

SUBVERSION

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FOR A UNITED ANTI-FASCIST FRONT

It can now be plainly seen that the deteriorating economic crisis and escalating attacks on working people is now leading to real acts of resistance across the world. Attempts by the ruling elites to impose a narrative of austerity on nation states by a combination of international agreements, banking crises and technocratic governments has now failed, with the economic and social implications of austerity leading to outright rebellion by working people and progressive organisations.

However, the implications for the growing schism in society is now leading to a long-predicted rise of the forces of reaction. Recent weeks have seen extraordinarily violent scenes, as both the state and the fascist forces that they protect have stepped up their assault on working people – and have dropped all attempts at hiding their agenda in the process.

In Turkey, the progressive sections of society have risen up against increasingly neoliberal, illiberal and non-secular direction of the government, which rode roughshod over the ecological, democratic and economic concerns of the people. The regime has reacted with appalling scenes of state violence

against the protesters, with police attacking and in some cases killing protesters and resorting to unprecedented measures to clear the protest area. The efforts of the young people and of the progressive organisations supporting them must be applauded, and the Turkish trade unions who have called strike action to support the protesters are showing exactly the kind of practical solidarity that is required. The League of Communists in Britain send its full support to the protesters in Turkey and their struggle against the Fascism of the Turkish state.

In Greece, the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party has been allowed to organise, recruit and terrorise the working people of Greece unimpeded and even aided by the oppressive apparatus of the state. They have attacked immigrants and trade unions, and been permitted to push their physically aggressive fascist agenda with impunity. Reports suggest that the Greek police have aided and abetted this agenda. A recent mass demonstration by Golden Dawn in Athens showed the depths of collaboration and tolerance of fascism by the Greek state. The League of Communists in Britain fully supports the working people and progressive organisations of Greece in their struggle against the state-backed fascist street movement.

In France, the far right have been bolstered by the electoral successes of the fascist Front Nationale and are now launching street attacks against anti-

fascists and national minorities. On 6th June 2014 Clement Meric, an anti-fascist activist, was murdered on the streets of Paris for a fascist street gang. The same month, a pregnant Muslim woman was attacked by a racist gang and subsequently miscarried. It is clear that the continued indulgence of anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim by the political elites in France has created a fertile breeding ground for the resurgence of fascist street violence. The League of Communists in Britain salutes the memory of Clement Meric and all of those fighting fascism on the streets in France, and extends our solidarity to the national minorities of France in their struggles against racist violence.

In Brazil we have seen a series of mass uprisings against the rising cost of living, with up to 100 million people joining localised protests. Although initial concessions have been made by the government it has been subsequently clear that the state is beginning to use its full might against the people of Brazil in crushing these protests. The League of Communists in Britain send its full support and solidarity to the Brazilian people in their struggle against corruption and neo-liberalism.

And in Britain, the murder of Lee Rigby has been used by the fascist EDL to re-launch their floundering campaign of terror against immigrant and Muslim communities. Mosques have been firebombed and Muslims and their organisations attacked. The anti-fascist movement of Britain has mobilised to prevent EDL gaining credibility by organising massive counter-demonstrations to EDL attempts to capitalise on reactionary and reductionist state and media reactions to the Woolwich murder. The League of Communists in Britain pledges its full support to all anti-fascist movements in Britain and states its total opposition to the racist street terror of the EDL and its fellow-travellers.

It is clear that the main strategic opponent of all working people is that of fascism and its causes, symptoms and organisations. The indulgence and influence of fascism, both by the political elites, the media and by the state, has become the major oppositional force to progress by the working class and all progressive people and organisations. There is therefore a pressing need to form a united anti-fascist front, based not on organisational unity but on practical solidarity and diverse political action. This should be based not just around a narrow opposition to fascist organisations, but to all the symptoms and manifestations of fascism and the system which fosters its support, including:

- racist and reactionary media and political discourse around minorities and immigrants
- any attempt to remove civil liberties and remove political rights of individuals or groups
- state violence or state abuse against individuals or groups
- nationalist, fascist and racist organisations, their supporters and sponsors

The League of Communists therefore calls for an urgent diversification and escalation of the anti-fascist movement across the world to face this threat, and to make it the principle priority of all political work.



TUC: WHAT KIND OF UNITY?

The news that the outgoing TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber has accepted a Knighthood from the current government has been received with dismay by many on the left and within the labour movement.

In one sense it was not a surprise. Anybody who was paying attention during the public sector pay dispute in 2011 would know the deeply conciliatory and unhelpful role the TUC leadership played in forcing a detrimental settlement on the unions involved, and how personally popular Barber appeared to be with Cabinet Office negotiators. It was evident that Barber was exactly the sort of soft-touch moderate and reluctant militant with whom employers and governments love to do business with.

Neither is Barber the first member of the TUC leadership to accept a honour from the establishment, or a seat in the House of Lords, or a job in one or another international quango. Nor will he, in all likelihood, be the last.

However, the cheer audacity and brazen opportunism of this award beggars belief. Not just that at the time when the organised labour movement, nominally federated within the TUC, should be engaged in a life-or-death struggle with the Con-Dem government due to the attacks on employment rights, trade union organisation, pay, pensions, and living standards they are implementing that the government feels confident and cosy easy enough to hand out honours to good behaviour to the leaders of the movement; but also that those leaders lack the basis class understanding and solidarity to refuse the award. What do the workers in the dole queue make of such a decision? Or the disabled being forced into destitution? To accept the award at all, but especially under current circumstances, is an insult to every victim of Tory brutality and class warfare.

Now, then, is surely the time to accept that something is deeply rotten with the workers' movement in Britain. The culture of collaboration,

compromise, corruption and 'co-operation' has routinely worked to undermine and mitigate the struggles and achievements of workers in Britain; it is indicative of the chasm between the cosy, professional staffers of the union movement and the hopes and aspirations of workers in struggle. The actions of the TUC leadership are an abdication of responsibility as leaders of the workers' movement and is compounded by their virtual monopoly on trade union affiliation in Britain.

It is time for a different approach.

The League of Communists would therefore call upon the most advanced and militant sections of the trade union movement to consider their positions on the TUC, and to consider alternative forms of trade union organisation. Any federation of labour organisations should be based on the following principles:

- a commitment to regaining the leading position of trade unions as the voice for social progress, protest, and solidarity
- a commitment to democratic federation and regular and direct election of federation leaderships, and to being led by lay representatives and not by full-time officers
- a commitment to organising the unorganised and in reenforcing trade union membership in Britain
- a commitment not to become involved in corporatist and collaborationist quangos or to accept favour from the vested interests of the British state
- a commitment to class struggle and active campaigning

The TUC has shown itself to be entirely incapable of meeting these ideals, and any unity of the trade union movement which fails to live up to the needs of the movement condemns us to generations of obsolescence and decline. This has to stop.



ISRAEL AND ANTI- SEMITISM

A story broke this January about Ethiopian Jews resident in the State of Israel being forcibly or unwittingly given the drug Depo-Provera, a “long acting reversible hormonal contraceptive birth control drug”. The story broke in Haaretz, and Israeli daily notable for being among other things accused of being a “far-left” publication.

The use of this sparked immediate concerns that the State of Israel was somehow using this drug to some kind of racial-engineering end. There's no evidence either way; critics of the theory point to the fact that Israel has a resettlement policy for the Jewish people whatever colour of skin; on the other hand the story was broken by Haaretz, which has a circulation of 72,000-100,000 in Israel itself.

After quoting subsequent Haaretz articles and ignoring the fact that they actually broke the story, Brendan O'Neill of the right-wing Spiked said this in the Telegraph:

“But the mistreatment of this story, the exaggeration of it, the warped repeating of it by observers and tweeters around the world, reveals something ugly too: a thirst for treating Israel as a uniquely racist, wicked, barbaric outpost. When it comes to pointing a big, white Western finger at Israel and accusing it of carrying out the kind crimes of racism and colonialism that the rest of us grew out of years ago – a favoured pastime of so many liberal campaigners today – it seems facts count for little.”

O'Neill is not accusing anyone of anti-semitism. Nor is there an inference that the Israeli state was forcibly sterilising African Jews; there simply isn't the evidence to confirm or deny this. What this does bring up for discussion, though, by a rather roundabout route (we could have started on Palestine) is the abstract notion that even considering that the State of Israel may act in an untoward way, is

sacrilege.

There is one huge notion here that needs to be utterly destroyed: that is, that criticism of the State of Israel (not its existence, even) but its actions, are somehow anti-semitic. We need to be clear that anti-semitism is firstly the realm of neo-Nazis and secondly the realm of certain rightist elements who would accuse you of hating Jews. Indeed for evidence of this one needs only look at the far right and how they have split (EDL vs EVF for example) to see how the logic does not stand up to any kind of scrutiny. In such circles, holocaust-deniers (a future museum piece, doubtlessly) face up to alleged Zionists (a meaningless term in whatever circle).

Criticism of the State of Israel of course is founded upon the historic and Apartheid-like treatment of the Palestinians and this does not need further explanation here. It is backed by many Jewish voices – needless to say they are Jewish but only for the purpose of the argument, its nature as it is.

The history of the Left is that of many, many Jewish thinkers and activists, which are far too many to mention but let's start with Marx, Marcuse, Trotsky, Arendt, Hobsbawm, and while I wouldn't propose a critique of all or any individual here, it is a needless recitation of the tradition (I haven't, for example, recited the tradition of the Hindu left). This also ignores the current Israeli left which which it is worth building solidarity.

But the first barrier to be overcome must be this: the right will accuse anyone criticising the State of Israel. That's nonsense. Second, they'll accuse us of anti-semitism. In the face of the evidence that is also nonsense.

Armed with this knowledge we can continue to support the cause for justice in Palestine with pride, and we can do that with our comrades in the Israeli left and build solidarity with them.



UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Universal Credit is currently being piloted by the DWP. Universal Credit will replace Housing Benefit, Tax Credits, Income Support and Job Seekers Allowance.

Everyone out of work and the low paid will have to apply for one universal benefit in the future and for every extra pound earned by those in work 65p will be taken away in benefit by the government until the benefit ceases to be paid completely.

Universal credit therefore is not remotely universal and is yet another attempt to means test benefits. The government hopes that this time, using real time Pay As You Earn information from businesses, that this benefit will not mean they have to spend the same amount on resources as they did to administer the previous six means tested benefits. They hope that that Universal Credit will allow them to slash the cost not just of the amount of benefit they need to pay out but also the cost of administering the benefit system.

This will depend on a number of factors.

- If the unemployment figures stay stable and do not continue to increase.
- If the IT systems and new Real Time PAYE system works.
- If the amount people are paid begins to rise in the near future.
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It is impossible to tell whether Universal Credit will cost more or less at the current time but the economic signs are not good.

The Tories have already achieved one success for their ideology through Universal Credit just through its introduction though and that is the complete abolishment of the contributory principle.

When the welfare system was first introduced, the contributory principle was one of the things which would enable the unemployed to retain self esteem. It meant that all workers who claimed benefits and had worked could point to the fact they had paid

National Insurance and what they were receiving in benefits was not a hand out but simply their own money which they had invested for their own protection.

Through introducing Universal Credit the Tories have completely eradicated any trace of the contributory principle. There will be no higher rate of benefit for people who have been in work. Everyone will be paid according to the criteria which does not include how much you have paid in Tax and National Insurance previously.

Ian Duncan-Smith as work and pensions secretary and this government have abolished the contributory principle because their aim all along was to ensure that people are made to feel as ashamed as possible about claiming any sort of benefit.

The government's strategy on welfare is not just to hoodwink the general public into thinking that spending on welfare is the main reason why the current economic crisis took place but also to demonise benefit claimants as the undeserving poor, skivers and benefit cheats.

The current government's approach is completely ignorant of the fact that the majority of the government's welfare spend is to pensioners and those in work who cannot afford to live on the meagre wages paid to them by the employer. To reduce the welfare spend the government should focus on reducing unemployment, raising the minimum wage, and ensuring all employers provide a decent pension scheme.

The government has deliberately not pursued this strategy and they have not taken away all in work benefits but they want to make people as reticent as possible to claim them.

There is an answer to the problems that Universal Credit will face and they would be quite easy to administer from the position we will find ourselves in very shortly.

The answer is to provide a truly universal benefit which everyone can claim and is paid.

If there was no means testing and everyone in and out of work was paid an allowance which would cater for their most basic needs it would solve the problem of administration, ensuring there was an

incentive to access work and better paid work at a stroke.

The argument against this is that if everyone received a minimum allowance why would anyone work? The answer to this is simple, no-one wants to live on the breadline and living on a minimum allowance would be powerful incentive enough for someone to want to get a job.

The reason why no mainstream government would introduce a universal benefit is because it would embolden the working class and give them a base with which to challenge the economic system. The threat of the shame of claiming benefits or even destitution and homelessness is a powerful incentive to keep people in line and fearful of challenging the system.

Under Capitalism there can never be a fair welfare system. It is only when the system is replaced with socialism with the principle of 'from each according to their ability, to each according to their need' that everyone will be able to live in dignity, free of suspicion and division.



LEAGUE

AGGREGATE

Members of the League met at Leeds TUC Centre in June to consider proposals to carry forward the League's political work. Particular attention was paid to the following areas:

- Improving the public and organisational work of the League
- Working on a new programme to unify the theory and practice of the League
- Improve and deeper links with campaigning and left organisations
- Make anti-fascism the key element of the League's political work
- Coordinate and strengthen the League's industrial work.

The League have agreed to work towards implementing these proposals as soon as possible, and to continue to practically assist those in struggle.



JOIN THE LEAGUE!

For more information contact us at:

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ABOUT

THE LEAGUE

The League of Communists in Britain was formed on 30th November 2011, and is a non-party, political organisation dedicated to grassroots political activity and practical solidarity. We are an inclusive, broad and non-sectarian platform for the non-authoritarian Left, and we include anarchists, communists, socialists and environmentalists in our affiliates. We believe that we are working in a post-Leninist politics, where the issue is not the establishment of another 'revolutionary vanguard' but the engagement of the working class with the masses, and the direct role of the masses in politics. The imposition of structure upon politics has failed, and the issue today is that of developing political consciousness and on supporting struggles against oppression and exploitation, and to work towards building a mass movement.

Communism in the 21st century is not a struggle for state power, but the struggle against it; it is the engagement in a radical, decentralised politics, which manifests itself as a challenge and resistance to exploitation and oppression on the basis of class, gender, sexuality, disability, nationality, immigration status, species and religion. Resistance and practical solidarity is the basis for all of the Leagues political work. We work to defend human rights and political autonomy, provide humanitarian assistance and support those in struggle. We publish a regular newspaper, 'Subversion', which acts as a focus for politics and organising. Our members are active in trade unions such as PCS, Unite and the NUT, and campaigning groups such as UK Uncapped, refugee support organisations and the anti-cuts movement.

We believe in a radical politics which is decentralised and broad; we do not have a structure of committees or branches, we have no conditions of affiliation or payment of dues, and we do not work on the basis of an agreed political 'line'. Instead our emphasis is on practical political work, and not on party building. Affiliation is open to anyone, regardless of membership of other organisations, who agrees with our core mission. statement and signs our equalities disclaimer. Affiliation costs £1 per month.