

CHARTIST

For democratic socialism

September/October 2013

#264

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Britain's Euro sclerosis

**Franziska Brantner MEP
and Greg Barnes**

EU futures

**Linda Kaucher,
Philip Whyman and
Mark Baimbridge**

Social Europe Follies

Frank Lee

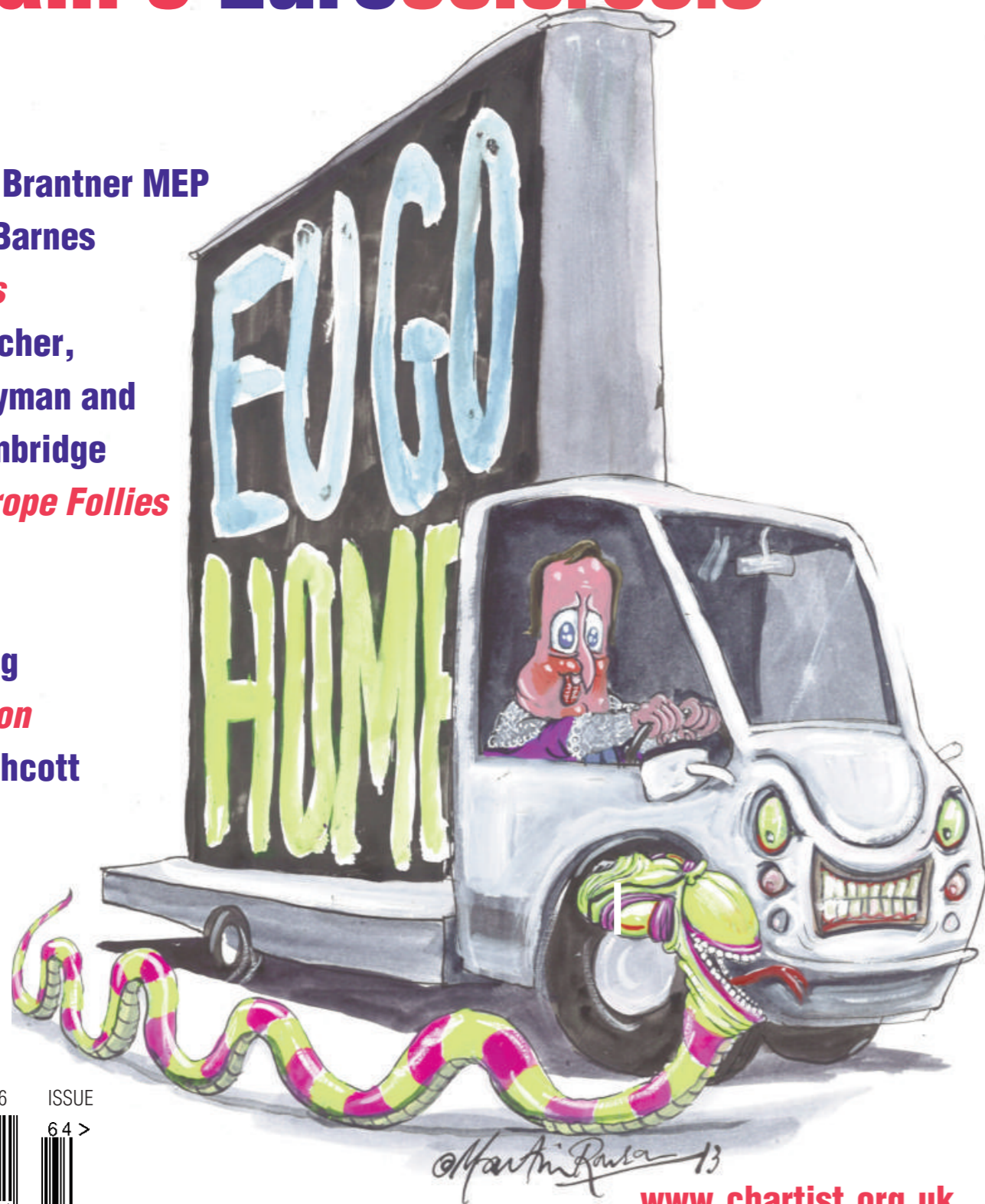
Statistics

Andy Gregg

Immigration

Mary Southcott

Turkey



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Editorial Policy

The editorial policy of CHARTIST is to promote debate amongst people active in radical politics about the contemporary relevance of democratic socialism across the spectrum of politics, economics, science, philosophy, art, interpersonal relations – in short, the whole realm of social life.

Our concern is with both democracy and socialism. The history of the last century has made it abundantly clear that the mass of the population of the advanced capitalist countries will have no interest in any form of socialism which is not thoroughly democratic in its principles, its practices, its morality and its ideals. Yet the consequences of this deep attachment to democracy – one of the greatest advances of our epoch – are seldom reflected in the discussion and debates amongst active socialists.

CHARTIST is not a party publication. It brings together people who are interested in socialism, some of whom are active in the Labour Party and the trade union movement. It is concerned to deepen and extend a dialogue with all other socialists and with activists from other movements involved in the struggle to find democratic alternatives to the oppression, exploitation and injustices of capitalism and class society

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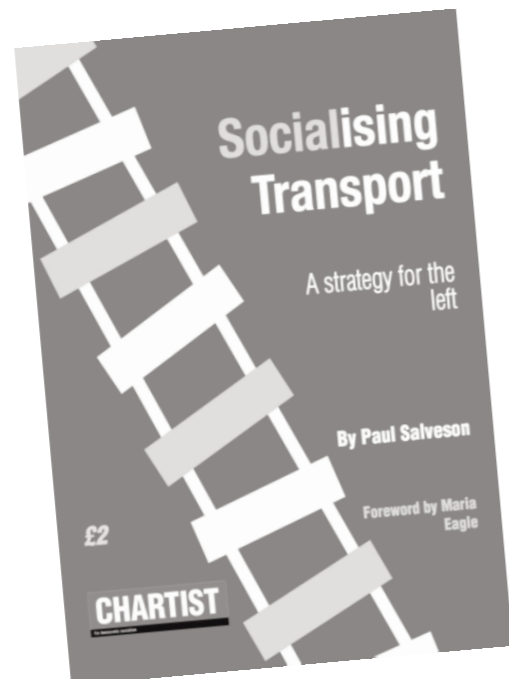
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Debating EU futures: pages 9 to 18 are dedicated to the EU



Turkey: page 19



Cooking the books: economics and statistics on page 22

FEATURES

8

EGG ON HIS FACE?

Peter Kenyon sees a Labour leader licking self-inflicted wounds

9

DEFICIT DENIAL OF DIFFERENT KIND

Andy Morton dissects the EU's democratic deficit and presents options

10

UNSOCIAL EUROPE

Philip Whyman and Mark Baimbridge give Europhiles food for thought on the European Social Model

12

A HOLY UNION?

Greg Barnes surveys the meeting point between trade union interests and the EU

14

TRADING ON OUR FUTURE?

Linda Kaucher lifts the lid on a dangerous free trade agenda

16

MORE EUROPE?

Franziska Brantner MEP says citizens need a 'better' rather than 'more' Europe

18

ERODING EURO GAINS IN EIRE

Lily Murphy sees the successes of EU membership eroded by austerity

19

DEMOCRATIC OR AUTOCRATIC?

Mary Southcott maps Turkey's troublesome relationship with democratic principles

20

SOMALIA

Dan Thea on the continuing problems of a war-torn country

21

BREAKING UP BRITAIN

Steve Freeman reports on UK nationalisms

22

LIES, DAMNED LIES AND STATISTICS

Frank Lee looks at the role of crooked statistics in economic reporting

23

IMMIGRATION MADNESS

Andy Gregg takes apart a Goodhartian view that is far from progressive



Cover cartoon by Martin Rowson

CHARTIST

FOR DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM
Number 264 September/October 2013

REGULARS

4 OBITUARY
In memory on Clarence Chrysostom

4 OUR HISTORY 50
Kier Hardie - From Serfdom to Socialism 1907

5 EDITORIAL
Re-engage

6 POINTS AND CROSSINGS
Paul Salveson on radical clubs

7 RIGHTS WATCH
Amy William's first of a new column on human rights politics

25 MARGINAL NOTES
Keith Savage on the geo-politics of HS2

26 BOOK REVIEWS
Nigel Watt on South Africa, Rory O'Kelly on the welfare state, Patricia d'Ardenne on Lincoln, Jon Taylor on the apocalypse, James Grayson on the west and development, Pam Morris on morals and markets, Frank Lee on radical theory and Duncan Bowie on Russia.

32 YOUTH VIEW
Dermot Neligan on cafeteria politics

Quiet man of revolutionary politics

Mike Davis on a founder of *Chartist*

Clarence Chrysostom, one of the founders of *Chartist* in 1970, has died aged 92 after a short illness. He was the quiet man of socialist revolutionary politics. He wasn't a leader, a great activist or theoretician, but his strength lay in what he was, a living link with the Sri Lankan LSSP that expelled the Stalinists from their ranks through to his days with the journal *Revolutionary History*.

He was born in Kandy, Sri Lanka, 10th January 1921, one of three sisters and four brothers.

He came to politics early. He was a member of a revolutionary minority opposing the coalition of the LSSP with capitalist parties in 1964. Around this time he decided to move to England. Following a brief period with Gerry Healy's Socialist Labour League he soon realized its sectarianism was not for him and joined the International Marxist Group, befriending Al Richardson, Keith and Val Veness

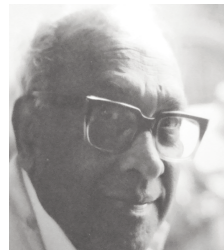
and others who were leading a pro-Labour Party group in 1968-69. This group evolved with others into *Chartist*. He was editor of the early duplicated *Chartist* publications which covered a range of topics from Vietnam to the May events in France 1968, sometimes writing brief introductions.

He was a member of the Labour Party for most of his time in Britain. He was active in NALGO and participated in marches and meetings. He was an active internationalist and anti-racist. He was involved in solidarity work against the suppression of Tamils in Sri Lanka 30 years ago.

He was a loyal friend to Al Richardson. When Al became disillusioned with *Chartist* in the late 1970s he helped form Socialist Platform publications and then the *Revolutionary History* project. He was business manager of the bi-annual journal which adopted the task of mapping the history of the world-wide Trotskyist and revolutionary movement.

He also maintained friendships in Sri Lanka. One day the Sri Lanka embassy limosine pulled up outside his flat in Swiss Cottage: the occasion a visit from an old LSSP friend who was now a government minister. Besides leading LSSP members he also made good friends with veteran socialists Frank Ridley and Trinidadian revolutionary author CLR James.

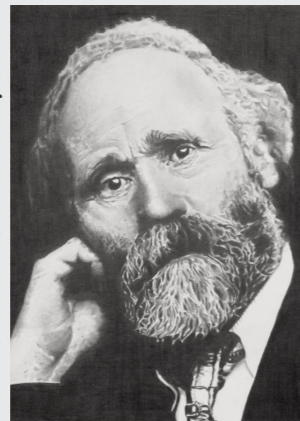
Perhaps coming from a period when Trotskyism was a mass organization and in government, the rest of his life in the UK was a gradual downhill road politically. He outlived his contemporaries and was saddened by the civil war and government atrocities in Sri Lanka over the last decade. He was more sanguine about prospects for workers' power here, but always interested and enquiring about the fate of the left and the prospects for socialism. Despite increasing memory loss he maintained his warmth, his openness, his impish chuckle and smiles to the end.



OUR HISTORY 50

Keir Hardie - From Serfdom to Socialism (1907)

Keir Hardie was the first independent socialist MP elected to parliament, the first leader of the Independent Labour Party and the first chair of the parliamentary Labour Party. He was a leading member of the Socialist International and the leading British socialist of his time. A Scots miner, in 1886 he became secretary of the Ayrshire Miners Union and then of the Scottish Miners Federation. He founded a paper, the *Miner*, which was renamed the *Labour Leader* and became the official journal of the ILP. In 1886 he unsuccessfully contested the mid Lanark parliamentary seat as an Independent, being successfully returned as Labour MP for West Ham in 1892. He lost his seat in 1895, before being returned for Merthyr Tydfil in 1900. He was a vigorous opponent of the Boer war. In 1906 he was elected chairman of the newly founded Parliamentary Labour Party. Hardie was a suffragist and actively campaigned against the moves towards war in 1914.



"Socialism is much more than either a political creed or an economic dogma. It presents to the modern world a new conception of society and a new basis on which to build up the life of the individual and of the

State. ... To the Socialist the community represents a huge family organisation in which the strong should employ their gifts in promoting the weal of all, instead of using their strength for their own personal aggrandisement. In like manner the community of States which compose the world, and making full allowances for the difference of environment, of tradition and of evolution, he regards as a great comity which should be co-operating for the elevation of the race.

The economic object of Socialism is to make land and industrial capital common property, and to cease to produce for the profit of the landlord and the capitalist and to begin to produce for the use of the community. Socialism implies the inherent equality of all human beings... Holding this to be true of all individuals, the Socialist applies it also to all races. Only by a full and unqualified recognition of this claim, can peace be restored to the world. Socialism implies brotherhood, and brotherhood implies a living recognition of the fact that the duty of the strong is not to hold the weak in subjection, but to assist them to rise higher and ever higher in the scale of humanity, and that this cannot be done by trampling upon and exploiting their weakness but by caring for them and showing them the better way"

Re-engage

Sceptics and Europhiles alike must, with a referendum looming, re-engage with a subject that has left both camps looking out of date

In the late 1980s Jacques Delors threatened to imbue the European project with a bonafide 'social dimension' and with it convinced swathes of the political left to back European integration. Since the great Frenchman's retirement 18 years ago a great deal has changed. The nature of the EU has become increasingly neo-liberal in nature as its impact on national life has deepened. This has left parts of both the Europhile and sceptic left views looking rather dated. Although this should not lead to any concession to a Conservative sceptic view laced with xenophobia, it does make clear that the democratic left needs to renovate its approach to the European project and before EU Referendum battle lines can be drawn.

Critically, the EU's neo-liberal turn demands that the left-Europhile view must now be based upon what the EU can do rather than what it currently does. Left eurosceptics on the other hand need to better place those positive aspects of EU employment law within their account that emphasises the negative aspects of 'the project'. Both camps need to re-engage with this subject and with each others' arguments.

This Social Europe focused issue of *Chartist* is dedicated to this theme of re-engagement. In this vein committed specialists have been invited to present a range of views on the European project.

German Green MEP **Franziska Brantner** provides a positive but not uncritical view of the EU's problems and prospects and the greater role the European Parliament can play within this. Her piece illustrates a number of the EU's structural and democratic problems. **Andy Morton** takes up this theme of the EU's democratic deficit and sees remedial action to correct it as central to any democratic socialist response. **Greg Barnes** and **Linda Kaucher** in their pieces use EU trade and procurement policy to demonstrate important but subtle linkages between global and national policy-making: Barnes in highlighting the challenges for the trade union movement and Kaucher in exposing the evils of a global trade and liberalisation agenda to which the EU has given more than a helping hand.

A similarly critical view is taken by **Philip Whyman** and **Mark Baimbridge**, who view the potential furthering of the European Social Model through the EU as fanciful at best. **Lily Murphy** introduces a necessary note to the perils of austerity and raises EU demands for cuts in Ireland as a demonstration of the risks austerity pose to past benefits won through EU membership.

This issue of *Chartist's* international focus does not end with Europe. **Mary Southcott** reviews the dwindling democratic credentials of Turkey's

government while **Dan Thea** provides an eye on Somalian developments that few others are reporting on.

Returning to Britain, Labour is tripping over the immigration issue. Shadow Minister Chris Bryant's recent effort to set a new course was messy. But as **Andy Gregg** shows, in his excoriating review of Director of Demos David Goodhart's book on immigration, faux liberal views can do more harm than good to working class unity.

This issue also links to Europe and is why UKIP seeks to make the two issues inseparable. It also leads to the damaging 'Go Home' poster campaign vans trialled by the government in six boroughs. What Labour needs is a forthright defence of immigration on economic and moral terms: that it builds the economy, that it is good for development and that we have duties and responsibilities to European workers, as argued by **Amy Williams** in her new column, and to aid asylum seekers and refugees beyond our own borders.

Labour should demand British jobs with a living wage, incomes that keep pace with inflation. Fire should be directed at the Coalition for turning

The nature of the EU has become increasingly neo-liberal in nature as its impact on national life has deepened. This has left parts of both the Europhile and sceptic left views looking rather dated. Although this should not lead to any concession to a Conservative sceptic view laced with xenophobia, it does make clear that the democratic left needs to renovate its approach to the European project

Britain into a low wage economy with a casualised workforce, where over a million are on zero hours contracts. As **Frank Lee** explains governments are manipulating jobs and income statistics to show unemployment is down when it is up and paint a rosy picture of an economy where income and wealth disparities are greater than at any time for over a hundred years. New figures from the House of Commons Library show the real

value of wages has fallen by 5.5% in Britain since the recession began—one of the largest falls in Europe.

Miliband must now roll up his proverbial sleeves, demands **Peter Kenyon**, and make the case for an end to austerity, nail the lie that Gordon Brown created the mess and lay down some key campaign policies. The economy may be moving out of recession but that should not reduce Labour's attack on the narrow nationalist politics of Cameron and co. They don't want Labour to talk about living standards and low wages...so this should be Labour's line of attack wedded to a defence of Social Europe.

As we move into the conference season time is running out for Miliband to set a new course with some clear policies: in an international context where we are seen to work with European and trade union allies. This could help restore Labour's wilting standing in opinion polls and shift the terms of political debate on to firmer ground for victory.

A club of one's own

Paul Salveson reviews radical clubs in points and crossings

The early socialist movement understood the importance of having your own place. Whether it was the radical clubs of London or the socialist rooms in the industrial North, they were a key part of building a new politics. It's one of the great tragedies of the modern labour movement that so few clubs survive. Many 'labour clubs' long since became nothing more than cheap drinking dens and most have succumbed to competition from even cheaper booze from supermarkets.

But all is not lost. What is probably the oldest surviving socialist club in Britain, at Milnsbridge in the Colne Valley near Huddersfield, is at the heart of a revival of radical politics in an area where socialist politics struck deep roots, leading to the election of socialist firebrand Victor Grayson in 1907. Milnsbridge Socialist Club was once surrounded by a thriving textile industry; the town had dozens of mills employing thousands of workers, many of whom flocked to the new socialist organisations that sprang up around here in the 1890s. The club opened in 1892 and hosted speakers including Christabel Pankhurst, Kathryn Bruce Glasier, Victor Grayson and Philip Snowden. It even had its own socialist brass band which used to perform at trade union and socialist demonstrations and on the annual May Day procession. A photograph of the band still adorns the club's concert room. Milnsbridge was one of many socialist clubs in the Colne Valley.

Their programme of social events, regular speakers and discussions and providing a base for Clarion cyclists and choirs provided an essential infrastructure for a hugely successful socialist movement. Britain's first socialist county councillor, George Garside, was elected in Colne Valley and Grayson's 1907 victory sent shock waves through the establishment.

But heritage on its own is no guarantee of salvation. Milnsbridge Socialist Club faced all the same problems that social clubs have had to deal with in the last few years: changing habits, an inability to appeal to a broader market, rising debts. It closed its doors in June and the future looked bleak. However, a group of local socialists, greens and anarchists have got together to save the club and create a new and more inclusive venue for a wider area, but also attract local community involvement. The club has been re-christened 'The Red and Green Club' and a co-operative has been formed to buy the building from its current owners, which it is renting to the end of the year. That gives the new co-opera-

tive a breathing space to raise £100,000 to buy the building. That's no easy task and the co-op will be launching a fund-raising campaign shortly. It is talking to several national trades unions about getting help from them to cover the capital costs of purchase and has benefited from free advice from the national co-operative movement.

The first public event that the club is organising will be an afternoon 'People's Party' on Bank Holiday Monday, August 26th. There will be live music, free food and general bonhomie.



West Yorkshire has a rich socialist traditions that are still celebrated today

Part of the club's ideas is to visit other places that are doing similar things and have faced the same challenges of funding and finding a new direction. Not far away is Bradford's 1-in-12 club which has similarly inclusive radical politics. Just up the line is Hebden Bridge's highly successful Trades Club, one of the North's most acclaimed music venues. Both are overtly political, without being tied to one party organisation. Across the Pennines is Bolton Socialist Club, founded in 1895 and still going strong as a good example of united left activity. Another venerable survivor is the marvellous Clarion House set in magnificent countryside on the slopes of Pendle Hill. It was built in 1912 and was recently featured on Radio 4. It

opens every Sunday and is a haven for cyclists and walkers, run by a small group of dedicated socialists.

I'd love to hear about other examples of socialist-inclined clubs around the country. Perhaps there are more than I think but there doesn't seem to be any sort of network. The old National Union of Labour

and Socialist Clubs is more for traditional labour clubs and doesn't even have a website as far as I can see.

Creating a lively, inclusive and financially viable centre for the left is no easy challenge. But it is vital if we want to rebuild a radical and democratic politics.

It's partly about having somewhere friendly and accessible to meet. But it's also about networking with people from other political groups and working together and running joint campaigns. A very positive feature about the Red and Green Club has been the way that activists from the Labour Party, Left Unity, Greens and local anarchist groups – as well as non-aligned socialists – are working together in a friendly and positive way. The next few months will decide the future of our venture..

Paul Salveson is a Labour councillor on Kirklees Council and general secretary of the Hannah Mitchell Foundation www.paulsalveson.org.uk

Making the case for human rights

Amy Williams on divisive Tory vans

Some things are self-evident. Vans with 'go home or face arrest' sprawled across them driving around London boroughs will divide communities. Legal protection of human rights is a good thing. Not so fast. Owen Jones has recently suggested that Labour has a communications problem. The Tories successfully instil mantras like 'we're clearing up Labour's mess' into the national psyche, yet a well-rehearsed Labour retort is lacking. He's got a point. It's no good dubbing the vans driving round London's ethnically mixed boroughs 'hate vans', as many on the left did, without explaining that the message on the vans is clearly for the 'indigenous' audience, designed to pitch sections of society against each other. Without succumbing to sound bite politics, the left needs to up its communications game. It needs to do so fast where human rights are concerned.

The Conservative 2010 General Election manifesto pledged to repeal Labour's Human Rights Act (HRA), hailed by Jack Straw as 'the first bill of rights this country has seen for three centuries'. Comfortably restrained by their Liberal Democrat Coalition partners, who remain committed to the HRA, senior Conservative members of the government have ratcheted up the anti-human rights rhetoric since. UK withdrawal from Churchill's legacy, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), to which 46 other countries are signed up, including Turkey and Russia, has been floated as a serious possibility by figures including the Prime Minister himself. "There's a dogma on the left that if it says 'human rights', it must be untouchable" Justice Secretary Chris Grayling recently told the *Sun* newspaper. It isn't dogma, our human rights laws must be untouchable, at least for now. Here are three reasons to help explain why.

First of all, legally enforceable human rights protection is about providing a check on state power - why it is considered a child of liberal, rather than socialist, political thought (a fact conveniently forgotten by the 'small state' Tory critics of this 'dogma on the left')? Statutory regulation of the Security Services resulted from a decision of the European Court of Human Rights, for example. The burden is on the state to prove that a person who is mentally ill needs to be detained, rather than on the individual to prove he/she should be released, thanks to a decision under the HRA. In our age of party whips and political patronage, this check against the 'tyranny of the majority' is vital. That was certainly the rationale behind the drafting of the ECHR after the horrors of National Socialism, the potential for

those in power to privilege the rights of the many over the rights of the few remains as real today as then.

But what if the judges get it wrong? The second key point conveniently not mentioned by Conservative critics of the HRA and their allies in the press, is that under the HRA it is still parliament (in reality the government), and not the unelected judiciary, that has the final say on rights. The HRA was drafted to make sure that politicians can have the last word.

It is true that individuals now have the advantage of being able to challenge the government on human rights grounds in court, and judges have a much greater role in assessing law and policy for human rights compatibility; they can read words into statutes, provided they do not fundamentally change their meaning. Where a judge finds a statute

cannot be read in a rights-compatible way, he or she can merely declare this to be the case under the HRA. This declaration has no legal effect; it does not invalidate the law in question.

Of course, the idea was that following a judicial finding of incompatibility there would be considerable political pressure on the government and parliament to change the law as required, but the scheme of the HRA provides for parliament to say 'no, we disagree' to the courts. So in February 2011, when the Home Secretary told the House of Commons that she was obliged under the HRA to change the law to allow sex offenders to appeal their inclusion on the Sex Offenders' Register, this was simply not the case.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, the HRA and the ECHR protect everyone in the UK. Prisoners, foreigners, members of 'unpopular groups' like Gypsies and Travellers and asylum seekers can all claim the rights listed – freedom from slavery, freedom from torture, the right to life and so on. There isn't a vast catalogue of rights – healthcare and social security are nowhere to be seen for example – and many of the rights, like free expression or privacy rights, can be limited on public interest grounds. It is the universal application of these minimal rights that lurks behind much of the opposition to our human rights laws.

Echoing the deserving and undeserving welfare rhetoric, there is a drive to exclude certain people or groups – Abu Qatada, convicted prisoners, even relatives of convicted prisoners – from the scope of the 'human' in 'human rights'. This is perhaps the hardest sell. We owe it to our ancestors who were de-humanised, including the subjects of the 'hate vans' of previous generations, at least to try.



Taxpayer-funded Tory hate vans



Amy Williams is a researcher on the Human Rights Futures Project based at the LSE.

This is the first of a new column on human rights-related issues today and writes in a personal capacity

The Miliband muddle

Peter Kenyon invites Labour's leader to focus on 'kinship', not 'kingship'

Labour's leader is in a muddle. He hasn't got long to plot. The 2013 Annual Labour Party Conference is his last chance to seal a deal with the electorate to improve his party's chances of winning the next General Election. There has been no shortage of summery advice – welcome or otherwise.

Two themes stick out: nail the lie – there was no mess when Labour lost the 2010 election; and secondly: Ed Miliband needs to speak human again and set out the stories people will appreciate. Guardianistas have been drafting mini-manifestoes in desperation of the Leader's apparent silence – simple statements setting out common values that could be Labour's.

Why the muddle? Just when the electorate is increasingly hungry for an anti-Coalition narrative, our Ed allows himself to get embroiled in a typical Blairite melodrama with the party's affiliated unions, and challenges them to a duel. It is a distraction. He is risking both party morale and cash. Expect the issues to be quietly buried to avoid undermining morale among Labour's core supporters – vital for campaigning and getting out the vote in May 2015. Labour nerds will savour the way in which this farrago has put Labour First, championed by John Spellar MP and serial PPC Luke Akehurst, representing the Labour Right into bed with the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, championed by shouty old Labour leftie Pete Willsman.

What does Labour stand for?

None of that will matter a jot with the voters. They want to know: what does Labour stand for?

On the basis of current showing – not a lot. Oh, there are the chroniclers of policy initiatives able to list commitments entered into by the Labour Front bench since the 2010 General Election. But no ordinary mortal can remember any of them. Worse, there was a National Policy Forum less than three months ago at the end of June. But the

opportunity to capture the public imagination was lost in stage management that disabled debate and banned votes.

There will be frenzied activity in some Constituency Labour Parties committed to democratic socialism. They are the ones that submit resolutions (or did I mean motions? Whatever!) for debate at Conference. All to little avail. The Conference Arrangements Committee, an elected body with a majority of trade unionists, has rigged the Conference agenda with remarkable aplomb and saved the Leadership's blushes for the last 15 years or more. There is no reason to suppose 2013 is going to be any different.

So it falls to the Leader, in his keynote speech, and the more recent innovations of platform Q&A sessions, with invited audiences, to project messages to the

Why the muddle? Just when the electorate is increasingly hungry for an anti-Coalition narrative our Ed allows himself to get embroiled in a typical Blairite melodrama with the party's affiliated unions, and challenges them to a duel

electorate via television, and webcasts. Will anyone be listening? Not many, apart from the media, assembled chatteratti and the other political parties campaign strategists eager to farm the proceedings for gaffes – the feedstock of modern politics.

Simple messages

But these are precious and rare moments to win over potential Labour voters, enthuse members and supporters. It just needs the creation of those simple messages; you were conned by the Coalition, Labour showed growth was possible, austerity is the politics of despair, Labour councils are showing the way – paying a living wage, building council houses, creating apprenticeships – despite the Tories and LibDems best efforts to prop up privileges and provide tax-breaks for their supporters – the 1%. And so on.

It's not difficult if you don't live



Pointless duels: Ed's unnecessary fight with the unions hurts him, the unions and the Labour Party

in the Westminster bubble. But that is Ed Miliband's weakness. He knows little else. His political courage – standing against his brother and winning in 2010 is not in doubt. But for what purpose? He sacked Nick Brown MP as chief whip, and stripped the Parliamentary Labour Party of its right to elect members to the shadow cabinet. Not achievements to boast about to democratic socialists. But it demonstrated strong leadership, his apologists argued. Fine, if you want to perpetuate 'kingship' through the leadership of the Labour Party. But the Labour Party was built on 'kinship', and that's how it will prosper for another 100 years. That's the bit of Labour's history that Ed has yet to prove he understands. Labour's future is not about individual choice and personal prejudice. It is about collective action and the common good.

That was what was so absurd about his 'personalised' message to members after the staged fight with Unite the Union leader Len McCluskey. If you really want to revive a mass-membership party, just remember political parties are collectives, egos have to be moderated for the common good. As Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, please set a good example, Ed. There's a good chap.

In an era of deficits

Andy Morton argues that the European Union's democracy problems are deepening and must be acknowledged, but not on Tory terms

"Socialism and democracy are two sides of the same coin"

With any attempt to define a 'Social Europe', democratic legitimacy, social rights, accountability and distribution of power must be a fundamental part. Social Europe enthusiasts too often however find themselves in a muddle when dealing with the EU's democratic credentials. Conservative sceptics have seized ownership of a debate concerning the EU's 'democratic deficit' as they've successfully, albeit partly erroneously, conflated concerns of 'sovereignty' and 'democracy'.

Denials of the EU's democratic deficit are very hard to sustain. Not only will a bonafide Social Europe never be formed without the EU's democracy problems being corrected, but the democratic left will be placed on very dangerous territory. It must also be accepted that there are a number of potential remedies available within as well as outside the EU. There are some very pertinent questions as to how viable these remedies are. In any event, non-engagement with the EU's pronounced democracy problems is no longer an option.

The EU's democratic deficit

The fleeting and superficial regard the British political class pays to issues of European integration is part of the reason why the impact of the EU on national life is not fully grasped. The EU's considerable powers – for better or for worse – hasn't yet been balanced with sufficient means of public and democratic control. Citizens feel an increasing disconnect from a complex, opaque and distant EU political system; a conclusion given validity given that there is no 'European government' people can throw out, despite the wide powers the EU's executive – the European Commission – enjoys over national policy and practice.

While many celebrate the intricate negotiation fora at the European level, spearheaded by the Council of Ministers, serious problems emerge when demands

to alter substantively EU law are met only by piecemeal and lowest common denominator outcomes in response. Given the powers of unelected institutions like the Court and the Commission to make EU policy and law it is important that directly elected bodies can repeal or substantively alter these. Currently this is very difficult at the European level and completely impossible at the national. This points to a critical generational aspect to the EU's democratic deficit: European legislation passed in year one cannot be repealed later at the national level and, again, is virtually impossible to substantively alter through negotiation with other member states. It is fundamental to any electoral notion of democracy that generations are not bound by laws of a previous generation—a concept also fundamental to the British constitutional principle 'Parliament is Sovereign'. This has been put into an uncertain position with regard to EU membership. But whereas Conservative sceptics claim an EU exit is the only response, it is worth considering – in the name of proper engagement these issues – what other options are available.

All Bad? Remedies

Many will correctly point to the European Parliament as a beacon of the EU's democratic credentials and buttress to Council and Commission overreaching. Its powers have risen sharply since Maastricht and possess an important role in the EU's legislative process. This does not itself correct the top-down nature of the EU, nor can it correct the Commission's own profound legitimacy and accountability problems. Directly electing the Commission or, as Franziska Brantner on page 16 recommends, tying European Parliament elections to its composition are important remedial ideas that should have been considered long ago; plus the Parliament still needs greater assent powers.

The introduction of national parliaments in structural terms

into EU governance, courtesy of the 'Yellow Card' procedure, was a much vaunted innovation of the Lisbon Treaty. Here national parliaments can come together under the auspices of the Committee of the Regions to reject Commission legislative proposals. This 'rejection' is not binding however and building upon this new feature in this way would enhance the democratic credentials of the EU and partly correct its top-down nature. This constitutes a middle way between the current 'Yellow Card' procedure and the 'red card' procedure William Hague favours that proposes that a single national parliament can veto European legislation. Hague's idea would make the EU's legislative process unworkable, which if this is the goal then advocate leaving the EU rather than pretending to make meaningful suggestions.

Introducing a substantive role for national parliaments raises the spectre of subsidiarity—the principle in EU law that posits that the lowest and most appropriate level must be where competence is assigned. This principle has nonetheless been greatly ignored by EU institutions, themselves far more concerned with the advancing internal market law. Subsidiarity can be placed on an equal footing with internal market law, either through the creation of a new subsidiarity court, appeals process using the Parliament and as a legal basis for all of potential remedies above.

Some of these and other suggestions need to be considered if there is any interest in correcting the EU's democratic deficit. Those on the pro-EU left need to acknowledge this and then can expose the phony credentials Conservative sceptics have on this issue. Modern Tories are no more a democrat on this issue than they were on the poll tax. The reason we know this is that if the EU's democratic deficit were corrected they would still be complaining about loss of sovereignty. More critically, engaging with the problems the EU has is essential for any democratic socialist.

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Whither Social Europe

The left needs to respond the neo-liberal reality of the EU and accept that the Social Europe idea is on its knees argues **Philip B. Whyman and Mark Baimbridge**

Over the past decade the left has increasingly embraced European integration as a bulwark to globalisation. However, the view that the EU provides the potential for realising a progressive social and economic policy is problematic. The creation of a 'Social Europe' is patchy in both coverage and generosity, because at least four variants of the European Social Model (ESM) exist. Moreover, the neo-liberal framework associated with Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) requires the separate formulation of monetary policy by the independent European Central Bank (ECB) from nationally determined fiscal policy, itself constrained by the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP), leading to a lack of policy coordination prejudicial to the construction of a progressive economic framework. Hence, this approach is the antithesis to traditional democratic socialist objectives.

Neo-liberal drift

Moreover, the recent neo-liberal drift in strategy espoused by the European Commission implies that, either the Left has to redouble its efforts in a struggle within the EU to realise a fundamental reform of its institutions and policy framework, or else consider other, more nationally-orientated alternatives. However, to facilitate such strategies the nature of membership *per se* is called into question in terms of alternatives that might produce more egalitarian results. Consequently, we also outline a number of these policy options and evaluate their potential benefits and costs from a broad political economy framework.

One of the main reasons why social democratic and trade union constituencies tend to favour deeper European integration derives from their enthusiastic support for the *espace social européen*. This vision is typically counter-poised against a neo-liberal, 'Anglo-Saxon' model, characterised by the unfettered opera-



Much of the pro-EU left have received their inspiration from a Delorsian 'European Social Model', one that is scarcely part of the current European Commission blue print for Europe

tion of free market forces. In the ESM alternative, European citizens benefit from comprehensive social protection, wage regulation and social partnership. Additionally, trade unions play an important part in the management of the labour market, rather than being marginalised by the growth of individual wage formation. Consequently, many adherents dream of corporatist solutions, or Euro-Keynesian macroeconomic policies, even though these have not been realistic alternatives for two decades or more. However, given the prevailing drift towards more market solutions, it is not surprising that those with more progressive inclinations are so attracted by the ESM. Unfortunately, it is only a mirage.

There are a number of reasons for this conclusion. The first relates to the fact that the EU was founded as an economic organisation, focused upon promoting integration through trade. It approached this through the removal of internal trade barriers whilst retaining them against the rest of the world. The founding Treaty of Rome established 'four

freedoms', one of which being the free movement of capital, thereby preventing future governments from exercising democratic control over capital movements. This has proven to be a problematic decision, not only in preventing many of the steps that could have been taken to prevent the contagion experienced during the recent financial crisis, but also for those advocating an alternative economic policy utilising Keynesian and/or active industrial policy instruments.

Little choice

Furthermore, the establishment of EMU amongst a majority of EU member states ties participants to a single monetary policy operated by the ECB; based in Germany, the EU's dominant economy. Its design means that participants, once they become uncompetitive, have little choice but to deflate their economies by squeezing wages and/or cut public spending in an attempt to reduce internal costs. The Lisbon Agenda, adopted by the EU in 2000 and intended to enhance Europe's competitive position,

plays lip service to the ESM, but the emerging 'Brussels-Frankfurt consensus' is profoundly neo-classical in nature. It adopts concepts such as pre-commitment to fiscal rules, rather than counter-cyclical discretion and accepts uncritically theories such as the neo-liberal explanation of inflation and unemployment, which places labour market (i.e. wage) issues at the heart of explaining the existence of unemployment, rather than a lack of effective demand in the economy. Thus, if Europe has a weak competitive position, it should create better allocative efficiencies through reducing wages or the social wage and promote market solutions. As such, there is a fundamental conflict between the economic infrastructure and the social superstructure of EU policy.

It is against this growth in EU neo-liberal economic orthodoxy that the ESM is supposed to provide a counterweight. But how? Tax revenues are coming under increasing pressure, as certain EU economies act as tax havens for global transnational corporations. Moreover, social policy becomes less a means of decommodification and more an instrument of reinforcing market solutions; for example, enshrining the work principle, cutting pensions and other programmes to maintain competitiveness. Enshrining trade union participation in decision-making seems a shallow prize, when this has little impact upon economic orthodoxy at the macroeconomic level. This is underlined when firms are increasingly seeking to introduce individualised payment systems within human resource management systems that offer less scope for active trade union representation of their members' interests.

Furthermore, the enlargement of the EU, whilst desirable in many respects, reinforces this position. Since wages in new member states are so much lower than for the EU as a whole, there is no realistic prospect of trying to equalise wages through regulation or trade union supranational bargaining, nor is the establishment of European minimum wages very likely. The unification of East and West Germany demonstrated what damage could be inflicted upon a less productive economy, when wages were equalised too quickly. Unsurprisingly, the new member states could not sustain this solution. Similarly, many new member states have under-developed

social and welfare policies. For those former communist nations, where a considerable proportion of social support was dealt with via employing organisations, the shift to capitalism and market solutions have stripped-out most of this former system without, in many cases, replacing it with a system of social support comparable with more established EU nations. Hence, the suggestion that harmonisation of social measures could form the basis for an ESM is unrealistic. Indeed, recent developments in the social protection systems in a variety of established EU member states would appear to reinforce this.

So, where does this leave progressive opinion? If the ESM is unlikely to be enacted in any kind of meaningful way beyond the minimal welfare base line that for

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most EU nations represents a race to the bottom in social terms, where does that leave support for further integration and support for continual membership of the EU?

Keep the faith?

One option might be to keep the faith and trust that, if or when new member states catch-up with more established EU nations, the potential for equalisation of social protection and wages can occur. However, this will be a long and painful wait for many EU citizens. Moreover, the concept of convergence is not automatic, as can be evidenced by observing the economic development of Spain, Portugal, Ireland and most obviously, Greece.

A second alternative would be to adopt a 'trade union' approach to EU membership and/or support for further European integration. In any negotiation, each party operates a system of sanctions and rewards; therefore, progressives might wish to consider threatening to remove their support for integration, unless specif-

ic elements of the ESM programme were introduced immediately. However, sanctions are not credible if no-one believes them to be real. For example, trade union strike threats only work if managers believe that this has the potential to disrupt productive activity.

A third alternative is to conclude that the European integration project offers little for ordinary working people, as opposed to big business, and opt to develop better national solutions. This will require the construction of sufficient electoral support to make this a reality, but this is what left-of-centre political forces should be doing in any case. Moreover, to the extent that EU rules and regulations impede developing this new approach, creative solutions would need to be identified.

For example, if a more active industrial policy falls foul of the EU's competition law, then if this cannot be changed within EU membership, or support for certain industries cannot provide real support without appearing to offer anything looking like a subsidy, then EU membership itself comes into question. Similarly with macroeconomic policy; if the EU persists with its current orthodox approach, and the UK or any other nation wishes to pursue a Keynesian and/or more regulatory approach, then membership will have to be re-examined.

The Lisbon process has provided the ESM with a problem that may prove difficult (if not impossible) to solve. On the one hand, the EU is committed to developing a more participatory, citizen-friendly form of social and economic governance, involving employees in decision-making within the workplace and creating a form of economics centred upon maintaining a high level of employment. However, simultaneously the EU is committed to an economic agenda seeking to raise productivity through market determination in the social and labour market spheres. One vision of the future takes as its basis a quasi-Keynesian negotiated economy model, whereas the other has supply-side neo-liberal foundations. To prevent cognitive dissonance, the EU needs to either demonstrate how it can square this particular circle, or else decide which approach it wishes to pursue.

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The arguments contained in this article are discussed at greater length, in Whyman, P.B., Baimbridge, M. and Mullen, A. (2012) The Political Economy of the European Social Model, Routledge, Abingdon

A tale of two unions

Greg Barnes surveys the problems and prospects for trade unions' relationship with the European Union

The European Union is in the process of negotiating a new agreement with the United States. The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) promises to found a new economic relationship with the United States, and lead to prosperity for both. This innovation was led by the EU and ushers in a new era of 'Western Integration'. In Britain, economic integration with, or through the EU is always contentious, and the publication of the Coalition's review of EU powers has brought it front and center once more. The review's conclusion is that EU membership has led to a positive impact on the UK economy. The TTIP should result in further positive growth for the UK and makes EU membership even more attractive economically.

In establishing this agreement, key issues regarding the rights and movement of workers arise. Will this integration offer an even greater challenge, and how may the political left respond to this new development?

One of the main explanations for increasing social integration in the EU is that when the economies are more closely integrated, subsequent market failures and disparities will emerge among member states. These are only resolvable through further close working and harmonization. An example of this principle in practice is the 'freedom of movement of people to work' established in the 1958 Treaty of Rome. The intention was that if market imbalances should occur across the market, then job seekers could move from one state to another easily to follow these new opportunities. Thus imbalances in the integrated economy may be resolved. This is also the accepted logic behind the 'Social Chapter'. With the granting of free movement of workers in the EU, coher-



The partnership between the trade union movement and the European Union is essential for a Social Europe

ent standards were therefore needed to ensure that these workers were treated in the same manner across the participating area.

There are then two main problems with the expanded rights mentioned above in the integrated market.

National trade unions

Firstly, the lack of a coherent trade union movement across the EU has restricted the ability of workers to coalesce preferences regarding working practices at a supranational level. This is despite the large number of companies that operate across Europe either through nationally bounded subsidiaries, or as part of a single supply chain. There are instances where cross border action has occurred, with Airbus supply chain in 2007 would be one notable exception, but widespread and systemic engagement has not taken place.

But why? Taking the UK as an example, the political left is popu-

larly defined by two factors. Firstly a humanitarian ideological perspective derived post-enlightenment. This ideology is principally secular in nature, and sought a redress to the imbalances of a monarchical and patronage based society. Later, the trade union movement realized some of these principles, but differed in others. Having arisen in large industries in the 19th century, bargaining was predominantly local, and it took a deal of time before it could be said to have developed to transcend local and regional boundaries. These unions sought to derive direct benefit for their members through their collective power rather than a more universal, transnational aspiration. With the development of improved communications, acceptance of unionism more widely, and the foundation of the Labour party, the union movement was able to reach beyond these regional boundaries and become national. Similar stories and processes are found across Western Europe.

National union movements have attempted to use 'soft' coordination of their groups in the European sphere. It could be said that they have been unsuccessful at real cross border operation. This is a result of the direct transactional relationship with its membership and the consequent national focus. In this sense, trade unionism appears elitist in nature. It defines itself, its principles, and the desired results by that which it is not. So it is the workers against the management, the members against non-members and an industry against its competition. Trade unionism has consequently been linked with protectionism and a desire to retain Western industrial production against Far Eastern outsourcing.

The flip side of this discussion has seen the political left effectively use the supranational level to access power at a systemic level. This access has offered a route to avoid the partisanship of national legislatures. Therefore the political left has had a route to realize some of their goals – hence some of the protections enshrined in the Social Chapter despite neo-liberal protestations. The challenge is now to look beyond national borders to embrace a universal international labour and integrate the direct patronage associated with unionism. The principle of European citizenship offers one route to this. It has not been widely accepted.

Movement of Workers

Secondly, without the ability to rebalance employment through free movement of workers and reciprocal workers rights, a free trade area with the US will break one of the fundamental principles of the EU. The TTIP in its initial proposed form does not provide

for this possibility. The US has been careful to protect its borders, and has stated that the rights of workers will not change following this agreement.

The free movement of workers in the EU has not been realized in the manner it was originally intended either. There are instances where some states (notably the UK) have seen large numbers of migrants for unskilled work, but a mass transnational employment market still seems remote. Language and cultural barriers conspire to alienate foreign workers, while the monetary costs of moving from one country to another prohibit this practice for many sectors of society. Other practices, such as the need to have a bank account in the same

In establishing this agreement, key issues regarding the rights and movement of workers arise. Will this integration offer an even greater challenge, and how may the political left respond to this new development?

state for the payment of wages (particularly prevalent in France), construct further technical barriers.

TTIP and international labour

So, even if the TTIP were to include these principles, it is unlikely they would be successful, particularly with the geographical distance of the US. Therefore, the possible unemployment caused by aspects of the TTIP such as in agriculture would remain unresolved. Groups such as the Farmers Alliance have highlighted these issues and the erosion of CAP support that may be included.

Where workers do move across



borders, they are unlikely to join Unions in the new state into which they move. In 2004, the German based European Migrant Workers union was formed from the Building, Forestry, Agriculture and Environment Union. Development of such groups is of crucial importance when considering the further extension of global free trade. It is crucial therefore to determine a non-elitist ideological focus for the left and unions to allow for their national level structures to transcend to the transnational level. When seen from this perspective, an extension of economic integration to such a scale provided by this new TTIP is a significant threat to an uncoordinated European labour force.

The political left has a range of fora available to press these issues, but none at a high enough level to have leverage. Groups such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) work on just these issues, but I would argue that without either a sense of universality or a direct relationship to union members any 'soft' coordination in this way is likely to flounder. This can only be resolved through greater direct coordination through a transnational union movement.

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Trade betrayal

The undemocratic assault from a global trade agenda is bearing poisonous fruit in the form of EU trade and procurement law argues **Linda Kaucher**

The main business of the EU is its external trade agreement agenda, yet this agenda and its importance are almost entirely hidden from the public. It also dominates internal EU and member states' policy-making. It contradicts the faux 'social Europe' concept to which many on the left continue to cling whilst democracy is eradicated and corporate rights entrenched in international trade law.

Its purpose is to permanently fix corporate-driven neo-liberalism, within the EU and internationally, via trade agreements. Any reassertion of democracy within the EU structure or member states is prevented by legally binding international trade law. This agenda is driven and effectively controlled by transnational corporations, especially transnational financial services corporations.

Internal EU policy, mirroring external trade policy, is formulated to fit and facilitate that wider agenda. Member states' national policies are similarly formulated to fit to this model, especially that of the UK which hosts the major transnational financial services centre and takes the neo-liberal lead in the EU.

The bigger picture

In this liberalisation agenda, states' powers are subordinated to transnational corporate power. Democracy, states' abilities to control corporations and connections between people and place are overcome, as are workers' rights. Real women's rights have no place except where profitable, so e.g. a sector may be 'feminised', to reduce labour costs, until cheaper male labour is brought in from overseas, or work sent overseas.

This bigger picture is successfully kept from the public by means of secrecy, spin and seeming trade 'technicality'. The result is that the left continues to swirl around in a mush of wishful thinking from old 'Social Europe' promises and ideological fragments that fail to address present



A Global trade agenda has moved far beyond ships and crates and includes. It now includes subtle but powerful mechanisms to infiltrate national politics. The EU is a big player in this agenda

realities, thus effectively castrating itself. Dissemination of information on this agenda is urgently needed to overcome secrecy and inform debate.

In 2005 the EU's trade agreement focus shifted from the stalled multilateral World Trade Organisation Doha Round to bilateral and regional trade agreements. The EU has now completed, is negotiating, has launched, or is considering trade agreements with most of the world.

The EU now includes 'investor protection' or Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) in its trade deals. In addition to state-to-state trade dispute mechanisms, corporations will be able to sue governments directly for any EU, member state or even local government level action that negatively affects their future profits. ISDS is a major factor in making trade deals irreversible, inevitably chilling the legislative process.

David Cameron's reneging on legislation for plain cigarette packaging is indicative even before ISDS kicks in, though the UK press failed to identify the international trade context. In Australia, the High Court ruled against tobacco companies' legal challenge to the government's

plain packaging legislation. Immediately, the Ukraine, hosting a Phillip Morris subsidiary, raised a World Trade Organisation (WTO) dispute against Australia in relation to the WTO Trade Related Intellectual Property (TRIPS) agreement. WTO trade disputes have to be state-to-state.

The UK, unrelentingly 'free trade', could hardly enact 'anti-free trade' legislation, and effectively support Australia in this globally significant dispute, especially while pursuing the massive US/EU trade deal. Who reminded Cameron of this and their financial interests are important questions, but more significant is the chilling effect of the international trade agenda on this and all future UK legislation.

TTIP

Because the Gillard Australian government excluded ISDS from Australian trade agreements, challenges have been only national and in the state-to-state WTO. With ISDS included in all new EU trade deals, the UK will be financially vulnerable to legal action by any corporation, in the international trade jurisdiction the corporation chooses, adjudicated only on 'free-trade' values.

Secrecy allows the Trade Commission to be increasingly ambitious. Now we face the newly-launched (1) but long planned US/EU Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) (2).

It is part of the secrecy and spin to misleadingly emphasise potential trade-in-goods tariff reductions when US/EU trade-in-goods tariffs are already minimal and most of the EU's trade is now in services. Trade-in-services liberalisation gives corporations rights to: operate in a country while reducing the state's rights to control how they operate; be treated as well as domestic firms, including access to subsidies (3); while prohibiting the state from limiting the number of providers and the range of services they offer (4).

The US/EU trade deal however goes beyond the liberalisation of trade-in-services, central to most trade deals, prioritising 'regulatory harmonisation' between the US and the EU. Insofar as a country is defined by its legislation and regulation, the US and the EU will become more similar, with regulations and standards 'harmonised' to the lowest levels to benefit transnational corporations that can utilise trade agreements. (Solely domestic firms cannot).

Preliminary TTIP documentation, including the Commission's leaked mandate, recognises that 'harmonisation' is most effective with new regulation, ensuring that it is corporate-friendly as it's being formulated.

The NHS under threat

An example is provided by the UK Health and Social Care Act and its regulations that will define the future of the NHS. It effectively enforces competitive tendering, and thus privatisation and liberalisation i.e. opening to transnational bidders - a shift to US-style profit-prioritised health provision. Even if outcomes of the NHS changes are disastrous, ISDS will effectively disallow any attempts by any future UK government, to reverse the changes.

The WTO Doha Round stalled because, in that context, developing countries jointly resisted demands of corporations made via Western governments. Further stated TTIP objectives are for other countries to be brought, singularly, into this 'transatlantic' trade deal as they agree to abide by its corporate-benefit rules, and for trade 'rules' to be established

that can then be incorporated into the multilateral WTO. Thus, this trade deal is intended to achieve the global neo-liberalism that the WTO Doha Round has not.

There are concurrent negotiations, for the same overall aims, on a Transatlantic Partnership (TPP) and an international Trade-in-Services Agreement (TISA)(5).

Corporate rights to access public procurement, that is all government spending at all levels, is now a top 'trade' priority, providing on-going 'rent', as with NHS contracts, when other forms of investment are less reliable. The Global Procurement Agreement (GPA) (6) is another means to achieve this, in addition to bilateral trade deals. So this juggernaut of corporate power is applying pressure at all levels for irreversible corporate rights, and the EU is a main mechanism for this.

Even if outcomes of the NHS changes are disastrous, ISDS will effectively disallow any attempts by any future UK government, to reverse the changes

Problems of Procurement

Transnational corporate power in Brussels is not particularly 'European'. The UK government, acting for London-based transnational financial services, financial services lobbying via the European Services Forum, and the US Chamber of Commerce all have major roles in the EU trade agenda. Firms gain from both sides' concessions in trade deals while people on both sides lose. Proposed reforms to EU procurement regulations will force member states' into global bidding procurement processes so transnational firms, via the EU mechanism and trade deals, can access government spending elsewhere, quid pro quo.

The EU single market prepares the way for external trade commitments made on behalf of European people in the EU, albeit without their knowledge. Abusing democracy, the EU now implements trade agreements subsequent to European Parliamentary assent but before member state governments' ratification.

Supposedly 'Social Europe' is systematically destroying labour rights. Labour rights have always rested on limited labour supply. Moving workers across borders from lower to higher wage coun-

tries destroys labour power but is highly profitable. The EU does provide free movement both of workers and services, but this has been used by firms to transfer workers to undercut wages, a development underlined by European Court of Justice(7) interpretations of EU directives in favour of corporations, overriding workers' rights.

EU internal provision is mirrored in secretive Mode 4 provisions in all EU trade deals, allowing firms, both transnational and from the partner state, to move numerically unlimited, skilled, temporary labour into the EU. These effectively permanent provisions discriminate against host country firms but mostly host country workers, disregarding displacement or unemployment. Movement of labour is a major capitalist strategy hitherto unrecognised and unaddressed by much of the UK left. The unanimous 2011 Trade Union Congress vote to publicise and oppose the EU/India free trade agreement, which is largely about cheap labour movement, was not implemented.

The EU is not a fixed entity and it continually expands to include low wage countries. The TTIP will be similarly amorphous. Its framework will allow it to change, its provisions deepen, and non-'transatlantic' countries to join, even after it is signed. These are urgently needed: public information on the international trade agenda: exemption for the NHS from the TTIP; and recognition that the EU, rather than being 'social', is a mechanism for global corporate takeover.

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Links

1. *Launched at the G8 (17 June 2013)*
2. *Called the Transatlantic Free Trade Agreement (TAFTA) in the US*
3. *National Treatment rule*
4. *Market Access rule*
5. *Between willing countries within the WTO, aiming to gradually pull more in, towards an eventual multilateral agreement.*
7. *Another plurilateral of willing countries within the WTO, aimed at eventual multilateral coverage.*
8. *Especially Viking, Laval, Ruffert, Luxembourg decisions of the European Court of Justice*

'Better' rather than 'more Europe'

Franziska Brantner MEP sees a pro-European argument that must be more responsive to the EU's problems as well as its strengths

While the UK government's approach to Europe seems to follow the notion "less is more", on the continent all major political parties – Conservatives, Socialists, Liberals and Greens – argue that "more Europe" is the answer to the euro crisis. While more Europe is certainly needed in some areas, pro-Europeans should focus their forces on making the EU more responsive to citizens. And they should realise that sometimes less can indeed be more – but combined with a real pro-European heart.

Europe is still mired in its deepest economic, social and political crisis since the Second World War. The global financial meltdown has translated across the European Union into an economic downturn, social hardship and a growing loss of political legitimacy and trust. The EU and its institutions and powers have increasingly been put into the spotlight in the search for ways out of the crisis.

Maybe surprisingly (especially for British observers), a broad consensus among decision-makers has emerged across Europe that the answer to the EU's existential crisis should be "more Europe". European Conservatives (which do not include the Tories), Socialists, Liberals and Greens have all voiced their support for more economic and political integration in order to overcome the EU's dangerous asymmetries: a quasi-federal monetary union without the economic and political pillars to keep it in balance.

The situation looks, of course, very different viewed from the United Kingdom, where the public debate on Europe is pretty much disconnected from that on the mainland. However, even on the continent, pro-Europeans should not content themselves with the general lip service paid to "more Europe".

First of all, this seeming consensus does not go far beyond the surface since "more Europe" can mean very different things to different people. Also, rhetorical commitment to deeper integration often goes hand in hand with stalling tactics when it comes to its practical implementation. This has been exemplified by the hypocritical manoeuvring of Chancellor Angela Merkel and her government over the past three years.

Positive image

More worrying for pro-Europeans should be the lack of public support for, and trust in, an ever-more powerful Brussels even on the mainland. Today less than a third of EU citizens have a positive image of the European Union. This fundamental crisis of confidence is "home-made", i.e. the politicians both in national capitals and in Brussels have only themselves to blame. For, generally, Europeans are very open to the European idea. Polls show that not only the majority of EU citizens define their own identity not only in

national but also European terms. But also do they support European solutions to concrete problems? For instance, almost 90 per cent of EU citizens agree that EU states should cooperate more closely to overcome the financial and economic crisis.

How does general support for European cooperation and shrinking confidence in Europe's institution go together? One explanation may be that two thirds of EU citizens believe that their voice does not count in EU affairs. Simply promising more of the same Europe to the people won't help address this growing disenchantment. People are not longing for more or less Europe; what they ask for is a better Europe. And they want themselves to have a say in what "better" means to them. The proponents of European integration, especially on the Continent, have so far failed to respond to these

Proponents of European integration should furthermore accept that "more Europe" cannot be the answer to each and every problem

sentiments. They have been too quickly calling for ever-more Europe while brushing off valid criticism of actual problems as anti-European. Before calling for more Europe, pro-Europeans need to explain how citizens can retain ownership of the process. The truly historic project of genuinely finalising economic and political union will only be successful if the citizens feel part of the enterprise.

Equal footing

How can this be accomplished? There are some institutional fixes to this, largely centring on the European Parliament. The EU Parliament should finally be put on a fully equal footing with the EU Council of national governments. In particular, in monetary and economic matters, which are often not of a legislative nature and therefore don't fully involve MEPs yet, in the future no major decisions should be taken without Parliament's full involvement and approval. As a concrete step,

the 'troika' should be abandoned and replaced by a democratically controlled body. As a result, Europe's response to the euro crisis would become much more transparent and the decision-makers behind it much more accountable.

Also, the link between the European Commission and the European Parliament needs to be further strengthened. At the same time the European Commission is handed increasingly

more power in overseeing national fiscal and economic policies. The Commission needs a stronger democratic mandate by tying his or her nomination to the results of the elections to the European Parliament. Just as the leader of the winning party or coalition of the elections to the UK House of Commons becomes Prime Minister, the leader of the pan-EU Party Alliance winning the elections to the European Parliament will

become Commission President.

Despite the fact that these ideas are not new and today enjoy widespread public support in continental Europe, many national governments (and their bureaucrats), whilst paying lip service to the proposals, are reluctant to share power with MEPs and EU-wide political party leaders in practice. This includes the United Kingdom, where national in/out referenda seem to be regarded as a much better way to bolster the EU's legitimacy than enhancing popular participation at EU level.

Proponents of European integration should furthermore accept that "more Europe" cannot be the answer to each and every problem popping up, in many areas we actually could well live with "less Europe". Europe as a community certainly needs a firm and lasting legal foundation, which provides citizens and businesses with a unified framework, in which common laws are enforced and common fundamental rights protected. Beyond this firm and lasting foundation, however,

People are not longing for more or less Europe, what they ask for is a better Europe. And they want themselves to have a say in what "better" means to them

the Union needs to remain flexible enough to evolve.

Certain areas such an evolution can lead to more Europe, in other areas to less Europe. Where we might need more Europe today, we might need less of it tomorrow. Objective circumstances and people's convictions change over time, and the division of labour between the Union and its states (as well as regions and municipalities), should adapt to this evolution and always be guided by the principle that competences must be located at the level at which the given objectives can best be achieved.

More powers

Brussels certainly needs more powers to stem the debt and banking crisis, at least as far as the Euro area is concerned. But does it really still need to control what a farmer seeds somewhere in South East England or whether a restaurant owner in Napoli puts open olive oil jugs on his tables?

One would certainly have to be fairly naive to believe that Brussels would voluntarily cede its powers, such as in the field of agricultural policies, back to the national level. It therefore needs mechanisms to ensure that the division of labour is not set in stone forever. One solution would be to tag EU laws with an expiry date. This would ensure that every, say, ten or fifteen years there have to be a fresh public debate on whether a particular issue is best dealt with in Brussels, London or at regional level. For many people, this would probably make it easier to support "more Europe" where and when it is needed.

While the notion of reviewing EU powers might sound familiar in the UK as of late, it is rarely heard of among continental advocates of European integration. It is very unfortunate that David Cameron's ongoing "review" of EU compe-

tences with its ideology-driven and blatantly unilateral nature will certainly make it no easier to sell the idea to pro-European circles on mainland Europe.

But the proponents of European integration, both in the UK and on the continent, should not leave this argument to the Eurosceptic and

Europhobe camps. Europeans don't simply need "more Europe". They need a better Europe, which can at times mean more powers for Brussels and at times less, but must always mean more ownership for the people.

Franziska Brantner an MEP from the Baden-Württemberg region in South West Germany and a member of the German Green party Die Grünen and the European Free Alliance bloc in the European Parliament

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The benefit of EU membership eroded by austerity

Lily Murphy provides an important Irish view to the benefits of EU membership eroded by recent Austerity measures

Ireland joined the European Union in 1972, its membership has to date been socially and economically beneficial, but modern day austerity is threatening to erode any progress that has been made from it. The aim of EU membership was to turn Ireland into a competitive economy, but was also a social experiment of modernisation.

The adjustment to EU membership has been a drawn out process. It would take almost twenty years before the full benefits of membership materialised when injections of capital from Brussels helped build the foundations of the Celtic Tiger. EU modernisation also influenced the social spectrum of Irish life.

Irish women in particular have gained greatly from the EU. As a condition of EU membership, Ireland had to remove the marriage ban that mandated married women could not work in the civil service. Before entry to the EU Irish women experienced other social inequalities such as restrictions on jobs and pay. With EU membership women's rights were recognised through anti-discrimination legislation and in the 1974 Equal Pay Directive gave women equal pay in the workplace.

Irish women in the labour force rose from 27% to 42%. The concept of a one earner household gradually disappeared. Today the dual-earner household is retreating back to a single-earner household due to high unemployment among males that has resulted in clear role reversal for many Irish men and women.

Irish farmers have also benefited from the EU, becoming the biggest financial winners from EU membership through the price support system supplied by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Generous CAP payments have to date amounted up to 44bn Euro. After the economic turbulence of the 1980s Ireland became the poster child for EU prosperity in the 1990s when it became one of the best performing economies

in Europe.

In 1994 over 7% of all US investment in Europe was destined for Ireland, this was a result of Ireland's attractive location for foreign investment. Being in the European Union also gave Ireland access to the Common Market, one of the critical ingredients in attracting international investors to Ireland. Financial help from EU structural funds became increasingly visual across Ireland from 1988 onwards when the country was designated as an objective one region for structural fund money. Those funds also helped to improve infrastructure, water treatment plants, rural development and heritage sites. Rural Ireland benefited from projects co-funded by the EU, receiving up to 2bn Euro, but these have been subject to austerity-driven cut backs.

Austerity

Ireland now sees high rates of suicide as austerity measures are making it harder for people to meet basic needs. In particular, a sharp rise has been reported in the amount of young males taking their lives. In 2011 of the 525 reported suicides in Ireland, 165 were men under the age of 30. One such group who have suffered from a spike in suicide rates are junior doctors who have recently spoken out against the long working hours, some claiming to have worked 71 hours a week while others told of how they work 36 hours without a break.

Austerity has also hit the university sector. Higher education institutions positively gained from EU membership through the funded research programmes receiving in excess of 6bn Euro from the European Social Fund. College fees were abolished in the mid 90s which made it easier for everyone to go onto further education, but in recent recessionary times fees are creeping back thus reserving third level education for the privileged few. The Irish edu-



Dublin: once the thriving heart of the Celtic Tiger, now the centre of Ireland's austerity-driven nightmare

cation system also benefited greatly from EU membership as projects such as the Erasmus programme gave EU citizens easy access to education across borders.

Another benefit of EU membership lay in the accessibility to work without a visa in other EU member states and this has made it much easier for many young Irish to migrate in search of work across Europe.

Youth unemployment has reached its highest since the 1980s prompting ever more to migrate across Europe but many more are taking flight for places like Canada and Australia. The number of under-25s emigrating in 2004 stood at approximately 15,000 but doubled to 30,000 in 2009. This is a brain drain Ireland can ill afford.

In 2010 Ireland accepted an EU/IMF bailout amounting to 85 Billion Euro. Austerity soon followed resulting in a drop in the standard of living.

Basic minimum income has been cut which reverses the progress in equality made since 1973. Social welfare has also been cut while higher taxes have been introduced.

We are told that these austerity measures are meant to combat recession but it just seems that the cure is much worse than the disease.

Turkish democracy rolls on

Mary Southcott on why you can't get off the train

Trafalgar, Taksim, Those Squares and Streets lead us to ask questions about democracy, secularism and islamification.

The West wants to justify its actions by imposing democracy, often hand in hand with liberal economics. As one US ambassador to Cyprus put it: "markets and votes".

Seen through the prism of Cyprus, Turkey's claim to be the model for the Arab Spring, democratic, secular and Muslim, always seemed slightly ironic, but it definitely ran into the ground over the Istanbul conservationists' move to save Gezi Park.

Autocratic

At the end of July, Turkish Cypriots held early elections for their Assembly. A vote of no confidence in the main right wing governing party was precipitated by the split between supporters of the Turkish Cypriot leader, Dr Dervish Eroglu, President of the unrecognised Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey's increasingly autocratic prime minister.

Turkish Cypriot trade unions organised 'human standing' emulating the 'Man Standing' in Taksim Square. They protested against Turkish policies of demographic change. Islamification and decision making by Turkey's military and Ambassador.

The liberalisation of the economy, including selling of state assets, as is happening in the south following the Troika bailout, has an added dimension in the north where the Turkish Cypriot-owned public sector is transferred to Turkey's private sector. As the north becomes Turkey most of what Cypriots had in common is lost.

Yet Greek Cypriots focus on Erdogan's opening of the Green Line in 2003, when he became prime minister, following the successful Cavit An case at the ECHR against Turkey who had to compensate him for preventing his meeting his Greek Cypriot medical colleagues. Greek Cypriots also credit Erdogan with

dismantling the military through the Ergenekon cases which have resulted in life sentences. There is speculation that had the Greek Cypriots voted yes in 2004 there would have then been a coup in Turkey. A new state could be created with the police force and sympathetic officers in the military.

Erdogan and his Justice and Development (AK) party seem unassailable. Turkish Cypriots say the US gets one thing right. Their president has only two terms! Erdogan benefits from a voting system which has a ten per cent threshold. This effectively rules out representatives of the Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party who have to stand as independents. Whether or not Turkey's constitution

Ironically Erdogan got on the democracy train to safeguard his party's existence. He seems to have got off whilst others move on claiming rights to demonstrate and cover these events...Democracy is not a train that you can get off when you reach the station you want. It rolls on

changes from parliamentary to presidential, it is doubtful the Republican People's Party (CHP) in the Socialist International, can wrest back power from this largely compassionate conservative Sunni Muslim party. This lack of a left alternative is partly the result of past military coups but mainly a need to recover from their nationalistic stance.

In northern, Cyprus the military supported the late Rauf Denktash, as it did in Turkey. His son Serdar leads the democrat party, which was the beneficiary of a split in the main party.

Some explain the initial positives of Erdogan because he was a democrat and a Muslim. He needed the European democratic framework to protect his party which grew out of the outlawed Welfare Party when he was jailed for reciting a poem, but now finds democratic openness a frustration. His support for the Palestinians, although welcomed, is a facet of his Sunni national-

ism.

The Gesi Park demonstration brought together disparate groups which the electoral system does not: Kurds, secularists, Europeanised democrats, environmentalists, students, trade unionists. So it seems that much will depend on developments in the AKP party itself. President Gul was much more conciliatory to the demonstrators.

The democracy train

Ironically Erdogan got on the democracy train to safeguard his party's existence. He seems to have got off whilst others move on claiming rights to demonstrate and cover these events. Journalists have lost their jobs, or gone on trial, demonstrators have been accused of being terrorists, the train moves on. Democracy is not a train that you can get off when you reach the station you want. It rolls on.

The EU is not going to accept Turkey any time soon with so many journalists in prison. The US is no longer following Erdogan's advice in Syria – the Sunni alternative seems no better than Assad. With better coverage of Turkey, the Kurds and northern Cyprus, without the US and UK's uncritical support, it may be in Turkey's interest to have a settlement in Cyprus and that is what will save the Turkish Cypriot community from extinction.



Former democrat, now autocrat, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan

Somalia on the mend

Dan Thea on a legacy of colonialism and rebirth

Somalia, the semi-arid country occupying the Horn of Africa, with Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti as neighbours, was carved out of the territory of the nomadic Somali ethnic people during the colonisation of Africa by Europe at the end of the nineteenth Century. Somalian ended up under five different governments: French, British, Italian, British (again) and Ethiopia.

Even when the Independent Somali Republic was established in 1961, the tragic divisions remained, with those Somali in Ethiopia, (4.5 million), Kenya (2.5 million), and Djibouti (0.5 million) cut off from their kith and kin in the new republic. Today, substantial numbers are also found in Yemen and elsewhere in the Middle East, Europe and North America. This is tragic for the estimated 19 million Somalis.

On top of all that, Somalia has, almost from independence, been a 'failed state'. In 1969 the young republic of 1961 was overthrown by Major General Siad Barre and his Supreme Revolutionary Council, and the country renamed the Somali Democratic Republic.

National consciousness

In 1976 the Supreme Revolutionary Council was in turn replaced by the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party, whose ideology borrowed heavily from the Chinese 'Cultural Revolution', sending students, civil servants and military 'volunteers' to the countryside on literacy campaign, combating the traditional clan social system, and promoting national consciousness and unity. Farming co-operatives were established; infrastructure, including hospitals and roads, were built; while land, businesses, industry and banks were nationalised.

Carried away by ambition, Barre launched his 'Greater Somalia' crusade in 1977, which was his biggest and fatal gamble, as he launched a total war against Ethiopia and occupied much of its southern Ogaden region. The Ethiopians fought back strongly, with Cuba giving valuable military support. The

invasion ended in 1978 with the virtual destruction of the previously powerful Somalian army, and marking the beginning of Barre's down fall. Internal rivals took advantage of the military disaster, harassed and pursued him to Mogadishu. Barre finally fled the country in 1991, after about 21 years in power.

Thus the first 30 years of independence, mainly under the 'strongman' Barre, were a part and parcel of the 'failed state' status of Somalia!

Similarly, the two decades or so since have witnessed precious little development, with a virtual absence of central government prevailing. Overall, the traditional clan rule took over across the country, though with fluid boundaries. In the north the former British Somaliland broke away, named itself Somaliland and declared independence. At the Horn, Puntland declared itself autonomous, while in the Mogadishu region the hard-line Union of Islamic Courts was in firm control.

In frustration, and under the cover of the UN 1992-95 involvement, the US intervened militarily in an attempt at regime change, but the invasion turned catastrophic. The Union of Islamic Courts remained in control of Mogadishu and much of the central and southern Somalia.

With poor habitat, civil and external wars, plus lack of both government and development, Somalia has been a 'failed state' during most of its existence; with the people among the poorest in the poorest continent. The proportionately huge Somalian diaspora reflects this history.

Disagreements, squabbles and infighting within the Union of Islamic Courts eventually led to a split, with the radical Youth group, (Al-Shabaab), formed in 2006 and linked to the Al-Qaida, breaking away and establishing itself in the south of the country, with its base at the southern port-city of Kisimayou. In October 2012 a Kenyan contingent of the UN-mandated 18,000-strong African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), attacked Kisimayou from its own shores



Major General Siad Barre was at the centre of Somalian troubles from 1961 to 1991

and drove the Al-Shabaab out, as well as from the nearby Kenyan/Somalian border area. However, Al-Shabaab is still strong in the area, although internal strife seems on the increase.

Between Barre's flight in 1991 and 2000 Somalia had no national government. The 2000 Transitional National government was replaced by the Transitional Federal Government in 2004, which went on to oust the Islamic Courts Union from Mogadishu. In severe military difficulties, however, this government was forced to move to Nairobi, Kenya. Under the 2012 Provisional Constitution, the Somali Federation of 18 regions was proclaimed; followed by the election of the Federal Government of Somalia, headed by a President and a Prime Minister. Somalian governmental institutions have since left Kenya for Somalia.

Colonial legacy of underdevelopment, decades of fighting, drought, famine, and indeed the absence of government have resulted in huge numbers of Somalian refugees leaving the country, with the world's biggest refugee camp at Dadaab in Kenya hosting 600,000 Somalians. (Just imagine the political fall-out and outcry if this was at, say, Dover!)

What is encouraging about the recent developments in Somalia is that appreciable progress in governance is being made; lessons from mis-rule, civil and external wars seem to have been learned; and the principle of mutual benefit of international relations accepted.

Politics of reinvention

Steve Freeman reports on the English and Scottish questions found with the Republican Socialist movement

On 6th July the Republican Socialist Alliance organised its first Day School on the theme of the national question in the UK with the main emphasis on England and Scotland and how the left could take up constitutional issues. Steve Freeman spoke about reinventing English identity. Allan Armstrong spoke about current developments in Scotland with the referendum next year. Corrina Lotz outlined the aims of the 'Agreement of the People' campaign.

The first session was called 'Remaking the English working class', a reference to E P Thompson's history of the English working class. The left must 'grasp the nettle' of the national question in England. England and Scotland are bound together in a political and constitutional union. The Scottish question (will Scotland become an independent state?) will come to a head in the 2014 referendum. The English question is the other side of the coin.

The national question is a democratic question and involves invention of a new nation by means of a mass political, cultural and constitutional struggle which may last many years.

We have to re-invent England as a 'Democracy' or a 'Peoples' Republic' or 'Social Republic' or 'Commonwealth'. Before doing this we need to examine the kind of English identity we already have. This can be described as the British-English, an identity invented in the 18th century after the British revolution finally came to rest with the Acts of Union in 1707.

Reinventing England requires mass struggles and the mobilisation of social forces. It is not the product of a few 'dreamers'. We have to think in class terms. Creating a new England requires the 'Remaking the English working class'. Since 1832 Chartism and then Labourism became two great mass movements with their associated mass parties which shaped the consciousness of the working class in England. In

evolutionary terms we should predict that at some point Labourism will be negated by a new form of Chartism – a more advanced or higher form.

Crown Powers

Allan Armstrong, from the Republican Communist Network (Scotland), and member of Radical Independence Campaign welcomed the development of the Republican Socialist Alliance. Unlike so many on the Left, the RSA appreciates the importance of the constitutional monarchist nature of the UK state, and the formidable anti-democratic nature of the Crown Powers. These powers cloak the operations of the British ruling class 'hidden state' and the activities of the City of London. For republicans, opposition to these Crown Powers is of greater significance than opposition to the monarchy, which merely fronts them.

However, there are two other significant features of the UK state. First, it retains an established church, the Church of England, with its bishops in the House of Lords.

A socialist response must be based on upholding a consistent secularism, which breaks the link between the state and religion.

Second the UK is a unionist state. The UK consists of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (and the whole of Ireland before 1922). The UK came about as a result of the English conquest of Wales, the joint English and Scottish conquest of Ireland, and an English and Scottish ruling class deal to create a British state in which they could benefit from imperial exploitation.

Thus, if republicanism and secularism are the socialist responses to the UK's Crown Powers and state-backed Protestantism, then upholding the right of self-determination for Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and yes, for England too, is the socialist response to the unionism of the UK state.

Today, the SNP's

'Independence-lite' proposals (or 'Independence within the Union'), which accept the Union and the Crown Powers, the Bank of England and participation in the British High Command and NATO, represents the self-determination of a wannabe Scottish ruling class. 'Independence-lite' represents a continuation of the old Home Rule tradition, but for a world dominated by the global corporations and US imperialism.

For socialists, self-determination in Scotland must reflect working class interests. This means a complete break with the Crown Powers, with the Bank of England and with NATO. During the nineteenth century Marx and Engels saw Tsarist Russia and its Hapsburg Austrian ally, as the two principal upholders of reaction against democracy in Europe. Today the UK plays the role of 'Hapsburg Austria' to the US's 'Tsarist Russia' in upholding the current global corporate order. The struggle for genuine self-determination is thus directed at the US/UK imperial alliance.

The third session was introduced by Corrina Lotz from the Agreement of the People campaign and the World to Win. She spoke about a proposal for a Constitution for the 21st Century put forward by Occupy London's Real Democracy Working Group and A World to Win. It is now supported by 15 organisations. It is inspired by the Leveller movement of the 1640 English revolution.

The problem is that the system is broken - global capitalism is in a worsening crisis. All the main parties are facilitating the rule of the corporations and banks. Votes hardly count. This makes the state and political system democratic in name only.

The campaign aims to develop a grassroots constitution from below and the Agreement is a draft framework for this, open to development. It can be discussed and implemented through a network of permanent Peoples Assemblies. In this way, assemblies can become the basis for an alternative to the existing state.

Damned lies and statistics

Official statistics are political constructions with tenuous connections to the real world
writes **Frank Lee**

The notion that permanent state institutions – e.g., the judiciary, Bank of England and various statistical agencies – are somehow immune from and above political manipulation is sadly misguided.

Those state departments charged with collecting and collating politically sensitive data form a new template for contemporary practise. The compilation of economics statistics underwent a profound change when the way that unemployment was measured in 1982. A re-definition of unemployment resulted in a fall in unemployment statistics; but this was not the same as changes in the real level unemployment. It simply resulted from the way in which unemployment was measured. Most governments are keen to minimise the appearance of unemployment, not only for political reasons but also for the economic signals it sends out. Over the last 35 years, numerous revisions to the official definition of ‘unemployment’ have been made, which have almost universally revised it downwards. Labour frequently accused the Conservatives during the 1980s of moving unemployed people on to sickness benefits – classifying them as economically inactive rather than unemployed – as a strategy for cutting the unemployment figure.

One Tory wet, Sir Iain Gilmour, then a member of Mrs T's cabinet, made the sarcastic comment, that ‘now we have succeeded in lowering the unemployment figures perhaps we can make a start on reducing unemployment.’ He was duly sacked from his Cabinet position.

More recently the definition of unemployment has, again for reasons of political expediency, undergone change. One of the current wheezes of statistical manipulation in this area is to count part-time jobs – even zero contract hours – as full time jobs. It should be understood that there are some 8 million of these workers most of whom would like full-time jobs, but sufficient full-time jobs are not available. These workers belong to the reserve

army of the ‘hidden’ unemployed, along with seasonal and temporary workers, both of which tend to drift in and out of work. Additionally, 2.26 million people of the 9 million currently deemed ‘economically inactive’ have told the Office of National Statistics they would like a job, but are not counted in the official unemployment figures either because they have not looked for work in the last four weeks, or would not be available to start work immediately.

It is the same with inflation. In the UK the calculation of inflation changed with the introduction of Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the older measure of Retail Price Index (RPI). Predictably this change, brought in by Gordon Brown, led immediately to a fall in the rate of inflation. Without going into the tedious minutiae we can summarise as follows: The best known coverage difference is

And for its part, the media, with some noble exceptions, is taking all the official bullshit figures at face value, and going along with this mass deception

that the CPI excludes most owner occupier housing costs while the RPI includes mortgage interest payments and house depreciation. But this is not the only factor. Council tax, vehicle excise duty, TV licences are among elements excluded from the CPI which also includes spending by overseas residents while visiting the UK.

Fraudulent

The result of this, since CPI was introduced 15 or so years ago, has been a cumulative inflation rate since 1996 is 53.6% (RPI) while that for CPI is 35.6% 2. A notional private pensioner who retired in 1996 and whose pension had been uplifted by RPI would today be 13% better off than a notional person starting on a similar pension uplifted by CPI. What amounts to an on-going reduction in the incomes of those on pensions, benefits, and now wages, is exacerbated further by

these income groups’ increases not even matching the fraudulent CPI inflation figure.

But one characteristic at least seems fixed: every time a new definition is used the inflation figures go down. As with unemployment, inflation is whisked away by changes in definition. It is not beyond the wit of these people to change the definition of inflation which excludes all items which rise in price. This brings us on to GDP growth. GDP growth measures the increase (in expenditure terms) of the level and size of an economy over a given period: usually quarterly or annually. All investment and consumption expenditures are aggregated into one figure called GDP. If this figure is larger from one time period to the next then economic growth has taken place.

Care must be taken, however, to exclude inflationary increases. Inflationary price increases are not real growth and have to be excluded from the calculations. This is carried out by use of a deflator. Growth is thus adjusted for inflation and the real figure for growth established.

The CPI plays a role in the determination of the real GDP; therefore, manipulation of the CPI could imply manipulation of the GDP because the CPI is used to deflate some of the nominal GDP components for the effects of inflation. CPI and GDP have an inverse relationship, so a lower CPI – and its inverse effect on GDP – could suggest to investors that the economy is stronger and healthier than it really is. In short: under-estimated inflation figures lead to over-estimated GDP growth figures.

This was precisely the method of statistical compilation used by GOSPLAN, the Soviet economic statistical service; basically a type of mass propaganda. But now nominally democratic governments seem to be countenancing the same approach. And for its part, the media, with some noble exceptions, is taking all the official bullshit figures at face value, and going along with this mass deception.

“Over the tannoy system came the latest announcement from the Ministry of Plenty (miniplenty). The chocolate ration was to be raised from 30 grammes to 20 grammes a week”

(George Orwell – 1984)

The British dream – a dangerous concoction of prejudices

Andy Gregg dissects David Goodhart’s toxic mix of myth and dogma on immigration

Sometimes self-styled liberals can do more damage than more overtly racist commentators. They provide complicit, dog-whistle politics to the more strident views espoused by the Tory right and UKIP. After all, we all know where we are with those who express outright racism and xenophobia. Taking their lead, similar views are now being put forward by supposed ‘liberal’ commentators aligned with ‘Blue Labour’ – predictably dressed up as ‘common sense’ and ‘what everyone is already thinking’.

David Goodhart is just such a figure. His recent book, *The British Dream: Successes and Failure of Post-War Immigration* falls into this category – a diatribe against recent levels of immigration under New Labour. If these positions were based on irrefutable evidence and clear logical argument there would be little that we on the anti-racist left could do or say about them. However, his approach is riddled with dubious assumptions coupled with selective evidence. His entire argument stems from the highly questionable (but seldom challenged) nostrum that ‘more diversity leads automatically to less solidarity’. According to Goodhart, less solidarity leads to a breakdown in trust which in turn leads to suspicion of the welfare state and hostility to welfare benefits.

The ties of solidarity

He argues that there has been far too much immigration into Britain since 1997 – and that this has damaged the prospects for integration, as well as directly threatening the ties of solidarity: the ‘moral consensus’ that he sees as vital to the welfare state.

The basis of Goodhart’s argument is the assertion that welfare states only work well in ‘culturally homogeneous’ societies. Has British society ever been culturally homogeneous? It is a myth and a fundamentally racialised perspective. Even so, the link is highly questionable.



Progressives must guard against a dangerous rightward drift on this issue

It is more likely that class differences and the growing prejudice that Owen Jones identifies against working class people as a whole are the main factors leading to the decline in support for the welfare state. The demonization of ‘benefit scroungers’ (often combined with added racism directed towards black or ethnic minority claimants) is the driving force in the public’s loss of support for the welfare state. Such prejudices are buttressed by the Goodhart approach, rather than challenged. It is more likely that issues of race, ethnicity and culture are rolled out in order to avoid a discussion of power, poverty, discrimination and racism.

Most of us, Goodhart asserts, ‘prefer our own kind’. This is pure tribalism and it is manifestly untrue. The fastest growing minority ethnic group in the UK are the children of mixed heritage relationships. Indeed, Britain has one of the highest rates of interracial relationships in the western world, and the mixed race group is expected to become the largest such group by 2020.

One of the consequences of Goodhart’s ‘muscular liberalism’ is that the arguments it proposes actively undermine the solutions that it aims to promote. By con-

stantly excoriating recent migration into the UK, these commentators actually stoke up the tensions that cause division – which is then used as evidence of the problem. The cure becomes the cause of the problem.

Unrepresented

Goodhart tries an even more bizarre approach, arguing that levels of racism are greatly exaggerated and that ‘there is little evidence to suggest that if newspapers reported immigration stories in a more neutral way that opinion would be significantly more favourable’. Characteristically, he fails to offer evidence for these conclusions. Even more astonishingly, he appears to argue that a hostile press actually helps the situation: ‘the tabloid press is often blamed for fanning prejudice but its bluntness may also have acted as a psychological safety valve for those who feel unrepresented by the mainly liberal political class’. Those targeted by the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express* are unlikely to see it this way.

There are two further allied positions that Goodhart and other ‘liberal’ commentators have developed. The first is the notion that things have changed so much for

the better in the UK that we are now living in a largely post-race and post-racism world where the old struggles for equality and against discrimination no longer make sense.

The second is the attempt to drive a wedge between, on the one hand the longer settled Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities (many from the first period of migration – the ‘Windrush generation’ – largely from the ‘New Commonwealth’ and their offspring - who settled here before the late 1990s), and on the other hand recent arrivals including refugees, asylum seekers and EU migrants often from countries that had no history of British colonial subjection.

Goodhart has gone on record in the *Evening Standard* as welcoming the Government’s recent travelling billboard campaign suggesting that illegal migrants turn themselves in: ‘indicating to people through these billboards that the Government is not ignoring the problem will reassure many more Londoners than it scares.’ But the evidence is that the clamp down has exacerbated tensions and has impacted on all black and minority ethnic communities regardless of their length of settlement in the UK. Doreen Lawrence in the *Daily Mail* has attested that recent immigration raids have clearly targeted ‘people of colour’ and rely on ‘racial profiling’ and it has prompted outrage across local communities.

Goodhart frequently makes the cardinal error of assuming a causal connection when none exists or confuses cause and effect. He refuses to engage with evidence showing that migrants actually make a net contribution to society. They pay more in taxes and take less out in welfare and benefits, rent homes and buy goods which keep businesses running in the meantime. They care for the older generation while using NHS services less than average. Indeed, many EU migrants return to their countries for medical or dental care – despite being labelled ‘health tourists’.

Increasing attempts to control migration are causing serious damage to UK universities, not to mention the ability of public services to recruit sufficient skilled personnel. Food processing, farming and many other labour intensive industries would be unviable without migrant workers, and this situation is likely to continue.

Recent figures from the Office for Budget Responsibility warned that Britain needs to continue to welcome hundreds of thousands of new migrant workers every year in order to keep public finances stable over the next fifty years. ‘Overall migration has a positive impact on the sustainability of public finances’ says the OBR, without a hint of qualification.

Deprivation, not diversity

Recent research by the University of Manchester directly challenges the view that more diversity means less cohesion and solidarity. The key finding of the Manchester research is that it is deprivation, not diversity, which is linked with poor physical and mental health, low social cohesion and race discrimination. The research shows that ethnically diverse areas are actually happier, healthier and less discriminatory. Goodhart makes much of the option of ‘white flight’ – how-

The real danger is that these deficiencies in Goodhart’s argument will be ignored by the Labour Party front bench in the rush to embrace a ‘common sense’ justification

ever most of the evidence he puts forward is from the US and is not applicable to the UK.

Diversity is actually associated with higher social cohesion and greater tolerance, not the other way around. The fear of migrants tends to diminish in mixed communities where there is real experience of living together, with all its complications. This chimes with the observation that it is the least diverse areas are those who are most hostile – all of which suggests an entirely different approach.

The book also contains the lazy suggestion that there are such things as ‘good’ and ‘bad’ migrant communities. The good ones are those he claims have had less problems integrating and who have come from more prosperous backgrounds. The bad ones – Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Somali - are constantly mentioned in this context: ‘often from rural areas and with generally low levels of education and poor or non-existent English’. They also just happen to be Muslim communities, which panders to yet another stereotype.

He consistently fails to have any analysis of the role of deprivation, poverty and social class. The effects of racism and discrimination are edited out of the picture – indeed they are somehow seen as illegitimate attempts by black and minority ethnic communities to claim victimhood.

A book that purports to discuss post-war immigration should surely have something to say about the key concept of institutional racism, the Stephen Lawrence case and the MacPherson Inquiry, which has dominated much of the discourse since the early 1990s. In 340 pages, Goodhart gives these key issues just a couple of sentences. He fails to address the notion of institutional or structural racism but caricatures it as ‘a new, more subjective definition of racism’, by which he presumably means that the police are now instructed to record an incident as racist if one or more of the participants insists that it is.

Confuses cause and effect

The book makes much of an extended description of life in the multicultural London Borough of Merton, where he identifies that poor whites ‘are doing the worst of the lot’ as the consequence of immigration. For Goodhart, this class of people have largely opted out. In fact, as many commentators (including Jonathan Portes) have pointed out, this not only bears little resemblance to the reality in Merton, but it again confuses cause and effect. As Portes says: ‘to put it bluntly, if you’re going to be white, British and poor, all the statistical evidence suggests you’d be better off being born in Merton – or anywhere else in London, surrounded by immigrants - than in the mostly white areas where education outcomes, in particular, are worse.’

Goodhart’s views, leading to the predictable conclusion that migration must be drastically cut by any means necessary, are highly questionable, misleading and thin on evidence. The real danger is that these deficiencies in Goodhart’s argument will be ignored by the Labour Party front bench in the rush to embrace a ‘common sense’ justification: a supposedly left version of the right wing mantra that immigrants are somehow the cause of the many problems Britain currently faces.

John McGrother and Keith Savage from Buxton Labour Party question Labour’s backing for a £50bn ‘white elephant’

High-Speed 2 – more capital spending for the capital?

The proposal for High-Speed 2 (HS2) came from Andrew Adonis near the end of the last Labour government. Broadly speaking the plan to speed up the rail links from London to Birmingham (by 2026) and then to Manchester and Leeds (by 2032) has enjoyed cross-party support in Westminster. Some northern city councils – such as Manchester - and the new Labour administration for Derbyshire County Council (DCC) are amongst those to throw their weight behind the project.

As consultation meetings are scheduled for the autumn and winter, a recent report to the DCC Cabinet argued: ‘The Government’s proposal for the development of HS2 is a major national scheme that is seen as an engine for growth that will help to regenerate the economy of the north of England. The proposals are likely to generate a significant range of economic benefits for Derbyshire and its surrounding cities’.

Unsurprisingly some of those outside the urban, economic centres are less persuaded. Why would you want someone speeding through your garden without you getting any real compensation? As the cost of HS2 is now estimated at £42.6bn (let’s call it £50bn and be done with it) we are entitled to question the business case – and the implications for regional equity - in this proposed spending.

Natascha Engel, Labour MP for North East Derbyshire and seemingly at odds with her County comrades has put it this way: ‘The Government has shown a complete lack of understanding about people’s lives and communities that were blighted from the day the proposed route was published. Even though nothing will happen in North East Derbyshire for 20 years houses can’t be sold, businesses are affected and regeneration projects such as the Chesterfield Canal Trust are facing an uncertain future. It is not a case of not in my backyard but through the house and village in which people have lived for generations. They do not benefit from HS2 and the train does not even

stop in Derbyshire.’

Part of the case for HS2 is that it will deal with a coming crisis of capacity on the rail network – it is argued, and the argument seems to prevail, that the network can’t cope with the amount of traffic forecast over the next twenty years. Maria Eagle speaking for Labour nationally evidently agrees. In fact much of the rail network is, of course, under-utilised. The overall network capability, however, is constrained by a relatively small number of ‘hot-spots’ and these effectively dictate the volume of traffic and the efficient operation of the network as a whole.



HS2 looks to set to benefit one region at the expense of others

These ‘hot-spots’ are well-known in the industry and are hardly new. Some are line junctions (that is not stations) like Ardwick Junction, south of Manchester Piccadilly. Some are effectively passenger junctions – Clapham Junction station in south London is less of a track junction and is more a cusp of many parallel lines. Some are both – like Birmingham New Street and Leeds stations. Others are simply bottlenecks, like Digs Well Viaduct, where the East Coast Mainline is constrained from four lines down to two.

It follows, though, that investment that addresses these ‘hot-spots’ can have particularly good returns in terms of efficiency and

capacity – and capacity (rather than speed) is the key to providing frequent and reliable train services.

The Public Accounts Committee has now started to point out the weaknesses of the HS2 business case, and it is becoming evident that far greater value for money could be gained by investing a smallish fraction of the projected £50bn in well-targeted enhancements for the existing network. Longer trains can add capacity to the network without stressing timetables – so in some instances platforms would need lengthening.

Some stations might be enhanced by adding offline platforms or separate through-lines to reduce platform-blocking and help timetable extra trains. The capacity of complex junctions could be increased by installing wider-radius signalling and train management systems, and in some cases reconfiguring track. Such targeted investment would represent better value for money and allow some of the billions of capital spending envisaged for the HS2 project to be spent elsewhere.

The claim that HS2 will be of benefit to the regions beyond London and the south-east is clearly bogus. If, however, HS2 goes ahead it will consume resources that might be used to relieve the known ‘hot-spots’ that might make a difference to regional links and capacity. The existing strategy focusses very much on enhancing travel across regions rather than within them – indeed this has been the focus for the last 50 years or so. Local and regional transport needs investment if it is to do its job – under-investment has resulted in many regional services that aren’t capable of providing reliable services.

At a time when it is forecast that Network Rail will be managing the interest payments on debts amounting to £50bn by 2020, going ahead with the outlined investment in HS2 would simply compound the regional and local issues. The overwhelming majority of investment will be directed to the south-east, leaving an expensive white elephant that is not properly integrated into a national transport network.

Keeping the flame alight in exile

Nigel Watt on quarrels and frustrations



EXTERNAL MISSION: THE ANC IN EXILE
Stephen Ellis (Hurst, £20)

In 1960, as the apartheid regime tightened its grip, the already long established African National Congress (ANC) decided to set up an external mission led by Oliver Tambo which could make the case for liberation away from the risks and suppression of black political activity inside South Africa. Apart from the challenge to its very existence, the ANC had to make difficult choices.

Nelson Mandela took the decision to work closely with the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the intertwined relationship with ANC influenced these choices, notably the decision to create a military wing, MK, and to prepare for armed struggle. Most of the leaders of the SACP were from racial minorities, many bringing ideas and ideology from Europe. The USSR was the ANC/SACP's greatest supporter and role model (though Sweden donated more money).

This book records the internal quarrels and frustrations within the ANC as well as its successes and failures during the 30 years of exile. Training camps were set up in several countries: apart from ethnic tensions, the young fighters were keen to go and fight before it was wise to do so (and in 1967 when a group went into Rhodesia they were butchered). After the Soweto uprising in 1976 many young people imbued with the ideas of Black Consciousness wanted to join MK. They found it hard to adjust to the ideology and a result of this (and of the genuine fear of infiltration) the ANC created a ferocious system of internal security with help from the East German Stasi. When members tried to raise criticisms they were ignored, ostracised and sometimes killed.

Joe Slovo and Chris Hani were greatly impressed by the way the population had been mobilised for liberation in Vietnam, but the ANC could never really replicate this. The most successful military operation, Vula, was launched secretly in 1987 when at the same time steps were being taken towards negotiation led by Thabo Mbeki. When Vula was exposed, the armed struggle was called off. Things then moved quickly: De

Klerk had replaced P.W.Botha and in 1990 the ANC was unbanned and Mandela released.

Stephen Ellis' book provides a readable, detailed and well-researched account of these events, though I would have liked to have his final assessments of the role of Oliver Tambo and other leading personalities. If you read nothing else, I would strongly recommend his brilliant final chapter entitled "Perspectives". He concludes that in the event the struggle was mainly between the apartheid state and the suffering majority who knew little about the ANC - the media never mentioned Mandela or the ANC and there was no internet in those days. The armed struggle did not in the end have much direct effect but it provided heroes and martyrs and raised the ANC's profile.

The final triumph of the ANC was more the result of the success of the external mission in convincing the outside world that it was the true voice of the people of South Africa, so that the various Anti-Apartheid Movements and the International Defence and Aid Fund - and many governments - could campaign for Mandela's release and learn about the evils of apartheid - and none of the 'dirty linen' was revealed.

The changes in the global context played a big part: the USSR under Gorbachev first reduced support, then disappeared. This

freed the USA from seeing South Africa as a bulwark against communism and it began to put pressure on De Klerk. Financial institutions began to disinvest. The iconic image of Mandela and the widespread disgust at the concept of apartheid added to the mix.

Once De Klerk had announced free elections he lost control of the narrative and Mandela's release helped the ANC position itself to be seen as the only real liberation movement and thus easily to win the 1994 elections.

In power it is showing some of the weaknesses it had in exile. It tends to be intolerant of criticism. There is corruption (the apartheid regime set a bad example). It imagines it can stay in power for ever - it is true that people criticise the government's failures but still love it as their own liberation movement. It gives little credit to others who struggled hard for liberation (UDF, Black Consciousness, AZAPO, PAC, the Anti-Apartheid movements).

The SACP lost influence after the return from exile and, to the regret of many, the ANC in government has to date created a very unequal society, far from its socialist origins, but democracy and the rule of law seem fairly well entrenched - we have to thank Mandela, Tambo and other heroes for the fact that South Africa is a much better place than it was under apartheid.

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Universalism should rule OK

Rory O'Kelly on reforming the welfare state

THE CASE FOR UNIVERSALISM
Mike Danson, Robin McAlpine, Paul Spicker and Willie Sullivan

ABOLISHING WANT IN A SOCIAL STATE
Kate Bell
Centre for Labour and Social Studies (both from CLASS) (Free)

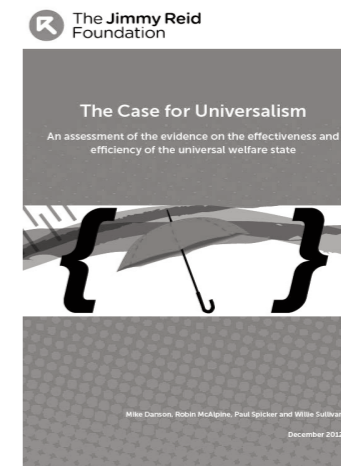
Some goals are only achieved as side-effects from seeking something else. Happiness is the classic example. Another would be efficiency. Organisations become efficient when the people in them believe in what they are doing and try to do it better. Sad experience in the public sector shows that efficiency drives and the quest for 'efficiency savings' are wholly self-defeating.

The relief of poverty is somewhat similar. Tackling poverty by identifying poor individuals and giving them money does not work. Such means-tested systems are administratively complex, prone to error and abuse, stigmatising and, above all, so unpopular both with those who pay for them and those who receive them that it is politically impossible to set payments at a realistic level.

By contrast, societies which address poverty indirectly by pursuing an egalitarian strategy (including progressive taxation) and setting mechanisms in place to address or compensate for the structural causes of poverty (old age, sickness, disability, unemployment, large numbers of children etc) reduce poverty. The evidence for this is so undeniable that Danson et al struggle to find anything new to say in their generally clear and compelling summary of the case for universalism.

The reader gets a sense of frustration that it is still necessary to make these arguments. Why are our governing classes still so committed to means-testing despite its manifest failure? It is perhaps a sort of addiction. Like many drugs, means-testing seems to solve all your problems when you first take it. You then find you need larger and larger doses to get the same effects until eventually it brings no benefits but you have to carry on doing it because the withdrawal symptoms are so horrific if you stop.

There are a few extra points which the authors could have made. They scarcely mention housing, though the shift from a



policy of providing housing to a policy of subsidising rents, and the destruction of social housing, is perhaps the clearest example in this country of the disastrous consequences of the shift from universalism to selectivism. It is depressing, and scarcely credible, that the Labour leadership is still supporting the sale of council houses at a discount.

They also fail to consider benefits paid through the tax system. It is a paradox that while the Liberal Democrats (in particular) turn against universal benefits they still favour large increases in the personal tax allowance. This is a benefit which is regressive at the top and bottom ends of the income scale but otherwise universal.

Increasing tax allowances and freezing child benefit transfers money from families with children to the childless. If this were a deliberate policy it would be possible to argue rationally about it. It seems however to be happening almost by accident, because those responsible have 'benefits' in one mental box and 'tax allowances' in another.

Kate Bell's paper addresses similar issues from a different angle. It contains more factual material explaining who is poor and why. It confirms again that countries with good social security systems and an egalitarian ethos have less poverty than others like the UK. There is much useful evidence here for people who need to argue the case for universalist social security.

The paper has its weaknesses. Its approach is too static. Correctly saying that worklessness, and particularly unemploy-

ment, is a major cause of poverty it colludes with the idea that this is a permanent status. From the media one might think that workers and people on benefits are two mutually exclusive groups. It is necessary to challenge this by pointing out not only that many people in work receive benefits but also that people move in and out of work constantly.

The paper is also curiously apolitical. It draws attention to the fact that poverty rose dramatically after 1979 but does not say why. In a sense this is obvious, but it is misleading to say that the revival of the Beveridge system in 1975 by extending the coverage of benefits and tying them much more closely to earnings 'failed'. In fact it succeeded and if the system then introduced had not been destroyed by the Thatcher Government we would not now have the problems that we do.

We seem to be much better at rediscovering old problems than old solutions. When Beveridge wrote the two main obstacles to an insurance-based approach to poverty prevention were family size and housing costs. The first problem was substantially addressed by universal child benefit and the second largely solved by council housing. People seem strangely surprised that scrapping the solutions brings back the problems.

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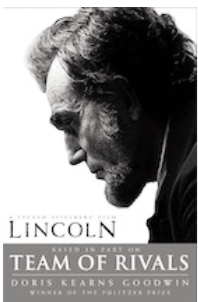
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Making the USA

Patricia d'Ardenne on a towering biography



TEAM OF RIVALS: THE POLITICAL GENIUS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN
Doris Kearns Goodwin
(Penguin Books, £12.99)

This remarkable book has been re-edited as a 'tie-in' to Steven Spielberg's film *Lincoln* which won the 2013 Oscar for Best Film. *Lincoln* was memorable and provided a very focussed study of the President in the fevered weeks prior to the passing of the Thirteenth Amendment to the US Constitution- abolishing slavery- all in 1865.

But *Team of Rivals* needs no tie in. It was first published in the US in 2005, when it won many literary, biographical and historical prizes. This scholarly book (200 pages of notes, indices and acknowledgements) towers over the movie. It uses every literary device to show how Lincoln gained power and then invited his Republican rivals to form a powerful cabinet. The text narrative opens in May 1860 at the start of the Republican Party's nomination of Presidential Candidate, and ends with his assassination in April 1865. But reference is

made to his forbears and successors to complete the story. Lincoln's short, tragic but triumphant life is painted in a number of retrospective comparisons between himself and his team of rivals- namely William Seward, Salmon Chase and Edward Bates.

The team was neither able to prevent civil war, nor able to ensure a promised speedy resolution of it. But, after two successful elections, it did (eventually) win the war, it did achieve the abolition of slavery, but above all else, it prevented the disintegration of the United States of America, by integrating the rebel states back into the Union, without acrimony, shame or unreasonable punishments. Indeed this biography makes it clear, that Lincoln's primary goal was to preserve the Union- for without that- all other purposes would fall. In this matter, as in all others, he was masterful in his political and oratorical skills, his pragmatism, his assiduousness, and his extraordinary personal kindness, tolerance, impartiality and charisma.

Goodwin succeeds, as no other historical author I have read, in zooming from the vast panorama

of 19th century US and European politics, the atrocities of war, to the minutia of uncomfortable clothing and travel, unsanitary residences, the constant anxieties about money, and the raw personal grief of losing two sons while in office. Lincoln is painted as a man of rare talent, outstanding conviction, a devoted sense of duty to his party and his people, as well as a warm and attentive family man. She does not ignore his faults- but rather places them in their fuller context, so that we can look carefully at this person and admire again his extraordinary achievements. She depends on many contemporary sources- notably the ten volume study made by Lincoln's two private secretaries, John Nicolay and John Hay, together with many newspaper accounts and personal correspondence. Lincoln was nothing if not a man of letters. Indeed my abiding impression of this account is how carefully Lincoln prepared all his words, his speeches, his addressing of his troops and arguments and how well he used them to achieve his Herculean tasks.

Strongly recommended.

Fuelling poverty and war

James Grayson on the West's role in development

THE ECONOMICS OF KILLING
Vijay Mehta (Pluto Press, £13)

The subtitle is: 'How the West Fuels War and Poverty in the Developing World'. An explanation of the recent international financial crisis is offered; much relates to trade between China and the USA, especially what is not traded.

The theme is the lack of development brought about by the diversion of resources which might be devoted to development into: the adventures of military industrial complexes, espionage, corruption and hidden offshore bank accounts. Mehta calculates that in 2010-11 NATO spending was 240 times the UN budget. Formed after WWII one can argue it was a deterrent against the Warsaw Pact countries. Once the Iron Curtain collapsed what was the remaining purpose? History records adventures in the



Balkans followed by Libya and Afghanistan.

There are interesting domestic considerations; why are so many mining and other extraction enterprises as well as tobacco companies based in the UK? Domestic mining has virtually ceased and I am unaware of any domestic tobacco crops. The UK is for many an effective tax

haven.

Think about the morality and the expense of renewing Trident. Mehta points out that had President Gadhafi not agreed to surrender his nuclear weapons some of the 'Arab Spring' outcomes might have been different, although he is certainly not a proponent of a greater spread of global weapons.

In a unipolar world the policeman role has been accepted by the USA. It assumes that all countries aspire to become more like the USA yet the standard of living of much of its citizenry has been in decline for decades. We noted an unimpressive result in helping Haiti after the recent disaster.

Those who aspire to global peace, prosperity and disarmament should study this book. Similar coverage is provided by the monthly, *New Internationalist*.

Jon Taylor is swept along



CANCEL THE APOCALYPSE
Andrew Simms (Little Brown, £13.99)

If you like books that take you on a journey, at speed, through exciting countryside and with fascinating stops along the way, then this is the book for you. And don't let the fact that it is about politics, philosophy and economics put you off for it is about far more than that. This is a book about an attitude, 'a belief that while problems are real, not only can they be solved, but we will be better for beginning to do so'.

This book is an extraordinary ride through most of the environmental and financial problems we face today but analysed with such flair and enlightenment that you feel both swept along and informed at the same time. Simms stops at nothing. Doris Lessing and Hawking; Colony Collapse Disorder and Alzheimers; Buffy the Vampire and David Cameron (no, not together). And these are not triv-

ial additions; each is shown to have its relevance to Simms central thesis: that the world is knowable; that we do not have to take the crap that politicians churn out every day; and that extra growth does not automatically translate into extra human welfare and happiness.

Have we become too passive? Today the charity sector organises increasing numbers of food banks. In September 1795 'London witnessed nearly a week of rioting in which the targets were bakers, food wholesalers and monopolists'. In E P Thompson's view, this was not mob rule, but 'a highly complex form of direct popular action, disciplined and with clear objectives'. Perhaps we need to read and learn from history - though not the sort of which Michael Gove would approve.

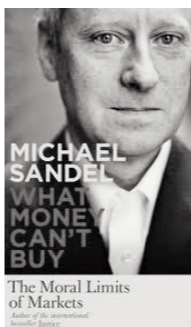
Do we face apocalypse? I draw back from the word as it is all too easily thrown down as a challenge that proves empty, yet the evidence becomes more convincing

by the week. Stephen Emmott (Head of the Computational Science Laboratory at Cambridge) tells us that the world cannot sustain the current increase in population of one billion every decade. Lester Brown (Head of the Earth Policy Institute in Washington) warns of a global threat to our food supply as water wells dry up. Who amongst our politicians here speaks for the world?

Simms is not out simply to offer criticism, nor does he limit himself to the West. He suggests ways in which, for example, the banking system could be reformed to reflect society's needs rather than the greed of the bankers. But Simms also recognises that we need to go far beyond small-scale, local solutions, however valuable those may be. 'I don't want to proclaim single alternative solutions, but rather to propose that far bolder and more ambitious experimentation is vital for survival'. That makes much sense to me.

Calling time on market triumphalism

Pam Morris on markets and morals



WHAT MONEY CAN'T BUY: THE MORAL LIMITS OF MARKETS
Michael J. Sandel (Penguin, £8.99)

What are goods? This question is at the heart of Michael Sandel's timely examination of how market forces now dominate large areas of non-economic life. The Shorter Oxford Dictionary defines 'good' as 'what is beneficial, produces well-being, 'a desirable object or end,' and 'property and possessions'. Sandel's predominantly moral argument is that the latter understanding of goods has corrupted the former meanings in the definition. Goods like health, education, civic responsibility and altruism have been commodified, offered for sale to those who can buy them. This transformation is not due to excessive greed, Sandel argues, but to ideology, the triumph of neo-liberal claims for the power and efficacy of markets.

Sandel, who is Professor of Government at Harvard University, sees this expansion of the market into non-commercial

domains as one of the most significant developments of our time. Yet it has been a quiet revolution. We urgently need a public debate about what role we want markets to play, Sandel urges, his aim is to provide a philosophical framework for such a discussion. He succeeds admirably in this: His account is highly readable; his style both informal and informed.

Sandel marshals an impressive range of evidence, from the comic to the grotesque, to demonstrate the march of markets into public and private life. He uses these examples to question the values and principles at stake. Whether the issue be queue jumping for money, replacing motivation with financial incentives, or the commercialization of education, two fundamental objections apply. The first is that of coercion and unfairness. Although market ideology foregrounds freedom of choice, there is clearly a stark imbalance in the freedom exercised between the purchaser of a kidney and the one who sells an organ due to force of poverty. The second objection is that of

corruption and degradation; putting a price on a good may degrade what it is that we value about it. What changes in the way we understand the sanctity of life when political asylum is dependent upon a fee, or when corporations buy insurance on their employees for financial gain when they die?

Sandel's critique of market triumphalism is persuasive. Less convincing is the solution he offers. Undoubtedly, we need public debate as to the proper limits of markets. But what Sandel does not acknowledge is the extent to which the public sphere, itself, is already bought up by those committed to market orthodoxy. Sandel writes, at times, as if markets had independent agency. This is the myth neoliberalism perpetuates. We need to accompany Sandel's moral debate with a political debate that reconnects the ideology with those who gain from its ascendancy and with those upon whose inequality market 'freedoms' depend.

Outside of the box

Frank Lee
on paradigm shifts

THE VALUE OF RADICAL THEORY
Wayne Price (AK Press, £8.95)

Harold Wilson is once reputed to have said that he attempted to read Marx's *Capital*, but after coming across a footnote longer than the page itself, he gave up. The story may or may not be true, but it certainly seems plausible. Philistinism, political and economic illiteracy are self-evidently commonplace in the Labour movement; and this tendency is on occasion taken to the point of virtue.

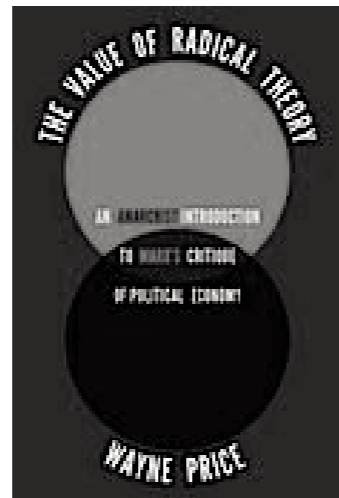
'The Labour movement has its roots in Methodism rather than Marxism' - yes and that is precisely the problem. If the object of the Labour movement is to establish socialism (now very much a moot point) then it must, of necessity, look at the world from a different perspective than its exploiters. It must have a different system of ethics and a philosophy quite distinct from and in opposition to those monied interests which effectively rule society. In short it must have a different ideological/political paradigm. As Marx pointed out:

'The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas; that is the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at one and the same time its ruling intellectual force.' (The German Ideology)

Failure to confront bourgeois society and its ideological legitimisation inevitably leads to adaptation to the received wisdom. Time after time Labour has been sucked into the vortex of the prevalent culture and is effectively defanged and tamed. This ultimately gives rise to abominations like New Labour.

This present slim volume is a timely reminder of this political truism. It firstly states that Marxism is not economics, it is, rather as it says on the sub-title of *Capital*, - A Critique of Political Economy. Although Marx learnt from the bourgeois political economists of his time - principally Adam Smith and David Ricardo - he none the less stood in uncompromising opposition to them.

The author is a self-confessed anarchist, but he has obviously taken the time and trouble to read Marx's texts, and argues that these are not the private



property of people who call themselves Marxists, but are indispensable to any political tendency in the struggle against capitalism.

The work starts with a very clear and precise analysis of the cornerstone of Marxism: the labour theory of value. That is to say that wealth is a creation of labour, and the workers receive a payment - wages - for their labour time which is necessary for their reproduction as labourers, the rest of the wealth is appropriated by the capitalist as surplus value. From this fundamental Marxist category of labour-value and its appropriation, other ramifications which are necessary features of the capitalist system - alienation, exploitation, chronic instability, the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, crises of over-accumulation, polarization of wealth and poverty - come into view. (For more detailed analysis read *Capital* volumes 1 and 3, Grundrisse.) Massive economic downturns which we are now experiencing are not due to personalities,

bad policies, or mistakes, but are intrinsic to the system itself. There never has been and never will be a crisis free capitalism. This side of the socialist revolution the class struggle pace Tony Blair is here to stay. The Tories know this even if New Labour doesn't.

Price argues that we are in a period of capitalist decline and this seems a not unreasonable assumption. But there will be no automatic transmission to socialism, as some of the cruder varieties of Marxism believe. The outcome will be a matter of political and ideological will and struggle.

Also examined is the record of social-democrats, socialists and communists when they have actually got their hands on power. It is not an impressive story and has usually resulted in hybrid forms of state capitalism, which in many instances has been worse than more normal forms of capitalist exploitation. Here anarchist critiques of the orthodox left have some validity.

These mistakes, and, it must be admitted, outright crimes against humanity, need to be honestly admitted in order not to make the same mistakes again.

This is a well-written, concise and non-sectarian piece of political writing.

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A lost internationalism

Duncan Bowie on defending Russia

BOLSHEVISM, SYNDICALISM AND THE GENERAL STRIKE
Kevin Morgan (Lawrence and Wishart, £25)

This is the final volume in Morgan's trilogy on Bolshevism and the British Left - the previous two volumes reviewed in *Chartist*. This volume has been long delayed but it has been worth the wait. The subtitle of the book is 'the lost internationalist world of A A Purcell'. The previous volumes focused on Lansbury and the Webbs respectively - Morgan's approach is to try to weave both a narrative and analysis of the period around a biographical study.

In this volume this has not been easy as it is not only the internationalism of the 1920's that is largely lost from labour history but Purcell himself is a forgotten figure. An organiser of the furniture trades union, Purcell was at different times a communist, a syndicalist, chair of the TUC, chair of the International Federation of Trade Unions, chair of the organising committee of the General Strike of 1926, and briefly a Labour MP. He was also an anti-imperialist, actively supporting the development of a trade union movement in India.

In Labour history he has been obscured by the more weighty figures of Ernest Bevin and Walter Citrine. Morgan is right to focus on Purcell as a key figure as his career reflects the troubled relationship not just between communism, syndicalism and trade unionism, but the changing rela-



tionship with the Soviet Union in the transition from Bolshevism to Stalinism. Morgan demonstrates that Purcell, the long term supporter of Soviet Russia lost influence, and was ousted from his IFTU presidency, as the international labour movement became more critical of Russia as it moved to a more social democratic or labourist and less revolutionary perspective.

Purcell was a member of the Labour Party Russian delegations of 1920 and 1924, though unlike many of the delegation members, he did not turn his memoirs of the visits into a book. He was active in the Hands off Russia campaign of 1920 and then chairman of the Anglo-Russian Parliamentary committee.

As in his previous volumes, Morgan takes us down some fascinating by-ways. He includes a whole chapter on the anti Bolshevik campaign of the American anarchist Emma Goldman, who was based in London after her experience of

the revolution when she wrote her classic volume on *My Disillusionment with Russia*. There is also a chapter on the relationship of the British labour movement with American politics and trade unionism in the 1920's, a subject generally ignored by British labour historians.

One of the most interesting parts of the book is the detailed analysis of the strategy and tactics of the trade union movement during the General Strike. Morgan provides an unusual depth in his analysis, in which he examines the different perspectives of Purcell, Ernest Bevin, Walter Citrine, Jimmy Clynes, Jimmy Thomas, Robert Williams and other strike leaders. Morgan relates the strike to syndicalist writing on the theory of the General Strike, and notes that many of the strike leaders saw the action as more of a protest movement than an attempt to achieve workers control of industry or political power for the working class. Purcell never recovered his role after the failure of the strike, losing both his national and international trade union roles, and in 1929 his parliamentary seat returning to his own grass roots and serving as secretary of the Manchester and Salford Trades Council, the organisation in which he had cut his political teeth before the First World War. Citrine and Bevin moved on to higher things and Purcell was lost to history. Morgan must be congratulated on this impressive study - and on finally completing his important trilogy.

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Cafeteria approach to politics



Dermot Neligan reviews an eventful silly season

Maybe it was my being reared on a diet of the *Daily Mail* that 'put me off' patriotism. The nauseating plethora of tales chronicling dubious abuses of the Human Rights Act and the daily litany of questionable statistics on the implications of immigration, all made pretty dull reading. Equally, perhaps my Catholic Irish background contributed to my aversion to deifying an unelected monarchy. Perhaps being born and bred in a diverse, modern, cosmopolitan city, made it hard to associate with the archaic sentimentality of 'traditional patriots', who to this day seek to justify stubborn colonialism (Gibraltar, The Falklands).

A myriad of contradictions underpins the modern British state. Over recent decades British society has really taken to the notion of 'progressive politics'. Where Blairites quivered at the labelling of their party with the tags 'left wing' and 'socialist', they soon swarmed to this softer umbrella brand that indicated an ambition for positive reform, and liberalisation. Although relatively ambiguous, the implication of the word is positive, and all the Westminster parties have gradually latched onto the notion. An example might be found in Labour's 'innovation' of 'One Nation' that brings connotations of a collective responsibility and unity – strikingly similar to Cameron's botched 'Big Society'.

Thus the passing this year of a gay marriage bill is symbolic of this tide of 'progress', and conducive to the notion of Britain becoming a bastion of democracy and a champion of its citizens' rights. The offering of asylum to the Pakistani heroine of women's rights and education, Malala Yousafza, is surely indicative of a noble progressive social agenda at the heart of both government and society.

Yet this belies a pervading rot at the heart of British politics.

Amidst the headline grabbing populist passing of gay marriage,



Politics doesn't always rock: you know its the silly season when Gibraltar hits the *Daily Mail's* front pages

there is an undeniable, potentially unstoppable, emergence of a bland cross party consensus on fundamental issues. Recent Miliband wrangling with the unions has only further fuelled fears that party politics is rapidly descending into a centrist monotony. Elections will be won not on policies, but on spin alone.

For too long the primacy of tackling fiscal ill health, and the getting back into the black of UK Plc. has led to constitutional debate being hijacked by superficial token gestures like the AV referendum. Parliamentary wrangling has long been more concerned with Number 11 and the Chancellor.

Drift

Even the opposition of late has drifted reluctantly toward Coalition fiscal policy, with red-faced backtracking on the few existing party distinguishing policies. The failure of the opposition to clarify their own stance on Coalition cuts affirms this farcical state of affairs.

Finance aside, puppet liberalisation has failed to challenge the status quo. Core institutions to the national identity go unchecked by the political elite, with no party willing to openly challenge the overtly archaic and outdated features of the Crown and Commonwealth. The sheer hypocrisy is damning – there exists a cafeteria approach where, celebrating antiquated ideas of Empire, the Establishment simultaneously acts as a 'just' authority on issues international.

Recent wrangling over the rock of Gibraltar epitomises the hollow diplomacy characteristic of modern Britain. Flying in the face of

all of the pragmatism of 21st century 'enlightened' foreign policy, a cultural encoding of the defence (at all diplomatic costs) of Her Majesty's territories is both unreasonable and illogical. Bellicose comments from senior British politicians only further underline the shallowness of our proclaimed progressiveness – not a single (sitting) Westminster party would dare to challenge the outdated British line.

The recent birth of the third in line to the throne, rather the press reaction to it, was further evidence of this systematic disjointedness. The epitome of privilege and antithetical to the meritocracy widely championed in greater society, the media circus surrounding the heir's birth was bittersweet. Whilst column after column rapidly exhausted any meaningful information, press attention was concentrated upon a private hospital wing charging £6265 a night. The irony of such lavish expense, at a time of unprecedented NHS cuts, whilst avoided by many of the right wing media outlets, was surely not lost on the British public altogether.

Perhaps we can hope that one party will seize the initiative, and challenge the 'yes-man' politics of today. A diverse Britain needs to rediscover itself – and this can only come from a frank reappraisal of the institutions that reign over it. Political consensus can be a tool for progress, yet the danger lies in a convergence of political parties that is contrary to the varying opinions that characterise democracy. Meaningful debate should not be shied away from; it should be embraced. Genuine progress will be found in questioning the unquestionable.