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workers'  
government

# Solidarity

For social ownership of the banks and industry

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## TORIES MOVE AGAINST NEW ARRIVALS



See page 5

# Migrant and local: workers unite!



## What is the Alliance for Workers' Liberty?

Today one class, the working class, lives by selling its labour power to another, the capitalist class, which owns the means of production. Society is shaped by the capitalists' relentless drive to increase their wealth. Capitalism causes poverty, unemployment, the blighting of lives by overwork, imperialism, the destruction of the environment and much else.

Against the accumulated wealth and power of the capitalists, the working class has one weapon: solidarity.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty aims to build solidarity through struggle so that the working class can overthrow capitalism. We want socialist revolution: collective ownership of industry and services, workers' control and a democracy much fuller than the present system, with elected representatives recallable at any time and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

We fight for the labour movement to break with "social partnership" and assert working-class interests militantly against the bosses.

Our priority is to work in the workplaces and trade unions, supporting workers' struggles, producing workplace bulletins, helping organise rank-and-file groups.

We are also active among students and in many campaigns and alliances.



### We stand for:

- Independent working-class representation in politics.
- A workers' government, based on and accountable to the labour movement.
- A workers' charter of trade union rights — to organise, to strike, to picket effectively, and to take solidarity action.
- Taxation of the rich to fund decent public services, homes, education and jobs for all.
- A workers' movement that fights all forms of oppression. Full equality for women and social provision to free women from the burden of housework. Free abortion on request. Full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Black and white workers' unity against racism.
- Open borders.
- Global solidarity against global capital — workers everywhere have more in common with each other than with their capitalist or Stalinist rulers.
- Democracy at every level of society, from the smallest workplace or community to global social organisation.
- Working-class solidarity in international politics: equal rights for all nations, against imperialists and predators big and small.
- Maximum left unity in action, and openness in debate.
- If you agree with us, please take some copies of *Solidarity* to sell — and join us!

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## Thailand: free Somyot!

By Riki Lane

In recent weeks more than 100,000 anti-government protesters have taken to the streets of Bangkok and closed down numerous government offices.

The "yellow shirt" protesters are responding to the Yingluck Shinawatra government's attempt to pass an amnesty bill that could lead to the return from exile of former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, Yingluck's brother.

The amnesty bill is also criticised by left wing elements of the "red shirts" because it does not include prisoners detained under Article 112, including many union and democracy activists, such as Somyot Prueksakasemsuk.

Left-wing pro-worker red shirts characterise the yellow shirts as fascist, anti-democratic, royalists who want to replace elected government with a more directly monarchical rule. Indeed the yellow shirts explicitly call for a military coup and a system where



many members of parliament are nominated by the monarchy and the military.

It may sound a little Maoist, but I think in Thailand there is a struggle between a modernising neo-liberal bourgeoisie versus feudal remnants in co-operation with the military.

The problem for the left is that they have not been able to win the "battle of democracy", so the anti-monarchical, anti-coup, pro-democratic movement is hegemonised by the bourgeoisie, not the working class.

The last three elections have produced Thaksin lead or influenced governments, which have made major reforms that benefit

workers and peasants.

The yellow shirts know they cannot win elections, so they organise reactionary mass mobilisations.

The government knows it cannot rely on the military to put down the yellow shirts, and also works to avoid violent confrontation.

We need to support the democratic anti-yellow shirts struggle, while also helping build the left wing forces that can shift the terrain of the battles to working class issues.

Recently in Australia, state and national union peak councils adopted motions supporting Somyot and other political prisoners. These were tabled at the International Trade Union

Confederation (ITUC) regional meeting in Bangkok last week, during the yellow shirts mobilisations.

Motions similar to the one below could usefully be put to trade union meetings in the UK.

1. We express our concern and opposition to the use of repressive laws in Thailand to stifle democratic debate and the right of people and workers to freedom of expression. We, as part of the worldwide labour movement, pledge our support for international working people's solidarity and for the continuing struggle for democracy in Thailand.

We call for the:

- Immediate release of Somyot Prueksakasemsuk
- Immediate release of all political prisoners in Thailand
- Abolition of Article 112 (The Lese Majeste law)

2. To organise an ITUC Asia Pacific delegation to visit Somyot in jail and to meet with his support group in Bangkok.

- [thaipoliticalprisoners.wordpress.com/](http://thaipoliticalprisoners.wordpress.com/)
- [aawl.org.au/](http://aawl.org.au/)

## Libya: crisis and the constitution

By Martyn Hudson

Ongoing struggles between the Libyan government and militias may either be resolved or worsen on the 15 December. That is the date the government has set for the full incorporation of the militias — which have been at low level war with the government — into the army.

Prime Minister Ali Zeidan had the militias on the pay roll; on 15 December that pay will stop.

The crisis is acute; the Amazigh and Tibu tribes of the south have respectively stopped the gas and the petroleum supplies to the north.

At the same time militias have stopped or are severely restricting the export of oil from the coastal refineries of Misrata and Brega. The occupations of the ports have been condemned by the government and by workers who are intimidated by militias. Up till now the militias have refused to surrender their arms to the government.

The brief kidnap of the prime minister by militia forces a month ago and

clashes in Benghazi between rival militias are signs of looming civil war.

A parliamentary struggle over the constitution is also significant. There is a deadlock between secular and Islamic parliamentary groups on proposals, wording and the whole nature of the post-Qadaffi state.

In November there were large-scale clashes between the government and the Islamist forces of Ansar al-Sharia. Also clashes in Tripoli; 31 anti-militia demonstrators were shot down, while protesting at the continuing presence and influence of the Misrata brigades in the city.

### AMNESTY

There is a strong feeling in Libya that remnants of the old regime have been incorporated into the new power networks. That there has been an effective amnesty of pro-regime supporters.

However a civil war would necessarily be limited if it does happen, by the fact that the militias are so diverse in intention, political programme, and geography. This diversity would preclude a united

fighting front against the government.

The Amazigh and the Bibu want to secure minority tribal rights under the constitution. Other tribes want some safety from the vengeance of the militias as some southern tribes were militarily and ideologically supportive of the old regime.

Other militias including the Misrata brigades are trying to protect their legacy of being at the forefront of the struggle and being those who suffered most during the war. But they also want a political stake in the new state and federal rights.

For many civilians the Misrata brigades have turned into murderous gangsters. Their massacre of unarmed protestors in Tripoli has gained them little but a deadline to disarm or dissolve.

Many of the militias are now also controlled by the Islamists which wasn't the case during the war itself.

If the deadline of 15 December passes without the dissolution of the militias the most likely outcome is a continuation into the future of militia gangsterism, per-

secution and control creating what might amount to a failed state more reminiscent of Somalia than its neighbours in Tunisia and Egypt.

The victory of a secular and liberal-democratic constitution in Libya would be a significant if precarious step forwards and limit the imposition of Islamic law on the state — a prospect that many in both Benghazi and Tripoli find abhorrent.

The shift from militia to workers' control on the pipelines and in the ports would be a massive development but the workers movement is fragmented geographically along the coast and the cities and in is small in comparison to the social weight of the militia.

The expulsion of the Misrata militias from Tripoli and the restoration of some form of law in the oil ports would be beneficial for the development of secular and workers forces.

A new constitution could ensure not just the liberty of the cities but also the minority rights of the peoples of Libya and across the Sahara and Maghreb.



# Nurses: demand 4:1!

By Angela Dean

**The 4:1 nurse ratio campaign argues nurses cannot look after an unlimited number of patients without suffering.**

To ensure there is a safe number of nurses on shift there needs to be a mandatory patient to nurse ratio (4:1). Without that bottom line, financial pressures will always lead to reductions in nurses on shift.

NHS nurses have to look after up to 14 patients at a time. One person can't even identify the needs of that many people, never mind meet them. Nursing practice becomes limited to giving out medications, while the ongoing care and assessment of the patient is carried out by unqualified healthcare assistants.

Healthcare assistants are not adequately trained, supported or paid to be able to carry out this responsibility safely.

Research indicates mortality can drop by at least 14% if a high nurse to patient ratio is implemented.

The demand has been met in some US states and Australia and nurses have found that patient care and the well being of nurses have both improved dramatically.

The government is simultaneously starving the NHS of money while blaming staff in the NHS for the resulting decline in standards

of care. They want to cut the wages bill. But wages — and wages paid at decent rates for all staff — *should* be the bulk of spending in the NHS!

Good healthcare is a joint effort, and a multi disciplinary approach is needed to ensure good outcomes, but the nurse is the lynchpin.

The nurse delivers almost all of the practical care. A healthcare assistant may be highly skilled and experienced, but will lack the authority to alert doctors to deteriorating conditions, or take part in emotionally difficult conversations with patients and families. Without adequate nursing staff warning signs are missed.

Lack of nurses has a profoundly dehumanising effect on patients and staff.

A recent Unison staff survey indicated that three in five nurses skipped breaks, and over half regularly did unpaid overtime. Hungry and tired nurses do not have time and energy to stop and talk to patients.

Nurses in this situation will try to make themselves less available. A patient reported to me, that in all the time he was an inpatient, only twice did staff make any eye contact with him. Staff would come to "do things" to him and walk away without saying a word.

He was in continual pain, unable to stand, and unable to sleep, and had no-one to



**New South Wales nurses struck for the 4:1 ratio and won**

help him. This is inhuman and degrading treatment. It is torture. And yet it is happening to patients in every NHS hospital.

Everywhere there are nurses going home, having not eaten a meal for over 12 hours, exhausted, unable to relate to their families, feeling that they have failed their patients.

In Unison's survey three-quarters said they did not feel they had the time to deliver safe and compassionate care to their patients.

## BURNOUT

**19.7% said that situations that happened in Mid-Staffordshire Trust were occurring in their Trust.**

Nurses, so psychologically damaged by working in under resourced departments, can no longer relate to their patients. This "burn out" syndrome can affect every aspect of a nurse's life leading to psychiatric ill-

nesses and relationship breakdown. The experience of being looked after by someone who is unable to recognise you as another human being is terrifying.

On the 4:1 website, nurses in California, and in Victoria Australia both point out that campaigning and winning this demand is about advocacy and solidarity between nurses and patients.

It isn't the guilt-ridden nurses who are the problem in some NHS hospitals, but the cuts in funding by government.

The miracle is, that despite the worsening conditions, the vast majority of patients still feel safe and well cared for in the NHS.

And the good news is that the 4:1 campaign is making progress; Unison and Unite have both signed up to the campaign, and the RCN are in talks about it.

But it will take more than speeches and motions at union conferences to achieve this. The campaign will need to be taken in every hospital, and every ward. It will need patients to stand with their nurses in demanding this.

The campaign to win the demand was backed up by strike action in Victoria, Australia, and that's what it might take here.

**This is the demand that has the potential to transform the NHS.**

• 4to1.org.uk

## Job cuts at Npower

### Expropriate the energy industry!

By Luke Hardy

**Energy giant Npower has said it will make 1,460 staff redundant. Their jobs will be outsourced overseas.**

Offices in Stoke, Peterlee, Thornaby in Teesside and Oldbury in the West Midlands are being shut. Other affected sites are in the north east and Leeds.

540 office workers will be transferred to Capita.

Workers being made redundant are back office workers; the workers being transferred are call centre staff. There may be more redundancies, sell offs and outsourcing, which will effect thousands more staff.

Despite Npower's German parent group RWE being in trouble, profits are still being made in Britain. The CEO Paul Massara is still in line for a £150,000 bonus on top of his large salary.

Jobs are going to workers in India (Tata Consulting Services) because those workers get paid less than a fifth of the UK wage. Kevin Coyne from Unite has called it "naked greed".

The three unions at Npower — Unite, GMB, and Unison — have put out statements condemning the job losses and are discussing possible industrial action. However as confidence among the workforce is low, a key role can be played by campaigners taking on Npower in a visible public way.

Putting on pressure over the job losses as well as highlighting the company's tax avoidance, rising energy prices and its part in the destruction of the environment is all necessary. There has already been a demonstration outside the central London office in Threadneedle Street. We need protests at other sites.

This will help workers see they are not fighting

this alone and cut against a racist narrative that Indian workers are to blame instead of politicians, bosses and the capitalist system.

Exploitation may be sharper in India but workers in Britain have common interests with workers everywhere, against bosses regardless of nationality.

The Labour Party has recently been bashing the Big Six energy companies over rising prices. They have promised a 20 month price freeze whilst the big six energy companies are broken up. The coalition have struggled for a response.

The Big Six including Npower have lobbied the government to remove certain green obligations and levies. The government has now caved and agreed to ease the timetable on the obligation to fit insulation and to pay some green levies out of general taxation.

This does not address either profiteering or job losses. The unions should pressure Ed Miliband and Labour to condemn these job losses and demand immediate public ownership of Npower and the whole energy sector.

There are practical things socialists, environmental campaigners and trade unionists can do now to support the workers. Organise demos outside Npower offices, power stations and depots. Pass motions, have meetings and send out petitions, linking job cuts with fuel poverty and environmental degradation.

**We need to defend every job and at the same time campaign for social ownership of the energy sector.**



## Labour "opt-in" plan can be blocked

By Rhodri Evans

**The Executive of the Unite union meets from 8 December. It will decide the union's attitude on Ed Miliband's drive to change union members' Labour political-levy payments to "opt-in".**

Jim Kelly, chair of the London and eastern region of Unite, told the *Guardian* on 3 December: "Our executive has got to keep a collective voice, and that... has to be expressed through the block vote at a decision-making party conference where unions keep 50% of the vote...."

"If unions stand together, with half the votes at Labour's conference, and supported by many constituency parties worried about the severe threat to the party's finances from Ed Miliband's proposals, as

well as the negative impact on the left within the party, then the link can be successfully defended."

The United Left grouping, which holds a majority on the Unite Executive, met on Saturday 30 November. Unite general secretary Len McCluskey was to due to come to the meeting and speak about the "opt-in" issue, but didn't show. Unite assistant general secretary Steve Turner spoke instead.

Turner said that the "red line" issues are the same for all the affiliated unions, that the affiliated unions will put a common position to Ray Collins (who is charged by Miliband with working out details), and that he expects the Executive to ratify that stand.

Up to now, all the affiliated unions have opposed the "opt-in" plan outright

— with the exception of a few maverick right-wing unions and... Unite. So Turner's speech marked progress.

Collins is scheduled to finish consultations by 24 December and then produce proposals to go to a special Labour Party conference in the spring. It is certain that the proposals will include some fudge or face-saver, rather than be simply "no change", but there is now a real chance of making the fudge relatively harmless.

The *Guardian* on 3 December carried a report based, as we understand it, on "leaks" from Collins's discussions supplied by Blairites who fear too soft a fudge and hope through the leak to stir up pressure for hard proposals to weaken the union link.

Maybe trade unionists

will be asked to "opt in" to the political levy, or not, only when joining the union, and existing payers will continue on the basis of "opt out". Maybe plans will be eased in over five years.

The *Guardian* also reports that Collins backs the long-voiced demand of Labour right-wingers that the union vote at Labour Party conference be cut to below its present level of 50%. There is a danger of "opt-in" being introduced for new union members only, the number of levy-payers thus being gradually reduced, and that reduction being used to cut the vote.

**"Defend The Link" is campaigning to keep the current level of union representation, and against rule-changes imposed on the unions from outside.**

• defendthelink.wordpress.com



# Future unclear for Left Unity

## Left

By Ellen Bates



**Left Unity, launched in late 2012 by ex-Respect members Kate Hudson and Andrew Burgin, held its founding conference on 30 November.**

The one-day conference was to debate and decide the safer spaces policy, aims, constitution, electoral strategy and campaigning priorities of the organisation.

How did it do? The conference voted through a constitution and founding platform statement, but political debate was thin.

The time allocated for the platform debate was ridiculous; a three-minute proposing speech by each platform, followed by twenty minutes general debate. The two key platforms within LU were the, explicitly working-class, common-ownership, Socialist Platform (SP) and the broad-left, hoping-to-unite-everyone-to-the-left-of-Labour Left Party Platform (LPP).

The Left Platform won by 295 to 101 votes, and the Socialist Platform was defeated by 216 to 122 votes. There was real support for the LPP at the conference, and this result was not a behind the scenes bureaucratic stitch-up, but the debate left a lot to be desired.

The chair argued that it was impossible to ensure a balance of debate across all the platforms and picked seven speakers from the floor on the criterion of being young, women, or BME. The first five of the seven speakers were for the Left Party Platform. A number of us went to ask Standing Orders to step in and ensure a balanced debate.

Soraya Lawrence from the Socialist Platform put a procedural motion to take three speakers from other platforms to balance the debate, and that was accepted by conference.

Still no speaker from the Socialist Platform was called, so the second most popular platform, with 36% backing, got no time from the floor.

In speeches for the LPP, we got little reference to the con-



Participants at LU's founding conference

tent of the platform, but generic speeches in favour of socialism, and calls for a platform that could unite the whole left — revolutionaries, reformists, feminists, greens, anarchists, and autonomists. (Ex-SWPer Tom Walker, who made that call, failed to mention which anarchists he planned to unite around a platform which called for the democratisation of the state in the interests of the majority).

Bianca Todd delivered a speech a Unison witchhunter would have been proud of, stating the debate had been skewed towards the LPP because women, young people, and BME people supported the LPP and so SP should stop complaining and take a look at themselves. As one of the young women who supported the SP and had been arguing for a more balanced debate, I was not impressed.

The LPP's movers accepted amendments to their platform from Camden LU, moved by Ken Loach, which incorporated many (not all) of the left-wing ideas from the Socialist Platform somewhere or other into their text.

An amendment from the Lambeth branch to designate the platform adopted at the conference as *only* a platform, not a statement of aims, passed. A left-wing statement of aims also

proposed by the Lambeth Branch was defeated.

This had the perverse result of giving priority to a statement of aims proposed as part of the LU constitution which codified all the least left-wing trends of the LPP and defined LU by a "belief in the benefits of cooperation and community ownership" and "a democratically planned economy... within which all enterprises, whether privately owned, co-operatives, or under public ownership, operate in ways that promote the needs of the people".

The conference had opened with an attempt to get it to endorse a 14-page "Safe Spaces" policy, circulated only a few days before, with no chance to amend, one short speech for, and no debate. Ruth Cashman of Lambeth LU was able to challenge the standing orders committee and get an overwhelming majority to remit the policy to the next conference.

The rest of Left Unity conference consisted of a long debate on constitutional amendments. Many criticised the chaos and inaccessibility of the constitutional debates. A move to elect a new National Coordinating Group fell by 110 to 228. The old NCG remains in office.

All debate on campaigning and electoral strategy fell off the agenda. Two inspiring speeches, from the Tres Cosas campaign and victimised NHS union activist Charlotte Monro, ended the day.

Left Unity now goes forward with a founding "platform" and constitutional "aims" which contradict each other.

Criticisms and notes of caution about rushing into an electoral project without a clear political basis or well-established activities outside election time were not heard due to time constraints.

The cumulative decisions of conference allow the incumbent leadership to propose anything they like as the political stance of the organisation, by drawing as they wish from the amended LPP and the adopted "aims" statement.

**Some local groups are building healthy local campaigns and unity initiatives. They will need to assert themselves to prevent what looks like a probable rightward and electoralist drift by Left Unity.**

• More: [bit.ly/lu131130](http://bit.ly/lu131130)

## Prioritise clarity over rhetorical flourish

### Letters



**In the discussion arising from Sean Matgamna's introduction to Workers' Liberty 3/1: Marxism and Religion, there are perhaps two issues that need a little more debate.**

The first is the extent to which Islamism is a "modern" movement or the revival of a centuries-old movement. The former is often put as an explanation of Islamism as straightforwardly the product of modern Western imperialism, which is simplistic and inaccurate. But it is important not to counter one simplistic view with its mirror-image. Islamism has many modern features, and while it has centuries-old roots and a life of its own, it is shaped and popularised in response to Western governments' military adventures against mainly-Muslim countries. More discussion is needed about the balance of modernism and revivalism in Islamism.

The second issue is the role of "envy" or "covetousness". There is Muslim scholarship, and there are writings by Engels, which describe envy and covetousness of, for example, nomadic Bedouins towards richer townspeople in the Islamic world in the past. But this is different from the assertion in Sean's article that "much of the Islamic world" now looks with envy and covetousness at advanced capitalist societies. For sure, there may be resentment — quite justifiably so — against imperialist oppression and inequalities in wealth. But "resentment" and "envy" are not the same thing. Neither is it helpful to slip from "Islamists" to "much of the Islamic world". I have not yet seen a justification of the description in Sean's article of "envy" and "covetousness" that convinces me: if there is not one, then that passage may be an unreasonable generalisation.

Perhaps it is a sloppy use of language. Certainly, it is the

overall argument of the article that matters, and that overall argument is right. And certainly, scrutiny of many left groups' back catalogue would reveal similarly unfortunate turns of phrase. Moreover, there is a tendency to exaggerate the importance of language by people wanting to scandalise an article rather than argue with its politics; and by schools of thought such as post-modernism, which places language on a pedestal above the ideas, and even the material facts, that language describes. But language does matter.

It matters that it is as accurate as it can be; that it is as clear as it can be, to avoid multiple interpretations; and it matters that it avoids words or constructions which alienate or insult groups of people who we wish to engage with. In some places, this falls down on these.

### PHRASE

**Most notoriously, it does so in the phrase "desert tribes of primitive Muslim simplicity and purity eyeing a rich and decadent walled city and sharpening their knives", with critics placing particular emphasis on the use of the word "primitive" and the imagery of "sharpening their knives".**

The author uses "primitive" to mean that the "simplicity and purity" he refers to is that of a previous, original age; critics say that, placed next to "Muslim", it is a racist slur. Does "primitive" mean literally the same as "original"? Yes. Does it in today's usage carry a more subjective, insulting implication than "original"? Yes, it undoubtedly does. (A comparison — not from the article — might be the word "retarded". It is a synonym of "delayed", but used to describe a person, is a much more pejorative term.) The author may not intend "primitive Muslim virtue and simplicity" — and the sentence that it is part of — as an insult, but he should not be surprised if people take it as such.

It is noticeable that the AWL's many critics did not notice

this supposedly obvious racism when the article was published in 2006, and many of those denouncing it now are applying the worst possible reading to the phrases used. But the wording is loose enough that it is possible to read it to have an insulting, even racist, meaning without being a sectarian mischief-maker.

The reference to "sharpening their knives" has been seen as a "trope" — an image often used by anti-Muslim bigots to create fear of a violent Muslim threat and therefore best avoided by opponents of anti-Muslim bigotry. A defence would be that just because bigots use a particular phrase or image, that does not necessarily make it bigoted or racist when anti-racists use it. True enough. But the AWL has rightly cautioned against using tropes in other situations, for example anti-semitic tropes used by some when discussing the Israel/Palestine issue.

We can (try to) insist that readers engage with what an article actually says. But when a passage can legitimately be read in more than one way, we have neither the right nor the power to insist that readers (especially those unfamiliar with the author or the AWL's other material) read it in the way we want them to. It might be better if readers dealt with ambiguous meanings in an article by pausing and seeking out further reading and investigating the context of the author and the organisation, but that is not the political culture we live in.

The AWL argues for an vital set of politics that swims against the stream of both capitalist ideology and the mainstream left. There is no guarantee against ambiguity or malicious misrepresentation, but greater clarity can minimise the likelihood of it and isolate those who try it.

**The AWL should say what needs to be said: it should do so in a way that prioritises clarity over rhetorical flourish.**

Janine Booth, east London





Newspapers like the *Daily Express*, *Daily Mail*, and *Daily Star* have maintained a constant campaign of racist abuse towards immigrants. The labour movement must provide an alternative politics based on anti-racism and solidarity.

# Migrant and local: workers unite!

**Six weeks before Romanian and Bulgarian workers will get unrestricted access to European labour markets, David Cameron has announced new benefit restrictions on all EU migrants.**

The initiative is, to borrow the word used by European Commissioner Laszlo Andor, “nasty”. It is also, to judge it in terms of bourgeois policy-making efficacy, nonsensical.

Under the proposals, newly arrived EU jobseekers will not be able to claim any housing benefit ever, will not be entitled to out-of-work benefits for the first three months of residency, will not be able to claim benefits for more than six months. A new minimum earnings threshold will be introduced before which benefits can be claimed.

A further measure — that any EU migrant sleeping rough or begging will be deported and barred from re-entry for 12 months unless they have a job to go to — is specifically aimed at Roma migrants.

This last proposal is the most obviously “nasty” message — “Roma go home” — but the other measures are as bad. EU workers will be second-class workers; they will pay tax but will not be entitled to make any call on public finances if they lose their job! They will be tolerated as long as they do not fall foul of the ordinary and inevitable uncertainties of being a worker in a capitalist economy.

These proposals set up divisions between migrant and local workers which can only boost fearfulness and a sense of helplessness among all workers, in or out of work. What does the future hold? Whatever it is the only thing we can do about it is to turn on our fellow workers.

A nasty policy, but also cynical. Cameron has no evidence to back up the claim that there are very many “benefit tourists” in the UK or many more getting ready to come to the UK.

The most recent research (from 2009) shows EU migrants are 60% less likely to claim benefits than local workers! The government has even acknowledged that few Romanians and Bulgarians want to come to the UK. The big migration from those countries (to EU countries other than the UK!) was in 2007, when Bulgaria and Romania first joined the EU.

These measures arise out of competition between the political parties in the UK. The Tories are bothered about four things.

- With waning poll ratings, the Tories are looking to the European elections in May and to compete with the anti-immigration stance of UKIP, which scored 19% in a recent poll (Observer/Opinium). Unfortunately for the Tories, but much more unfortunately for migrants, the Tories’ anti-immigration stance has only increased support for UKIP.

- The Tories also want to outbid Labour on immigration. Shadow Home Secretary Yvette Cooper is just the latest Labour politician to say the last Labour government allowed immigration to grow “too far and too fast”. Even before Cameron’s announcements, Cooper was pushing the government to act on “benefit tourism”. Labour has fully entered this vile bidding war on immigration.

The Tories have been under sustained pressure from a right-wing tabloid xenophobic campaign against a predicted “wave” of Romanian and Bulgarian migrants. Because there is nothing the Tories can legally do about the relaxing of labour market controls on 1 January, they are reduced to talking tough and acting tough.

## COMMITTED

**Back in 2010 the Tories committed themselves to bring net migration down to fewer than 100,000 per year by 2015. That is not happening. They cast around for alternative ways to be seen to be on top of immigration.**

In addition to the benefit crackdown, the government is rushing through a new Immigration Bill which will introduce many new points for immigration checks.

The new legislation will turn landlords, bank tellers, and workers at the DVLA into immigration police. All will be legally obliged to check the immigration status of people they come into contact with. The same Bill proposes a health care charge for non-EU legal migrants. The Bill will also restrict circumstances in which people who have been threatened with deportation can appeal their deportation.

The immediate effects of this bill will be to force many people into homelessness, or the over-crowded over-priced accommodation of criminal landlords. It will drive thousands of people further underground, into precarious employment, and a marginal existence.

Only better off workers and students from non-EU countries will be able to afford to come to the UK.

Nearly 50% people who lose their right to stay in the UK

win it back on appeal. With the new Bill those people could now fall foul of the structurally poor-decision making of the UK immigration authorities. These difficulties will be compounded by widespread cuts to legal aid.

Will we see a hike in forced deportations? Maybe, but it is difficult to see how any government could manage to, or afford to, deport the estimated 600,000 or more people who have, for one reason or another (often the failings of the state bureaucracy), no legal status.

For just this reason many bourgeois politicians were advocating amnesty for these migrants not so long ago. Just this summer, Boris Johnson re-raised the idea of an amnesty. The call was accompanied by offensive elitism — “ambulance-chasing lawyers” prevented most deportations, he said — but at least he was being realistic about the government’s capacity to reverse historical immigration, settlement, and integration of hundreds of thousands of migrants into the UK.

In this new mood of anti-migrant demagoguery — where migration is used to distract from a relentless drive against all working-class people — there is now no serious talk about amnesty.

Nick Clegg, in a rush to be indistinguishable from his Tory partners, has said the Lib Dems were wrong to call for an amnesty before the election.

So we cannot be complacent. The political mood *may* turn into a real drive to deport thousands more, the people who are long-time workmates and neighbours. At the same time we should remember the thousands who are already victims of “involuntary deportations” every year.

All over Europe anti-migrant politics is growing. In polls a third of French voters say they would consider voting for the far right Front National. The Swiss People’s Party is now the largest party in the federal assembly with 28.9% support. It calls for the anti-Islamisation of Europe. In Austria the Freedom Party is more popular than ever. And the openly neo-Nazi Golden Dawn last year won 7% of votes.

British politics has some way to go before such blatant racism and xenophobia becomes “mainstream”, respectable, and rooted in day-to-day party politics.

**But we are not so far away. The left and labour movement must combat every aspect of this anti-migrant drive.**



# Zero-hours contracts “keep wage costs down”



**Hovis bakery workers struck against zero-hours contracts, and won.**

**By Andy Forse**

**Research by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, a human resources consultancy firm, attempts to put a positive spin on the proliferation of zero-hours contracts.**

The report concludes that employers mainly use zero-hours contracts for flexibility, and claims that most workers are satisfied with this arrangement as it provides flexibility for them as well. It suggests that, on the whole, if there is an issue surrounding zero-hours contracts, it is to do with the way they are managed, rather than the type of contract itself.

Why would workers report being “satisfied” with zero-hours contracts? For many workers, zero-hours contracts are the only option if they need a more flexible working arrangement (to cater for childcare responsibilities, for example). So workers’ “satisfaction” with zero-hours contracts may only be in contrast to the alternative of not being able to work at all.

The report states that employers say they want a flexible workforce to meet fluctuations in demand. What they really mean is they want flexibility from their workforce without having to pay a decent wage for it. Things like flexi-time, annual hours, and part-time contracts could also be used to achieve flexibility, but none of these serve the conveniences of the employer as much as zero-hours contracts, where maximum expense and inconvenience is off-loaded onto workers. According to the report, 20% of bosses say zero-hours contracts are part of a “broader strat-

egy to keep wage costs down”, and 28% use them to “provide cost-efficiency”.

The arbitration service ACAS suggests that zero-hours contracts should be used to meet short-term staffing needs, but routinely, entire workforces are employed on a zero-hours basis. This can mean staff are left competing for shifts, causing insecurity that stresses workers, but stretches the profit margin for their bosses. Cultivating competition and individualism in this way weakens the bonds of co-operation and solidarity that are essential for building the foundations of workplace organisation and struggle. Anyone found to be a “bad apple”, a dissenter, or suspected of getting ideas about class struggle, can easily be squeezed off the rota at the manager’s convenience.

As use of zero-hours contracts becomes commonplace, young and inexperienced workers will have learned not to question them, because they have never had a better deal. Zero-hours contracts are most common in the low-wage economy where their use is part of a toolkit of stingy and oppressive policies.

Socialists can raise awareness of how concessions are won by highlighting victories like the Hovis bakery strike in the summer, when workers forced their employer to put them on permanent contracts with optional overtime and secured a commitment to use zero-hours contracts only as a last resort.

Workers will be intimidated by their hostile environment and worry about being shunted off the books if they kick up a fuss. Capitalism has a never-ending creativity for finding ways to squeeze, drain, and exploit people for profit. Precarious workers must be equally creative in finding ways to organise. We can help empower them by providing political and material solidarity with their attempts to organise, suggesting strategies and tactics, and linking them up with other groups of workers

**Let the zero-hours workforce know there is a better deal out there for them if they fight! Support their struggles and push the bosses and managers back.**

## Amazon’s UK “slave camp”

**By Ollie Moore**

**Workers employed in the warehouses of online retail giant Amazon are paid poverty wages, work 50-hour weeks, and walk up to 11 miles during the course of a shift in which they are expected collect one order every 33 seconds.**

A number of undercover reports have exposed hyper-exploitative conditions in the warehouses, which employ an extra 15,000 staff to deal with the Christmas rush. One worker told the BBC that conditions in the warehouses were comparable to “a slave camp”.

Workers’ productivity rates are monitored, and they face disciplinary sanctions if their work levels drop too low. Professor Michael Marmot of University College London said that the conditions faced by the workers increase the risk of physical and mental illness.

**The GMB union has some members in Amazon warehouses, but says the employer is so hostile to workers organising that it is forced to operate “underground”.**

## Walmart workers’ “Black Friday” strikes

**By Ira Berkovic**

**Strikes and protests were held at 1,500 Walmart stores across America on “Black Friday” (the Friday after Thanksgiving), 29 November.**

The actions were part of a long-running campaign by unions, workers’ centres, and labour-movement coalitions against low pay, union busting, and exploitation at Walmart stores. The number of stores which saw protests more than trebled from the 2012 Black Friday day of action, although some estimates suggest the number of Walmart employees involved (rather than workers and activists from other workplaces and areas) did not increase. Many attribute this to the scale of victimisation and intimidation Walmart workers face for trying to organise.

**Josh Eidelson, a journalist for Salon magazine who covers labour issues, said: “The National Labor Relations Board has announced that it’s ready to issue a complaint, roughly the equivalent of an indictment, against Walmart for a number of allegations involving the company’s efforts to restrain people from going on strike.”**

# How we

Outsourced cleaning, catering, and security workers at the University of London have been fighting for sick pay, holiday, and pension equality with directly-employed staff through the “Tres Cosas” (“Three Things”) campaign, since they won the London Living Wage in 2012. On 27 and 28 November, they struck to win those demands, as well as to stop job cuts at the Garden Halls, and to win recognition of their union, the Independent Workers’ Union of Great Britain (IWGB).

Workers mounted pickets at the university’s flagship Senate House building from 6am on both strike days, and succeeded in turning away delivery vans, dozens of students, and some staff from using the building’s facilities.

The strike succeeded in winning significant concessions on sick pay and holidays, bringing workers employed by Balfour Beatty onto terms much closer to those of directly-employed staff.

*Solidarity* spoke to an IWGB University of London branch officer about the strike and the campaign.

**We’re very happy with how the strike went. We worked so hard to get the members out on strike. There was a real feeling of unity amongst us. People have lost their fear.**

The next time we strike, or take other action, workers won’t have that sense of fear or intimidation any more. Outsourced workers are worried about victimisation if they stand up for their rights. They are often migrant workers, and think they don’t have the same legal rights as other workers or directly-employed staff. The strike we’ve had shows that we have power and can take action

This was our first ever strike of outsourced workers at the University of London, and there’s a mixture of feelings about the results. We’ve won some very important concessions on sick pay and holidays, but it’s not a total victory. Our aim is to win full equality between outsourced workers and the directly-employed staff, and we haven’t won that yet. We also want to stop job cuts at the Garden Halls, and win union recognition, so there’s still a lot to fight for. The strike mainly involved Balfour Beatty workers, but we also have Aramark employees in our union branch. We’re fighting for full equality.

The most positive thing coming out of the strike was the display of unity we showed as a workforce and a union branch. We’ve won a partial victory, but in some ways the unity we’ve shown is a bigger victory and achievement.

The university and Balfour Beatty have negotiated with Unison, and they’re claiming credit. They’re taking advantage of our action. I think Unison felt under great pressure because of our action. We built a union branch of over 100 workers in less than six months, Unison don’t meaningfully represent outsourced workers at the university.

We’ll discuss the next steps for the dispute within our union branch and within Tres Cosas campaign meetings. We’re very clear that our demands haven’t been met and that the fight must continue. We’re very grateful for all the support we’ve received from other workers, trade union branches, and students, including donations to our strike funds, and we hope that solidarity continues.

We have some directly-employed workers in our union branch. They struck on 31 October and 3 December alongside UCU, Unison, and Unite members as part of the Higher Education workers’ pay dispute. We support that dispute, and we’ll be visiting their picket lines in solidarity.

Our strike, and our campaign, sends a signal to other low-paid workers, other precarious workers, and other migrant workers that we have power and that, if we are united, we can act.

**Through organising and taking action, we won the London Living Wage, we’ve won some concessions on sick pay and holidays, and we’re still fighting for equality.**



# Workers lost their fear



## Voices from the picket line

**“After the strike, I’m very optimistic. I’m very proud of all the members who struck, and everyone who came to support us.**

“We had a great turnout, even at 6am. It’s important to remember that this is a strike. It’s a new stage for the campaign. We’ve had lots of protests, but a strike is something different.

“Some managers made faces and ironic gestures at us, but you can tell that management are shaken.” — **Sonia Chura, Vice-Chair, IWGB University of London branch**

**“3 Cosas is a model for the whole labour movement!**

“This is not about downtrodden workers asking for a ‘fairer’ deal, this strike is about power, about saying they



refuse to be invisible any longer - workers make the university run and it is workers who should run the university!” — **Daniel Cooper, University of London Union Vice President**

**“It’s a very militant strike and demonstration. We’ve turned away a lot of delivery vans, which is fantastic.**

“We’re more determined than ever to keep building for victory. Cooperation and solidarity, between outsourced workers, directly-employed workers, and students, will be key.

“We’ve supported student struggles, and they’re here supporting us. That solidarity will be essential to winning victory.” — **Alberto Durango, President, IWGB**

**“The strike was remarkable. It was solid, with the vast majority of IWGB members out on strike and many on the picket lines.**

“Far from a token protest, it caused major disruption. Deliveries for the Foundation Day celebration with Princess Anne were turned away, and managers were forced to take out the rubbish in the morning.

“Up until now, the University and Balfour Beatty were not interested in negotiating seriously. Today they looked taken aback at the strength of the strike, and the support it received from staff and students. Workers will be back tomorrow morning for another day of picketing and this dispute is only really beginning.” — **Liam McNulty, IWGB member and 3 Cosas campaign supporter**

### New Unionism 2014

A conference for activists

**Saturday 22 February,  
11am-5pm**

**University of London Union, Malet  
Street, WC1E 7HY**

How can we defend ourselves against the bosses’ attacks, rebuild working-class power and transform the labour movement, including trade unions, into a force which can change society?

This conference will discuss and seek to learn from the experience of organising the unorganised, in Britain and other countries, in history and today. It will hear from working-class activists on the frontline of today’s class battles, and of struggles to reshape trade unions. It will discuss issues including the changing shape of capitalism and the working class, the struggles of young, migrant and women workers, organising in the private sector, outsourcing, fighting in bureaucratised trade unions and “revolutionary unionism”, approaches to working-class politics and much more.

Hosted by Workers’ Liberty



# Religious glue for right-wing politics

By Martin Thomas

**In Solidarity** recently we have discussed how political Islam can be both a “sigh of the oppressed” and a reactionary, right-wing movement.

The Christian right in the USA shows the same paradox more extravagantly. Thomas Frank, in his study of the rise of the right in Kansas, found that in Olathe, a poor Kansas City suburb which is a bastion of the right, “each of the conservatives I spent time with was either a blue-collar worker or married to one”

He talked with one of the leaders of the right, Kay O’Connor, a working-class woman.

She supports tax cuts for the rich. “Progressive taxation is theft, plain and simple”. She supports voucher schools, explicitly on the grounds that they will “produce good workers who will work for lower wages” and thus help business expand.

Her political programme does not even include the sort of social demagoguery — government programmes for jobs, controls over capitalists — which the far right of the 1930s used.

Although she is, as far as Frank could see, the dominant character in her household, with her husband very subordinate, she believes women should be submissive and prides herself on being “a happy captive”.

How do these paradoxes work? Racism may serve as the glue to keep some of the US radical right together, but Frank reckons that is not true for them all, and not true in Kansas. Kansas right-wingers see themselves as in the tradition of campaigners for the abolition of slavery, like John Brown, and the 1960s civil rights movement.

In his book *Pity The Billionaire*, Frank describes the Tea Party as more secular, more concerned for economic rather than moral doctrine, and having its base somewhat higher in the economic scale, than the Kansas right.

But at the centre of the varied spectrum of the US plebeian right, as Frank describes it, is a religious idea. There is a natural order of society, defined by the Bible, the free market, and the US constitution. “It is God’s finger that wrote the Constitution. This is God’s country; these are God’s rights” (Glenn Beck).

At some vaguely-perceived point in the past, that holy trio



Religious intersects with politics on the American right

prevailed. Society was maybe tough, but good. It has been spoiled by “the liberal elite”. Now the people are rising up against “the liberal elite”.

There are odd echoes here of the “privilege theory” current in some left-wing circles. The blight in society is that ordinary honest-to-goodness people are victims of “the elites” with their reading, their smooth talk, their put-downs, their cosmopolitanism, their un-Americanism.

“Harvard hates America”, as one right-wing best-seller puts it. The answer is to hearken to the simple truths which naturally well up from the ordinary, honest-to-goodness people.

And the US right “knows” how those ordinary honest-to-goodness people get the simple truths. They are in tune with God, and so in tune with the “real” America of small business and free-market competition, uncorrupted by the fast-talking ideologues of East and West Coasts.

This construct also allows politicians who are Harvard graduates and East Coast insiders to lead the right. If they

speak up for God and the market, then they are not really part of the “liberal elite”.

Another eerie parallel with some trends on the left is the way the US right is sustained by a constant bubbling of scandals and revelations conveyed on the internet.

In 2009, for example, the right was galvanised by the idea that the Obama administration planned to set up internment camps for right-wing activists. Then the scandal faded, as it was replaced by the next one.

Frank attributes some of the rise of the right to the weakness of the left. “While leftists sit around congratulating themselves on their personal virtue, the right understands the central significance of movement-building... going door-to-door, organising their neighbours, mortgaging their houses, to push the gospel of the backlash”.

Another paradox, though: the right-wing activists’ organising energy remains undismayed partly because it is not based on a “realistic” pursuit of immediate and definable goals.

The US right has cut taxes for the rich, battered unions, increased social inequality. Working-class right-wing activists may see those things as part of the God-given order, but not as their cherished goals.

US government spending remains a big proportion of the economy, 33 years after Ronald Reagan took office, and will remain big. Abortion remains legal. Organised prayer in public schools remains as illegal as when the Supreme Court struck it down in 1962.

But if your political motivation is to make a moral stand, then it remains strong. Your sense of victimhood — what Frank calls the plen-T-plaint — remains fresh.

You think God is in control, not you, so results may be slow. Paradoxically, that fatalism can produce a determination and sense of duty unknown to the “realistic”.

**The lesson for the left, to my mind, is that we must develop politics which has a moral drive, a focus on the big picture and the long term, as compelling and vivid as the right’s, as well as, and based on, rational and realistic assessments.**

• Thomas Frank, *What’s The Matter With Kansas?* (2004), and *Pity The Billionaire* (2011)

## Why socialists should have nothing to do with Russia Today

Eric Lee



**Thom Hartmann is a prominent left-wing radio broadcaster from the USA. I first came across him when he interviewed me at a conference in Washington and was promptly told by everyone just how prominent he is.**

He describes himself as a “democratic socialist” and his nationally-syndicated radio show has an estimated 2.75 million listeners.

George Galloway needs no introduction to a left-wing audience in the UK.

What Hartmann and Galloway have in common is that they host shows on Russia Today (RT), a global satellite television channel that performs the same function for Vladimir Putin as Press TV did (and still does) for the Iranian dictatorship.

Hartmann’s show, “The Big Picture”, typically covers the standard fare of the US left — most recently with reports on how badly Walmart treats its workers, or why Vermont’s socialist senator Bernie Sanders should run for president.

Galloway’s new show on RT is called “Sputnik: Orbiting the world with George Galloway”.

RT uses the language of the mainstream left to cover politics that are fundamentally reactionary and that serve Russian imperial interests.

Of course that’s not how the TV channel describes itself. “RT news covers the major issues of our time for viewers wishing to question more,” says their website, “and delivers stories often missed by the mainstream media to create news with an edge.”

By “news with an edge”, they may sometimes mean that

quite literally — and the edge belongs to a Russian bayonet.

For example, according to a timeline published on RT’s website, in 2008, “RT leads the coverage of the conflict in South Ossetia. RT is the only international news network to report from Tskhinvali during the Russia-Georgia War of 2008 and the first to confirm atrocities committed by the Georgian military against the civilian population.”

They were probably the only news network in South Ossetia because they were embedded in the Russian army.

One of RT’s regular shows “exposes the BIG STORIES Mainstream Media dare not touch,” according to their website.

But those stories are invariably ones in which the West, and in particular the USA, comes out looking bad.

When RT turns its attention closer to home, the progressive mask drops rather quickly and the strident tone of late-Stalinist Soviet propaganda comes to the fore.

This week, while “Mainstream Media” reported on the mass street protests in Kiev, RT brought on experts to discuss what was behind the new, giant wave of demonstrations. One Moscow-based expert came on to explain that while it appeared that the European Union was behind the unrest — for which the United Nations should be called upon to intervene, as the EU was violating Ukraine’s sovereignty — this was not actually the case. The EU, we’re told, is only acting as a proxy for Washington. The real behind-the-scenes players are the National Endow-



ment for Democracy and Freedom House — the same shadowy organizations that brought on the original “Orange Revolution”.

RT can’t enforce a party line, and the speaker that followed — a Russian academic — forcefully disagreed, insisting that it was in fact the EU that was sabotaging Ukrainian sovereignty, and not merely the EU acting as an American proxy.

Both speakers of course agreed that it was Western “interference” that was the source of the trouble.

While the two speakers were “debating” who was more at fault, the news ticker scrolling across the bottom of the screen talked about how protesters in Kiev were throwing rocks at police, how an estimated 100 police officers had been injured so far (no mention of civilian casualties), and how some protesters were using “an unknown gas” to attack the defenders of public order.

The film footage shown again and again was of masked, violent protesters hurling objects at the police, who stood still for the cameras.

It was made abundantly clear to RT’s viewers that the Russian state is not happy with pro-EU demonstrators in Ukraine, and that Mr Putin would be delighted if the Ukrainian leadership would deal with them the way he has dealt with such threats to state security as “Pussy Riot” and the Greenpeace “pirates”.

Let’s be absolutely clear about what RT actually is. This is a state organ of the Putin regime and though it occasionally uses the language of the left (when attacking Russia’s rivals) the one thing consistent about its coverage is its uncritical support of Russian imperialism.

**Honest leftists should refuse to have anything to do with RT, shouldn’t watch it, should refuse to be interviewed by it, and certainly should not host shows on it.**



# Greek protests against ecological destruction

By Theodora Polenta

**A caravan of protest against the development of a new gold mine on the mountain of Skouries, on the Halkidiki peninsula in north-east Greece (near Thessaloniki), made its way to Athens on 25 November.**

At a time of relative lull in other battles (participation was low in the general strike at the beginning of November), this movement has mobilised thousands of people on the street (not restricted to the “usual suspects”).

On 9 November, a demonstration in Thessaloniki drew 10,000 people.

There were small children on bikes with t-shirts reading “SOS Halkidiki”. Students holding banners and shouting slogans, against the effects of capitalism on the environment and on their future. Grandmothers. Many families. And all the major trade unions that have been in the forefront of struggle.

Also present were Green organisations and the whole of the left (Syriza, KKE, Antarsya, Plan B, Xekinima, the rest of the revolutionary left, and various anarchists). This sort of broad unity does not happen very often.

Despite difficulties and repression, despite the attempts by the government to equate them with “illegality” and one of “the two extremes”, the protests showed passion and fighting spirit.

The protests include people who had not previously participated in a march. People who were not familiar with holding banners and megaphones, or dealing with tear gas, are being brought into activity, and not only on the issue of Halkidiki.

The demonstration ended outside the Thessaloniki office of the public broadcaster ERT, shut down by the government and then occupied by the workers, and anti-fascist slogans were heard along the way.

There were slogans against the destruction of the region, slogans against the multi-national monopolies, slogans against repression, slogans against fascism, slogans against the memorandum policies (imposed by the EU, the European Central Bank, and the IMF), slogans against the privatisation of utilities, slogans against capitalism...

Listening to a new generation of young protesters chanting: “the mountains are ours, the water is ours”, one cannot but think that the future is ours too.

The Canadian-based multinational Eldorado Gold operates in Greece under its subsidiaries: Hellenic Gold and Thracian Gold Mining.

In the Halkidiki Peninsula, Hellenic Gold operates Stratonio, an underground, silver-lead-zinc mine, and is “developing” Olympias, a replacement mixed sulfide deposit, and Skouries, a gold-copper mine.

In 2003 the Greek government granted Hellenic Gold an



**Mining corporations threaten Halkidiki, above, with environmental destruction**

area of 317,000 acres, calculated to hold gold and copper worth about \$ 12 billion.

A primeval forest has been “nibbled away” for private greed, leaving craters and toxic waste ponds, and risking the irreparable contamination of the area’s underground water table.

It was officially announced in August that in the Neohori area the water is unfit for use because of a high arsenic concentration, but the state has not investigated the connection between water contamination and the activities of mining companies drilling a short distance from the source of the village’s water.

The European Court of Justice has condemned Greece for illicit financial aid of millions of euros for the mining companies in Halkidiki.

The residents of Halkidiki have stated at every opportunity their opposition to the project (with the sad exception of the direct employees of the company, whom the company are trying to turn into a private army to defend their interests).

Halkidiki is a place of great natural beauty, which is flooded each year by tourists from around the world. The movement of against the gold mining includes fishermen, farmers, ranchers, beekeepers, scientists, workers, unemployed, pensioners, students.

They have demanded from the authorities information and public consultation that have never happened. The residents then turned to scientific bodies, and asked them to ascertain the potential impact of mining.

Each time the residents of Halkidiki have protested, the riot police have intervened as an occupying army in the re-

gion, tear-gassing the protesters and arresting many.

When the local beekeepers attempt to go into the forest of Skouries to gather the bees, they are met by armed men from Eldorado Gold who control the movement in the forest.

The residents’ attitude is not the “rejection of progress and development”, or the artefact of “extreme leftists who want to put a brake on investment”, which the coalition government and its media acolytes say it is.

The mining activities in Halkidiki threaten to destroy a primeval forest of hundreds of thousands of acres, and to transform the area into a toxic swamp (since gold mining requires the use of cyanide chemicals). The company says that it will restore the topsoil, but scientists doubt it can do that at all adequately. Even if a few hundred jobs are temporarily created, the mining will destroy countless others, those associated with tourism, agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, etc.

Scientific bodies such as the Technical Chamber of Greece, the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the Arnaia Forestry Department have taken a position against the gold mining in Halkidiki.

Hellenic Gold has shown that its assurances on observance of the required security measures should not convince anyone. On 12 September, a leak from a truck left arsenopyrite in the area of Rentina. On 5 October, a ship’s captain of the ship MSC refused to load a cargo container from the company because toxic lead was found.

Toxic and hazardous materials are transported from the areas of Stratonio and Olympiada without any precautions and dealt with by workers who are not made aware of the hazardous and toxic nature of the materials. The materials are then transferred to the company Balkan Logistics, in the Industrial Area Sindos of Thessaloniki, and loaded in containers onto ships to China. The consignments are declared just as iron, and not as arsenopyrite, and sent to China to detach the precious metal.

## WINNING

**In this way the company is winning around €121 million without paying taxes to the Greek state of about €30 million.**

The answer to the propaganda for Hellenic Gold and the government about job creation and investment must be:

We want a massive program of public investment to create permanent jobs based on social needs. We do not want investments that destroy the livelihoods of tens of thousands, destroy the environment, and devastate entire regions forever.

The money for investments can be found from those who have speculated so many years against us — bankers, shipowners, industrialists and big business in general. It can be found by utilising the wealth produced by us, by nationalising the monopolies and big business under social and workers’ control and management.

It can be found by stopping repayments on the debt to moneylenders — debts for the creation of which we bear no responsibility.

That can only be done by a government of the left, which is ready and determined to confront powerful interests and the status quo. Which aims to radically overthrow the system and implement a socialist program for recovery of our damaged economy.

With such proposals we need to reach the workers in the company and to invite them to fight with us for a better future for all of us, and convince at least a part of them.

Otherwise there is scope for intervention by the fascist Golden Dawn movement, which, under the guise of “supporting the metalworkers”, sides with the government.

The last word belong to the residents of Halkidiki: “We are the residents of Halkidiki and those who solidarise with them from all over Greece.

“For three years we have come out on the streets to fight for our area. We are not protesting just for our rights, but for our very lives and the future of our children.

“We stand in solidarity with every activist who fights for life, equality, freedom, dignity. The criminalization and repression of social movements and struggles supporting fundamental rights is the only response of a power system in a state of panic.

**“Our obligation is to protect with our voice and our continuous struggle all those who resist the arbitrariness of power.”**

## Biodegrading sects

By Rhodri Evans

**33 years ago Tariq Ali quit the International Marxist Group (IMG), then the second-highest-profile group of the revolutionary socialist left in Britain.**

He had never been a rank-and-file activist. He had been a well-known leader in the IMG ever since he joined it in 1968.

He called for the withdrawal of the Russian troops which had invaded Afghanistan in December 1979, while most of his comrades thought that their definition of the USSR as a “degenerated workers’ state” (which Ali shared) ruled out that call.

He was right on that; but he didn’t stay to argue. He quit. He has been “around” the left ever since, but never really active. He declares that “the communist ideal” is dead.

He used the *Guardian* on 26 November to claim that the arrest of leaders of a tiny Maoist sect, on charges of holding three women

captive for 30 years, “tells us about the far left” in general.

Nothing special about Maoists, he says. “The Maoists’ antics were rivalled by a number of Trotskyist sects... Even those most critical of Stalinist style and methods tended to reproduce the model of a one-party state”. He considers the (now bio-degraded) Norwegian Maoists, however, not so bad: “a far cry from the cult... in Brixton”.

Best to bio-degrade into a bourgeois or social-democratic career, and then you’ll avoid the risks of anything so intense as revolutionary activism...

As well to argue that since the pursuit of science can lead you to obsess about squaring the circle or making a perpetual-motion machine, or into daft experiments, it is best to stick with uninquisitive common sense.

“Every [socialist] sect is religious”, wrote Marx back in 1868, in order to argue for non-sectarian activist politics rather than relaxed acquiescence to bourgeois society. The Maoists, with their cult of Mao, were special, and those remained Maoists after the about-turns of China’s leaders in the 1970s and 80s were more specially sectarian still.

**The main religious sects in bourgeois society, however, are... the religious sects, including large and “respectable” ones like the Catholic Church, with a record of abuse exceeding the Brixton Maoists’.**





# Independence-lite or class-struggle-heavy?

Scotland

By Dale Street



**Back in July of this year, a senior aide to SNP First Minister Alex Salmond briefed the media that Salmond “would not object to the term ‘independence-lite’ as a description of what was on offer at next year’s referendum.”**

The publication of the SNP government’s White Paper “Scotland’s Future — Your Guide to an Independent Scotland” on 26 November confirmed that.

The Queen will remain Head of State. Scotland will remain a member of the European Union. Scotland will remain a member of Nato. And the pound sterling will remain the currency.

All the BBC’s output will still be screened in Scotland. Passports will still be the same colour and format as British ones (except, obviously, for the word “Scottish” on the cover), and National Lottery tickets will still be on sale, with Scotland receiving its “fair share” of funding.

As Salmond recently put it, his independent Scotland will maintain five of the six existing “unions” with the UK.

The political union, created by the Treaty of Union of 1707, would be ended, but the five other “unions” would remain: European Union, currency union, Union of the Crowns of 1603, defence union (i.e. NATO), and a “social union”.

An example of the “social union” as understood by Salmond, is: “People in England will still cheer Andy Murray, and people in Scotland will still support the Lions at rugby.”

The reason for the SNP’s emphasis on how little would change in an independent Scotland is that most people in Scotland don’t want independence.

Opinion polls consistently show a 60% to 40% split against independence amongst those who have a definite opinion, with around 15% of the total electorate undecided.

In order to try to construct a majority for independence, the SNP’s chosen tactic is to argue that life under independence will not be much different from life now.

As numerous political writers have put it, it is an attempt to change the question from “Why independence?” to “Why not independence?”

## SMALL

**The White Paper argues that, though change through independence will be small, it will all be for the better.**

The bedroom tax — mentioned 37 times in the White Paper — will be scrapped. Royal Mail will be renationalised. The National Minimum Wage will increase at least in line with inflation. The state pension age may be lower than in the remainder-UK (RUK).

Trident will be scrapped by 2020. Children aged three and four will be guaranteed 1,140 hours of free childcare. Energy bills will be cut. Pensions and mortgages will be unaffected, and there will be no increase in general taxation.

Corporation tax will be cut by up to 3%. Air Passenger Duty will be cut by 50%, prior to its eventual abolition. A Scottish Broadcasting Service will be set up.

Scots will be £600 a year better off on average, according to the White Paper.

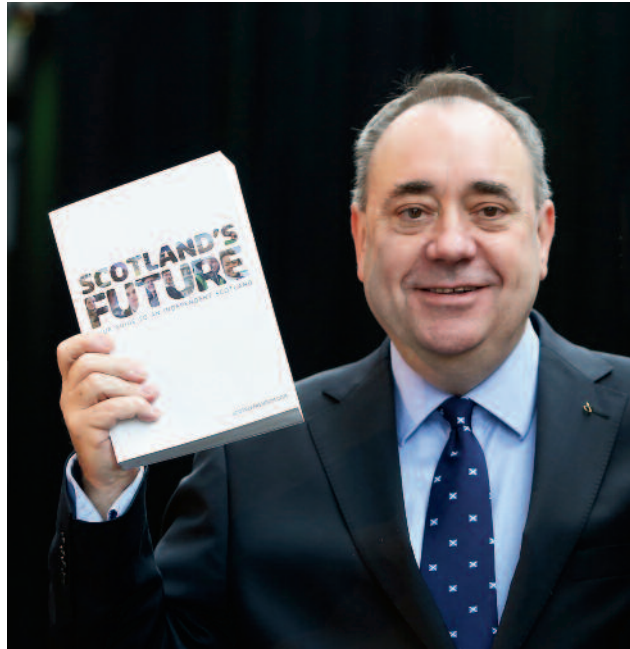
The fact that the White Paper doubles up as an SNP election manifesto — implementation of any or all of these policies would be a matter for the government of an independent Scotland — is another example of how the SNP hopes to win a majority for independence without really talking about ... independence.

And many of the electoral bribes are not as attractive as they might seem as first sight.

Trident will go. But there will be a “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy on visits to Scottish ports by NATO-country ships carrying nuclear weapons. And the billions saved on weapons of mass destruction is to be spent instead on weapons and military forces of modest destruction.

There will be no nukes on Scottish soil — but plenty in Scottish waters.

The cut in corporation tax means a race to the bottom as an independent Scotland tries to attract foreign investors. It’s good that the National Minimum Wage will rise in line with inflation — a much higher proportion of the workforce is



Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond

likely to be dependent on it.

The promise to cut energy bills turns out to be a promise to transfer responsibility for spending on increasing domestic energy efficiency from the power companies to the Scottish government.

Out of the well-known goodness of their hearts, the power companies will then supposedly pass these savings on to consumers by cutting their bills.

An SNP government will scrap the bedroom tax in 2016 — but in the meantime it is failing to provide local authorities with sufficient funds to meet the demand for Discretionary Housing Payments.

## POWER

**An SNP government will also extend free childcare to three and four-year-olds in 2016 — but the SNP has the power to do that right now.**

Questioned about why it was not doing so, Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon explained: “If we did that now, then the revenues would flow straight to the UK Treasury rather than staying here in Scotland to help us fund that policy, to help us support that properly. That is why we need the full powers of independence.”

The issue of expanding childcare looms particularly large in the White Paper and its presentation. This is because women are one of the groups most resistant to supporting independence. Hence the inclusion of a specific election bribe targeted at women in a White Paper about independence.

The thrust of criticism in the media and from the cross-party Better Together campaign was that the White Paper/SNP election manifesto was a contradictory wish-list in which the sums did not add up.

They had a point.

It would not be up to Scotland alone, for example, to decide whether there would be a currency union with the RUK or ongoing membership of the EU.

But the White Paper simply assumes that, despite statements to the contrary from both the UK government and the EU Commission, the rest of the world (plus the BBC and the National Lottery) will carry out the SNP’s policies.

And some weighty academic research has also repeatedly concluded that the SNP’s assumptions about the income of an independent Scotland are unrealistic. The *Times*, for example, singled out:

“The questionable assumption that between 2011-12 and 2016-17 onshore tax revenues would grow by 23%, a stellar performance compared with the preceding five years, when they grew by only 3%.”

Less than consistently, the SNP argues that a currency union would be “common sense” because economic cycles in Scotland are much the same as in the UK as a whole.

So much for the longstanding SNP argument that independence is needed because Scottish economic cycles diverge from those in the rest of the UK, but Westminster governments adopt policy in response to UK, not Scottish, economic

cycles.

But much of the media and Better Together criticism of the White Paper is only a mirror image of the SNP’s politics. The latter predict joy in an independent Scotland, the former predict doom and gloom, but both sets of calculations are speculative.

Neither side in the debate links the issue of Scotland’s constitutional status to basic questions about a root-and-branch attack on the social and economic inequalities and the environmental destruction inherent in all capitalist states.

The best that the SNP can offer is a vision of a slightly “fairer” society, albeit one funded through attracting multinationals by tax cuts and increased income from non-renewable sources of energy.

The mainstream campaign for a ‘No’ vote does not even go that far.

It does not present the constitutional status quo (or increased devolution, which is what most Scots support) as a ‘better’ way to achieve social change. It runs an essentially conservative effort based on little more than scaremongering.

In theory, the Better Together campaign could argue for the status quo (or increased devolution) on the basis that a Westminster government could use the resources of the larger unit of the British state to redistribute wealth and power in order to create a fairer society.

In fact, because the campaign is an alliance between a latter-day Scottish brand of New Labour, Lib Dems and the Tories, it is inherently incapable of doing that.

Over the next ten months socialists need to intervene in the debate from a class perspective.

For socialists, the “social union” that counts is not one that revolves around tennis players and rugby teams, but the existence of an integrated labour movement based on a free and voluntary association of organised labour in the constituent elements of the UK.

The “social union” which counts is one based on the class interests, values, and political attitudes which are shared by workers in Scotland and the rest of the UK: 63% of people in England agree with the statement “there is one law for the rich and one for the poor”, as do 61% of people in Scotland.

But for both the Yes and No campaigns, the labour movement is just so much voting fodder. Its only role in politics is to be either electorally bribed into a vote for independence-lite or scaremongered into a vote for the status quo.

**Long overdue is a campaign which challenges the politics of the mainstream Yes and No campaigns and counterposes united labour movement mobilisation to the sterility of the current referendum “debate”.**

## BOOKS FROM WORKERS’ LIBERTY

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# Education workers strike for decent pay

Higher Education workers in three unions struck on Tuesday 3 December against a 1% pay deal. University and College Union members in Further Education also struck to win better pay. A Unison activist in a large university spoke to *Solidarity* about the strike and the future of the dispute.

**The strike seemed more solid at my workplace than the 31 October strike. We're recruiting to the union as a result of the dispute, but it's a slow process.**

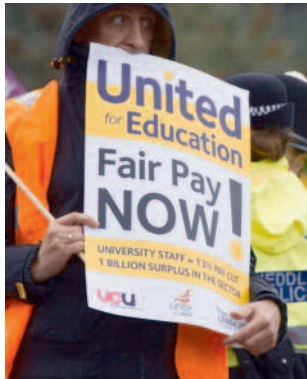
The employers have categorically said they're not budging on their 1% offer, and have told universities to begin implementing the 1% pay deal. Their attitude means we're not in a situation of polite conversation, of give-and-take. If we're going to win an improved deal, it'll mean forcing them to do something they very obviously don't want to do.

What's happening between the strike days has been in some ways more important than the strikes themselves so far. As a re-

sult of the dispute, we've organised weekly joint meetings between the three unions, open to all members. Those meetings have produced bulletins and other materials for the strike, planned the picketing, and discussed the direction of the dispute. We plan to keep those meetings going for as long as the dispute lasts and, hopefully, indefinitely. We want to continue producing joint union materials.

At the moment, density is very low, so even if all our members strike it won't shut down the university. Holding regular meetings and producing materials are crucial to building up union strength.

In meetings, activists have expressed frustration about the lack of strategy and communication from the union's negotiators and leadership. However, expectations are often so low that people don't even acknowledge that lack of communication as a problem. We need to raise expectations so members demand to be kept informed about what's going on with the dispute at the



level of national negotiations, and demand to be given a say in how the dispute's run.

As well as escalating our strikes, we should consider selective forms of action. Some workers, such as IT staff, have more strategic power. If a university's IT support goes down for a week, that's incredibly disruptive, so we should consider action that sees more strategically-placed workers striking for longer. We may need strike pay to fund that, which we currently don't have in Unison. There's an "industrial action hardship fund", but that's only accessible once there have been three strike days in a dispute, and is very badly administered.

We've received a lot of student support for our strikes, which is very important. When I was a student activist, getting students to support university workers' strikes was like pulling teeth, but now the students' union at the university where I work has been very supportive. Students have mobilised to support our picket lines, and the wave of student occupations shows how the student activist left has used building solidarity with our strike to rejuvenate itself.

However, while it's symbolically hugely important and great for morale to have a lively student presence on our picket lines, that's not going to win the dispute. I'd prefer that students didn't cross our picket lines to go to classes, but I don't see those that do as "scabs" – the scabs are the people teaching those classes on strike days!

**Student support must be a supplement to, not a substitute for, building up union strength and making sure the maximum number of workers participate in the strikes.**

## Lewisham teachers' pay win

By Jonny West

**The threat of strikes by teachers in seven secondary schools in Lewisham, south London, has forced school managers to withdraw an unfair pay policy.**

The NUT's national dispute on pay, workload, and pensions, provides a framework for union groups at school or borough level to escalate action in order to "secure an acceptable pay policy", and the victory in Lewisham shows that, by standing firm, teachers can force concessions from local managements.

Schools in Lewisham had wanted to peg teachers' pay to Ofsted grading of lessons, which the NUT described as "arbitrary and unfair".

Union activists said that



performance-related pay policies tied to Ofsted criteria could result in pay cuts for teachers. They argued that, if a child happened not to be paying attention in a class that was observed and graded by Ofsted, it could cost the teacher £2,000.

The new policy remains performance-linked, but will now be based on progress towards defined appraisal targets within the schools themselves rather than Ofsted criteria.

The threat of strikes also forced management to withdraw a stipulation

that teachers must submit a "mainly paper evidence base" for applications for higher pay grades, which would have substantially added to the degree of bureaucratic paperwork teachers already have to contend with.

Strikes had been due to take place on Thursday 28 November, Tuesday 3 December, Wednesday 4 December, and on 7, 8, and 9 January. Following negotiations, the November and December strikes were suspended. As *Solidarity* went to press, union sources said the January strikes would be kept on until the commitments made in negotiations were seen to be implemented.

A union statement said: "The fact that teachers have shown that they are prepared to make such a firm stand over policies

will hopefully help dissuade any school who might have been thinking about taking advantage of Gove's damaging legislation to unfairly block pay-progression next September.

"The successful outcome in Lewisham shows what can be achieved through pursuing co-ordinated escalation of action, paying careful attention to the issues being raised by members across different schools at each stage of the campaign. It shows again that the depth of anger at performance-pay still runs deep.

**"Now that anger must be harnessed into further escalating national action to defeat the national legislation which is still at the heart of our national dispute with Michael Gove."**

## Tube union begins strike ballot

By Ira Berkovic

**London Underground union RMT has begun balloting for strikes to stop a management cuts plan that will lead to the closure of every ticket office on London Underground and the loss of nearly 1,000 jobs.**

The ballot, which opened on 3 December, will close on 10 January. A mass meeting of around 200 RMT members on 26 November discussed a campaign of sustained industrial action, including creative forms of 'action short of strikes' as well as strikes. Janine Booth, RMT Executive member for the London Transport region, told the rally: "Our action will not be a token protest to show our opposition to job cuts which are then imposed. It will be planned, effective action designed to stop those job cuts being imposed." The rally was also addressed by a representative of the smaller TSSA union, which is also considering balloting for action. RMT hopes that the other Tube unions — ASLEF and Unite — will also join the dispute. RMT says that the ticket

office closures and staffing cuts will have a detrimental effect on the quality of service and passenger safety. Running of tube services. Strikes could begin from 17 January.

As well as the industrial dispute, RMT is running a public, political campaign, leafleting passengers at stations across the network making the case against cuts.

Meanwhile, RMT members on London Underground have voted by a 74% majority to strike in support of their demand for the replacement of agency labour with directly-employed, permanent posts.

This comes in the wake of a huge expansion in the use of agency work on the Tube's infrastructure maintenance over the last few decades, and LUL's refusal to take on 33 workers previously employed by the Trainpeople agency when it cancelled the agency's contract earlier this year.

**Drivers on the Piccadilly Line have also voted to strike on Wednesday 4-5 December in a dispute over management bullying.**

## Brian Munro elected

**Workers' Liberty member Janine Booth, whose term of office on the RMT Executive finishes in January 2014, will be replaced by Brian Munro, a Bakerloo Line driver. Workers' Liberty and Tubeworker, the rank-and-file bulletin we publish, supported Brian in the election, which he won by 1,714 votes to 1,276.**

**We offer our congratulations, and look forward to Brian's term of office as an Executive member who will reflect the wishes of the rank and file at the highest level of the union.**

## Reinstate Charlotte Monro!

By Darren Bedford

**Charlotte Monro, an occupational therapist and chair of the Unison branch at Whipps Cross Hospital in north east London, has been sacked for speaking out against cuts.**

Charlotte faced disciplinary charges, and was ultimately dismissed, after she raised concerns about a planned reorganisation

resulting from the merger of two NHS trusts in 2012 which created Barts Health, the trust which now controls Whipps Cross (along with five other hospitals, including the Royal London in Whitechapel).

**A demonstration to demand Charlotte's reinstatement was planned for Wednesday 4 December at 5pm, outside the Royal London.**





# Solidarity

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## Egypt: support the left in the “Third Square”!

By Clive Bradley

On 19 November a group called the Revolutionary Front marched through the streets around Tahrir Square in Cairo, shouting slogans against the military government.

In the Square was a crowd gathered in support of the army, which took power at the end of June this year. A confrontation between the two groups resulted, which the security forces dispersed with tear gas.

Later, with the pro-regime forces now gone, the Revolutionary Front returned to the Square, this time confronting the Central Security Forces directly. Some reports say 40 people were injured.

All this is, for now, a pale echo of the events of January and February 2011 which saw the removal of President Hosni Mubarak, or indeed the enormous mobilisations in June this year against the then government of the Muslim Brotherhood, led by President Mursi — which led to the coup.

After the army intervened to reclaim power there was a period of clashes with the Brotherhood and its supporters which left hundreds of dead. Now the regime accuses the Revolutionary Front of being sympathisers of the ousted Islamist government.

They most definitely are not. The Revolutionary Front brings together several groups — the April 6th

**2 December: There have been further clashes in Cairo as a draft constitution was approved.**

**The draft preserves some of the military’s wide-ranging powers and would allow a presidential election to be held before parliamentary polls.**

**It must be approved in a referendum this month or in January.**



Neither Mursi nor al-Sisi

youth movement, the Revolutionary Socialists, the Anti-Coup Alliance, and the Resistance movement — whose basic stand is in opposition both to the current military government and to the previous, Muslim Brotherhood, one.

It is the most radical political expression of what has come to be known as the “third square” — those who opposed Mursi but also oppose the coup.

The April 6th Youth Movement had been born in struggles against Mubarak over the previous few years (and in particular efforts at solidarity with the burgeoning working class movement: April 6 was the day of an intended general strike).

The Revolutionary Socialists are linked (perhaps rather tenuously, but linked) to the British Socialist Workers Party.

The November 19 demonstration — held on the anniversary of a big confrontation with the security forces in 2011 — was quite small; the pro-regime assembly was bigger. And, indeed, the government of General al-Sisi (technically there is a civilian president) remains popular — a measure of the profound unpopularity the Brotherhood managed to earn after only a short time in power.

Apparently, the Revolutionary Front largely consists of middle-class, educated youth, the very

social group which spearheaded the 2011 revolution. It is probably of particular significance that the April 6th movement is part of this front, as although it’s a small group it represents something important in the mood of that layer of youth.

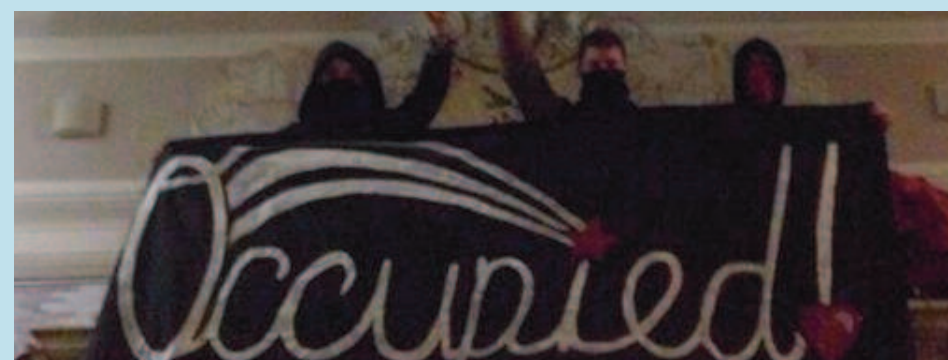
Egypt has been profoundly divided by the experience of the Brotherhood government and the coup which overthrew it. Most of the Brotherhood leadership is in jail. The charge of “terrorism” is now used against a range of opponents. But vast layers of society, and of liberal opinion, have fallen in behind the army.

Presidential elections are due to be held next year, and al Sisi will probably run. The candidates who came second and third in last year’s presidential election, which Mursi won, have both said that if he does so they will not stand against him. One of these was the open representative of the old regime, so it’s not very surprising; the other is the Nasserist, more radical figure, whose party includes at least one significant representative of the new, independent trade union movement, who is currently Minister of Labour.

The labour movement, which is a vital new force in Egypt, has also been divided by the coup, with one of the independent union federations openly calling for an end to strikes and co-operation with the government.

A big test, both of the unions and of the wider democratic movement, will be a new law to make public protests harder to organise.

**These are difficult times for Egypt, and the outcome is still uncertain. For sure, groups like the Revolutionary Front and the radical organisations which comprise it need and deserve our support and solidarity.**



Occupation at Goldsmiths College, London

## Occupying in solidarity

By Will Greene

**As Solidarity goes to press, anti-cuts activists in Birmingham, Liverpool, Sussex, Edinburgh, Exeter, Goldsmiths, Sheffield, and the University of Ulster in Coleraine are in occupation.**

This new wave of student occupations was sparked on 20 November by Birmingham Defend Education, the anti-cuts group at the University of Birmingham linked to the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts (NCAFC).

The occupations are in solidarity with the Higher and Further Education strike on 3 December, as well as against fees, cuts, and the general marketisation of higher education, and for local demands.

The week-long Birmingham occupation was forcibly brought to an end by bailiffs following its defiance of an injunction, but not before Sussex Against Privatisation re-occupied the Bramber House Conference Centre as part of their ongoing campaign against the privatisation of services on campus.

The occupations have since spread, as part of a conscious effort by activists to connect local struggles and show solidarity with each other and with workers’ struggles on campus. Birmingham Defend Education have now re-occupied the University’s Senate Chamber following a demonstration on the campus in support of the Higher Education strike.

In the last few years, there have been many inspiring local actions. However, this is the largest simultaneous wave of student occupations since the autumn of 2010.

**It is likely to inspire more action this week. The NCAFC has put a call-out for further occupations around the demands for democratic institutions and public education, solidarity with workers’ struggles, and against the privatisation of student loan debt.** More: anticuts.com

## Charges dropped against Bob

By Martin Thomas

**Construction company Abigroup, part of the Lend Lease empire, has dropped the charges against Bob Carnegie arising from the Queensland Children’s Hospital construction site dispute in August-October 2012.**

In August 2013, Bob was acquitted of “contempt of court” charges, brought on grounds that he disobeyed court orders to keep away from the site during the dispute.

Abigroup said then that it would continue with civil charges against Bob, seeking millions of dollars in damages to compensate for its losses in the dispute. Now the civil charges have been dropped.

Trade unionists and socialists, mainly in Australia and the UK but with support from unions and activist around the world, mounted a campaign to defend Bob, organising solidarity actions at Lend Lease construction sites. When Bob appeared in court, thousands of Australian dock work-

ers and construction workers launched wildcat strikes calling for the charges to be dropped. This victory against corporate bullying should embolden and encourage workers all over the world who want to organise for their rights, even when their opponents are powerful multinational companies. The victorious strike at QCH, and Bob’s victory, prove that no capitalist is invincible.

Bob said: “This brings to conclusion a 15-month nightmare and an end to the legal assault against myself and my family. To all the thousands of working-class people everywhere who stood by me during this very difficult time, my sincerest thanks. To Melissa [Bob’s partner] goes my love.

“In the words of Joe Hill, “it’s the life of the rebel I chose to live, and it’s the life of the rebel that I will die”.

**“Together we conquered Goliath! I will see you all wherever workers struggle for a better life.”**

• bobcarnegiedefence.wordpress.com