

**NO NEW
WARS
NO TO
NATO**

PROTEST 30 AUGUST TO 5 SEPTEMBER

DEMONSTRATE SAT 30 AUGUST, NEWPORT

COUNTER-CONFERENCE SUN 31 AUGUST TO
MONDAY 1 SEPTEMBER, CARDIFF & NEWPORT

OTHER PROTESTS AND DIRECT ACTION IN THE WEEK

Stop the War, CND, No to War: No to Nato



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Paper of the British section of the League for the Fifth International

Summer 2014 ★ Issue 378

PRICE: £1

Nato expansion threatens new cold war: in Russia, USA, Germany and Britain

THE MAIN ENEMY IS AT HOME

By KD Tait

THE ANNOUNCEMENT of the substantial reinforcement of Nato forces in Eastern Europe signals the end of the “phony peace” that followed the collapse of the USSR.

The conflict in Ukraine, which saw the pro-Russian president Yanukovich overthrown by Western-backed ultra-nationalists and fascists has been the catalyst for a sharp escalation in tension between the rival US and Russian imperialist blocs.

French and US warships have entered the Black Sea. Britain has sent extra warplanes to patrol the skies over the Baltic States and is preparing to deploy up to 1,000 soldiers and dozens of tanks, artillery and support vehicles to participate in exercises in Poland this summer. President Obama has announced an additional \$1 billion to fund reinforcements to the 67,000 US troops already stationed in Europe.

The USA spent \$5 billion dollars promoting “democracy” in Ukraine. The payoff for this invest-

ment was the political influence that allowed US envoy Victoria Nuland to sideline the EU and handpick key members of the new government.

The US is now determined to pour in further resources to make sure its investment in Ukraine pays off in terms of EU and Nato membership. The same will probably apply to Georgia. The measures of economic war - sanctions and embargos - will remain in place against Russia.

Civil war in Ukraine

US world leaders gathered in Kiev to celebrate Poroshenko's inauguration while the man elected by only a minority of Ukrainians and a government elected by a parliament purged of 110 of its 450 MPs are conducting a brutal war against their own people.

Kyiv's punitive military offensive against the civilian population centres of the Donbas has seen planes, tanks and artillery deployed indiscriminately. The fascists of the Right Sector, drafted into the “National Guard” to bolster a mutinous con-

script army, can only operate with the logistical and intelligence support of the US and British secret services.

By comparison Russian forces have not struck a blow or killed a single Ukrainian citizen. This is not because Russia is incapable of such actions. The destruction of Grozny in the second Chechen war indicates this. Its support for Assad in Syria, a filthy murderer of his own people, underlines that Russia is an imperialist power.

But for all their talk of democracy and human rights, the statesmen and women who head Nato are the ones trying to seize and pocket Ukraine. They are the ones who fully share responsibility for the hundreds of deaths in Ukraine. They encouraged the Maidan putsch; they failed to condemn the Odessa Pogrom. They are the number one criminals and the enemy of all working people. And all those in the labour movement or on the left, who remain silent have shamefully abandoned the people of Ukraine to fascist death squads.

Towards a new cold war

Nato military planners have long coveted Ukraine, which occupies a strategic position as a formally non-aligned buffer state between Russia and Europe. The installation of a pro-US regime in Kyiv is simply the latest step in Nato's creeping encirclement of Russia.

For the USA the potential economic value of a semi-colonial Ukraine, integrated into the Western powers' sphere of exploitation via the IMF and the EU Association Agreement, is secondary to its strategic military objective of encircling Russia - a policy enthusiastically supported by Poland, the Baltic States and Turkey, and in which Georgia and Azerbaijan loom large on the horizon. It is this prioritisation of the military over the economic, which lies at the heart of the political rift in Nato between Germany and the USA.

Far from attempting to defuse the conflict, the US will use its domination of Nato to “fight for peace” by staging confrontational military exercises on Ukrainian soil this July.

These war “games” are a crude

provocation that will see Ukraine become a de facto protectorate of Nato, completing a new “iron curtain” of military outposts stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea.

For two decades Nato has acted as the military arm of US foreign policy. This pax Americana was, for a dozen countries too weak to defend themselves, the peace of the graveyard.

While Putin's Russia emerged from the devastating impact of capitalist restoration, it could not vigorously oppose the United States' consolidation of its hegemony over the Balkans and the Middle East. The quid pro quo was the silence of the “democratic” imperialist powers faced with Putin's methodical butchery in Chechnya and the other republics of the North Caucasus.

Warfare or welfare?

As competition for resources grows and the world economic crisis destabilises whole regions, this “new world order” has been brought to a sudden end. A new and bloodier period of open imperialist rivalry

and conflict is upon us.

From Portugal to Poland the representatives of the billionaires, whose dictatorship subordinates all human progress to the interests of private profit, demand austerity, sacrifice and submission from working people. We are told that the age of welfare is over, that schools and hospitals must close so economies can grow.

There cannot be found the politician who will demand higher wages for those who work, better care for those who are ill or a real future for those with none, yet everywhere can be found politicians demanding Nato members increase spending on military budgets and governments burn money buying tools of destruction.

In September Nato's leaders will assemble in Newport, South Wales. Their message will be warfare not welfare. We must gather there in the greatest numbers possible to confront these warmongers and identify our main enemy as the British billionaires and government who impose austerity at home and arm fascists abroad.

Protest Nato • Newport, Wales • from 30 August

STRIKE TOGETHER TO SMASH THE PAY FREEZE

Millions of us have suffered a huge drop in our living standards as the bankers, bosses and Tories have made us pay for their crisis. **Jeremy Dewar** explains why we need to go beyond one-day protests if we want to stop the government's attacks

OVER THE past five years workers across Britain have witnessed their pay and benefits shrink remorselessly in the face of rising prices.

Local government workers have had their pay frozen for three of the past four years and received a miserly 1 per cent "rise" last year.

Once inflation is taken into account, this amounts to an 18 per cent drop in "real" pay.

One million council workers – two-thirds of the total – now earn less than £21,000 a year; half of these are on less than the living wage.

Yet if their pay had merely kept up with prices since 2010, they would be earning £1 an hour more than they currently do.

Seething anger at this injustice is intensified by the thousands of cuts in services and jobs that have been part of this bosses' offensive.

Taking on the work of colleagues made redundant, cuts to benefits that many staff rely on, slashing car allowances and overtime rates, holidays and sick pay, unpaid overtime... have piled on the resentment.

Whose recovery?

How this contrasts with the sight of Chancellor George Osborne, grinning like the Cheshire Cat, as he announces

growing profits, stock market prices and GDP, claiming to have engineered a recovery.

And yes, it's real – for some. The *Sunday Times* Rich List boasts that the wealth of the top 1,000 people has risen 15.4 per cent to an incredible £518.975 billion in the last 12 months. Britain's 100 billionaires (another new record) own over £300 billion between them.

This really is the 1 per cent that Occupy protested against.

Thomas Picketty, a French economist, has done the working class a real service by publishing *Capital in the 21st Century*, an analysis that proves that capitalism, left to its own devices, does not lead to a "trickle-down" of wealth, but concentrates it among the very rich.

OK, Picketty is a reformist; he supports tax reforms to redistribute wealth. But revolutionary socialists know this is not enough, and that Labour will not meddle with the power of the rich.

That doesn't mean that we have to accept what little Labour may do for us if elected; by mobilising our own strength, by utilising effectively the methods of *class struggle*, we can recover our share of the wealth we produce.

Strike

There is growing enthusiasm for the public sector pay strikes that are being lined up for 10 July. The teachers' union NUT already has a mandate for action and has committed to calling its 300,000 members out. They are likely to be joined by 900,000 local authority workers in Unison, GMB and Unite, who are balloting to strike in support of their claim for a £1 per hour increase across the board. They have been offered an insulting 1 per cent.

Others, with their own disputes, are also showing signs that they could join in, notably the civil service union PCS, the firefighters' union FBU and Doncaster Care UK workers in Unison. This could result in the mid-week day of action over falling pay that the TUC promised in September but did nothing to deliver.

Even Unison's timid leaders have pencilled in a two-day strike for September if the employers do not budge – which they won't after just one day.

The Royal College of Midwives is the first of the NHS unions to call for strikes, though Unison and Unite are likely to follow, after Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt blocked the pay review body's 1 per cent recommendation. Unite's head of health Rachel

Maskell said,

"There is growing anger across the 1.3 million workforce at the way Jeremy Hunt continues to treat dedicated NHS staff over pay."

This is all well and good – though if promises of action were actions we would have defeated austerity and wages freezes two years ago. We need to employ the old rank and file motto: "Watch your leaders!" We have, after all, been here before.

The public sector pensions dispute led up to a two million-strong strike in November 2011, but within a couple of weeks the union leaders had called off the action and retreated into sector-by-sector secret talks.

The result was for most workers little better than the original offer, and for others abandonment in the field of battle.

Rank and file control

This betrayal has to be remembered and its lessons learned if we are to fare better this time round.

• One day's action will not be enough. We need to lead workplace discussions about the next steps now. The date for a two-day follow-up strike should be announced now and we should force our leaders to commit to escalating action, up to and includ-

ing an all-out indefinite strike.

• No pulling out of the action. Form joint union committees in every workplace to link the disputes from below. An injury to one is an injury to all – no one must be left behind to fight alone. If necessary, we must continue the battle by issuing a unity call from below and picketing out those whose leaders let them down.

• Demand Ed Miliband and Labour support the strike and condemn them if (or rather, *when*) they do not. The main union leaders no doubt see this campaign as a fillip for the Labour's election campaign in May 2015, which has to be completed long before the polls so that party leaders are not "embarrassed" by strikers. We say, don't wait for Labour, who will only act for the working class if we force them to.

• Finally, but most importantly, fight for rank and file control. We are the ones who are making the sacrifices and whose families are being driven into poverty. We should settle for nothing less than a £1 an hour increase. Elected strike committees at local, regional and national levels have to take charge of all negotiations and decide when we are to strike and for how long.

If we do all this, then we can win.

workers power

what we stand for

- Capitalism must be abolished across the globe and a world without class division, state repression or the oppression of women, subject races and nations, must be created. That is what revolutionary socialists call communism.
- All power must pass from the capitalist elite into the hands of democratic councils of delegates from the working class, the peasantry and the poor directly elected by the masses and subject to instant recall. These councils must be supported by the armed working class and its allies.
- The resistance of the exploiters must be broken by the force of millions acting together in a social revolution. Armed workers must forcibly break up the police and army that exist to support the rule of private property.
- All production and distribution must be organised democratically and sustainably, without private ownership and the blind and brutal dictatorship of market forces.
- The capitalists' property must be expropriated, with not a penny paid in compensation.
- Social inequality and the underdevelopment of whole continents must be overcome through the planned allocation of humanity's resources: raw materials, means of transportation, communication, technology and labour.
- Imperialism, the highest and most violent stage of capitalism, means the exploitation of billions in all countries, it means blockades, invasions and occupations.
- We support all resistance to imperialism and its agents and demand an end to the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq. We demand the withdrawal of all British troops from abroad including from Northern Ireland. We demand the disso-

- lution of Nato and all imperialist pacts.
- We support the Palestinians' struggle to free their homeland from Zionist occupation and to create a single country "from the river to the sea", in which Arabic and Hebrew speaking citizens can live in freedom and equality.
- There is only one road to this freedom. It is the road of class struggle and revolution, the fight against all forms of exploitation and oppression.
- We demand equal rights for minorities, an end to all racist discrimination and an end to the lies of the racists in the mass media, which whip up violence against black people and other oppressed communities and ethnic groups. We fight against all immigration controls: they are inherently racist.
- We fight for women's liberation: from the burden of childcare and domestic labour, which must be socialised; from rape, physical and mental abuse, from unequal pay and discrimination at work.
- Women alone must control when and whether they have children, not the state or the churches. This includes defending and extending the right to free abortion and contraception on demand.
- Lesbians, gay men and transgender people must be defended against harassment on the streets, at work and in the schools. They must have equal legal rights to marry and bring up children.
- We fight the oppression of young people and demand an end to their harassment by the police, the government and the press. Young workers should have equal pay and equal rights with other workers.
- We fight for free, universal education, under the control of students, teachers and other education work-

- ers themselves. We fight for an autonomous, revolutionary socialist youth movement.
- We fight the catastrophe of climate change, resisting corporations which pollute the earth, governments that refuse to take action against the emission of greenhouse gases, and policies which put the profits of big oil, the auto industry and the power generators before the very survival of our species.
- We oppose reformism and the pro-capitalist policies of the Labour Party. Capitalism cannot be reformed via elections and peaceful parliamentary means; it must be overthrown by the masses through force.
- We oppose the control of the trade unions by unaccountable bureaucrats. Union members should have full democratic control. All officials must be regularly elected, and subject to instant recall; they must earn the average pay of the members they claim to represent. A rank and file movement to carry out this transformation.
- In the fight against austerity, we call for a united anti-austerity movement pledged to oppose every cut, for local councils of action, and for mass industrial and direct action, up to and including a general strike to halt the assault on the NHS, the welfare state and education and to kick out the coalition.
- We fight for a workers' government based on the fighting organisations of the working class and the socially oppressed.
- We propose the unity of all revolutionary forces in Britain to build a new working class revolutionary party. Workers Power is the British section of the League for a Fifth International. It fights for a world party organised across national boundaries on a programme for world revolution.

SOLIDARITY with ANTI-FASCIST RESISTANCE in UKRAINE



- We are against the UK and Western governments' backing for the far-right regime in Kiev.
- We oppose the planned NATO exercises in Ukraine.
- We demand that the killers of 42 people at the House of Trade Unions in Odessa on 2 May be brought to justice.
- We are against attacks on democratic rights and the repression of left-wing organisations.
- We support the antifascist resistance in Ukraine.

OVER 150 PEOPLE packed the meeting room in SOAS university, London on 2 June to launch the campaign in Solidarity with the Antifascist Resistance in Ukraine.

The speakers were Workers Power's Richard Brenner, Lindsey German from Counterfire, Boris Kagarlitsky from the Institute for Globalisation Studies and Social Movements, Moscow, Andrew Murray from the Communist Party of Britain, Alan Woods from Socialist Appeal and Sergei Kirichuk from the socialist organisation Borotba in Ukraine who, like Kagarlitsky, spoke via Skype.

The speakers explained different aspects of the crisis in Ukraine, including:

- The role of US and European imperialism
- The recruitment of fascist gangs into the National Guard
- How the conflict is a social and

class based one rather than one based on language or ethnicity

- The support of the British government for the Ukrainian authorities
 - The presence of far right and openly fascist elements within the Kiev government
 - The participation of British troops in joint NATO exercises in Ukraine
 - The role of the oligarchs
 - The attacks against the Communist Party and other left wing organisations (having their offices burnt down and ransacked, their members persecuted, threats of banning)
 - Mutinies in the Ukraine army.
- All speakers stressed that support for the anti-fascist resistance did not mean support for Putin.

There was also time for discussion from the floor, including the interventions from two Ukrainians who supported the Kiev government. The demo-

cratic nature of the meeting meant they could speak freely – could anyone imagine the same happening the other way round?

Perhaps the most significant intervention from the floor was that of Eddie Dempsey branch secretary of the RMT Paddington No.1 branch who, on behalf of his branch, called for a broad based, democratic campaign, rooted in the labour movement. Eddie also emphasised that his branch wanted to move an emergency resolution to RMT national AGM.

At the end of the meeting, the aims of the campaign were approved with an overwhelming vote (see above).

For more information see: ukrainiantifascistsolidarity.wordpress.com/ and like facebook page: [facebook.com/SolidaritywithAntifascistResistanceinUkraine](https://www.facebook.com/SolidaritywithAntifascistResistanceinUkraine)

Across Europe, the solidarity movement is more advanced than it is here in the UK. Here is the Italian band, Banda Bassotti, at their gig on 5 June



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Racist and sexual abuse widespread at Yarl's Wood

Joy Macready reports on the scandal at the heart of Britain's privatised immigration system and yet another tale of abuse by Serco staff. Time to call for the shutting down of all deportation centres

AFTER NUMEROUS complaints, a hunger strike by 80 inmates, CCTV evidence and even a prison pregnancy, the truth about widespread sexual and physical abuse at Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre has finally made the front pages.

It took a male former employee to break through the web of lies spun by Serco, the "biggest company you've never heard of". This multinational services firm is still running Yarl's Wood despite having had to sack two guards over "detainee sex" in October last year. One male staff member was dismissed for "inappropriate behaviour with a resident" four years after the incident was caught on CCTV.

The whistleblower described the repeated sexual abuse and rampant racism from staff. But only now has Shadow Home Secretary Yvette Cooper demanded an independent investigation, calling into question last October's HM Inspectorate of Prisons report, which said that detainees "felt safe" and that "there is little violence".

Not a new revelation

But widespread abuse is not a new revelation. Throughout the seven years that Serco has run Yarl's Wood, there have been a series of substantiated complaints made by female asylum seekers against staff; yet Serco has conspired to discredit and silence the victims.

The Home Office is complicit in covering up sexual abuse by deporting witnesses and victims. One woman claims that attempts were made to deport her to nine different countries after she

complained about sexual assault.

Serco doesn't even adhere to the legal minimum level of care for the vulnerable women it imprisons, many of whom fled their home countries to escape from rape and torture. The ex-official said that women have been deported without their mental health being properly assessed, despite more than half of the detainees at any one time – more than 200 individuals – either self-harming or at risk of self-harming.

Rule 35 of the Detention Centre Rules bars the Home Office from detaining anyone who has been tortured. Doctors must alert the Home Office of any detainee who they think might be a victim of torture; yet in 2012 only 6 per cent of detainees were released under Rule 35.

Tragically, in March a 40-year old Jamaican woman, who had lived in the UK for more than 14 years, died of cardiac arrest after screaming in pain for over 45 minutes. A spokesman for Serco said that Christine Case had received a comprehensive health check from a nurse and a doctor the day she arrived at Yarl's Wood. Yet 10 days later she was dead.

The most vulnerable

Almost 90 per cent of people held at Yarl's Wood are women, yet about half the staff members are male.

These women are the most vulnerable in society. Many have escaped wars or persecution because of their race, religion, nationality or political opinion. When they seek refuge in the

UK, they are then torn away from their families and in some cases imprisoned for up to four years. None of the women in Yarl's Wood have any idea if or when they will be released – or violently deported.

These women have committed no crime, and yet they are treated worse than convicted criminals; at least they know how long their sentence is.

Some harrowing statistics:

- 50 per cent of women asylum seekers are survivors of rape
- 70 per cent of women in detention are rape survivors
- 57 per cent of women in detention have no lawyers

Many believe that the official statistics are well below the actual number. Rape victims often fail to mention the attack because of the unsympathetic attitude of UK Border Agency (UKBA) officers and their own sense of shame. The UKBA offers no childcare service, so women are often forced to describe their rape and torture in front of their children.

These conditions of imprisonment have a traumatic effect on their recovery. Detention at Yarl's Wood is like reliving their worst nightmares, and as a result many become depressed and suicidal.

Detainees say that guards give them the impression that they can help with immigration cases in return for sexual contact. They also feel that they have to flirt with staff to gain access to basic essentials like toiletries.

In this power imbalance, at no point could sexual relations between staff

and prisoners be considered consensual. Even so, an investigation by the Home Office's Professional Standards Unit, into a case in which a young detainee was made to have oral sex with a guard, claimed that the detainee, "Tanja", had failed to demonstrate that this was "anything other than consensual".

Serco – parasites

Serco has been mired in scandal since taking over Yarl's Wood in 2007. In 2010 the detention of children was finally stopped after a public campaign. Last year Serco had to pay back £90.5 million after it was found to have been charging the government for tagging people who were either dead, in prison or never tagged at all.

Yet after a short ban, the government quietly decided in January to let Serco bid for government contracts again. In 2012 alone, Serco's revenue from the UK public sector amounted to £1.8 billion.

These include contracts for over £600 million from the Ministry of Defence, as well as contracts for over £200 million each with the Ministry of Justice, the Department of Transport and the NHS.

In May it was disclosed that Serco could be among companies to take over the running of privatised children's social services, including child protection, under proposals being considered by Michael Gove's Department for Education.

Outsourcing companies like Serco, G4S, Capita and Virgin Care, are com-

pletely unaccountable. These companies run public services like schools, nuclear weapons and other military facilities, prisons, ambulances and the government's Work Programme for the unemployed, for a profit, not for the benefit of the community as a whole.

The solution

We need a labour movement campaign, led by those unions and activists already campaigning against privatisation, to kick private firms out of our public services and bring them back under public control. Only then will we be able to hold those providing the services to account and ensure not just adequate but high quality.

But the campaign must also take up the rights of asylum seekers and immigrants. It must fight to close all immigration deportation centres and to open up our borders. Serco, which operates in 30 countries, is a perfect example of how money can move around the world with no borders stopping the capitalists from reaping profits. Why shouldn't people be able to move with the same freedom?

Some trade unions are already committed to a No Borders position, but they must be able to back this up with real action. But this will also mean tackling the lies about asylum and immigration that have been spread by all the main parties. The immigration crackdown, which they have all backed, has made the situation worse, increasing the desperation of the women – and men – caught up in Britain's punitive asylum system.

Going all out to win at Lambeth College

By Jeremy Dewar, Lambeth Unison Publicity Officer (pc)

LIKE MANY further education establishments, Lambeth College is facing devastating cuts. Unlike most, however, its workforce has come out fighting – in an all-out indefinite strike.

Teachers in the Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) have been on strike since 3 June, demanding the withdrawal of new contracts which will, with no extra pay,

- Add an hour onto the working week
 - Cut holidays by two weeks
 - Slash sick pay, impoverishing anyone suffering long-term sickness
- In his short time at the

college, the principal Mark Silverman has done everything to alienate the local community.

He has overseen the selling off of two-thirds of the Brixton site to "educational" chancers who want to set up two free schools; he has cut staff numbers and courses and gone running to the courts to get an injunction against the UCU.

To add insult to injury, Silverman spent £35,000

Picket lines have been lively. Strikers have involved students and the community, as well as linking up with Ritzy cinema staff, who have struck for the living wage

refurbishing his office in the middle of these cuts!

Silverman used Britain's world-famous anti-union laws to force the UCU to call off its first strike on the spurious basis that some workers may not have understood the question. Teachers responded by re-balloting and returning to the picket line a month later.

Now he is claiming the staff are divided, but he is also

coming unstuck here as Lambeth Unison members have also voted – by 84 per cent – for an all-out strike. They will start a two-day strike on 11 June, with the regional officer saying they may extend this if the turnout is strong.

That's not right. Unison members are demanding the union backs an indefinite strike alongside UCU. It is all well and good saying the strike must be solid, but Unison has an obligation to back the UCU all the way – anything less would amount to scabbing.

Jim, a Unison member who has been on every picket line since Day One, says, "We plan to make this a very active strike with 'teach-outs', a hair and nail bar, and other activities for the

students."

Dave from UCU is looking at ways to extend the strike, "We want to get the security guards and cleaners unionised and out on strike. CONEL college in Tottenham may also come out, too. There's more we can do to win this."

Messages of support to: mandybrowncow@yahoo.com

Send donations to: Mandy Brown c/o Lambeth Trades Council, Hambrook House, Porden Road, London SW2 5RW. Bank details: Halifax • Account name: J Eldon • Sort code: 11-01-07 • Account number: 11242869

Pickets at Clapham Common South Side: 7-11am Monday-Friday



Podemos: a model for the European left to follow?

By Markus Lehner

SPAIN BUCKED the rightward trend in May's European Parliament elections by electing five MEPs from the new "Podemos" (We Can) formation.

With 8 per cent or 1.25 million votes, in addition to the 11 per cent won by the United Left (IU) bloc, Podemos's surprise success opens up the possibility of creating a radical left-wing alternative along the lines of Greece's Syriza party.

Activists associated with Movimiento 15-M, which led the 2011-12 anti-austerity protests, founded Podemos just two months before the elections. For several weeks there had been predictions that it would achieve a vote just around the threshold for winning seats. But as the election campaign progressed the swing towards Podemos increased.

In February IU had not yet agreed a common electoral platform. Many former IU supporters were disillusioned with its record and feared it would continue its policy of supporting another government led by the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE).

Spain has been rocked for three years by mass protests against an EU-driven austerity that has been imposed first by the social-democratic PSOE and then by conservative Popular Party (PP) governments.

The square occupations, Movimiento 15-M and the Indignados are just a few faces of the sustained politicisation of young people hard hit by this austerity. In a space where the big trade unions and the established left parties were weakly represented, these overwhelmingly youthful movements found new forms of protest and organisation, which have sustained protests for several years. It was these conditions that contributed to Podemos' success as an electoral left alternative.

Origin and structure

The initiative to launch Podemos began with a number of leftist intellectuals led by Pablo Iglesias and Santiago Alba Rico, who sympathised



Podemos leader Pablo Iglesias and supporters

with the protest movement and who no longer supported IU.

A second factor was a decision by the Anticapitalist Left (IA), a group led by the Spanish section of the Fourth International, to break with IU and launch an independent electoral initiative. After years of work in IU, IA counts over 1,000 members, and its national structures provided a framework around which the Iglesias group could build Podemos.

The basic idea for building Podemos was the "circuitos", or circles. These open and expandable structures operate locally or within certain social sectors (trade unions, environmental and women's movements etc.), and not just individuals but also groups and campaigns can join them.

Podemos emphasises that it does not intend to replace existing initiatives or organisations but rather try to bring them into a common framework of political discussion and collaboration.

Both the programme and the candidates for the elections were discussed first at circle level, before being decided through a process of online voting at national level, drawing 30,000 to 40,000 "supporters" into the discussions and decision-making. With this form of participation Podemos quickly gained thousands of activists for the election campaign and built circles of considerable size, even in small towns in the provinces.

Spain is now covered with these circles. Electoral success generated requests for cooper-

ation and new circles more quickly than they could be processed.

Podemos' programme

It must be said here that the strongly grassroots-centred democratic process – as concerns both candidates and programme – has not produced too many surprises. On one hand, Iglesias was confirmed as the main leader and placed at number two on the electoral list. On the other hand, the programme reads like the left-reformist manifesto usually issued by the Spanish section of the Fourth International.

So we have the call for a "social Europe" that increases employment through investment programmes, an audit (not cancellation) of the state debt, accountability (not expropriation) of the multinationals, a basic income, restricting political salaries and perks to the level of the average wage, the abolition of the repressive EU border regime and so forth.

But that is as far as it goes. Nothing in the programme addresses the means by which these demands might be implemented: state ownership of land and workplaces and working class control of the means of production are not mentioned.

Nor does Podemos's programme challenge illusions in the democratic process by posing the need for a fundamental break with the capitalist state apparatus. In spite of its many progressive and necessary demands it is unquestionably a left-reformist organisation with

a left-reformist programme.

However despite this the character of Podemos is not yet fixed in stone. The grassroots decision-making structure, its connection to radical social struggles and its roots within the unionised workforce allow revolutionary currents within Podemos to agitate for a decisive break with the elements of petit bourgeois ideology, and with their representatives. Without such a break, Podemos will nurture within itself the embryo of compromise and conciliation with the capitalist order.

A new workers' party?

We would argue that both electoral support for Podemos and work inside it are entirely justified for the very weak revolutionary currents existing in Spain. Arguing as some do that the tiny groups of revolutionaries should carry out their own regroupment separate from Podemos is not a way to fight the centrism of the Fourth International but leaves it to determine the fate of Podemos and with it an important section of the vanguard of youth and workers in Spain.

A small collection of groups that could do little more than draw programmatic conclusions from the crisis of the left, or offer their ideas as a guide for workers' struggles, cannot thus seriously impact the mass movement that formed Podemos. Instead, such organisations should try to integrate themselves with that movement and fight for a revolution-

ary strategy for the strikes and protests.

Podemos is not simply a regroupment project of socialist propaganda groups, but a movement that influences hundreds of thousands of workers and youth. The question is therefore how this can develop into a new workers' party which acts as the vanguard of the working class in Spain, drawing in the most politically active and most dynamic parts of the new social movements.

Podemos's electoral success calls into question the balance of forces within the working class and the traditional labour movement. This is shown by the fact that Podemos voters came not just from the social movements. Many were former PSOE supporters who are now looking for an alternative to its neoliberal policy.

Perspectives

Despite IU's own gains, many clearly see the radical democracy of Podemos as a credible alternative. The question for Podemos now is to set out its policy on the most pressing issues: unemployment, the housing shortage, job cuts, workplace closures and the national question. Podemos equally must address the question of what attitude to take to other organisations, political campaigns and social movements.

And Podemos will have to answer this as a party, as a political force with mass impact. To achieve its potential, Podemos

cannot remain in its current stage of unstructured circle growth and participatory democracy and fail to address the question of power and working class rule.

On all these issues, Podemos must rapidly develop clear political answers and advance precise demands as the basis for a united front of all labour organisations and social movements against the attacks of capital and Mariano Rajoy's government.

The abdication of King Juan Carlos and the demands of the Catalans and the Basques for a referendum on independence show that democratic demands remain a central issue in the Spanish state.

The transition from Franco's dictatorship left a whole host of democratic issues unsolved, issues which the PSOE ducked repeatedly and which the PP as Franco's heirs naturally rejected. The mass demonstrations calling for a republic can boost Podemos if it courageously takes up the demand for a republic, for a constituent assembly and for the right of all the nationalities in the Spanish state to decide if they wish to remain within it or to achieve their independence.

Revolutionary socialists in Podemos should be fighting in the democratic base structures of the party for those tactics that can win these political and social demands, i.e. the all-out general strike, controlled by assemblies and councils in the workplaces and communities.

At the same time, Podemos must clarify its future as a party – its political programme and its internal structures – by conducting a thorough and democratic debate on the alternatives reform or revolution.

Podemos can only become a "new type" of party when it acts as an expression of the struggle for workers' democracy against the prevailing capitalist relations.

Without issuing ultimatums, revolutionaries should therefore propose a revolutionary action programme, and advocate a genuinely democratic centralist party structure as the most effective way to fight for a strategy of the revolutionary seizure of power by the working class.

UKIP: a threat for Tories - and workers

By Rebecca Anderson

AFTER MONTHS of media hype about UKIP and a national debate focusing on Europe and immigration, the right-wing party came top of the polls in May's European Elections.

It can hardly come as a surprise to anyone that UKIP did so well, but there are diverging opinions about what this means for the future and what it says about racism in Britain today.

Election results

In the European elections, UKIP won 27 per cent of the vote and now have an MEP in every region.

It was the first time that the main opposition party has not come top of the polls in a European election since 1984, but Labour did increase its seats from 13 to 20. The history of election results in EU elections show that voters treat them as a way to register their dissatisfaction with the ruling party.

This is especially true since the European Parliament has no measurable impact on voters' lives and because European election results are not always reflected in local and general elections.

UKIP's vote actually fell in May's local elections. A year ago they won an average of 24 per cent of the vote but this time round they only won an average of 17 per cent nationally and seven per cent in London.

This is not a result of them spreading themselves more thinly – in these local elections they actually concentrated their efforts on certain areas, thereby winning a greater number of council seats despite receiving fewer overall votes. Despite this tactic, UKIP do not have control of any council and have only 161 councillors.

Labour, on the other hand, won 300 additional seats and won control of six additional councils. Lord Ashcroft, a Tory Peer conducted a poll that found that if a General Election were held today then the Tories would lose 83 seats and Labour would win by a comfortable majority.

Ashcroft also found that around half of UKIP voters were ex-Tory voters, 20 per cent had voted Lib Dem in the 2010 general election and 15 per cent had voted Labour. So, UKIP took votes from all the major parties, and got votes from people who don't usually vote, but the main party losing out to UKIP is the Conservatives.

The media hype

Despite the media hype about UKIP, their failures in the local elections demonstrate that their popularity could well be shallow – many of those who went to the polls in May must have voted UKIP in the European



UKIP election posters were targets of a nationwide graffiti campaign

elections but for another party in the local elections.

This is despite the huge media coverage of UKIP in the run up to the elections, both positive and negative. The BBC received almost 1,200 complaints about their disproportionate coverage of UKIP, which is thought to be the highest ever number of complaints of that nature. Nigel Farage has appeared on the BBC's Question Time 16 times since 2009, much more than any other party leader.

Many newspapers ran stories exposing the racism of UKIP candidates, forcing a number to resign. However, leaders of the mainstream parties weren't willing to fully condemn the racism of UKIP.

When Miliband said that Farage's comment that he would feel "uncomfortable" living next door to a Roman family was a "racist slur" but refused to say that Farage himself was a racist, he was slammed by Tottenham MP David Lammy who told the BBC's Daily Politics: "I remember a context in which some people said, 'you don't want these people living next door to you' – that was racist. What Nigel Farage said over the weekend was racist... So I'm clear, he's a racist."

The mainstream parties, including Labour, were aware that allowing the national debate to focus so much on Europe and immigration would benefit UKIP in the European elections. However, while debate about the economy, jobs, housing and the NHS focussed on migrants and EU regulation, it wasn't focusing on austerity, privatisation and the cost of living crisis. Naturally, the Tories, Labour and Lib Dems were happy with this arrangement.

A socialist alternative?

Although racist attacks have fallen

from 55,134 recorded incidents in 2009/10 to 47,678 in 2011/12, there is a clear rise in the racist rhetoric used by the media and government to cover for the social problems caused by their economic policies.

There is no party of the left saying that migrants aren't to blame, challenging racism and pointing to the real

causes of our problems.

It was a real achievement for the Trade Union and Socialist Coalition to stand over 500 candidates in the local elections. They polled over 65,000 votes nationally and their best result was in Salford where they won 9.9 per cent of the vote.

There are 11 months until the gen-

eral election, where socialist candidates will be in a position to challenge Labour on their near silence over the Coalition's imposition of brutal austerity and to raise demands for jobs, homes and saving the NHS.

TUSC could build on their successes in the local elections, but they themselves claim that their coalition is a step towards building a party and it is clear that a nothing less than a mass party capable of presenting a fighting socialist alternative on the national scale will do.

Left Unity will undoubtedly stand candidates in the General Election, and whilst it is a newer organisation than TUSC it will have the advantage of having campaigned against austerity in towns and cities across the country for the two years leading up to the elections. It also has a more clear and coherent attitude to immigration – they are in favour of it.

On this basis it should set out to win roots not only in communities fighting to defend their jobs, houses and services but all those fighting racism whether its comes from UKIP, The Tories – or Labour. TUSC and Left Unity should discuss adopting a common action programme for 2015 that could be a starting point for a new party of class struggle.

How can we go beyond Labour?

Despite Ed Miliband's 2013 conference pledges to abolish the bedroom tax, freeze fuel bills and build 200,000 affordable homes a year by 2020, over the past three years the Labour Party has:

- Backed the Tories' public sector pay freeze
- Denounced the 30 November 2011 pensions strike
- Said it would not reverse the Coalition's cuts and would keep to its spending levels for two years
- Supported the Tories' benefits cap
- Attacked unions who demanded policies in their members' interest in return for the millions they contribute to Labour
- Joined the Tories' attacks on claimants

The Old Labour "socialism" of reducing social inequality has disappeared without a trace; the identification with the unions and the working class has been all but abandoned; the domination of openly pro-capitalist ideas in Labour is near total. The representation of the Labour left in parliament, in local government, in the constituencies has shrunk to an all-time low.

Labour cannot be converted into an instrument of socialist transition. That is why we need a new party of the working class, a party of struggle against capitalism, based on those fighting capitalism in the here and now. A party that can win working people to the only real solution that is in their interests – a socialist solution.

This party should focus on today's struggles: defending the NHS, opposing the bedroom tax, making the rich pay to save our services, fighting

for jobs, for a future for the young and a decent

retirement for the elderly.

At the same time this new party should connect these struggles to the fight for a socialist transformation of society.

The party will oppose the pro-capitalist ideas that are spread by the media, and that foment a pathological individualism that glorifies selfishness, status and celebrity and denigrates collectivity and solidarity.

It will fight the denigration and persecution of benefit claimants and the long-term unemployed, which portray them as scroungers when the rich dodge far more in taxes than is lost through invalid benefit claims.

Our party will fight the British nationalism that blames unemployment, bad housing and stretched health and social services on fictional "floods" of East European migrants, Roma and others. Our party should protest against racism in all its many forms, from the merely "casual" to attacks and abuse in the streets and communities.

A new workers' party can fight this by exposure, by mockery, and by stimulating the creation of a combative counterculture, based on giving working people, youth and women a voice.

In short a new workers' party must put socialism back on the agenda for millions. And this is not primarily a question of winning elections; this must be a do-it-yourself solution, carried out by the direct action of millions and not just voted for.

In the words of Karl Marx, "the emancipation of the working class is the task of the working class itself".

Interview: why voting for Scottish independence is not a way forward

Sandy McBurney, Glasgow South Left Unity member, talks to *Workers Power* about why he is against voting for Scottish independence in the upcoming referendum on 18 September

Workers Power (WP): What effect do you think independence would have on the unity of workers north and south of the border?

Sandy McBurney (SB): It is obvious that the unity of the working class across Britain would be weakened. Firstly, if a Yes vote is achieved, the common project of establishing a workers' government in Britain, which is implicit in the organisation of a labour movement, would have suffered a major setback at the hands of the Scottish nationalists and their project of winning Scottish workers to support an independent capitalist Scotland.

The main culprits responsible for this defeat would be the trade union and labour bureaucracy, and in particular the New Labour project of Blair and Brown, which so far has succeeded in marginalising the working class voice in British politics.

The goal must be to combine workers together to oppose the dictates of capital by forming themselves into a class – and this is something that will have to be fought for in the teeth of opposition from the labour bureaucracy, whose aim is to restrict working class self-activity to that which is compatible with the continuation of capitalist rule.

Secondly, the success of the Yes campaign would mean the victory of nationalism over class-consciousness in the heartlands of the working class in Scotland. It would be a sign that workers in Scotland no longer identify themselves as part of the British labour movement.

Thirdly, as a result there would be a trend towards separate Scottish trade unions, which are likely to be even more dominated by class-collaboration politics than the existing UK-wide unions.

Fourthly, the Marxist project of a British-wide socialist party fighting to give political answers to the struggles of the working class in Britain and beyond would also suffer a



Glasgow pupil support assistants strike November 2013

major setback. Already much of the old left in Scotland have rejected the idea of a British-wide socialist party, opting for a Scottish "left" party in favour of giving support to the anti-working class independence project of a section of the Scottish bosses led by the SNP government. So a Yes vote will signify a setback for working class solidarity, strength and class-consciousness.

WP: Why do you think the independence lobby is gaining support, particularly from the poorer strata of society and the youth?

SB: The support for independence has grown, but only a minority of the working class backs a Yes vote at present. It is also doing poorly among first-time voters and women, where support for independence in the latest polls is at 29 per cent and 28 per cent, respectively. However, some working class people are becoming desperate, especially given the attacks on their living standards. As elsewhere in the UK, we are seeing a rise in food banks, zero-hour contracts, benefit sanctions, rents are increasing, etc.

The labour movement and its leadership are not offering any real fightback. It is dominated by middle class careerists, who are totally subservient to

big business and the establishment. Given the absence of a working class fightback in Britain currently, as well as the experience of the anti-working class nature of the last New Labour government and its subservience to finance capital, sections of the working class in Scotland see little alternative than to vote for the independence project. The SNP claims that independence will create a fairer society, and people in bad situations need hope. The snake oil salesmen have a market for their wares.

Remember, however, the majority of the working class still doesn't support the call for Scottish independence. Among those workers who do support independence, the support is weak and not based on any great enthusiasm – it is widely understood that Scots do not suffer national oppression within Britain. The independence project of the SNP has always been based on keeping the working class quiescent. There has never been any mass working class action for independence – no strikes or mass demonstrations.

WP: In your opinion, have the pro-independence socialists conceded ground to nationalism? If so, in what ways have they done this?

SB: I think it would be more

accurate to say that the pro-independence socialist groups have transformed themselves into left nationalist groups. Their function is no longer to promote working class solidarity and class-consciousness, but rather to attempt to sell to workers the anti-working class neoliberal independence project of the SNP by painting it as "progressive" or as a step towards socialism – or even as a major blow against imperialism.

The trend to nationalism is obvious, from flying the Saltire on Mayday to slogans such as the Radical Independence Campaign's "Britain is for the rich; Scotland can be ours."

Let's be clear, the left nationalist groups (Scottish Socialist Party, International Socialist Group, Socialist Party Scotland, Solidarity, etc) are supporting the project of an important section of the Scottish establishment – the project of an independent capitalist Scotland. Unlike Marxists, they are not fighting for the political independence of the working class from the forces of capital but quite the opposite: the continued subordination of workers to the ideology of their bosses – nationalism.

The left groups have downplayed or dropped any criticism of the SNP government or its white paper on independence during the referendum campaign, in case it may harm the

Yes vote. When the SNP government recently voted down (with Tory support) a Labour motion in Holyrood for the living wage to be paid on all Scottish government contracts, the left nationalist groups disgracefully stayed silent on the matter.

Of course, it is important that socialists give no support to the Better Together Campaign, and stress that we are for the unity of the British working class and are fierce opponents of the British state and its imperialist role around the world.

Most workers who support a Yes vote do so in the hope that things will be fairer if independence is achieved. We have to reach these workers with the argument that in order to defend their interests we need workers unity with our comrades south of the border. What will not bring pro-working class reforms is "unity" with the likes of [Stagecoach bosses] Brian Souter, George Mathewson and Rupert Murdoch!

WP: If there is a Yes vote, what do you think are the main tasks facing socialists in Scotland the day after the referendum?

SB: If the majority of Scottish people vote for independence, we must defend their right to national self-determination if it comes under attack from Westminster. I think such an attack is very unlikely, even

given the fact that bourgeois politics are more unstable and populist than in the past (witness the rise of UKIP).

However, during the negotiation process between Westminster and Holyrood to divide assets and liabilities, which is expected to last at least 18 months, there is a real danger that chauvinists on both sides of the border will stir up national antagonisms over the terms of the "divorce". This could be a very difficult time for socialist politics since what is a fair and democratic division of resources between the two capitalist states is difficult to determine, and the fact that socialist politics do not thrive in periods of national antagonism.

We must strive to maintain the existing unity of the working class in Britain and promote a common struggle against austerity and "our" respective rulers. There is a real danger that during the negotiation period the left nationalist groups may try to "out nationalist" the SNP by posing as the real defenders of the Scottish "people". There are already signs of this, with a leading member of Radical Independence Campaign calling for hard negotiations so that the Scottish people get their fair share, which apparently includes 22 stops of the London underground!

We should continue to argue for a British-wide socialist party and the need to create a united socialist party of the working class in Europe. I think that very quickly after a Yes vote the pro-independence wing of the working class in Scotland will lose any illusions it has in the progressive nature of an independent capitalist Scotland.

However, there is also a danger that the reality of independence may simply lead to a period of further demoralisation and atomisation of the mass of the working class. This is an outcome we must fight hard against.

4 August 1914: the collapse of the Second International

By Dave Stockton

THE SECOND International, founded in 1889, was an organisation of the world's socialist, social democratic and labour parties. From its founding conference in Paris it set out to coordinate the activities of mass organisations formed over the previous two decades. These centred on winning universal suffrage and an international campaign of strikes and mass mobilisations on May Day for the eight-hour day.

But from the beginning the International set itself the task of combating war, which it clearly linked to the overthrow of capitalism. Towards the end of the century and into the new one, a series of wars and clashes outside Europe, where the European powers and the USA carved out new colonies, set the scene for a whole new epoch of capitalism, one that Marxists were to call imperialism.

Between 1900 and 1914 the International debated the relationship between changes in the structure of capitalism, the exploitation of colonies and the dangers of war.

Colonial seizures by the major powers pushed the question of naval power to the forefront. Britain had succeeded in grabbing "the lion's share" because of the worldwide reach of its battle fleet. But this provoked an arms race, as Germany, France, Russia, Italy and the USA tried hard to catch up.

In 1904, Britain and France formed an alliance that became known as the Triple Entente, when Russia joined it a year later. Faced with the potential of a war on two fronts, Germany and Austria formed a counter-alliance with Italy and became known as the Central Powers.

Conscription created huge standing armies, capable of being mobilised at short notice. Advances in military technology – heavy guns, machine guns, fortifications – all ensured that war, when it came, would be unbelievably more destructive than the wars of the nineteenth century. As Frederick Engels wrote, as early as 1887:

"No war is any longer possible for Prussia-Germany except a world war and a world war indeed of an extent and violence hitherto undreamt of. Eight to ten millions of soldiers will massacre one another and in doing so devour the whole of Europe until they have stripped it barer than any swarm of locusts has ever done. The devastations of the Thirty Years' War compressed into three or four years, and



"If they think we are going to lift the weapons of murder against our French and other brethren, then we shall shout: 'We will not do it!'" Rosa Luxemburg (pictured)

spread over the whole Continent; famine, pestilence, general demoralisation both of the armies and of the mass of the people produced by acute distress; hopeless confusion of our artificial machinery in trade, industry and credit, ending in general bankruptcy; collapse of the old states and their traditional state wisdom to such an extent that crowns will roll by dozens on the pavement and there will be nobody to pick them up; absolute impossibility of foreseeing how it will all end and who will come out of the struggle as victor; only one result is absolutely certain: general exhaustion and the establishment of the conditions for the ultimate victory of the working class."

The International

So how did socialists develop the tactics to combat the war drive in Europe?

The Second International held nine international congresses between 1889 and 1914. Those held at Stuttgart in 1907 and in Basel in 1912 were particularly significant for the fight against war. Here it became clear that the compromise between reformist and revolutionaries, which was central to the International, would become a critical weakness. Engels and the German Marxists believed optimistically that reformism was in fact an old and declining middle class viewpoint. After all, Marxists dominated the German Social Democratic party (SPD), having fought off an attempt by Eduard Bernstein and his followers to make the party openly reformist.

At the Stuttgart Congress Bernstein and his supporters argued for reform

of colonial policy, rather than outright support for the fight against colonial oppression. Gustav Noske declared: "The Social Democrats will not lag behind the bourgeois parties and will shoulder their rifles. We want Germany to be as well armed as possible."

The resolution adopted at the Congress rejected such chauvinist ideas. Vladimir Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg and Julius Martov drafted its last sections jointly: "The Congress holds that it is the duty of the working classes, and especially their representatives in parliaments, recognising the class character of bourgeois society and the motive for the preservation of the opposition between nations, to fight with all their strength against naval and military armament and to refuse to supply the means for it, as well as to labour for the education of working class youth in the spirit of the brotherhood of nations and of socialism, and to see that it is filled with class consciousness."

If there was an outbreak of war, the parties of the International solemnly pledged themselves "to strive with all their power to make use of the violent economic and political crisis brought about by the war to rouse the people and thereby to hasten the abolition of capitalist class rule."

However, the First Balkan War in the autumn of 1912 set alarm bells ringing. The International Bureau met to decide what action to take. An emergency congress was held in Basel, Switzerland. But it added nothing to the resolution passed at Stuttgart. Above all it did not agree what measures to take if a war approached

beyond mass demonstrations of protest and a refusing to vote war credits in parliament.

Ominously it never settled the issue of so-called "defensive" wars. While opposing imperialist war for plunder and annexation, it allowed the parties to support their countries if they were "attacked"; in that case, "defence of the fatherland" was permitted.

Karl Kautsky (according to Lenin) pointed out that "at times of patriotic excitement", it was "often quite impossible to make out" if "a particular war has been brought about with defensive or aggressive aims", and that "Social-Democrats would be entangled in a net of diplomatic negotiations if they took into their heads to determine their attitude to a war by this criterion."

Likewise the International never settled on what tactics to use when the ruling class would not tolerate opposition from mass parties that would undermine army morale. The spectre of defeat would drive them to dictatorship and that in turn would raise the spectre of revolution.

Franz Ferdinand

On 28 June 1914, Serb nationalists assassinated the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, Crown Prince of Austria-Hungary, alongside his wife in Sarajevo. Then on 23 July Austria issued an ultimatum to Serbia, one it clearly could not accept. Tsar Nicholas II declared that if his Serb ally were attacked, Russia would mobilise against Austria. The German government then announced that if this occurred it would stand by Austria. Europe prepared for war.

As had been agreed, the sections of the International organised mass demonstrations all over Europe. Hundreds of thousands demonstrated in Berlin and the SPD's Berlin daily *Vorwärts*, repeatedly denounced the war:

"The class conscious proletariat of Germany, in the name of humanity and civilization, raises a flaming protest against this criminal activity of the warmongers," it thundered, "Not one drop of blood from a German soldier shall be sacrificed for power-hungry Austrian rulers and imperialistic profit interests."

On 28 July Austria declared war on Serbia. The alliances swung into action; a series of mobilisations and then declarations of war followed. The International's leaders met on 29 July in Brussels. Here a different picture emerged from that presented at the mass demonstrations.

Viktor Adler of the Austrian Social Democracy gloomily claimed, "We can do nothing." Others protested at his pessimism but no specific action was agreed.

As it became all too clear that nothing would stop the war, socialist leaders called off antiwar demonstrations. Right wing SPD parliamentarians assured Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg that they would vote for war credits, whatever the party itself decided. They argued to their supporters that if the party abstained it would be declared illegal, with all its funds and property confiscated and its leaders arrested. This produced a total collapse of the other SPD deputies' already daunted spirits. Even the left agreed that unity and party discipline were necessary.

Thus on 4 August every single SPD member of the Reichstag, including Karl Liebknecht, voted for war credits; and with that, international solidarity was shattered into pieces. "It cannot be, it must be a forged number," exclaimed Lenin when he read a report of it in *Vorwärts*.

When socialist parties in the belligerent countries – except Serbia and Russia – followed suit, the Second International was no more. Europe embarked upon the bloodiest war in its history, where millions of working class men and women killed one another other on behalf of the capitalist class.

Rosa Luxemburg was the harshest critic of its betrayal. She wrote: "Since 4 August 1914, German Social Democracy has been a stinking corpse."

The Battle of Orgreave

Thirty years ago in the Yorkshire coalfield, thousands of striking miners and their supporters faced an army of riot police intent on smashing the union and demoralising the pickets. **Chris Clough** looks back on and asks if the battle could have been won

BY MAY 1984, the miners, in their tens of thousands, had been on strike for nearly 12 weeks over plans to close dozens of pits in what was rightly seen as a political attack on the UK's most militant section of workers.

In many ways the strike had reached a stalemate. The police, using tactics usually reserved for the north of Ireland, had managed to keep some pits working in the Midlands. These working miners had initially come out on strike after being picketed out, but the police were then used to block the pickets from talking to the scabbing miners and thereby facilitating a return to work.

The British state was using increasingly authoritarian tactics to achieve its aim, including mass arrests and blockading the whole of Nottinghamshire.

The National Union of Miners (NUM) was in a difficult situation. Coal stocks were high and a minority of miners was continuing to produce coal under police protection. If the miners were not allowed to picket in Nottinghamshire, then coal would continue to be mined and they couldn't hit profits at the point of production. So it was decided to hit coal profits at the point of use, by targeting industries that relied on scab coal.

The Orgreave coal coking plant, which turned the coal into usable fuel for Scunthorpe steel works, was identified as the main target. Many workers and truck drivers were sabotaging the strike by handling scab coal, despite the brave stand taken by the railway workers and many dockers in refusing to do so. So the plan was to call mass pickets, thousands strong, to block the scab lorries and starve Orgreave, and therefore Scunthorpe Steel, of coal.

'Turn Orgreave into Saltley!'

In the 1972 Miners' Strike, a coking plant at Saltley had been closed through pickets of miners supported by engineers from Birmingham. The key to their success was the strike of 40,000 engineering workers. They flocked to Saltley and outnumbered the police, who were forced to close the gates. Working class solidarity had humiliated the Conservative government. The Tories would spend the next 10 years learning the lessons and preparing for revenge, whereas the rank and file network that made Saltley possible would become a distant memory.

The ruling class, and especially the



Unarmed miners take on the might of the British state at Orgreave

Tories, never wanted a repeat of Saltley and so the police had to be reorganised and radically altered. Police across the country were regimented into a national strikebreaking force run by the National Reporting Centre, accountable to Thatcher. Officers from different regions could be deployed in military-style operations to combat mass pickets. The British state was preparing a militarised police force to take on the vanguard of the working class, a force which would be used to devastating effect in the 1984/85 Miners' Strike.

The Battle of Orgreave

Full-scale picketing of Orgreave started on 25 May. The police mobilised over 2000 officers in riot gear, and used horses and baton charges to keep the coke plant open. Hundreds of picketers, including NUM president Arthur Scargill, were arrested in these set piece battles, and many picketers suffered serious injuries.

The showdown at Orgreave happened on 18 June. More than 5000 riot police, with dozens of horses and attack dogs, appeared on the battlefield, whereas the miners turned up in t-shirts and trainers, unaware of the planned police attack. At first many described the atmosphere as peaceful – until the police charged on the pick-

eters. Most of the police hid their identification numbers. Without any notice, the police lines would break and dozens of horses charged down miners – and the police mercilessly beat those that couldn't run.

Picketers were chased into the village, while dozens of unconscious bodies were left lying in the street; attack dogs were let off their leads to savage people. This was a conscious attempt to terrify the picketers, regardless of the damage. Although many ended up in hospital with severe injuries, such as broken legs, arms and ribs, it was lucky no one died. Scargill was one of 59 injured.

The fear of charging police and bloody truncheons soon turned into indignation and anger. Many miners resisted after fleeing the field; they built barricade after barricade, setting them on fire if the police tried to take them. They threw rocks and glass at police lines, pulled down telegraph poles and rolled them down hills to oncoming police thugs. To stop the police horses charging the miners, they strung barbed wire across the road; they also set up stakes and "tank traps" to halt the police.

Lessons

Neither the sporadic defence nor the disorganised charges of the miners were enough to win the day against a

well-oiled military machine. The first lesson learnt by miners on this day was that the police had changed their tactics and organisation since Saltley. What the miners needed now were dedicated defence squads, disciplined and well equipped, which could form their own wedges to penetrate police lines.

As one miner from Merthyr Vale put it: "We learnt from Orgreave. We've got to be a lot stronger, got to beat them like they do us. I'll go mass picketing again, only better prepared; not in daps and t-shirts but protected and armed."

The crucial missing element that made Orgreave different from Saltley was solidarity strike action from other workers. In 1972 Arthur Harper, president of Birmingham East District AUEW, invited Scargill, as leader of the Yorkshire miners, to make a request for assistance. This became a recommendation for strike action and a march on Saltley. No similar approaches were made at Orgreave, despite the town being on the outskirts of Sheffield, boasting a big industrial area.

A call by Scargill directly to the rank and file for solidarity action would have made the world of difference. This, combined with constant agitation to bring in wider working class forces, could have quantitatively and quali-

tatively transformed the mass pickets and turned Sheffield into a centre of resistance.

Only Workers Power activists issued a call for solidarity strikes in Sheffield, but the Communist Party blocked any such call to action. The CP was an influential force on the many shop stewards committees in the area. And while Scargill called on other unions for support, he never challenged other union leaders nor called on union members to disobey leaders if and when they refused. There was a desperate need for the rank and file to bypass the CP and TU leaders' obstruction.

Leadership

Disgracefully TUC General Secretary Len Murray declared regional one-day general strikes "unconstitutional", but in South Yorkshire a regional day of action showed the potential: "Large numbers of workers struck on the Day of Action – buses in Doncaster and Barnsley stopped; all trains were stopped through Sheffield and Doncaster; and many workers from NALGO (local government workers) and hospital ancillary workers came out. Firemen and ambulance workers only answered 999 calls, while 1000 dockers took action and a few factories closed."

This shows that if there had been an alternative leadership to stand up when the union leaders cowered, the miners at Orgreave – who bravely faced police violence day after day – could have got the support they needed from the tens of thousands of angry workers in South Yorkshire. This solidarity and generalisation of the struggle, coupled with disciplined self-defence of the picket lines, could have sent the police running like in 1972 and dealt another blow to the ruling class, setting the miners' strike on a different course.

Unfortunately this was not the case but the lessons the struggle provided are invaluable, and 30 years on justice can still be won for all those who were savagely beaten that day and then dragged through the courts on trumped up charges by a corrupt and brutal police force.

The Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign is organising to bring those police and politicians responsible for this travesty to justice, and on 14 June this year, 30 years almost to the day, thousands of trade unionists, their families and supporters, will descend once again on Orgreave to celebrate those who were on the picket line that day.

Rigged elections reflect imperialist consensus

The election of the Egyptian General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi should have provoked international outrage. Marcus Halaby explains why the great powers are engaged in a conspiracy of silence

RUSSIAN IMPERIALISM and its Western rivals may be at loggerheads over Ukraine, but in Egypt they seem to have established a silent consensus, in favour of the consolidation of a barely disguised military rule.

It is just about conceivable that military dictator Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, announced as the winner of farcical presidential elections held on 26-28 May, enjoys the support of half of Egypt's population.

After all, the military counterrevolution's previous candidate for the presidency, Ahmed Shafik, who stood in June 2012 against Sisi's jailed and overthrown civilian predecessor Mohamed Morsi, supposedly received 48.3 per cent of the vote, in elections that were far less rigged than this year's.

If it exists, then this "popular support" has a social and material basis: the lack of a political voice for Egypt's working class; and the exhaustion and disillusionment with the 2011 revolution of Egypt's urban middle class, in particular its more established and less insecure layers.

Hence their search for a return to the decades of military rule since Nasser.

No democratic mandate

But Sisi's military junta, still engaged in a massive and brutal repression of popular protests against their July 2013 coup, cannot by definition hold free and fair elections. With a purged and controlled media screaming its "anti-terrorism" message from all of its outlets, Sisi's fraudulent "election" is no democratic mandate for his presidency. It lacks even the manufactured credibility that the regularly rigged elections under dictator Hosni Mubarak had.

This can be seen most clearly by looking at the alleged vote and turnout. A total of 25.6 million voters, or 47.5 per cent of the electorate, are said to have turned out to vote, of which

23.8 million apparently voted for Sisi. Hamdeen Sabahi, a Nasserist who was the only prominent bourgeois politician foolhardy enough to act as the regime's stooge "opposition" candidate, received only 758,000 votes or 3.1 per cent, less than the 1 million blank or invalid votes cast.

And yet the authorities had to extend voting from two days to three, amid claims from Sabahi's supporters, reported by France 24, that the turnout was hovering at around 10 to 15 per cent, while Interior Ministry spokesman Hany Abdel-Latif simultaneously claimed to the Associated Press that it was 30 per cent.

Prime Minister Ibrahim Mahlab threatened to apply a little-used law to impose fines of 500 Egyptian pounds, equivalent \$70 or about a week's average income, on those who did not vote. Meanwhile, presenters on pro-Sisi television stations (i.e. all of them) practically begged the electorate to come out and vote, between pieces in which they mocked the laziness those who could not be bothered to vote because they had the air conditioner on, and the lack of political engagement of an electorate on whom democracy is clearly wasted.

Even Sabahi, who had played ball by conceding defeat, was forced to protest this blatant bit of rigging, with Israel's Jerusalem Post reporting him as claiming that the exaggerated turnout was "an insult to the intelligence of Egyptians".

Back into the fold

As if this were not enough to confirm the counterrevolutionary character of the elections, amongst the first to congratulate Sisi on his victory was Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Barack Obama, Russian President Vladimir Putin, British Foreign Secretary William Hague,



Pro-Sisi demonstration: Egypt's middle classes place themselves and their children under Sisi's boots

Algerian dictator Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Omani monarch Sultan Qaboos bin Said and Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas all followed suit.

Not to be left out, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, the indispensable backers of dictatorship throughout the Arab world, are reported to be preparing a package of \$20 billion in aid to help stabilise Egypt's worsening economic situation.

Not dead just yet

But set against this pretence of popular participation, there is an anti-coup movement that enjoys the support of those wide layers of Egyptian society for whom Sisi's July 2013 coup stole their vote and their revolution. This movement is not yet crushed, despite the massive state violence directed against it. A court in Minya, for example, notoriously sentenced 529 people to death in March for the alleged killing of a policeman, although it has since confirmed only 37 of these sentences, commuting the rest to life imprisonment.

The same court described the (mainly Islamist or Islamist-aligned) condemned as "demons" who followed the teachings of "their holy book,

the [Jewish] Talmud", and sentenced a further 683 people to death in April, whose sentences are due to be confirmed on 21 June. More than 41,000 people have been arrested and prosecuted by the authorities since the coup, according to a report by Wikithawra on 25 May.

Even so, Haytham Abo Khalil of the Victims' Centre for Human Rights announced on 30 May that over 20,000 prisoners in over 114 locations would be taking part in a week-long hunger strike. Probably the biggest collective hunger strike in history, this action and others like it are passed by in silence by the mainstream media East and West. If there is one thing that Russia Today, the BBC and Al Arabiya all agree on, then it is that in Egypt there really is nothing to see, apart from Sisi's obvious if occasionally distasteful popularity. Move along now, please.

United front

What is desperately needed is solidarity and common action between all the forces opposed to or at the receiving end of the military's repression. This should be regardless of their ideology (Islamist or secular), their attitude towards the demand for Mohamed Morsi's reinstatement as president,

whether they took part in the protests against Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood-dominated government or whether they supported his government against them.

However this should not preclude freedom of criticism, because if the masses do not learn from the mistakes of their leaders over the past three years, then there is no hope of establishing a truly democratic, revolutionary regime, committed to social justice in Egypt.

So far, however, neither unity in action nor self-criticism has been forthcoming. The liberal "youth movements" by and large welcomed the overthrow of Morsi as an extension of the revolution, and have passed into the anti-coup camp in dribs and drabs, as they themselves have become targets of the military regime's repression.

The far left has been scarcely any better. Egypt's Revolutionary Socialists (associated with Britain's Socialist Workers Party), at first saw Sisi's coup as a continuation of the 30 June mass movement against Morsi. They failed to recognise a counterrevolution when it occurred and mistook it for a continuation of the revolution.

Earlier they had decided to support the Brotherhood's Morsi against the candidate of the feloul Ahmed Shafik, as a distorted reflection of the revolution. But they have now compounded these errors by supporting Sabahi's doomed bid for the presidency this year. And whereas two years ago this meant ditching the principle of working class political independence, even in the course of a struggle for democratic rights, this time around it meant lending credibility to a military regime that is clearly in need of it.

Most importantly, the social force most capable of changing the balance of forces in Egyptian society must be brought to bear: the organised urban working class. The anti-coup

protests may well have penetrated well into the pauperised rural and provincial regions that came into the Egyptian revolution some time after it had already begun, and they may well have the allegiance of a new generation of genuinely young and plebeian youth that make the graduates of the liberal "youth movements" look like the ageing and out of touch elitists that they are.

Working class party

But it will still take the only class in capitalist society that is capable of bringing it to a halt to amplify their discontent and their rejection of military rule until it resonates loudly enough to shatter the coup regime's fragile "stability".

In February, as Sisi was preparing the window dressing of constitutional legitimacy for his enthronement, a strike wave over predominantly wage demands forced the resignation of his already fractious cabinet.

Involving 100,000 workers in 54 different enterprises, it was not especially larger or smaller than the strike waves that took place under Morsi or the military junta that replaced Mubarak, or for that matter the strike wave that convinced the military to eject Mubarak to preserve its own position.

Just imagine what could be achieved on the basis of mass workers' mobilisations for political demands: for a decisive breaking of the military's power, for genuinely free and fair elections, for genuine political pluralism, and for the lifting of censorship and state repression.

This, however, will require a party to articulate this strategy, with a vision that does not stop simply at representative government in a deeply unequal class society, but that sets itself the goal of overthrowing the capitalist social order that threatens to extinguish formal democracy for as long as it persists.

Can workers halt Modi's offensive?

The victory of Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the recent elections threatens a rise in ethnic conflict writes **Bernie McAdam**. The Communist Parties were punished for their willingness to join bourgeois parties in government and their attacks on peasant farmers, but now the working class must defend itself against Modi's coming neoliberal attacks

THE HINDU nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won 336 out of 543 seats in the election to the Lok Sabha (lower house of parliament), an increase of 195. Although there has been much talk about a landslide victory, Modi only secured 31 per cent of the vote. This is yet another indictment of the undemocratic first-past-the-post electoral system that India shares with Britain.

Nonetheless the swing to the BJP of 12 per cent was there for all to see. The previously ruling Congress Party, which had been in power since 2004 and for 49 of the past 67 years, had presided over an economy afflicted with declining growth rates since 2008, high inflation and rampant corruption, alongside chronic levels of poverty throughout the country.

Despite the neoliberal policies of the Congress Party that helped turn India into a cheap labour market for world capitalism, corporate interests were losing patience with Rahul Gandhi's government and the stagnant economy. Modi has been wooing big business for some time. A poll of 100 corporate leaders showed 74 per cent wanted Modi to be prime minister. To prove his credentials, Modi used his record in office in Gujarat, which includes fast growth and investment in infrastructure.

Modi's many rich admirers include Ratan Tata, the former boss of the largest Indian firm, Tata Sons, and India's richest man, Mukesh Ambani. Fellow Gujarat-based billionaire Gautam Adani's personal wealth surged \$4.1 billion in eight months. This is the equivalent of making \$25 million a day in a nation where some 800 million people live on less than \$2 a day! This is a direct result of Modi's pro-market policies as chief minister in Gujarat.

The Indian stock market and rupee both shot up in anticipation of a Modi victory, as news came in of his 'landslide'. Although this rally has now run out of steam, the newly won business allies believe in his ability to grow the economy and face down any threat from organised labour.

Modi's past

Modi's background is in the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, a paramilitary right-wing Hindu nationalist group that runs over 45,000 branches and camps where arms training is among one of their activities. Similar to the BJP, it is based on supremacist Hindu ideology, which argues that non-Hindus may live in India so long as they accept the superiority of Hindu culture. It was this belief that led a younger Modi to join BJP leader LK



Narendra Modi

Advani on a chariot procession across India in 1990, with the aim of destroying the Babri mosque in Ayodhya.

In 2002 Modi was widely regarded as instigating the Hindu riots that saw over 1,000 Muslims murdered in Gujarat. Western governments had distanced themselves from Modi after he was implicated in the massacre. Even George W Bush refused him a visa to the US in 2005 on the grounds of 'severe violations of religious freedom'. Now that Indian big business has changed its tune regarding Modi's desirability, the West soon followed suit.

Modi's "image managers" have been hard at work seeking out European and US ambassadors to rid them of his sectarian hardliner image. His isolation effectively ended in February when the US realised a regime change was coming and sent their ambassador to meet him for talks. President Obama has since congratulated Modi on his victory and invited him to visit the US.

In a period when inter-imperialist rivalries are sharpening as evidenced by the events in Ukraine, the US will move quickly to counter any potential Russian/Chinese bloc.

Modi has been a frequent visitor to China, encouraging Chinese investment in Gujarat. This has not gone unnoticed and the US will conveniently forget his gory past if it means a reliable ally in Asia.

The West's new position is best summarised by the Economist: "Although we did not endorse him, because we believe that he has not atoned sufficiently for the massacre of Muslims that took place in Gujarat while he was chief minister, we wish him every success." Why should a massacre of 1,000 Muslims get between business friends? After all, the West can turn a blind eye to fascists in the Ukrainian government, so why let Modi's past interfere with the West's

imperialist ambitions?

Rout of the left

If the Congress Party suffered its worst ever electoral defeat, then this was matched by the decimation of the vote for the two Communist Parties of India – CPI and CPI (Marxist). Even the traditional power base of the CPI(M) in West Bengal saw a dramatic decline – unsurprising given their role in the slaughter of peasants during the Singur-Nandigram land acquisition struggle in 2007-08.

Both CPs had attempted to forge a Third Front independent of both Congress and BJP with several smaller regional and bourgeois parties. An indication of the calibre of such allies was shown when the leader of Assam regional party Asom Gana Parishad announced he would not rule out joining a BJP-led government. Other parties in the projected front already had experience of partnering BJP in regional governments. The unravelling of this "democratic and secular alternative" was no great surprise.

In fact there was nothing to rule out the CPs' support for a new Congress-led government had the latter got anywhere near to power. This, they argue, would have been "justified" as they thought it was imperative to stop the BJP. They had already propped up a Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government for four years before being booted out.

Any time the CPs have supported Congress or entered state governments, they have pursued pro-market policies. Is it any wonder that workers

don't see them as any alternative? The CPI(M) manifesto for this election is a nationalist and reformist programme with no mention of socialism or expropriating private industry. Instead it talks about "encouraging the private sector to invest in manufacturing and services sector" and "protection of domestic industry" with a limit on foreign direct investment.

Building the fightback

The CPs' parliamentary road to reforming capitalism will leave both groups without any real strategy to defend the Indian working class in the dangerous period opened by the election of Modi. The BJP are preparing an almighty attack on workers that will involve the dismantling of energy and fertiliser price subsidies, social spending cuts, the gutting of restrictions on layoffs and factory closures, wholesale privatisation and opening up the economy to foreign companies.

Indian workers will need to put themselves on a war footing. Revolutionary socialists must intervene in this crisis with a clear programme of action around the fight to defend workers' interests, against communalism and against women's oppression.

The might of Indian workers was there for all to see last year when a two-day general strike saw tens of millions take action against anti-labour policies and rising inflation. The battles ahead will not require a parliamentary strategy but a reliance on working class action to head off Modi's attacks. The general strike weapon will have to be used again, but next time work-

ers need to stay out indefinitely to secure a real victory.

Modi will use Hindu communalism to divide workers. During the election campaign Modi vowed to remove all Bangladeshi Muslim migrants from West Bengal, an area that has seen communal violence recently that left 40 people, mainly Muslims, dead. It is clear that ethnic minorities and migrants will have to organise self-defence and demand support from all trade unions.

After the rape and murder of a young woman from Delhi in 2012, a mass movement against rape and abuse of women took to the streets throughout India. The tens of thousands that demonstrated reflected a mass anger at women's position in society and the institutionalised discrimination they suffer.

Women's oppression in India as elsewhere is closely linked to capitalist exploitation, where women are treated like commodities or house slaves. There needs to be a fight against all forms of sexism in society from the workplace to the home. A working class women's movement needs to be built in India and internationally, but all workers need to fight for equal pay, state provision of childcare and decent housing with a minimum income for the unemployed.

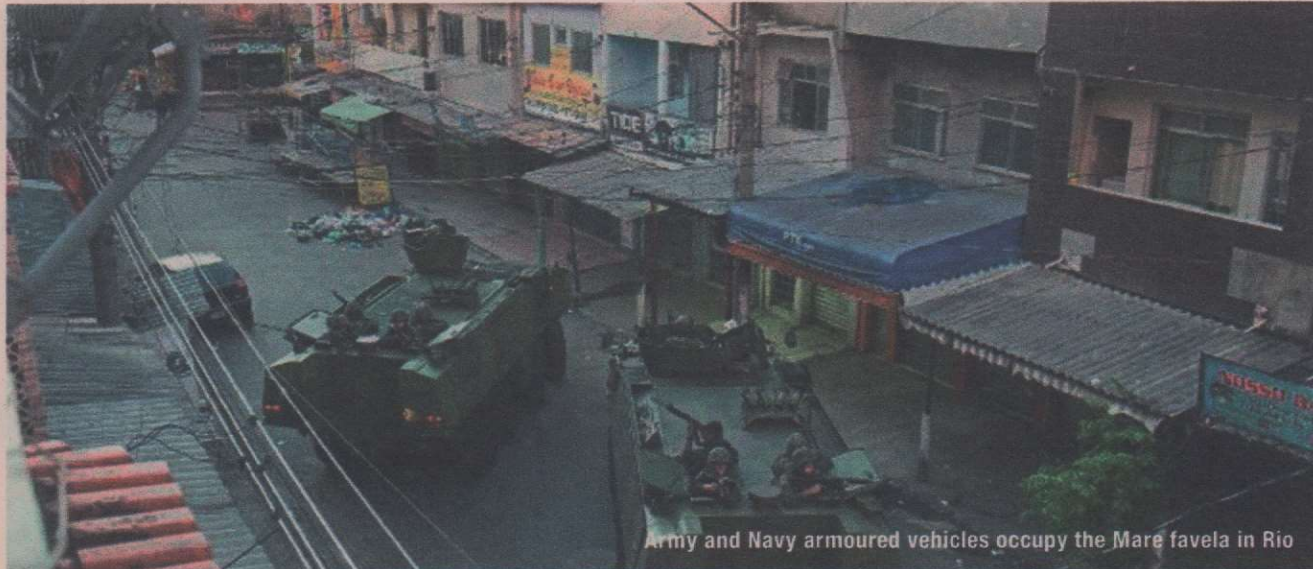
In the coming days it is essential that an alternative revolutionary way forward is mapped out in all these arenas of struggle, so that India can rid itself of a capitalist system that only offers chronic poverty, communal violence and endemic women's oppression.

A train set on fire by Hindu chauvinists in Gujarat in 2002 in a pogrom of Muslims, which claimed over 1,000 lives. Modi, Chief Minister at the time, is widely thought to have instigated the riots and has still not apologised



The social cost of the World Cup's fun and games

It is estimated that over 3 billion people will watch at least some of the World Cup live on TV this summer, but how many will see the depth of poverty in the host country, Brazil, asks **Rico Rodrigues**



Army and Navy armoured vehicles occupy the Mare favela in Rio

THE REMAINING MONTHS of 2014 will be very important politically for Brazil. The World Cup begins on 12 June, while in October there will be elections for the president, state governors and parliament. When the government, then under President Lula, brought the World Cup to Brazil, practically everybody thought this would be a safe number.

No nation in the world is more avid for football than the Brazilians. The sequence seemed perfect, first the World Cup, then the re-election of the Workers' Party (PT). However, as the World Cup approaches, the country is like a pressure cooker and nobody knows whether – or when – it might explode. The elites had certainly not reckoned on this.

A big business World Cup

FIFA had already moved into the sights of protesters last year with demonstrations against transport fare increases that, at their height, brought over a million people onto the streets. The resentment about the World Cup and related policies was expressed in the demand for "FIFA standards for Education and Health" which was heard everywhere on demonstrations.

The message is clear; for the bulk of the population, mainly the working class, the situation regarding public transport, education, health and housing is increasingly precarious, especially in the big cities, yet political concessions for FIFA are decided in no time at all and piles of money are made available.

With about £8 billion in public spending for stadiums, infrastructure and airports, this World Cup is the most expensive of all time. The costs, especially for the stadiums, have exploded to four times the original estimates. To this can be added approximately £320 million in tax breaks for FIFA and its partners, plus an unknown sum for the security apparatus and state funding paid to the development bank, BNDES.

In the course of building the stadiums and infrastructure, it is estimated that some

250,000 people – 70,000 in Rio alone – were forcibly resettled. This mass forced relocation includes preparation for the 2016 Olympic Games.

National legislation was often broken; compensation payments were frequently not paid, were too low or paid only after years of legal battles. The infrastructure projects are primarily of benefit to tourists and the rich. In Rio, a super expensive metro line into the rich district of Barra da Tijuca has been built, while the trains in the poor parts of the city to the north more resemble cattle transportation.

Then there is the exclusive legislation for FIFA that has outraged many people. The Brazilian working class have been fighting for a century for their rights, yet even minor reforms could only be wrested from the capitalists by long struggles.

Twice an initiative to increase the property tax for the rich has been rendered ineffective by the courts in Sao Paulo. In contrast, a whole series of special laws granting privileges to FIFA have been passed without any delays; the Law for the World Cup (Lei Geral da Copa), which encourages municipalities to amass additional debt for World Cup-related expenditure, grants complete tax exemption for FIFA, its "official partners" and others. Of course, special laws for the repression and restriction of demonstrations during the World Cup are also under discussion.

Above all, FIFA will once again make a handsome profit from the spectacle. The association currently expects a profit of \$2.7 billion. Special zones have been established around all stadiums in which only official partners may sell goods. All street traders are to be excluded, if necessary with police violence.

To enforce this, President Dilma Rousseff, who like Lula is in the PT, is planning to use 170,000 police officers who will be given extra training by Academi (the US mercenary company formerly known as Blackwater, which achieved international notoriety with its criminal actions in Iraq).

It has also been announced that the army will be on standby, in case that is not enough.

Bubbling at the base

FIFA is like a mafia organisation that sweeps from one country to the next. It no longer has anything much to do with football. So it is very positive that demonstrations, protests and strikes in Brazil now dominate the international media.

The mass movement last year failed to develop into a generalised challenge to the ruling PT government. The absence of leadership was demonstrated by the disappointing turnout of the anarchist and communist-organised "Comitês Populares da Copa" demonstration of 15 May which brought just 15,000 onto the streets.

While the propaganda saturation and football fever will probably diminish popular protest during the summer, the work of these rank and file popular committees, which exist in all 12 World Cup host cities, opens the possibility of mobilising popular resentment during the autumn election period.

On 22 April, the dancer Douglas Silva Pereira was shot by police in the favela "Pavaozinho" in Rio, close to the districts of Copacabana and Ipanema. The suspect, who has not yet been officially identified, is in all probability an official of the "peace police" (Policia da Pacificacao), which have imposed military occupations to "pacify" the various favelas in Rio for years.

Protesting residents staged a militant demonstration through the rich district and set fire to barricades – and this is happening shortly before the World Cup, when only tourists should enjoy the sand and the sun in Copacabana. The politicians and FIFA are nervous.

Another great wave of protest has gathered in Sao Paulo. In May, the city was shaken by a strike of bus drivers. As we go to press, news is coming in of Sao Paulo's Metro workers being tear-gassed and baton-charged by riot police, on the second day of their indefinite strike for a 10 per

cent wage rise.

The homeless workers' movement MTST is also mobilising for its demands. On 23 May the MTST organised a demonstration of 15,000. On 28 May 2,500 demonstrated in front of the city council and demanded legalisation of the "Copa do Povo" (People's Cup) occupation in the east of the city. And with success: the PT group on the council has agreed under pressure to support the claim and to force a vote on it before the World Cup.

The organisers of protests all know that it is an enormously opportune moment to enforce social demands. The eyes of the world media are focused on Brazil. Guilherme Boulos, one of the leaders of the MTST makes the point very clearly:

"We all know that the opening of the World Cup will take place in Itaquerao, a stadium in Sao Paulo. If there has been no vote on our demand by then, a lot of people without tickets will want to get into that stadium."

Brazil before the election

No one can say exactly what will happen during the World Cup. But perhaps the situation after the World Cup, before the important elections in October, will be even tenser.

During the protests last year, Rousseff was pressed to propose an "exclusive Constituent Assembly" to carry out a fundamental political reform. The proposal was quickly shelved, but a part of the base of the PT, including the trade union confederation CUT and the landless workers' movement MST, has now taken up the proposal and are campaigning for it. They have drawn in many social and leftist organisations.

The PT, of course, hopes to turn this into an election campaign, and maybe they will succeed in that, but the proposals being discussed now go far beyond what Rousseff originally proposed, and there is no guarantee that the PT leadership can control how the initiative develops.

In addition, the topic is causing friction with the PT's main bourgeois coalition partners PMDB, which is of course strongly opposed to it. If the campaign gains momentum and Rousseff is forced to the left, this could lead to a rupture of the electoral alliance.

So, the situation is politically exciting, and Rousseff's re-election is by no means guaranteed. Of course, the right wing hopes to profit from all this and to return to power after 12 years, but the PT are still well ahead in the polls.

For the working class, what matters is to finally establish its own political force that can fight independently against the bourgeois state and the reformist bureaucracy of the PT for a socialist perspective. Today, what needs to be put in place in Brazil is the foundation stone for the building of a new revolutionary party.