

# Unity! @the Big Meeting



## Take Britain out of NATO

Graphic by Andy Vine

### NATO NO!

NICK WRIGHT

**N**OBODY LOVES Donald Trump (except at a price). But dislike for the bombastic blond is not sufficient grounds to warm our hearts to Hillary.

If Trump can be bump-started into bombing Syrian military installations by a spooky media campaign and a fake video from the jihadis running the MI6-funded White Helmets he deserves our sharpest criticism.

But as each of the media storms – about Novichoks in leafy provincial towns or Syrian military gas attacks – degrade as fast as Trump's marriage vows you have to wonder at the gullibility, or malice, of those Blairite MPs who are more enthusiastic about joining NATO bombing campaigns than they are on joining Jeremy in parliamentary votes.

Trump wants Britain and other European countries to stump up more cash for NATO.

For Britain this means adding to the expense of Trident (which is a US system under US operational control) as well as funding military adventures along Russia's borders.

A divided US ruling class is at sixes and sevens about its foreign policy as well as its domestic strategies. Much like our ruling class which is divided over Brexit.

But just because one set of big business plutocrats, bankers and bureaucrats says one thing we don't need to back the others. As every trade unionist knows, when the bosses are divided we have something of an advantage.

Hillary Clinton would have been an even worse US president than Trump. This is the woman who planned the bombing of Libya and – with British Special Forces, RAF and MI6 collaboration – precipitated the destruction of that country, the rise of jihadi statelets and the refugee crisis.

Manchester paid the price for this policy when a jihadi who returned from Libya bombed the Ariane Grande concert. He was part of the

network subsidised and directed by British intelligence.

Every overcrowded boat which capsizes as the European Union polices the Mediterranean is a consequence of Hillary's wargames.

If Hillary, the Tories and Labour's NATO fifth column had their way we would be at war in Syria, up against the Russian military and in danger of a new Cold War turning red hot.

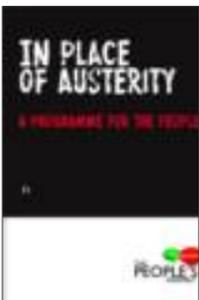
If Hillary had her way we might be on the brink of a new Korean war.

Trump is a rank racist, a miserable misogynist, a fashion disaster and an existential threat to logic of the English language.

But these are mainly problems for people in the US to sort out. Our message is simple. Go home Donald. Take your missiles and military bases with you.

NATO provides no defence for our country and is a threat to others. The time has come to dump Trident and take Britain out of NATO.

NICK WRIGHT IS EDITOR OF UNITY!



**▲ In Place of Austerity, published by the Peoples Assembly, sets out a programme for the people with solid, practical proposals for a range of government measures that would put an end to austerity policies and begin the task of rebuilding a Britain fit for working people. Speaking on behalf of the rich and powerful, the Tories and almost all of the mass media have told us for nearly a decade that austerity is necessary for 'economic recovery' following the 2008 financial and economic crisis. Available now from the Peoples Assembly Against Austerity or at [www.comunist-party.org.uk/shop](http://www.comunist-party.org.uk/shop)**

## Election now over Tory Brexit betrayal

### BREXIT

ROBERT GRIFFITHS

**T**HE DEAL reached in the Conservative Cabinet on conditions for a 'super-soft Brexit' pledges Britain to maintain alignment with EU rules, including the ban on state aid for industry, locks the state into a single market on goods, limits our country's ability to make independent trade deals and agrees to a substantial measure of control by the EU legal institutions over British law.

The people with the real power behind Britain's ruling class party – big business, the banks, top bureaucrats, the military and intelligence axis, arms and energy industrialists – are determined to subvert the Brexit vote. But the Tory party has an electorate to satisfy and where it has traditionally acted as ringmaster to the sometimes contending forces among the rich it has been united in face of the working class movement.

Today that ruling class is divided and so is its government. The most powerful section of the ruling class, with the strongest ties to corporate capital, has acted. But the Chequers agreement that Theresa May cobbled together at her weekend party lasted as long as a bad hangover. Johnson flipped his position to back the prime minister and a day later flipped back. The

resignation of Davis and his ministerial team was not enough to endanger the prime minister. And neither, it seems for the moment is, the resignation of her discredited foreign secretary.

But the deep divisions remain. Theresa May has always been a pro-EU remainer and now she is set to deliver a super-soft Brexit. If the survival of her strategy comes under real threat there is only one body of support she can turn to. That is the Blairite, pro-EU rump of right-wing Labour MPs whose loyalty to a NATO-militarised Fortress Europe, free market capitalism and the EU is mirrored in their lack of enthusiasm for socialist policies and a Labour government that would introduce them.

The idea that has united the Remain Tories, the Lib Dems, the dimmer nationalists and dafter Greens with the Blairite back-stabbers is that a parliamentary majority could be cobbled together to back a deal on terms dictated by the EU or to veto Brexit altogether.

To that end we have been subjected to an unending campaign of false rumours, scare stories and dirty tricks with the BBC and the liberal press the most mendacious.

**Labour can break this government.** With policies that have the support of a clear majority of people in Britain – ending NHS privatisation, introducing government aid to industry, renationalising the railways and utilities, VAT reform, cracking down on tax avoidance,

restoring union rights and outlawing the super-exploitation of migrant labour – it can create a winning combination of voters.

By making clear that these aims cannot be achieved in the EU or with a 'super-soft' Brexit it can bring clarity to a debate in which people have been blind-sided by a deeply dishonest media campaign which hides the neo-liberal reality of the EU behind a facade of 'freedoms'.

Labour now needs to put forward its bold, left and progressive alternative the Tory betrayal of the people's vote and force an early general election and campaign on a manifesto which commits a Labour government to ending austerity, reversing the spending cuts, assisting industry across Britain, investing in infrastructure and green energy, expanding trade with the Brics (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and other growing economies, redistributing wealth and devolving powers repatriated from the EU to the nations and regions of a federal Britain.

The time has come to hold the "people's vote" that Britain needs – a general election to remove the divided Tories and elect a left-led Labour government. Jeremy Corbyn's Labour must now step in to negotiate a real "people's Brexit," not a "soft" nor a neoliberal Brexit.

ROBERT GRIFFITHS IS GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

**BREXIT** MOST OF the Cabinet want a superficial Brexit that would still tie Britain to the neoliberal rules of the EU single market and customs union. This was the warning Communist Party chair Liz Payne gave just days before May announced her 'soft' Brexit policy.

'The Tory government is a divided shambles over Brexit and would be finished off by a large, solid group of left-wing MPs' she said.

She was reporting to the party's political committee after a visit to the Westminster parliament with Palestine Peace and Solidarity Council chair Aqel Taqaz.

'The tragedy is that so few Labour MPs voice a clear understanding of the imperialist, pro-big business and anti-working character of the EU and the progressive alternatives to Britain's membership', she said.

'Instead, some Labour backbenchers are joining rebel Tories in an effort to block the democratic outcome of the 2016 EU referendum, while many other MPs including most of the Cabinet want a superficial Brexit that would still tie Britain to the neoliberal rules of the EU single market and customs union', she added.

Liz Payne accused the EU single market and its policies of austerity, privatisation and labour flexibility of promoting uneven development across the continent. 'One consequence is the resurgence of the far right and its bogus populism based on racism, chauvinism and anti-Muslim scaremongering'.

Liz Payne welcomed the outcome of the 2018 conference of trades union councils in Manchester, where delegates rejected a motion urging them to organise an anti-Brexit campaign.

**Britain's Road to Socialism** A new draft edition of the Communist Party programme *Britain's Road to Socialism* has been published. Party organisations will be discussing it with a 1 October deadline for amendments. These will then be considered by the party's leadership with an updated edition published in time for the party congress on November 17-18.



### Money, membership and recruitment.

Party treasurer Martin Graham reports that the 1917 centenary appeal for funds to strengthen the party's work went over the top. Aiming for £19,170 (Geddit?) the final total was £19,192. Meanwhile the summer meeting of the party's leadership heard reports showing an upturn in applications to join the party while the party's 'Red Wedge' recruitment team is planning a range of new materials promoting the Communist Party profile and outlook and launching a new range of merchandise.

**Young communists take to the hills.** The 2018 camp organised by Britain's Young Communist League returns to the picturesque village of Edale less than a mile away from the Kinder Scout National Nature Reserve – scene of the 1930s historic mass trespass. The camp features outdoor recreation, a hike up Kinder Scout, film showings and socialising as well as lots of political discussion and education.

Edale is only half an hour from Sheffield, 1 hour from Manchester, two hours from Birmingham and three hours from London on regular trains. Contact your YCL branch to see about travelling as a group. [www.facebook.com/events/172937606753148/](http://www.facebook.com/events/172937606753148/)



# Greetings to the Gala

## THE BIG MEETING

Martin Levy

THE COMMUNIST PARTY sends solidarity greetings to the Durham Miners' Association and all participants in the 134th Durham Miners' Gala.

The Big Meeting has always been a great day out, and a celebration of the best of working class culture, values and traditions - solidarity, community, support in adversity and the fight for justice, a decent life and social progress.

25 years after the last pit in Durham closed, the Gala has also become a massive message of defiance to our ruling class, a statement to our masters that, no matter how much they try to beat us down, we shall rise again. The massive numbers of participants are a testament to that.

There may no longer be any working miners in Durham, but the labour movement's resilience and class consciousness has been strengthened by the influx into other industries of former miners and their daughters and sons who understand what class struggle is really about.

And, 33 years after the end of the great Miners' Strike, that titanic struggle continues to inspire working people throughout Britain and even overseas, as demonstrated by the breadth of participation in the Gala.

The survival of the Big Meeting could not have happened without the determination of the DMA - and particularly its sadly departed leaders Dave Guy and Davy Hopper - to keep the Gala going as a festival for the whole labour movement. And the whole movement can identify with, and be inspired by, the very many lodge banners and their brass bands marching now, as their forebears did in the past.

This year, given the coincidence of the Gala with the US president's visit to Britain, there will be a special 'Together Against Trump' bloc, with the message 'No to racism - No to sexism - No to war' - particularly important given the fact that Trump's policies have emboldened the far right.

The Big Meeting has always been about solidarity. But it has also become a beacon for change in the labour movement. Jeremy Corbyn's speech at the 2015 Gala, and the DMA's support for him, gave a big boost to his Labour leadership campaign, and ever since then he has been able to use the Big Meeting as a platform to project his vision of Britain 'for the many, not the few'.

Miners remember their friends. Corbyn was among them. But the *Morning Star* newspaper also: it gave the Miners stalwart support during the 1984-5 Strike, and in subsequent battles against pit closures, and continues to this day to support struggles domestically and internationally for social progress and peace. The DMA provides 3,000 copies of the newspaper for each annual Gala, though an army of *Morning Star* supporters is needed for the distribution.

Communists are proud to be working with many other *Morning Star* supporters to undertake that distribution. The *Morning Star* is a vital weapon for challenging ruling class ideas and building working class confidence and solidarity. It is essential reading for all on the Left.

We support the election of a left-led Labour government as the first step towards challenging the power of the ruling monopoly capitalist class and opening the road to socialism. As our programme, *Britain's Road to Socialism*, makes clear, we consider that socialism can be achieved in Britain through mass struggle, involving building a popular democratic alliance to fight for a comprehensive left-wing programme, and the election of a Labour, socialist and communist majority committed to carrying out that programme and relying on the organised strength of the labour movement.

That will be a process in which the questions of state power, the reactionary NATO alliance and Britain's imperialist role in the world will have to be raised.

MARTIN LEVY IS NORTHERN SECRETARY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

# Tolpuddle's meaning today

## ANTI UNION LAWS

CAROLYN JONES

GEORGE LOVELESS, first among equals in the five Tolpuddle Martyrs understood that to win a living wage a union of agricultural workers was needed.

Although combinations of workers were nominally allowed he and his comrades were charged with swearing illegal oaths under the 1797 Mutiny Act and sentenced to seven years' transportation to work in slave conditions in the Australia. Meanwhile their families were left in poverty.

It took a combination of mass action, petitions, parliamentary agitation and the mobilisation of the working class to win their repatriation.

Tens of thousands of workers (pictured below in a contemporary print) rallied on Copenhagen Fields near King's Cross, London. Mobilised by the Central Committee of the Metropolitan Trade Unions and, in highly disciplined contingents, they marched to Kennington Common with a wagon carrying over 200,000 petitioners' signatures.



This lesson of mass action including strikes was repeated when widespread unofficial strikes, mass demonstrations and the threat of a general strike compelled the Tory government of Edward Heath to release five London dockers imprisoned in 1972 (pictured right Docker's leader Vic Turner carried in triumph from the prison gates). Again, a century and more after Tolpuddle, they were charged with 'conspiracy' as were the 1972 Shrewsbury building workers. (Below right Builder's strike leaders Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson)

In a reprise of the 19th century, life for many workers in Britain is increasingly characterised by long hours, unsafe working practices and limited employment rights.

While in the 19th century the relationship between worker and boss was based on the concept of master and servant, with local magistrates setting wage levels and workers facing criminal charges if they dared to "conspire" to object, today the power of employers is steadily strengthened as a succession of governments sliced away at hard won rights. Despite promises of repeal, successive New Labour governments of Blair and Brown failed to repeal the Tories' anti-union laws.

During the industrial revolution, the working relationship was "updated" and the doctrine of freedom of contract was introduced.

Freedom of contract, however, simply meant that whatever terms the worker was forced to agree would then be enforceable in law no matter how unfair.

So, when the second mate on a ship died ten days before his arrival in Liverpool after a long voyage, the court (in *Cutter v Powell*) held that the 30 guineas payable on arrival was not recoverable by his grieving widow since the seaman had failed to complete his side of the contract.

Fast-forward 150 years and what do we see? Workers in the 21st century once again at the beck and call of the employer.

Three million people are stuck on zero-hours contracts, agency work or in low-paid self-employment and around five million workers cannot enforce their rights with their "parent" company because they are outsourced or working for a franchise.

So whether you are a McDonald's worker or an NHS hospital cleaner, you cannot hold your parent company to account because the workforce has been fragmented, franchised and fobbed off with inadequate protections.

In such a fractured labour market, companies are getting away with murder — literally.

In one firm, a delivery driver died after missing hospital appointments for his diabetes because he was too afraid to take a day off and lose the £150 his company charged for taking time out.

Technology may have moved on, with the mobile phone replacing the dockside as the hiring point. But old-fashioned exploitation remains rife with workers once again being denied rights, security and fairness.

But it need not be this way. Employment patterns are based on the political, industrial and economic policy decisions made by

and the Institute of Employment Rights has a plan to modernise workplace relations.

First, we need a ministry of labour to ensure that the UK's 33 million workers have a voice at the Cabinet table and a say in an industrial strategy that determines the levels of investment, training and employment needed to help grow a strong, planned, productive economy.

Second, we need every worker to be covered by a national agreement that provides a floor of rights below which no worker should be forced to work.

So, whether you're a teacher or a cleaner, a driver or a care worker, you will be protected by a set of standards negotiated by unions and employers in your sector and enforceable by law.

Third, we need to strengthen and extend employment rights so that all workers are protected and strengthen our enforcement mechanisms so that the unorganised and vulnerable are not left at the mercy of employers who are more interested in profits than people.

So, as we look back at 150 years of trade unionism and forward to the election of a government that can truly claim to be the party of the working class, let's proudly embrace a radical strategy that will drag our current workplace practices out of the 1870s and into a modern world fit for the many, not the few.

Labour under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership is shaping a new legal framework for working life in consultation with the unions, labour lawyers and campaign groups.

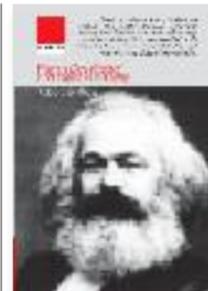
A *Manifesto for Labour Law* drawn up by the Institute of Employment Rights and backed by the Campaign for Trade Union Freedom sets out 25 major policy recommendations. It proposes changing the way in which working conditions are regulated by embedding the voice of workers at national, sectoral and enterprise levels. It moves responsibility for workplace regulation from legislation to collective bargaining. It calls for a Ministry of Labour and a National Economic Forum;



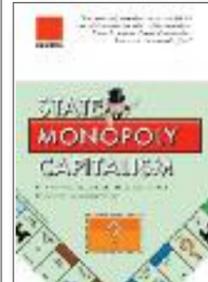
governments. For far too long British governments have prioritised free markets over fairness, arguing that regulation is bad for business and that managers should be left free of interference from the state or trade unions. That ideology has failed. It's time for change

sectoral collective bargaining; the repeal of the Trade Union Act 2016 and the introduction of fundamental and enforceable rights for workers.

CAROLYN JONES IS DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE OF EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS.



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**unity!**  
Ruskin House 23 Coombe Road  
Croydon CR0 1BD  
Editorial team: Derek Kotz,  
Anita Halpin, Deirdre O'Neil,  
Nick Wright

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