

The main question is building a revolutionary party and destroying the grip of the reformist bureaucracy.

The International Socialist League is in this fight.

Find the International Socialist League at <http://isl.lit.ci/>

 **International Socialist League**

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INTERNATIONAL

BILL HUNTER'S ARCHIVE

France – A country on the verge of civic insurrection. UK – Build solidarity actions

Save the women's hospital

Build the resistance save the NHS

Margaret McAdam

The Tories aim to kill off the NHS once and for all by privatizing its vital organs.

NHS Property Services Ltd (PropCo) was launched in April 2013. They now own £3 billion of NHS land and buildings.

PropCo is responsible for sales to property developers, which means large swathes of NHS land could quickly pass into private hands.

The private firm providing the PFI/PF2 loans for the 25-30 year repayment period owns the hospital. Thus, more than a hundred NHS facilities are owned by banks and shell companies.

Commissioning Support Units were created to run tenders, manage contracts, provide IT and Human Resource services and other back-office admin functions.

Although Clinical Commissioning Groups were created by the 2012 Act to decide where the money goes, it is the CSUs that provide the infrastructure.

The Act created CSUs as part of the NHS structure, but from 2016 the CSUs will become independent businesses to be bought out by private firms. In fact, the sale has already begun. If private firms take over the CSUs they will have a huge influence on the funding and rationing of healthcare in this country.

Personal Health Budgets (PHBs) which allocate a limited amount of amount of money to an individual to cover their healthcare needs are being introduced in England.

There is the spectre of 'top-up' payments for those who exceed their allocated budget. But the classical pattern of funding in the NHS is that money is allocated to Trusts according to the amount of work they need to do. PHBs allow for a move to a tiered private insurance model,

where everyone pays a premium and a private firms then decide who gets treated which claims to pay out on.

Combining universal PHBs with privatised CSUs means an American-style health system.

If land, buildings, back office and budgets have all been privatised, what does that leave? All hospital trusts now have a mandate to become independent businesses known as Foundation Trusts. These are standalone organisations which have to keep themselves in the black, and can do so by taking on as much private work as they want. As with the CSUs, the FTs are units ripe for privatisation, which in this case is dressed up with the vague term "mutualisation". This means passing from public ownership into the hands of 'stakeholders'.

The government has divided England into 44 "footprints" through the Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STP) which are designed to make £22 billion cuts. Most of these plans are developed in secret.

Save Women's Hospital

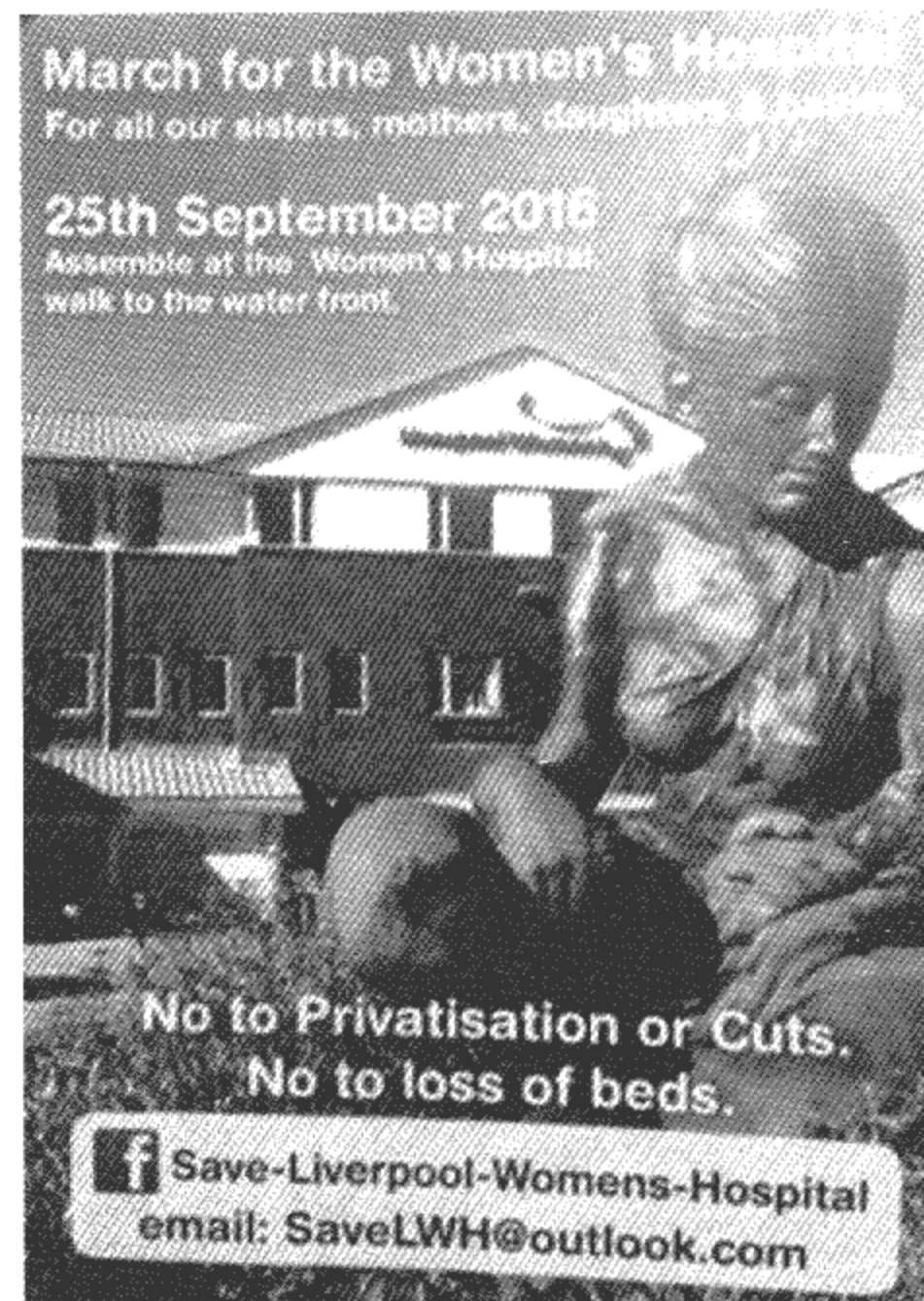
In Liverpool the health authorities plan to close the Women's Hospital and a leaked NHS report states that in Liverpool health trusts there will be a £1bn deficit by 2021.

Swingeing cuts are being planned to balance the books with Liverpool hospital trusts expected to slash £167m over the next five years.

A merger between the Royal Liverpool, Broadgreen, Aintree and Liverpool Women's hospitals has been suggested. And that will be part of the cuts and closure national package for health, the STP.

Meanwhile staff at the women's hospital have been told to push private provided by the Catharine Medical Centre, which is based in the women's hospital, so the hospital can make money to cover the deficit it has. Management are saying they need to make £500,000 from the private services. The CMC describes itself as a "leading boutique private healthcare provider", that exists because they "recognise that the needs of every woman are different, and that is why we have developed our private maternity care service."

This spin covers over the fact that it is the NHS that must provide this type of



choice if it is to remain a NHS.

They should of course add that they recognise that every women can be treated differently if they have enough money to pay. For example post natal services start at £250 to £950. Some of the services they offer started in August 2016.

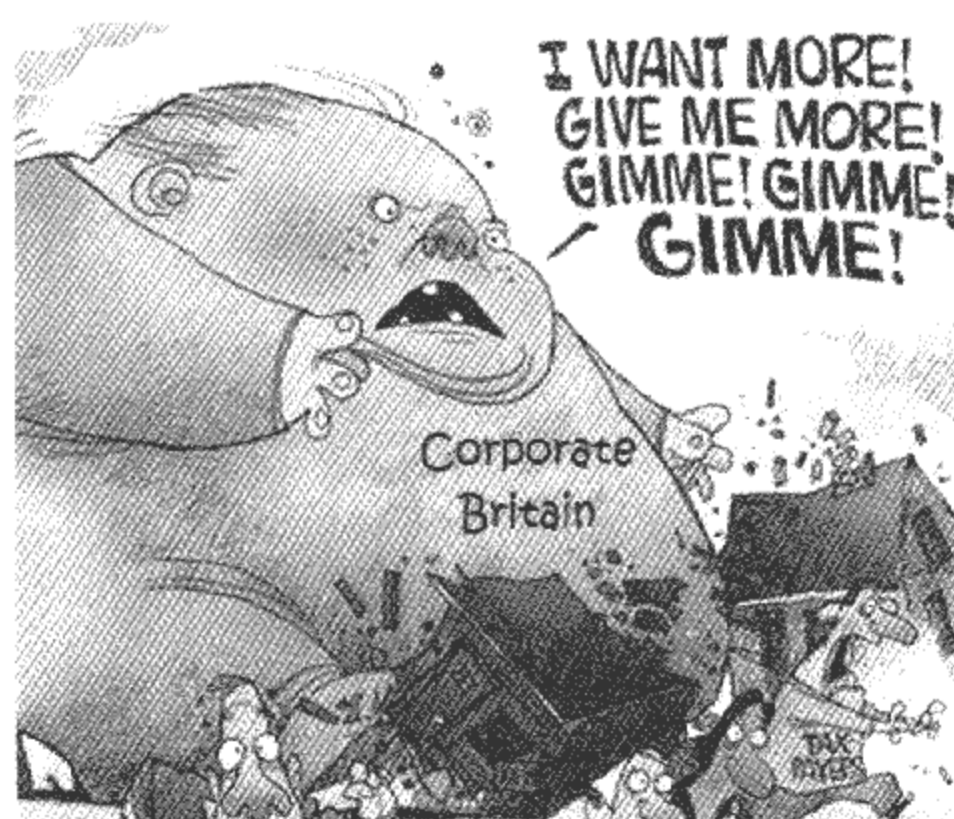
In London two Labour leaders, Ealing and Hammersmith & Fulham councils, have refused to sign the plan to "transform" NHS services amid fears that two major London hospitals will close, and the downgrading of Ealing and Charing Cross including the loss of A&E units and other acute services.

No such resistance is coming from the Labour leaders in Liverpool to plans to cut health service. So we are calling upon the elected Labour MPs and councillors to oppose any plans to close or sell off Liverpool NHS services, and to actively and publicly campaign against the closure of the Liverpool Women's hospital.

We have to make the left MPs and councillors fight.

Labour and trade union leaders have failed to lead any campaign or mobilization as the NHS has shifted closer towards the US health insurance model.

Rank and file trade unionists and grass roots communities must take the helm and mobilise nationally. This is the only path to take to stop the wholesale destruction of the NHS.





While the world's media focuses relentlessly on the horrors of Islamic fundamentalists and regime-change wars, western journalists and governments are universally silent on the Indonesian government's barbaric genocidal war against the people of West Papua.

A struggle for independence has been underway since 1969 when Indonesia stole half of Papua New Guinea, which was a former Dutch colony, in a rigged UN election.

In the so-called *Act of Free Choice*, 1025 Melanesian men and women out of an estimated population of 800,000 in Western New Guinea, were selected by the Indonesian military to vote to relinquish their sovereignty in favour of Indonesian citizenship. The "election" involved them raising their hands or reading from prepared scripts in a display for United Nations observers.

Almost all indigenous Papuans rejected the referendum, claiming it was an "act of no choice".



The brazen act of colonialism by Indonesia, itself a former Dutch colony, created access to some of the largest reserves of gold and copper on the planet for Indonesian and American capitalists.

West Papuans had held a congress in 1961 to discuss independence and raised the morning star flag. The heroic people have been fighting ever since.

It was declared illegal to raise the morning star flag and many of the independence leaders have been jailed for long periods because of peaceful acts of defiance.

Ever since the invasion of West Papua over fifty years ago, the Indonesian military and police have engaged in endless extreme human rights violations.

An armed independence movement has fought back, killing security forces, but a much larger civil movement is also heavily suppressed.

In October 2011, the Third Papuan People's Congress, a civilian gathering calling for self-governance, was violently broken up by Indonesian forces. Six peo-

ple were killed and dozens more injured.

The Free West Papua Campaign has documented countless other examples of atrocities. Like the Blak Massacre in 1998, where over 200 people including women and children were rounded up by the Indonesian military, loaded onto vessels, taken to sea and thrown overboard.

Over 500,000 civilians have been killed in the genocidal war pursued by Indonesia against the indigenous population. Thousands more have been raped, tortured, imprisoned or 'disappeared' after being detained. Basic human rights such as freedom of speech are denied and Papuans live in a constant state of fear and intimidation.

The program of systematic slaughter of Papuans is backed up by the transmigration of hundreds of thousands of Indonesians with the intention of ultimate racial domination.

Papua New Guinea and West Papua are Australia's closest neighbours. The beautiful mountainous island is the most linguistically diverse place on earth, with 850 different languages. Rich in natural resources, minerals, and timber in forests almost as big as the Amazon, it is also, for its people, one of the poorest in the world.

The Arizona-based Freeport McMoRan (FCX) runs the massive Grasberg mine and its profits are one of the biggest sources of tax for the Indonesian government.

Freeport Indonesia produces about 220,000 tonnes of copper ore per day and employs 24,000 people working at Grasberg mine.

Indonesia plays a vital role in Freeport's global business. More than 90 per cent of Freeport's gold production, and a significant amount of its copper, comes from its Grasberg mine. In 2014, the mine produced \$3 billion of Freeport's \$21.4 billion global revenue.

Despite the years of murder and oppression by Indonesian security forces at Freeport operations, FCX's claims on its website, "Our global workforce, comprised of employees and contractors, includes approximately 80,000 members. FCX has a strong commitment to safety performance, environmental management and to the local communities where it operates."

Dech Mortimer, Australian author of children's books

Regardless of what is happening to the people of West Papua, the rest of the world remains silent. Trade and military ties with President Joko Widodo and the ruling clique are what count.

The Lombok Treaty, a bilateral security agreement, was signed by Indonesia's foreign minister Hassan Wirajuda and his Australian counterpart, Alexander



Downer, in 2006. The treaty commits both countries to cooperate and consult in the fields of defence and defence technology, law enforcement and combating transnational crime, counter-terrorism, and intelligence-sharing, as well as maritime and aviation security.¹

In a display of crude cynicism, the US Ambassador to Indonesia, Robert Blake, during a visit to West Papua in January this year, reportedly said that, "He wanted to know about Papua's human rights and political condition."

Just what did he want to know? The internet is full of photos of video clips of murdered and butchered West Papuans. The independence movement daily presents to the world what is happening.

Ambassador Blake was in lockstep with his president, Obama. During a visit to Indonesia in 2010, where he lived as a youth, Obama was silent on the genocide. Instead, he said, "...your democracy is sustained and fortified by its checks and balances: a dynamic civil society; political parties and unions; a vibrant media and engaged citizens who have ensured that — in Indonesia — there will be no turning back from democracy."

Similarly, Australia's PM said in a November visit last year that, "trade, investment, economic growth, stronger economies in both Indonesia and Australia for the benefit of both sides is the focus of the discussions".

BREXIT

another Europe is possible

By Roberto Love, member of Comuniste Rols (the International Workers' League) party of the Spanish State/7 September, 2016

We include this article in the Socialist Voice because of the continuing debate about Brexit and what it means, we think this article will be useful to the discussions that are taking place amongst workers.



On 23 June, while the French working class were confronting the labour code reform of Hollande and the EU in France, despite the campaigns of the British, European and even United States' capital, a majority of the British working class voted to leave the EU.

It is clear the timorous policy of the current Labour leader Corbyn was to stay in the EU against the majority of his social base (who were more inclined to leave).

The Labour apparatus, that is disciplined by British capital, made the task of the conservative right-wing and the UKIP easier, who put racism and xenophobia at the centre of the debate while hiding the true reasons for leaving.

The vote was against the neo-liberal

policies implemented in Thatcher's time, by her successors Major and Blair, and also against the results of the explosion of the 2007 crisis.

It would be childish to deny racism and xenophobia played a central role; it is also true that, as many say, "not everyone that votes to leave is racist, but every racist will vote to leave", while Cameron used xenophobic policies against the refugees. In other words, there were xenophobes in both camps.

Britain was, together with the US, one of the centres of the current crisis, because the UK was deeply involved in the real-estate bubble that engulfed banks like Northern Rock.

That bank was nationalised then later sold and retirement funds were swept away by that crisis.

A Bank of England high executive, Andrew Haldane, said in July 2010, "Over the past 160 years, growth in financial intermediation has outstripped whole economy growth by over two percentage points per year.

Or put differently, growth in financial sector value added has been more than double that of the economy as a whole since 1850." And further said, "Between 1948 and 1978, intermediation accounted on average for around 1.5% of whole economy profits. By 2008, that ratio had risen tenfold to about 15%."

"Great" Britain was only capable of navigating through the crisis, differently to the Spanish State and what they pejoratively called the PIIGS, because of the "special" situation of British imperialism in the international division of the world.

— A workers and peoples Europe

Today it is a financial centre with no major industry (all in foreigners' hands, or out of the country), and it controls Stirling, which allows it to absorb part of the surplus value at a global level, to cover its costs and have independent policies from the eurozone.

Even so, being part of the EU forced it to accept the discipline of Brussels' policies, even against its will. That discipline is what pushed the EU into decline by cuts and austerity. Britain left the EU as it continues to crumble and the refugee crisis exposes the EU for what it is.

From Greece to the UK, France and others

It is not the first time the EU suffered a setback from the people of Europe.

In fact, every time a country asks for the opinion of its population regarding the EU, the EU and the government in question faces a defeat.

In relation to the European Constitution, according to data quoted by Vincenc Navarro, in France 79 per cent of manufacturing workers, 67 per cent of services workers and 98 per cent of trade unionists voted against.

In the Netherlands, 68 per cent of manual workers and in Luxemburg, 68 of working class districts per cent voted against.²

Just one year ago in Greece, the EU got a major OXI [NO], that was not implemented because of the betrayal of its government. Syriza is now driving the policies that are turning Greece into a European protectorate, mainly a German one.

The Greek rejection of EU had an effect on Brexit, in fact it shows the international nature of the British people's response.

At the bottom is the EU crisis

Brexit is not the reason for the EU crisis but one of its consequences, like the Greek OXI and the French mobilisations.

It is a consequence of European capitalism (which was legalised in the Maastricht Treaty) and its consequences of

debt, privatisation and dismantling of the Welfare State.

But this is a particular type of crisis, as the British bourgeoisie always had a "special" relationship with Europe, that was defended by Churchill in 1930: "we are with Europe, but we are not part of it".

After the WWII, when the UK left the centre of the world to the US, the British bourgeoisie redefined its role and became the European "partner" of the new Power.

For the US, this new role is very important, and therefore Obama's position favoured "remain", which would have kept a foot inside the economic conglomerate that could become its shadow at some point, besides being a spearhead for economic relations on both sides of the Atlantic: Britain as the filling of the sandwich, the EU on one side and the US on the other. Both keeping London as the financial centre of first order.

This contradictory relation showed less than two years ago, when the court in Strasburg denied Frankfurt the right to be the headquarter of Euro exchanges, located in London.

It is surreal: London, with a different monetary policy than the eurozone, controls the financial decanting in Euros. Brexit intensifies the inter-imperialist tensions: by leaving the EU, they cannot maintain the financial centre of the Euro in London, and the moves to take control of it have already began.

The EU is an alliance among imperialist powers against the European working class and the peoples of the world.

The crisis of 2007 intensified its exploiter, oppressor tendencies, and it is against these policies the peoples are reacting; some through a referendum, like the Greek and British people, and some through strikes and occupations, like the French people.

But in all cases the response is isolated. Each working class and people confronts its own government, as if the policies were not part of a European capitalist plan but just national or State problems.

This happens mostly because their accomplices, the union bureaucracies, social democracy and the neo-reformism educates their bases in a national, not international, way of thinking.

Many of the parties rejecting the policies of the EU do not take this to the end, remaining with the sole demand of "regeneration" (of the EU), not understanding the EU itself is the problem.

Others remain in opposition to those policies only inside a national framework.

Both feed the racist, xenophobic proposals, which are the only ones that appear to the working class and the population with a clear and open confrontation to the core of the problem: the EU.

For Brexit, OXI and the French mobilisations to gain a really transforming nature, it is necessary to overcome the nationalism that tie them down.

The rejection to the EU has to be linked to the demand of "Another Europe is possible: A Europe of workers and Peoples".

1 Andrew Haldane: The contribution of the financial sector – miracle or mirage?

2 The Crisis of the European Union Weakening of the EU Social Model Vincent Navarro and John Schmitt

Article is published on <http://litci.org/en/brexit-another-europe-is-possible/>

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For further reading on Europe see:

<http://litci.org/en/the-long-depression-an-interview-with-michael-roberts/>

And

<http://litci.org/en/the-crisis-of-refugees-the-shipwreck-of-the-european-union/>

Brazil: “We need to put Aracaju into the hands of the workers”

Socialist Voice interviewed Vera Lúcia, a leader of the PSTU (a Trotskyist party in Brazil and section of the International Workers League-Fourth International). She is also the mayoral candidate in Aracaju (capital of Sergipe state, North-East).

Vera is standing on a socialist platform calling for “Out with Temer, out with them all!” a general strike to kick them all out, build popular councils and force a general election without big business private financing.

Following the impeachment by the right-wing of Dilma Rousseff (Workers Party) for corruption, Temer, Brazilian Democratic Movement Party, took over.

Vera was a PSTU delegate to the 2016 IWL-FI World Congress and spoke on the struggles facing Black women in Brazil and internationally because as she says they are “the most exploited of the oppressed people”.

Vera has been active all her working life including as the shoe makers’ union leader in the factory where she worked, political educator in the oil workers union, leader in the CUT union federation, member of the Workers Party, and member of CSP-Conlutas (a militant trade union federation in Brazil).

SV: How would you describe your upbringing?

I came from a very poor religious family but I am not religious. There are many Black and white members of my family, but there is discrimination against the Black members. I was told in the family that I was not beautiful, this was said to hold me down.

But I was always a rebel and I had to



fight survive. I took beatings from my brothers and my cousins and I always had to struggle against sexism in the family. I was only the second woman in my family who did not officially marry.

At 19 years of age I left my first partner. I had a child and I had to work in a shoe factory. Aracaju did not have history of textile factories but businesses began to move here because of a huge source of cheap labour, and for tax benefits.

I helped found the shoe-makers’ union in Sergipe, before that there was no union in that sector of work.

SV: How did your union and political work begin?

In 1989 I led a week-long strike in the shoe factory and became the leader of the shoe makers’ union. In that year I was fired, but fought for five years to be reinstated. During that five year period I remained as the union leader and we combined with the textile workers’ union.

In 1989 I became a leader in the CUT and I joined the Workers Party (PT,

Brazilian initials) and I joined “PT for the Base”, one of the many currents inside the PT. A Trotskyist current, Convergence Socialista inside the PT (later the PSTU) did not exist in Sergipe. I joined CS when it was expelled from the PT (1992, along with many other currents).

In 1994 I lost the legal case for reinstatement. I then worked for the oil workers’ union. During this time I organised outsourced workers and became a union political education officer. I am self taught because working class Black women have huge problems accessing education. However, I have just finished a degree in Social Science at university.

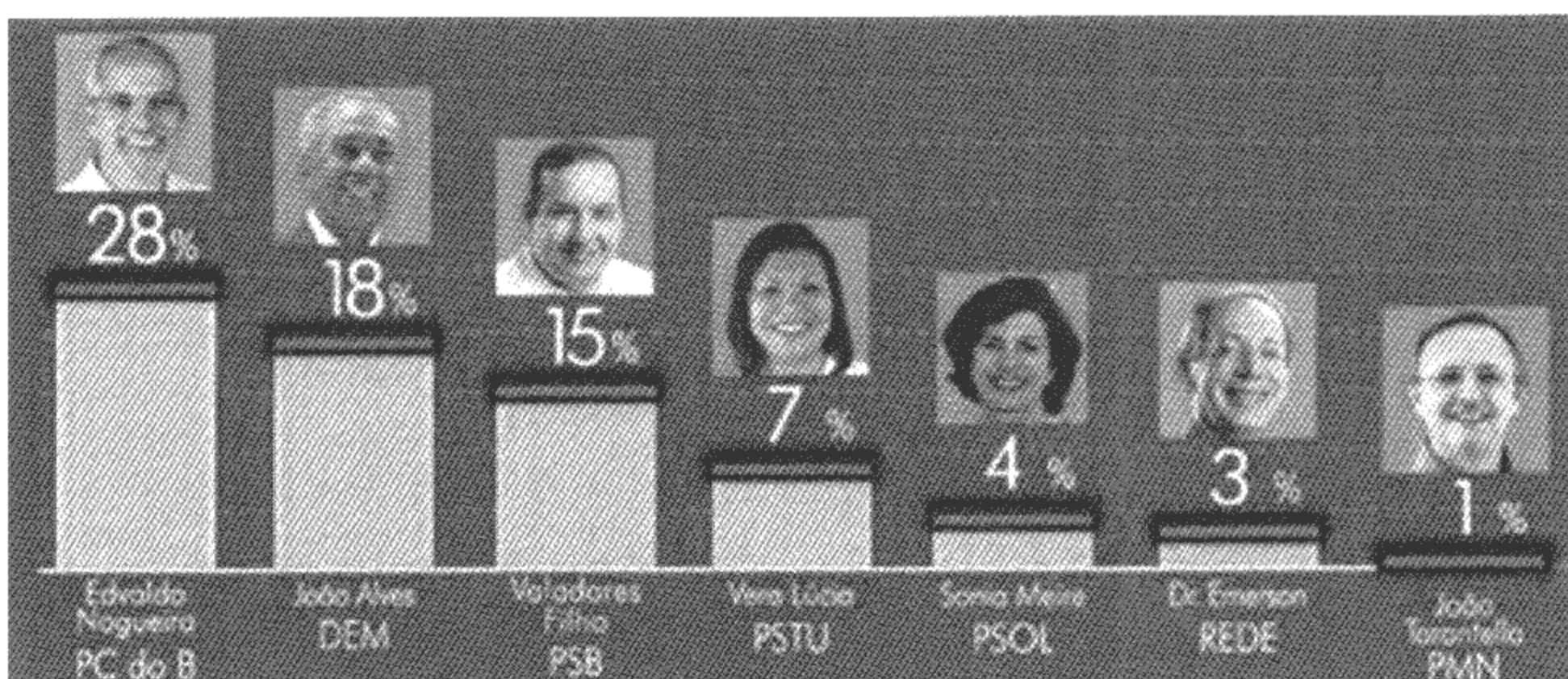
SV: What is the history of the Brazilian Black women’s struggle?

Black women were a vanguard of the struggle against slavery, it was not just men who led the fight. Women organised escapes and were a big part of the Quilombolas, which were settlements of escaped slaves.

When slavery ended slaves left the plantations and were free but they had nothing. Until Black men entered the industrial workforce those who sustained the family were mainly Black women, as maids, servants, selling foods and working in the service sector.

An important difference between Black and white women is that Black women have been part of the work force since the days of slavery.

The capitalist class divides the working class by race in order to exploit workers more easily. As in the era of slavery the idea that Black people were inferior is



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used to justify the position of Black women today. White women are seen as “pure”, Black women are seen as servants or as a sexual object for white males.

A large part of the Brazilian population is Black or mixed-race, and much of the mixed-race population has its origins in the raping of Black slave women and when slavery ended many were often forced into prostitution.

SV: What is the situation today?

A large number of Black women are single parents and bring up families, 60 per cent of Black women are the bread winners. With no educational opportunities and lack of educational achievement, Black women earn up to one just one minimum wage (up to Reals 800 per month about £200).

Subsequently their children do not have access to good schools, they live in poor neighbourhoods where there is no drainage systems, they may be more vulnerable to crime, and are more likely to die young.

“Brazil's 49 million black women are so much more likely to be killed than their white counterparts — the groups represent 53 and 45 percent of the population respectively — black women are even more vulnerable to the surge of violence than black men.” *Murders of Black Women in Brazil Rise Sharply — Murders of White Women Fall.* (news.vice.com).

The establishment says Brazil is a country of racial democracy, it is far from that. Racism is a very serious problem in Brazil because it is white-washed.

This interview will be continued in the next issue of Socialist Voice.

See also <http://litci.org/en/black-women-a-history-of-struggle-against-male-chauvinism-racism-and-capitalism/>

Black women: A History of Struggle Against Male-chauvinism, Racism and Capitalism



the labour movement. The meeting in the Stadium in fact was the peak point of any action to free Neary.

Neary remained in gaol until after the strike ended in confusion, thanks to the mediators. The stadium orator, Hart, joined the others to extinguish the flames.

The task of Heffer and the other three ‘honest brokers’ was to move everything away from the major issues of the strike, including the release of Neary, to a question of meetings between strikers and union leaders.

Heffer, Frazer and Mahon sailed off to the Isle of Man to get hold of Sir Tom Yates, general secretary of the NUS, who was attending the Trades Union Congress, and discuss with him how to end the strike.

Yates refused to address the strikers but eventually agreed to send Scott, the assistant General Secretary, to Liverpool. Scott spoke to a seamen’s meeting in Liverpool’s Philharmonic Hall on September 9th, with Heffer in the chair.

It was long and stormy. At one point Mahon told the seamen not to be childish.

Heffer said that if they were to stay out till they got the points they were demanding then they would be out for ever.

At one point the meeting almost broke up. It was saved by Heffer.

It happened over the question of union branch meetings. All over the country seamen had been demanding branch meetings which had been refused by officials. Scott was asked to call branch meetings. He said he couldn’t do it.

At that answer seats clicked back with a sound like machine-gun fire. The entire audience rose to leave the hall. Heffer sprang up, holding up his arms like Moses before the River Jordan.

‘Brothers! Brothers!’ he shouted, ‘I have sat through this meeting hoping for a

glimmer of light. Someone has to talk about this thing in a sensible manner. Let’s continue.’

After ten minutes of hard work he persuaded the audience to stay. A shaken Scott pledged that he would try to persuade the officials of the union to countermand the order that no branch meetings of the union would be held before a return to work.

Two days later Yates declared there could be no question of meetings before the strike was over.

The mediators went into action again. This time they succeeded in ending the strike.

Yates agreed to meet them with two members of the NSRM, Barlow and Kean.

Following that meeting and further contact between the mediators and Scott, the Liverpool NSRM committee recommended a return, and Liverpool seamen on September 22 decided to end their strike.

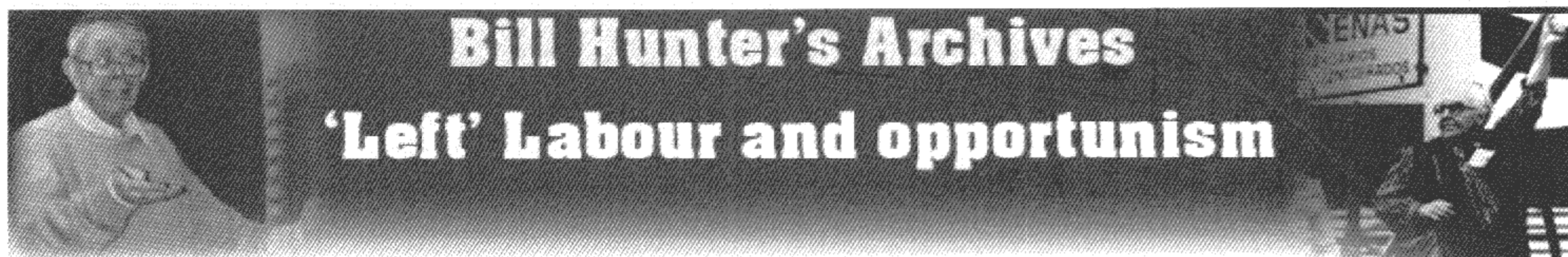
Other ports followed. The strike ended on the terms worked out with the help of the mediators.

After a public declaration that the strike was ended, branch meetings would immediately take place.

The union leaders pledged to fight victimisation and seek a revision of the 1894 Merchant Shipping Act. There was no mention of 44 hours, the £4, or the release of Paddy Neary.

That the seamen’s strength was not completely shattered by this debacle, and that in the following period there were some changes in the union and the election of shop stewards on the ships, is despite the activities of Heffer and the mediation committee in the strike.

So far as Heffer was concerned it marked his emergence as a ‘responsible’ figure.



This is the second piece from a selection of articles by Bill Hunter, *From syndicalism to parliamentary cretinism: the case of Eric Heffer*, (Labour Review, November 1981). Here Bill shows the role that left leaders can play in holding back working class struggles while pledging support for them.

In 1960, Heffer proved his worth to the Establishment and to the reformist bureaucracy.

In the seamen's strike of that year, together with Simon Mahon, the right wing Catholic MP for Bootle, he worked to end this unofficial struggle. The strike lasted for seven weeks over August and September.

It was led by the National Seamen's Reform Movement, a body with support in all British ports. It had been set up to campaign for democratic reform within the notoriously bureaucratic National Union of Seamen.

The NSRM called a national strike when, without consulting the rank and file of the union, the Executive Committee of the NUS made an agreement with the Shipping Federation. They accepted conditions and wages far below what the majority of seamen had been expecting.

The strikers demanded a 44-hour week, a £4 a month increase, and the election of shop stewards to represent them aboard ship. Immediately after the strike began, sixteen seamen were arrested in London. Eight of them were sentenced to one month's imprisonment. Eight others were sentenced to forfeit six days pay. The charge was that by striking they had 'disobeyed a lawful order' under the Merchant Shipping Act of 1894. During the course of the strike there were arrests in every port, with fines and gaolings.

On 13 August, warrants were sworn out for the arrest of the Liverpool leaders of the NSRM for 'intimidation'. In Montreal, 37 British seamen were arrested, again on the charge of 'disobeying a lawful order'.

Among the Liverpool working class, support for the seamen was overwhelming. There were several big demonstrations through the city.

On August 16th, Merseyside dockers struck for a day in sympathy with the seamen and five to six thousand dockers and seamen marched to the Pier Head in



a silent demonstration carrying a banner inscribed: 'Death to the 1894 Act'.

As a result of action by the Cunard Shipping Company, the chairman of the National Seaman's Reform Movement, Paddy Neary a Liverpool seaman, was brought before a court in London for disobeying the order of a judge restraining him from conspiring to incite or inciting Cunard seamen to break their contract of employment.

On 23 August, he was found guilty of contempt of court and taken to Brixton prison. The gaoling of Neary shocked Merseyside. On 24 August, two thousand seamen marched through Liverpool.

The Trades Council and Labour Party called for a demonstration on Tuesday 30 August. On that day there was the biggest demonstration that had ever been seen in Liverpool. At the end of the march the Liverpool Stadium was packed and overflowing.

On the platform was Councillor Heffer, vice president of the Trades Council and Labour Party. Also there was Councillor Hart, Constructional Engineering Union official, ex-Communist Party member and former seaman who had been imprisoned as one of the leaders of the 1947 seaman's strike.

It was Hart who ended his speech amid prolonged and thunderous applause by declaring: 'We must light a flame tonight which will spread throughout the country and burn higher and higher till Brixton gaol opens and Neary is released.'

It must be said for Simon Mahon MP, the only right winger on the platform, that he gave no indication that he was lighting any fires over Paddy Neary. Mahon offered to 'mediate' between the seamen and their union.

His aim was to bring back the strikers, he said 'into the fold of the negotiating machinery of the NTJS, the only body with whom the ship owners will talk'.

Thus the idea of 'mediation' was born. Following this meeting the mediators appeared in the centre of the stage. They were: Simon Mahon, Eric Heffer and Simon Frazer, full time secretary of the Trades Council and Labour Party and a direct link with the bureaucracy at Labour and TUC headquarters.

Hart joined the team in the later stages.

'Honest' broker

The mediating committee had not come into the fight for the purpose of widening the campaign and developing the fire in

(Continued on page 11)