

# CHARTIST

For democratic socialism

#283 November / December 2016

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## Not fit to govern



**Don Flynn**  
*More incomers*  
**Julie Ward MEP**  
*Resisting Brexit*  
**Peter Kenyon**  
*Last rites*  
**Dot Lewis**  
*South Africa*  
**Owen Tudor**  
*TUC red lines*  
*plus*  
*Points and*  
*Crossings,*  
*Youth View,*  
*film and book*  
*reviews*

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83



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# CHARTIST

For democratic socialism

## 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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CHARTIST is published six times a year by the Chartist Collective. This issue was produced by an Editorial Board consisting of Duncan Bowie (Reviews), Peter Chalk, Mike Davis (Editor), Nigel Doggett, David Floyd, Don Flynn, Roger Gillham, Tehmina Kazi, Peter Kenyon (Treasurer), Frank Lee, Dave Lister, Andy Morton (Website Editor), Mary Southcott, James Grayson, Patricia d'Ardenne, Sheila Osmanovic and Patrick Mulcahy. Production: Peter Kenyon and Andy Morton

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Sweetness and light return to Labour - page 11



SA President Zuma contemplates local election setbacks - page 15



Syrian bombing - a critique of Labour's position - page 21

## FEATURES

- 8 BREXIT: AN OPPORTUNITY**  
Peter Kenyon says it's time to bury Toryism
- 10 BREXIT: TRADE UNIONS STANCE**  
Owen Tudor sets out red lines
- 11 A DELEGATE REPORT**  
Dave Lister reports on Labour's Annual Conference
- 12 GRAMMAR SCHOOLS**  
Dave Lister on turning back the clock
- 13 BREXIT: INEVITABLE**  
Glyn Ford says the Left needs to get real and move on
- 14 BREXIT: NO SURRENDER**  
Julie Ward makes the democratic case for fighting on
- 15 SOUTH AFRICAN ELECTIONS**  
Dot Lewis on the struggle for a new society
- 16 BREXIT: UK IMMIGRATION**  
Don Flynn makes the case for more not less
- 18 TAX COLLECTION**  
Mike Davis on Prem Sikka's scathing report on HMRC
- 19 UN CALL FOR DISARMAMENT**  
Daniel Blaney invites Labour to get on board
- 20 ELECTORAL ALLIANCES**  
Trevor Fisher makes the case
- 21 SYRIAN DEMOCRACY**  
Phil Vellender challenges Jeremy Corbyn to think again
- 22 UK'S BROKEN HOUSING POLICY**  
Matthew Brown reviews the work of the ILP
- 23 ELECTORAL REFORM**  
Joe Sousek and Klina Jordan ask will Labour adopt PR?



Cover by Martin Rowson

# CHARTIST

FOR DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM  
Number 283 November/December 2016

## REGULARS

- 4 OUR HISTORY - 69**  
HN Brailsford - Socialism for To-Day (1925)
- 5 EDITORIAL**  
*Chartist* talks up challenging Brexit and calls for a pro-EU strategy involving members
- 6 POINTS AND CROSSINGS**  
Paul Salvesson proposes a new umbrella approach in the North
- 7 GREENWATCH**  
Dave Toke on Greens, cars and power
- 24 FILM REVIEW**  
Patrick Mulcahy on *A United Kingdom*
- 26 BOOK REVIEWS**  
Jackie Bowie on migrants, Steve Cushion on Cuba, Rory O'Kelly on social security, Andy Morton on ethical socialism and the TUs, Nigel Watt on the Congo, Duncan Bowie on free love, and Hoxha, Mike Davis on planning and Tony Manzi on mapping
- 32 YOUTH VIEW**  
Harry Hayball on lessons from Momentum

## OUR HISTORY - 69

### H N Brailsford - Socialism For To-Day (1925)

**H**enry Brailsford was a journalist and leader writer for a number of Liberal and socialist newspapers. A friend of republican exiles, he volunteered to fight in the Greek army against Turkey in 1897, with his experiences novelised in *The Broom of the War-God*, before leading a relief mission for the Balkan committee in 1903, leading to a second book *Macedonia*. A member of the Friends of Russian Freedom, he was convicted of supplying passports to Russian exiles. Brailsford joined the ILP in 1907; in 1922 he became editor of the ILP paper, the *New Leader*, and *Socialism for To-Day*, published by the ILP, was based on articles published in the paper. In 1914, Brailsford published his critique of economic imperialism and military rivalry – *The War of Steel and Gold*. He was an active member of the Union for Democratic Control and promoted international government and published a book advocating a *League of Nations* in 1917. Failing to be elected to parliament, he visited post-war Europe and became a critic of the Versailles treaty, publishing *Across the Blockade* (1919) and *After the Peace* (1920). He then visited the Soviet Union, being sympathetic to the revolution but critical of the Bolsheviks in *The Russian Workers Republic* (1921) and *How the Soviets Work* (1927). He was an active member of the Labour Party's Advisory Committee on International Affairs. A critic of imperialism, he visited India and published *Rebel India* in 1931. When the ILP disaffiliated from the Labour Party in 1932, Brailsford helped to set up the Socialist League and in 1937 signed the Unity Manifesto. He helped found *Tribune*, contributed to *Reynolds News* and became leader writer of the *New Statesman*. He wrote a number of further books and pamphlets and in 1944 argued for a magnanimous peace with Germany. He also wrote a detailed study of the Levellers which

was edited by Christopher Hill and published in 1961 after his death three years earlier. He is the subject of an excellent biography by F M Leventhal, *The Last Dissenter*, which was published in 2000.

"Socialism does mean a new challenge to human nature, a call to us to adapt ourselves, and to fit ourselves for a new and progressive society.... Change the outward social conditions, and the mind of man, his response to different motives, his morals, his attitude to society, his 'human nature' will change, as certainly as his ape-like body changed, when he ceased to live in trees and took to hunting on the ground. We change with our tools, with our houses, with the organisation of our work. Every student of history knows that the slow transition from flints to electric dynamos, from cave-dwellings to skyscrapers, from hunting to capitalist industry, has profoundly modified 'human nature'; it is only in the heat of political discussion that we forget it."

"We believe that the change we advocate is an inevitable step in the destined march of history. Our hope is to accomplish it without violence or bloodshed. It is not our action which may hurry society into catastrophe – the danger lies in the obstructive delays of men and parties, who will not read the signs of the times. When, year after year, miners and engineers must scan the horizon without hope, when the figure of a million unemployed becomes a normal fact of daily life, when the industries which are the basis of our national wealth must confess themselves unable to pay a living wage – then, at length, the capitalist system admits its bankruptcy. Its evident collapse is a summons to Socialists to act with sincerity and resolution. It is not enough to oppose violence. We can prevent it and frustrate it, only if our own energy and determination give to our peaceful methods an impetus which carries us through crisis to fundamental change."

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# Brexit and beating the Tories

**B**rexit is now the defining political issue of the hour. The air is thick with talk of hard and soft Brexits. In putting the three Brexiteers Boris Johnson, David Davis and Liam Fox in charge of negotiations with the EU, Prime Minister Theresa May is taking a huge gamble (pro-leave Tories are in a minority in her Cabinet). The likelihood of her Brexiteers securing a 'good deal' is zero.

The key to the negotiations is what terms the UK will secure. A 'hard Brexit' says immigration controls and ending free movement of labour trumps access to the single market. This policy is seriously at odds both with the majority of Tory MPs and British big business, not to say the trade union and labour movement.

Already senior Tories are getting jittery. They see the headlines: pound slumps to lowest level ever against the dollar. Leading companies freeze investment in UK. Top companies consider shifting HQs to Europe. 100,000 jobs in financial services at risk. Mark Carney governor at the Bank of England is rapidly revising inflation forecasts seeing big price hikes ahead from rising import costs.

No deal with the EU will be better than the current terms of trade. That's why without free movement of labour access to a tariff free single market won't happen—especially with new year elections beckoning in Spain, France and Germany pushing Euro leaders to a hard line.

Labour with a re-elected Jeremy Corbyn leadership is right to call for a parliamentary vote before Article 50 is invoked. Furthermore Labour conference was right to call for a general election to let the people decide if they want to leave the EU on Tory terms.

In this issue **Glyn Ford** proposes a number of questions and safeguards to ensure the slide towards economic and political nationalism is averted. **Julie Ward MEP** explains why Fabians are wrong to capitulate on 'free movement'.

Jeremy Corbyn was right to argue for the benefits of EU membership on workers' rights, environmental and human rights protection, dealing with tax avoidance and economic development. The former will be the first to go if the Brexiteers get their way.

Other political fault lines for the government will be plans from the SNP to block a Scottish exit. Similarly any enforcement of the border in Ireland is likely to undermine the Good Friday Agreement and destabilise the North. Further, Sadiq Khan is right to make efforts to ensure London is not marginalised or penalised in the negotiations.

Theresa May's proposals to boost grammar schools in England, highlight further Tory divisions and represent a desire for a more class driven inequality as **Dave Lister** explains.

The 'little England', close the borders, scapegoat foreigners, almost Powellite ideology that appears to drive the May government sets it on a path of revanchist bourgeois nationalism. As **Don Flynn** explains

immigration is good for the British economy and is part of a growth engine that the Tory right seem set on breaking. In addition we have foot dragging on the Dubs deal to accept child refugees from the closed Calais camp, a go-slow on accepting a limited number of Syrian refugees and a refusal to guarantee around two million EU nationals settlement rights. With other anti immigrant rhetoric this reminds us why May herself once called the Tories 'the nasty party'.

As **Peter Kenyon** argues Labour led by Jeremy Corbyn with his new and bigger electoral mandate now has the biggest challenge and opportunity of a generation to take the fight to the Tories and defeat them. While the polls do not look so good it is not surprising after months of infighting and bloodletting. Voters do not like divided parties. But the polls can be turned round with a positive united front.

With over 600,000 members Labour is the biggest party in Europe. The almost trebled rejuvenated membership must be transformed into a campaigning and election winning force. Labour can score on the economy, on Brexit, jobs and security, wages and living standards, housing and education, health and welfare. Some good work has been done on

developing an economic alternative particularly around tax avoidance and the HMRC as **Mike Davis** reports. This fresh thinking needs to be replicated in other areas of policy as a priority. Brexit divides the Tories far more than Labour. The Thatcherite ultras want a hard Brexit, to quote Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell 'using the ensuing chaos to tear up workers rights, hammer wages into the floor and destroy public services'.

New Chancellor Philip Hammond has abandoned Osborne's plan to restore a budget surplus by 2020 and ditched most other targets. His plans to 'reset' economic policy in the Autumn statement on November 23 will sustain austerity Britain while blowing a hole in May's pledge on her appointment as Tory leader to want to represent the under privileged many against the wealthier few.

Labour has begun to steady itself. A new Shadow Cabinet is in place, which has reached out to the centre. It is gender balanced with the highest ever proportion of ethnic minority MPs. Corbyn's ten pledges need to be augmented by a clear pro-Europe strategy and creative involvement of members and specialists to flesh out the new politics and connect them with the aspirations of the millions left behind and squeezed by six years of Tory led governments.

The biggest challenge, with reduced parliamentary seats from boundary gerrymandering and an entrenched SNP in Scotland, is for Labour to reconnect with its heartlands in the Midlands, the north and Wales where many supporters have been wooed by the siren nationalist calls of UKIP and the Tories. We must expose these calls as hollow and divisive by providing a credible socialist programme of hope. Working people will pay the biggest price if we fail. **C**

Corbyn's ten pledges need to be augmented by a clear pro-Europe strategy and creative involvement of members

## The North needs an umbrella

**Paul Salveson challenges Tory denials**

Suggestions that the 'Northern Powerhouse' is running out of steam have been denied by Government spokespersons. Yet the removal of George Osborne followed by the resignation of Jim O'Neill from the Government has confirmed suspicions that the Powerhouse idea is struggling. George Osborne, now a back bench Tory MP, has launched the 'Northern Powerhouse Partnership' which we're told by the ex-Chancellor will "bring together business and local politicians to commission research, share ideas, and lobby Whitehall to press ahead with devolution". He added "I'm so pleased major businesses, civic leaders and others have worked with me to create this new northern powerhouse partnership....Chairing this new partnership will now be a major focus of my political energies. The northern powerhouse is here to stay."

Or perhaps George Osborne's ambitions are here to stay. It all sounds very Osborne-centric and a classic case of a politician who has fallen from favour finding something else to do. There's nothing wrong with that but the whole idea of this 'partnership' looks very much like a George Osborne Fan Club, with the usual line up of the great and good. I hope I'm wrong and would be delighted if there was an attempt to recruit a genuine cross-section of Northern civil society. But I doubt it.

Maybe we should create an alternative 'Northern Powerhouse' partnership which is genuinely inclusive? A partnership that represents 'The North' (with a large 'N' by the way) in all its creative diversity. Not just 'major businesses and civic leaders', though that I've anything against them. It's just that they don't, on their own, represent what The North is all about. We need a much bigger umbrella, one that can harness our creative potential through community action, culture, enterprise and a really different way of doing politics.

It's an opportunity staring us in the face. Just as Scotland dumped its victim mentality and went for a radical, inclusive idea of Scotland back in the 1980s, Northerners need to do the same and develop our own idea of 'The North' which is dynamic, creative and inclusive. At the heart of that has to be democratic devolution, not the fifth-rate option being foisted on us by the Westminster Government, with

a few elected mayors who will have less power than the London mayor, without any of his accountability (i.e. to the directly elected Greater London Assembly).

We can do it. But it needs a real debate, not just among the select few, be they business leaders, civic dignitaries or academics. It's a debate that has to reach out into every community, urban, rural, affluent and downtrodden. It has to involve community organisations, trades unions and faith groups under one umbrella. It should develop into a Northern Citizens' Convention that can build an alternative vision for The North that transcends party loyalties.

How do we make a start? We need a loose, flexible network that can bring together a huge range of organisations and individuals – a 'Northern Umbrella', inspired perhaps by Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement (and the fact that it rains quite a lot up here). We don't need more committees, and certainly not more pompous patrons, even if well-intentioned. But something that can provide a creative and comfortable home to Northern-based groups, large and small, might just work. That would be a really powerful partnership that means something to people.

We can't afford to be insular. Instead of seeing Scotland, Wales – and London – as rivals we should be looking at them as friends and allies who can teach us a lot about how to

take real devolution forward; learning from their successes and also from their mistakes. Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Greater London each have their own form of democratic devolution, with each governing body elected by a proportional voting system. In each case, their form of devolution is 'work in progress' but a good beginning has been made and nobody wants to go back to centralised Westminster rule. In our case, we aren't even at the starting post. If anyone suggests that the elected mayor approach has anything 'democratic' about it, they're kidding themselves. It's being foisted on us, and is likely to be an unaccountable (albeit powerful) role which will be dependent on the goodwill of the constituent local authorities. It's far less democratic than the former metropolitan county councils abolished by Thatcher in the 1980s.

A Northern Powerhouse has got to be a democratic powerhouse. Roll on the Northern Umbrella....! **C**



The North will need one at least this big

**Dave Toke tours the UK while it remains united**

The Green Party's new co-leadership team – Caroline Lucas and Jonathan Bartley – are being criticised for taking the lead too much. So says 'Bright Green' the self-styled independent green media outlet. Apparently they are taking decisions themselves rather than go through the Green Party Executive first. Many of the Green Party Executive members evidently believe that each member of the Exec has as much say as the Leader(s). Lucas-Bartley (or Bartley-Lucas?) have recently been proactive in pushing the notion of a 'Progressive Alliance' against the Tories, calling for an early general election and also for a second EU referendum. 'Their approach seems to be an almost vanguardist approach: a chosen policy is paraded out by the leadership to the press first', says Douglas Roux. Sounds an interesting debate except when you realise that it might sound a bit odd if everybody on Labour's NEC said that they had as much right to announce policy initiatives as the Labour Leader. Mark you, there's plenty of odd stuff going on anyway!

### Scottish greens head for independence

Scottish Green Leader Patrick Harvie has emphasised that his Party's six MSPs will back Surgeon and the SNP's independence Bill to prepare the way for a second referendum on Scottish independence. That makes passage of the Bill a certainty as together the parties have 69 out of 129 Members of the Scottish Parliament. But the Greens will be less of a pushover for the SNP when it comes to taxation, as Harvie is threatening to withhold support for the Scottish Government's budget unless taxation is made more progressive. The Greens have said that they want to replace the current Council Tax banding system with one that taxes expensive houses at a higher rate, and they also want the top tax rate on high earners increased to 60 per cent.

### Greens to join Labour?

Jon Lansman's suggestion that the Green Party should become part of the Labour Party rather like the Co-operative Party has been given short shrift by Green Party leaders. That is diplomatically in public, but less so in private. Some have pointed out that Labour's policies on issues that matter most to greens are somewhat, well, unclear. What is the Labour Party's position on Trident exactly? And as for the Hinkley C nuclear power station, on the one hand Jeremy Corbyn said that "Tories have just put up the cost of your electricity by giving a blank cheque

to EDF for a power station that doesn't work', and on the other hand Barry Gardiner, until recently the Labour energy spokesperson, said that the Hinkley C contract should be renegotiated at a lower cost to the consumer. Put those statements together and you get a policy which says something like: 'Labour wants to pay a slightly lower price for a power station 'that doesn't work'. SNAFU perhaps?

### Where's are the electric cars Sadiq?

Sadiq Khan got a lot of coverage for his plan to increase charges for older cars which do not meet new EU emissions standards on nitrogen oxides, but I have not seen any announcements about how he is going to meet his pledge on electric cars. He promised in his election policies that his administration would: 'Set a target of only buying clean electric or hydrogen buses from 2020'. We're waiting on that one! Do a checklist on Sadiq's green promises from [www.sadiq.london/a\\_greener\\_london](http://www.sadiq.london/a_greener_london)

Electric cars are already plunging in price and getting very fast with long times before they need to be recharged. But new battery developments promise to speed progress even faster. I read in the *Nikkei Times* (October 9th) that Japanese researchers have devised a practical magnesium battery. Magnesium is 96 per cent cheaper than lithium and so the cost of batteries is set to plunge even faster than they have been doing recently. <http://asia.nikkei.com/Tech-Science/Tech/Honda-partner-to-commercialize-magnesium-battery>

### Hinkley C: So what's new?

You may be not surprised to learn that despite all of the hoo-hah about the Government finally signing a contract for the Hinkley C nuclear Power plant, EDF is not planning to even start serious construction until 2019. That means the power station will not be up and running until at least 2026, even if all went well, which it won't of course (it never has done with nuclear power in the UK!).

Basically, despite recurrent headlines about this or that agreement and 'breakthrough', absolutely nothing of any consequence has changed about the contract in the three years since the 'agreement' was originally 'agreed' between the Government and EDF in 2013. Meanwhile, however, the cost of renewables has continued to fall. Now even offshore windfarms, never mind onshore windfarms and solar farms, are being given contracts to sell power for a lot less (and for a lot less long) than the price that has been awarded to EDF for Hinkley C. **C**



UK Green Party Co-leaders Jonathan Bartley and Caroline Lucas MP taking flak for exercising leadership

If you're interested email [paul@hannahmitchell.org.uk](mailto:paul@hannahmitchell.org.uk) or tweet to @NorthernNetwork  
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LABOUR

# Burying free market Toryism

With a snap election in prospect, **Peter Kenyon** suggests a way forward for Labour

Labour people have spoken. Jeremy Corbyn has an even stronger mandate. His supporters have shown superior organisational capacity. Now, what? Corbyn's broad-church shadow cabinet Mark II is landing blows on the Tories. But the public is still disinclined to trust Labour. How can that be?

For Labour to have any hope of unseating the Tories and form the next government, it has to shift public opinion pretty damn quick. Its prime target has to be through Brexit. The result of the EU referendum stands – no question. However, it is becoming obvious to this correspondent that calling the referendum was a monumental mistake by former Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron. Regrettably, the majority of voters don't seem to see it in those terms. Nor more worryingly do some Labour MPs. On the positive side, there are straws in the wind, three months on, public opinion about Brexit is wavering. Sterling's collapse is having an impact, not just on prices but public sentiment. Rocketing costs of holidays abroad, and rising petrol prices at the pumps are too easily blamed on those nasty bankers and greedy multinationals. So far the Conservatives and their new leader are getting off 'scot-free' (as indeed the reduced UK will be if Scottish first minister, Nicola Sturgeon, has her way).

Labour's job in Parliament is to calmly prepare the Tories for burial by the electorate. That can't be achieved by wasting time trying to seek the best Brexit deal. The best deal is to Remain. A cunning plan is need to encourage enough Tories to agree, thus depriving Conservative Prime Minister Theresa May of her slender majority in the House of Commons.

Her Party Conference speech setting a date for invoking Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty activating the UK's withdrawal from the EU was her 'Black Wednesday' moment.

Responsibility for every company announcement of job losses, transfers out of the UK, investment plan shelved has to be laid firmly on May's shoulders and

those of the Conservative Party. Unlike in 1992, when Labour in opposition relied on the mainstream media (MSM) to get across its message – you can't trust the Tories with the economy – Corbyn and Labour Party HQ will need to mobilise its 600,000 plus members to shift public opinion faster.

Brexit is just the latest in a long list of Conservative blunders that are impoverishing the majority of Britons. A massive public re-education programme is needed to open the eyes of at least five million extra people to vote and vote Labour in the next General Election, or switch their vote to Labour. Under first past the post (FPTP) voting for Westminster Parliaments, there is scope for a 'Progressive Alliance' to form the next government as discussed elsewhere in this issue of *Chartist*. That risks detracting from the urgent work of the moment – creating the messages

**The Conservative Brexiteers need to be forced to admit the costs for most people of their reckless gamble. The options need to be narrowed through public discourse so voters can see unequivocally that the best option is Remain**

that will help family, friends, and neighbours change the political weather.

Some awkward truths have to be acknowledged. Jeremy Corbyn is seen by too many people as a 'bogey-man', just as 'socialism' remains anathema to many. The fact that the UK has enjoyed the benefits of socialist healthcare for over three generations has simply passed over the heads of the vast majority of voters. Britons are engaged in a nation-wide cutting off-nose-to-spite-face exercise. Most support policies advocated by Labour until they discover err....they are Labour policies, or worse, Corbyn policies...aghhhh.

It is doubtful whether, even in polite conversation, those 'truths' can be confronted and overcome by Labour supporters. Conversational experiments suggest that reframing Labour's mission, as Corbyn is doing, referenc-

ing re-nationalising the NHS, restoring good free education for all, ensuring more secure employment and affordable housing – the sorts of rights his generation and mine enjoyed resonates well. Yes, rights – not privileges. Though in the light of how governments have behaved in recent years that is how universal health care, housing and education are too readily perceived. Former Tory Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher spawned the rot by reintroducing the household spending model into national political dialogue – private sector spending good/private sector spending bad, government has to live within its means. Then she sugared the poison pill with 'Right to Buy' - an assault on affordable/council housing which has continued relentlessly ever since. Voters loved her as she appealed to their venal side again and again, privatising nationalised industries offering shares to the masses at knockdown prices. So today, with the exception of very modest programmes of new build by some Labour councils, social housing as we all knew it is being systematically sold-off under ruthless Tory legislation aimed at enriching their supporters even more. Conservative cancer has infected every aspect of the economy and public life, finally reaching its heart – membership of the European Union. In a reckless attempt to cleanse the Conservative Party of its own canker, Cameron gambled the country in a referendum. May appears set on leaving the EU. Too many Labour MPs appear supine in the face of that ill-fated vote. Business leaders are not so squeamish. This is the point that business may be able to assist Labour bury the Tories.

MSM is not the slightest bit interested in our ideological ambitions. Editors like good headlines. May's cavalier attitude to the economy, people's jobs and living standards is setting the scene for a possible change in the political sentiment. Her faltering responses at Prime Ministers' Question Time in the House of Commons, an inability to be decisively deliciously portrayed in a very short video clip for social media by Labour Deputy Leader Tom

Watson and her haughty-style satirised by cartoonists such as our own Martin Rowson could be the start of her undoing as a credible leader. Her weaknesses needed to be tested vigorously both in Parliament and on the doorstep. Every opportunity must be taken to encourage doubts among Tory MPs about the wisdom of invoking Article 50, and build support for a Parliamentary vote that will force a General Election as quickly as possible to end the uncertainty facing both the UK and EU-27 economies.

Latest polling by COMRES for *The Independent* newspaper in mid-October found that the British public think a good trade deal with the EU is more important than cutting immigration. May was marginalised at the Brussels EU Council summit the following week. The EU-27 appear determined not to offer any hints of their negotiating stance ahead of the UK reaching a point of not return by invoking Article 50. In the meantime, business leaders especially bankers are getting impatient. Some political commentators rightly are chronicling varying degrees of indifference to the possible departure of casino banking from the UK to Dublin, Frankfurt, Paris or Luxembourg. There is however a big snag with this casual disregard for the nation's finances; namely, tax receipts. The Labour Party is united in wanting to rebalance the economy – banking reform is needed to fund investment in future jobs and growth. But the speed and imminence of banking jobs and functions being relocated outside the UK risks a possible massive loss of tax revenue for the UK Treasury. At the same time Conservative austerity is cutting more savagely into the provision of public services across all sectors. Under the Tories there is no prospect of the investment needed to avert the risk of recession, let alone offer more secure and sustainable employment.

With less than a month before the annual Autumn Statement about the state of UK finances scheduled for 23 November, Labour should be using every parliamentary opportunity to highlight the damage Brexit is doing to jobs and people's living standards. Rhetorical questions should be carefully framed. The Conservative Brexiteers need to be forced to admit the costs for most people of their reckless gamble. The options need to be narrowed through public discourse so

voters can see unequivocally that the best option is Remain, and quickly. At the same time the idea that the economy is not safe in the minds of voters, as Labour's plans are seeded as a viable alternative.

Corbyn's 10-point vision should be an easy sell. It is more reminiscent of the One Nation Conservatism that boasted you have never had it so good, than the red-blooded socialism that characterised the 1945 Attlee government.

The most difficult part of a snap election readiness strategy is the messaging to add credibility to a Corbyn-led Labour Party, while the electorate wakes up to the idea that the Conservatives led by May are not fit to govern.

A chorus of Tory MPs opposed to Brexit because of its kamikazi impact on the economy should be sufficient to persuade the Labour Party shadow cabinet to use its Parliamentary time to attempt to bring the government down. Though carrying the SNP in the House of Commons with it into the lobby to defeat the government would be a challenge.

Threaded through this strategy is a presumption of unity within the Parliamentary Labour Party. At the time of writing Labour's right-wing extremists reported as 'moderates' were wishing Corbyn dead in the columns of the *Sunday Times*. The concerns of those who voted to leave are

never going to be addressed by Brexit, and Labour should be making that case. They are only going to be answered by government intervention directing investment into neglected areas. No Tory government is every going to contemplate such action. That needs to be a key part of the messaging on the doorstep that should be activated now. Nor is any Tory government going to require firms to invest in the skills training to enable local people to secure local employment as and when it is available. As for affordable housing, forget it, no Tory government is ever going to allow your local council to borrow money to build enough Council houses even to replace those that have been lost since RTB was introduced. If you happen to live in London, the Tories claim an affordable home is one costing up to £480K. Doh! How much do you have to earn to afford such a dwelling? At 3x income that is £160K a year. According to latest ONS figures median income in London is £34K. Wake up, people, you are being conned by the Conservatives. Clue? Their politics is in their name. No where in this strategy to bury Toryism has the subject of immigration been mentioned. Why not? As Corbyn himself recognises immigration is a consequence of human activity. None of us would be here without it. As discussed elsewhere in this issue of *Chartist*, we need more not fewer incomers. **C**

<b>An economy that works for all</b> 	<b>Secure homes for all</b> 	<b>Security at work</b> 
<b>Secure our NHS and social care</b> 		<b>A free national education service</b> 
<b>Action to secure our environment</b> 	<b>Our 10 pledges to rebuild and transform Britain</b>	<b>Democracy in our economy</b> 
<b>Cut income and wealth inequality</b> 	<b>Act to end prejudice and injustice</b> 	<b>Peace and justice abroad</b> 

Re-elected Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn's 10 pledges

# Working across Europe

The TUC campaigned strongly for Britain to remain in the European Union. **Owen Tudor** lays down the red lines for campaigning against the Brexiteers

A majority of trade unionists voted to stay in European Union, but a majority of those who voted overall disagreed - and that majority included large numbers from working class communities.

We accepted the result immediately, and turned our attention to the vital task of ensuring that working people don't pay the price for leaving the EU as they did for the global financial crisis. We issued an urgent call to the government to invest in infrastructure, end austerity and boost growth by raising wages (starting by abandoning the freeze on public sector pay).

Business needed the confidence that would come from government investment in high profile projects like a third runway at Heathrow, HS2 and Hinkley Point C. The latter project has - albeit after a confusing and unhelpful delay - been approved, and the Chancellor's forthcoming Autumn Financial Statement could see commitments to abandon George Osborne's damaging debt targets, and switch from monetary to fiscal measures to restore growth, put into practice. But there is still far more to be done.

We need to restructure the way the economy functions: even Theresa May can see that it isn't working. We've welcomed her commitment to workers on the board, but it needs to be based on union rights to really make a difference. And we also need to see a new approach to collective bargaining to raise workers' wages and restore some equality to the workplace.

We also demanded that the workplace rights guaranteed by EU membership should be maintained after Brexit, and a commitment given that British workers would not fall behind their sisters and brothers around the rest of Europe. The Prime Minister and Brexit Secretary David Davis spoke at Conservative Party Conference of guaranteeing the rights we now have and going further, and we will be working to keep them to their word.

Our goal is a deal that pre-

serves Britain's ability to:

- prioritise the EU as our largest trading partner, by exporting our goods to the EU tariff free and without cumbersome rules of origin requirements and providing services in other EU countries without restrictions;
- enforce the highest regulatory standards in Europe, especially when it comes to workers' rights, but also consumer and environmental protections; and

- provide British people with the opportunities to work, live and study unrestricted in the EU.

And finally, we responded to the dreadful rise in racist attacks and abuse which followed the referendum result. Voting to leave the EU, or being concerned about the impact of immigration, isn't racist. But we can't escape the fact that people who do hold racist views felt that the Leave Campaign and the result validated their beliefs and gave them permission to act on them. We urged employers to show zero tolerance for racism, and provided guidance for union workplace reps on how to handle the attacks.

The trade union movement needs to reconnect with working class communities abandoned by globalisation, who in particular haven't shared in the economic or social benefits that migration has provided in areas like London.

We want to make sure that those communities become the focus for industrial regeneration, better public services and the boost to local schools, hospitals and housing that an expanded Migration Impact Fund could deliver - with local people having a say in how it is spent. The Home Secretary announced a pale imitation, the Controlling Migration Fund, at Conservative Party Conference. But the £140m she promised - amounting to less than £20 per migrant

**Owen Tudor is TUC Head of EU and International Relations**



European workers campaigning against austerity

- is utterly inadequate.

Now that the Prime Minister has announced a timetable for the triggering of Article 50, we will redouble our campaigning domestically to make sure working people don't pay for leaving the EU. And we will be taking our campaign to unions across the EU - our fellow members of the European Trade Union Confederation.

They will play a key role in ensuring that neighbouring governments understand the dangers presented if right-wing Tories got their way and turned Britain into a sweatshop economy and insist on continuing the common floor of workplace rights that the EU has delivered.

In the immediate future, just as British unions campaign with others to secure the right to remain for EU27 citizens currently making their contribution to the UK, we will be looking to European unions to fight for Brits abroad to have the same right.

The demands we are making to ensure working people don't pay the price of Brexit are the same as European trade unions have been making to overcome the lasting impact of the global financial crisis, so whatever the future relationship between the EU and the UK, British trade unions aren't leaving the European trade union movement. **C**

# Labour Conference: A mountain to climb

Jeremy Corbyn got a bigger and renewed mandate. How did Labour conference respond? **Dave Lister** reports on Corbyn's speech, mixed messages and unity calls

I attended Conference last year as an observer but this was my first conference as a delegate after 39 years of Labour Party membership. Sunday was largely reports, but on Monday there was more solid fare with the economics debate closed by John McDonnell. Much applause for his pledges that Labour would introduce a real living wage of at least £10 an hour and would become an interventionist government with a comprehensive industrial strategy to invest in Britain's future. Following Prem Sikka's review, McDonnell also promised to double the number of HMRC staff working on tax avoidance and to ban tax avoiding companies from winning public sector contracts. His concluding comment was "In this party you no longer have to whisper it - it's called socialism".

The following day Tom Watson countered this by saying "Capitalism, comrades, is not the enemy". So there you have it. He also brought some delegates to their feet by celebrating the achievements of the Blair/Brown governments. When one delegate shouted "what about Chilcot?" he riposted that she clearly had not heard the call for unity.

Conference climaxed with the Leader's speech on Wednesday afternoon. Corbyn expressed his conviction that Labour could climb an "electoral mountain" to general election success by focusing on "the needs and aspirations of middle and lower income voters". Hopefully he is right but many of his MPs remain unconvinced of this. At least he recognises that there is a mountain to climb, given the need to win back swathes of Labour voters from the Tories in the context of Tory gerrymandering to reduce the number of seats and voters.

Corbyn also made the important commitment to end the ban on Council borrowing to invest in social housing. Further, Labour would not aim to reduce immigration but would put the emphasis on increased funding for areas of high immigration. He urged

colleagues to end "trench warfare", take on the Tories and prepare for a general election, which he warned could come soon. In a strong passage he condemned all anti-Semitism as "evil" and attacked the "so-called free market system" for producing "grotesque inequality". He also promised to repeal the Trade Union Act and, in a stinging attack, portrayed the Tories as a party "funded by the privileged few for the benefit of the privileged few".

It was interesting to note the differences in the responses of delegates. There were clearly many hard core Corbyn supporters there, who responded in an extremely enthusiastic way to his speech. There were also a significant number of delegates who were of the other persuasion who got to their feet when converse views were put. I probably reflected the *Chartist* line of critical support for Corbyn in that I was on my feet applauding him on a number of occasions, but not with the wild abandon of many delegates.

There were also debates on some key areas voted for by CLP delegates: housing, the NHS, grammar schools and child refugees, as well as four areas selected by the unions.

The big issue of Brexit was discussed tangentially in the TSSA proposed composite on employment rights. It included the recognition that 'the final settlement should be subject to approval, through Parliament, and potentially through a general election, or a referendum'. It resolved that 'Our party leader, PLP and EPLP work with the Party of European Socialists and other progressive forces in Europe to ensure the terms of our exit are concluded before Article 50 is triggered'. Now we know the Tories plan this action by the end of March 2017, we have our work cut out.

The other motions were also carried. The one on grammar schools included opposition to any expansion of selective educa-



Labour Party Conference, Liverpool 2016

Image: © Richard Wendland/ Wikimedia Commons

tion and the establishment in all areas of a genuinely comprehensive and inclusive secondary education system. I experienced in this debate the fate of many delegates. I had written what I believed to be a good speech but was not called to speak.

A leitmotif throughout the conference was the wrangling over rule changes. East Devon had had their proposed rule change, which would have allowed local parties and trade unions to interview prospective candidates ahead of the parliamentary long list, ruled out of order. They protested but to no avail. At the same time conference was being asked to endorse a package of rule changes from the NEC. The package included some important positive steps, such as ensuring that the leader's name was automatically included on any future leadership ballot and strengthening the role of the women's conference, allowing it to feed into policy-making. But it also included a proposal to expand the NEC to include the leaders of the Scottish and Welsh parties, which the Left saw as a move to counter the election of two additional Left members of the NEC. Requests for a card vote rather than a show of hands were rejected by the Chair, Paddy Lillis, apparently in breach of Party rules. In the end the package was comfortably passed by Conference.

**Dave Lister is a member of Chartist EB and was a delegate to Conference from Brent Central CLP**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12 >>

# Backwards to the 1950s

Dave Lister on the iniquities of school segregation

I attended a state grammar school that also produced Peter Mandelson and Gerald Ratner! There was a scheme that allowed a few pupils from local secondary modern schools to join our school, Hendon County, in the sixth form and a friend of mine, who had been labelled a failure at age 11, was able to join us. He is now a professor in the USA. However many other areas did not have this sort of scheme. The question is therefore how many of those 75-80% of children who failed the 11+ examination were so discouraged that they ended up not reaching their full potential? In addition, cognitive development continues well past the age of 11, so selection at age 11 also penalises late developers.

Unfortunately the Blair and Brown governments failed to address this issue effectively. They could have abolished all selection rather than introduce local referenda on it. Since they did not do so we still currently have 163 grammar schools across the country with the threat of considerably more being created. What this means, as shadow secretary for education Angela Rayner said at the recent national conference, is "segregation, segregation, segregation".

Moving forward to the present, it is important to emphasise that it is a myth that grammar schools advantage those pupils who are both gifted and deprived. The truth is that only 2.7% of those

children entitled to free school meals attend grammar schools in those areas where they exist. It is also the case that children achieve better in comprehensive schools than they do in areas with selection once results in non-grammar schools are taken into account. Schemes like the London Challenge boosted results through collaboration between comprehensive schools and support from local authorities. At the same time local authorities with a fully selective system have had a higher proportion of schools failing to meet government floor targets than those without one. This is backed up by research from the

## The damage that Gove/Morgan have done to the entire education system in England needs to be addressed

University of York in 2009 that demonstrated that the existence of grammar schools depressed overall examination performance in the areas that had them.

What is needed now, following the unanimous support for the anti-selection motion at the recent national conference, is a broad based campaign drawing in particularly parents but also everybody who is opposed to selection to stop Theresa May and Justine Greening's lurch back to the past. The Tories need to be reminded that Conservative councils brought in comprehensivisation and that Margaret Thatcher as

Secretary of State for Education encouraged this process. Why was this? It was not because of their deep attachment to fairness and equality but because of the growing opposition to selection, which even they could not ignore. Ultimately our campaign is going to have to persuade a significant number of Tory MPs to vote against this nonsense – the word used by Ofsted's Chief Inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw in dismissing the idea that "poor children would benefit" from the resurrection of grammar schools - especially if the SNP are not able to vote on this issue. The Tories are clearly divided on it – for instance former Education Secretary Nicky Morgan said that lifting the ban on new selective schools risked undermining six years of education reform under her and Gove - and it is a clear opportunity for a Labour victory as part of a united campaign.

At the same time the damage that Gove/Morgan have done to the entire education system in England needs to be addressed. The issues include forced academisation and the spread of free schools, reductions in funding, teacher overload and the tyranny of the tests. Education is an area where the Left can really make an impact and we have many in the Party, including the Socialist Education Association (SEA), who can help to develop progressive policies. This is one we can win. **C**

infighting continues. What also needs to be considered is how a Corbynite Labour Government could implement his 'socialist' programme. It is difficult to believe that the extremely rich will meekly accept measures to make them significantly less rich. Harold Wilson's 'gnomes of Zurich' were actually located rather nearer home, in the City of London. Watch this space! **C**

# Labour Conference

>>CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

And what of the future? There were calls for unity from both wings of the Party throughout conference. We do not yet have any indication of what this will mean in practice. But it is absolutely vital that unity takes place with the widening of the shadow cabinet to include some of those who left it. McDonnell in particular has acknowledged that mistakes were made over the last year and it is surely incumbent on the party leadership to ensure

that a more inclusive approach is taken in the future and that more joined up work takes place around policy formulation. It is equally incumbent on Corbyn's critics to accept the verdict of the members and return to the fold.

Chartist's position remains one of critical support for Corbyn and a commitment to party unity. Maybe Labour can do a Leicester City, confound the commentators and win in 2020. It cannot possibly do so however if large-scale

# BREXIT - What do we want and how do we get it?

Glyn Ford proposes some red lines and why Labour's Brexit deal must work with a range of domestic and European allies.

The reaction on much of the Left to the Brexit debacle echoes that of Dick Tuck, the US Democrat, who in his concession speech on losing the race for a California State Senate election in 1966 stated, 'The People have spoken, the bastards'. Yet they have, and there is little if anything that can be done about it. To borrow a phrase, Brexit means Brexit. The Left needs to get real and move on. Conference's decision to demand a referendum or general election on the outcome of the negotiations is not to run history's tape again, but a pragmatic procedural step to force May's red lines to cleave closer to the shop floor than stock-exchange floor.

## Crisis

The EU is in crisis and it's the deadweight of austerity Britain - aided and abetted by its ideological fellow travellers - that has got us there. While the message to May from the Referendum was read as largely more of the same, in Brussels it was seen as a demand for a fresh approach. This Commission and this Parliament may well be Europe's last best hope. In May 2019 unless there is some dramatic volte-face the European Elections will produce a Parliament incapable of electing a Commission President or endorsing a Commission as the waves of euroscepticism and xenophobia, nationalism and scepticism sweep aside the soggy centre majority. For many, having Britain - the accidental European - leave is like being unchained from a mad dog.

For the UK the negotiations starting in April are not about where we've been, but where we're going. These interests are best served by a 'soft, rather than 'hard' Exit. Our job therefore is to shape the agenda in both Westminster and Whitehall accordingly. We want to see guarantees in any deal to protect the rights of EU citizens living in the UK and Britons living abroad, we want to see not just the European

social and environmental legislation transposed into British Law with May's Great Repeal Bill, but surety as to their maintenance for the foreseeable future. We must demand if we are to retreat from the Single Market's four freedoms of goods, services, capital and labour that at a minimum we maintain the first to protect manufacturing industry and jobs. Any credible deal will be far worse than what was rejected in June. Regardless there is still a yawning chasm between a 'good' deal and 'bad' deal for the people of Britain, with a 'bad' deal almost taking us down the road to Tom Nairn's dream - transposed into nightmare - of the break-up of Britain.

Delivering on this agenda will not be easy and we have to bring to bear all the forces at our disposal in Westminster and the wider Labour Movement plus unlikely allies in the CBI and industry. We must look to our fifth column in Europe. We can open a second front in Brussels where we have allies and others with shared interests in ensuring a good deal for British - and consequently European - workers. Any Article 50 Agreement requires the assent of both a qualified majority in the Council of Ministers - effectively 21 out of 27 Member States - and a majority in the European Parliament. Neither the Left in solidarity and self-interest nor the Right in purely self interest want a post-Brexit UK undermining the EU core-labour and environmental standards with buccaneering low-wage, deregulated ultra free market economy, as an Atlantic Hong Kong.

## Our Deal or No Deal

The answer is 'Our Deal or No Deal'. Labour's Brexit team must work with and within both the Party of European Socialists (PES) and the Socialist and Democrat Group in the European Parliament (EP) to jointly establish the red lines that must be met if the deal is to be approved

by them in the EP. The Parliament must use the powers it has to guide the Commission in respect of International Agreements on the minimum conditions that need to be met if they are to expect Parliamentary approval of the Brexit Agreement.

The Tories will be negotiating against a ticking clock once they trigger Article 50. In reality it is two years or less with no extension. Any extension of the negotiating mandate requires unanimity in Council and leaves the UK exposed to blackmail from Rajoy's Spain over Joint Sovereignty for Gibraltar. The fact that the final deal requires legal translation into all the official EU languages, and this process will take many months to complete once the deal is done, also means time is of the essence. In these circumstances the Tories will have Hobson's choice dealing with Labour and our European Allies if they are to get anything like the deal they want and need. To neglect to use all the weapons at our disposal to get the best deal for 'Our Britain, Not Theirs' would be to fall into the Tory Trap for which we would not deserve to be forgiven.

Glyn Ford was a Labour MEP

**C**

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# Brexit - a democratic challenge

**Julie Ward MEP** argues the case for Europe against some Fabians who want to surrender to the Brexiteers

A recent Fabian Society policy paper has several Labour MPs urging the Party not only to “accept that Brexit means Brexit” and to “make the best of it”, but that progressives should “open their ears and listen” to what Leave voters want, and demand limits on immigration and an end to free movement.

Not only would such a strategy be an immoral betrayal of our social democratic values, but it would be an electoral catastrophe for Labour. It is not just that the referendum itself was a flawed process surrounded by fabrication and deceit, which excluded UK citizens abroad, EU citizens here and young people. It is not just that the result itself, a 1.8% majority, is far from conclusive. It is also a misunderstanding of how political debate must happen in a healthy democracy.

Treating the ‘will of the people’ as a foregone conclusion is not what democracy is about. Rather healthy democracy is about quality debate and persuasion by honest means, standing up for what we believe in the hope that others will want to join with us.

I joined the Labour party relatively recently, in 2012, when I decided to join in the fight against the waves of rising xenophobia, against Tory austerity, and in defence of social justice and a multi-cultural and diverse European Union that I want my country to be a part of. I have supported Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership from the moment he was first nominated because I recognise that tenacity in him, and remain convinced he will not sell out our ideals.

However, I do expect Labour to put out a strong and united message on Europe: that any deal on Brexit needs further democratic approval because the referendum was flawed and the government still has no plan at all. That Labour will reject any bad Brexit deal and will prefer remaining over selling out our European social rights or market access. That freedom of movement and immigration are good things that have brought us economic pros-

perity and vital cultural diversity. That Labour continues to be a part of the European Social Democratic movement, and will continue to fight for social justice not just in Britain, but in Europe and around the world.

To do that, all of us in Labour need to remember how a democracy works: when an election happens, one side wins and becomes a Government, and the other loses, and becomes Opposition.

In both the 2010 and 2015 general elections, British citizens voted for an agenda of austerity and cuts. Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell did not respond then by saying “as much as we regret it, we must accept the outcome and support austerity”. They proceeded to argue, across the country, that austerity is wrong, unworkable, and unjust.

**By arguing its case, exposing the government’s failures and proposing a clear viable alternative, Labour must shape the debate, and persuade those who did not vote for the Party to vote for it next time around**

That was the right democratic course of action, and it succeeded in transforming public debate in the country, to the extent that even this Tory government has now abandoned its draconian fiscal targets.

Labour must remember who it represents, and who it must persuade. Labour must stand up for those who voted for it, who gave their vote in order to see the Labour manifesto and values put into practice. By arguing its case, exposing the government’s failures and proposing a clear viable alternative, Labour must shape the debate, and persuade those who did not vote for the Party to vote for it next time around.

The authors of the Fabian paper seem to suggest instead that Labour must always abandon its position at every election it does not win and adopt the positions of the winning side. “Have people voted to Leave? Let’s advocate leaving then...” “Did they vote to end immigra-

tion? Let’s say we’ll end immigration”. This flip-flopping attitude is not that of the Labour Party that embraces diversity, welcomes others, speaks out against the demonisation of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, but the Labour Party that sells coffee mugs with anti-immigration slogans.

There could not be a more disastrous political strategy. How could any voter trust the Labour party if it reversed its position at any opportunity? How could voters who hold Labour values expect to be represented, if Labour politicians go out pandering to Tory voters with Tory policies?

Labour stands for inclusion, openness, tolerance, fairness, solidarity and diversity. Labour must now represent the 48% who voted to Remain (the Labour position), based on the understanding that many moderates who voted to Leave will oppose a failed Brexit, that young people overwhelmingly voted to Remain, that Britain has nothing to gain from Leaving and everything to lose, and based on the fact that the Labour party shares the core values of the European Union of democracy, human rights, and social solidarity.

Young people are being mobilized and politicised by the crisis that they see unfold, and which is likely to harm their future. Organisations like RECLAIM and SLYNCS give young people a platform to engage, and it is important that these kinds of initiatives grow and expand. As these young voters come of age, they must be able to see Labour as a clear voice that speaks for them.

There is another reason for Labour to keep its pro-EU, pro-immigration stance: Britain is already rolling down the slippery slope of xenophobic nationalism, and we all know that what is at the bottom is ugly and dangerous.

The case against immigration and free movement is based entirely on deception. Study after study has shown that immigrants from the EU and elsewhere make an enormous economic contribution paying more into our coffers

than they take out, and that without immigrants working in our public sector, our NHS and other essential services would collapse. “They” are not ‘stealing our jobs’ because there is no finite number of jobs, but a dynamic economy where one job created in one place leads to more jobs being created up and down the line. Working people are harmed not by immigrants coming in, but by public services being underfunded, neglected, and privatised, and by big businesses exploiting and abusing immigrant labour at locals’ expense, and pitting one community against another.

If Labour accepts that immigration is a problem and it must be stopped, then UKIP have won. If the ultimate priority is to stop people coming in, then the only solution is to build a wall, and then Farage, Trump, and Le Pen are the most forceful advocates of that wall. How could we possibly hold the Tory government to account if we simply parrot right-wing platitudes and do not offer a clear alternative? Luckily for Labour, the facts point to the contrary, and there is no need to try and assimilate populist jive.

Supporting freedom of movement of people is at the core of a

social democratic vision because we believe that workers are at least as deserving of rights in a marketplace as capital, goods and services. We know that migration is economically beneficial and we believe cultural diversity makes us richer. Labour has always been an international socialist movement working towards social justice and high social standards, and European freedom of movement has been the greatest tool for achieving that here and across the continent. **C**

## South Africa: an interregnum?

**Dot Lewis** on mounting challenges for the ruling ANC

The results of the municipal elections in August showed South Africa is ‘a healthy democracy’ according to Jacob Zuma. This may seem slightly odd from a President with a track record of corruption, including using public money for his lavish homestead in Nkandla, ignoring rulings by the Constitutional Court to repay some of it, and fixing cronies’ appointments to the boards of public companies. But for social democrats Zuma surely has a point: multi-party politics are on the way. The ANC’s 54% total may seem pretty decisive against the Democratic Alliance’s (DA) 27%, but in the urban centres it’s a different story.

### Lost overall majorities

The ANC lost overall majorities in four of the eight metros (urban areas) as the DA extended its reach from Cape Town to Johannesburg, Pretoria and two metros in the Eastern Cape. It has not taken over though. In only three metros is there an overall majority, and proportional representation means seeking coalitions are the order of the day.

Metro results were seen as the most important in the elections and sent the ANC into hectic discussions on how it could ‘restructure’, get ‘back to its roots’. Meanwhile, horse-trading is ongoing not only between the ANC and DA (28 parties competed in the elections). In some constituencies the Economic Freedom

Fighters (EFF), which won only 8% if the total vote, is taking advantage of ‘hung’ assemblies. For example, in Nelson Mandela Bay in the Eastern Cape – DA: 57 seats, ANC: 50 seats, EFF: 6 seats (5% of the vote). Unlikely coalitions of parties much devoted to slanging matches are not impossible. In Rustenberg (a municipality in North West province, not a metro), home of the Marikana mine, the ANC won an overall majority but the EFF’s 24% share of the vote is worth noting.

One surprise was the revival of Inkatha Freedom Party which made its mark in the 1980s by attacking demonstrations against apartheid. Remaining based in KwaZulu-Natal, it recovered rural seats there – including Zuma’s home town of Nkandla.

The triple alliance forged in the struggle to overthrow apartheid is history. Cosatu’s (Congress of SA Trade Unions) affiliated membership declined from 2.9m to 1.8m over the four years since it expelled the metalworkers (NUMSA). A further decline looks likely as its largest affiliate – the NU Miners, is threatened with retrenchment of some 35,000 gold miners as prices fall. That’s on top of the losses Cosatu suffered when the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU) replaced the NUM in the platinum fields in the wake of the Marikana massacre (see *Chartist* 267). AMCU is affiliated to a small TU federation which supported the EFF in the

elections. As for the SA Communist Party, it is now considering putting up independent candidates in the 2018 general election. At present many MPs are members of both the ANC and SACP. Three years ago NUMSA declared its intention of forging a party committed to socialism – but there is no sign of it so far.

### Suffering

South Africa is suffering from the unemployment, poverty, and increasing inequality which beset countries tied into global capitalism. In addition it suffers the inheritance of apartheid. It seems unlikely that if the President obeys the popular slogan “Zuma Must Go!” (or the National Assembly impeaches him) stability will follow. The urban black middle class who must have voted DA in significant numbers and the working class in the townships and rural areas who abstained will be major players in the struggle to form a new society. **C**



**Democratic Alliance (DA) activists at a pre-election rally with bold messages**



**Julie Ward is a Labour MEP for the North West of England**

# A post-Brexit paradox: Britain needs more incomers

Don Flynn makes the case for immigration to drive forward a vital transformation of the UK economy

**W**hat role, if any, will immigration play in a Britain which, to borrow the slogan of this year's Conservative party conference, 'works for everyone'? Theresa May and her home secretary, Amber Rudd, gave us one answer when they each set out in their separate speeches a vision that promised 'not much'.

According to their view, Britain has been using immigration across the past two decades as a crutch that has allowed the economy to hobble along on the basis of a low-skill, low-productivity Uber-style operation. Even firms operating in high skill, high innovation sectors tell some sort of a success story deserve a reprimand for making extensive use of immigration rather than training up UK residents for the jobs that need doing.

The 'hard Brexit' that now seems to be shaping up as the government's preferred, if not only, option will, according to the line that is emerging from Downing Street, deal with this by ending the free movement of workers and subjecting employers to much more rigorous tests as to whether they have done enough to find British workers to fill their staff vacancies. The result will be, or so we are told, the drop in net migration which May has been in search of since she took on the home secretary job herself back in 2010, but also a supposedly virtuous restructuring of industry and commerce which will deliver more high quality, well-paid jobs to people already living here.

## **Ironically**

Ironically this is the one bit of the hardline Brexit deal which seems to recommend itself to Labourites in the evangelical 'Bremain' wing of the party. Post-referendum developments, triggered by the dramatic fall in the price of the pound, have confused their narrative which held that nothing other than economic and social disaster would come from a vote to leave the EU. What seems to be happening is that the much-needed currency devaluation is creating at least some of the conditions for a revival of the very export-orientated industries and services which support decent jobs and conditions of employment.

With this in mind it is disappointing that the newly-appointed Labour front bench seem to think that this is the right moment to signal support for a rolling back of the free movement of workers. The Brexit spokesperson, Sir Keir Starmer, has made it clear that the referendum result makes this a bullet that has to be bitten and he is willing to sit down with government to see what aspects of the right to movement which wage earners currently enjoy can be ditched.

This sits uneasily with Jeremy Corbyn's view that the UK's borders should remain open to, amongst others, people who are looking for jobs. There is obvious irony here, with Corbyn as a politician who could easily see the downside of participation in the EU single market ("I'll give it 7 out of 10" as he explained to during a television interview during the referendum campaign) is prepared to stick his

neck out and call for support for continuing freedom of migration, and the Parliamentary Party mainstream who seem to believe it can be negotiated away. Who is right in this debate?

Part of the answer lies in trying to think what immigration controls might look like in a system which squares with the ambitions of a hard Brexit. Theresa May has already signalled their main features: tougher checks at all UK border crossing points; a requirement to get a visa prior to entry for anyone planning to stay in any capacity other than

that of a short-term tourist; conditions imposed on the granting of these visas to be onerously high – restricted to highly skilled jobs where a labour market test has ruled out the possibility of finding a suitable British worker.

However, these are the very elements that amount to strictures on the operation of the UK labour market which will run the risk of choking off the opportunity to rebalance and rebuild the economy around high quality manufacturing and services.

Some harsh facts about the current state of the British labour market will help establish the veraci-

ty of this claim. By 2020 the number of people aged 50 or over who are still active in employment will be close to 25 million out of a total labour force of 32 million. With the best will in the world this is not a group of workers who are likely to be working at the cutting edge of innovation in all the new technologies that will be driving competitiveness across the world.

On the contrary, the older age groups are amongst those most likely to have been able to make the low-skilled 'gig' economy work best for

**By 2020 the number of people aged 50 or over who are still active in employment will be close to 25 million out of a total labour force of 32 million. With the best will in the world this is not a group of workers who are likely to be working at the cutting edge of innovation**

them – mixing part-time work with income from pensions and rent from other assets. Frustration with this complacency is

most keenly felt by younger workers who are looking for types of employment that make full use of their skill-sets and which provide a basis for progression across their lifetimes.

A government keen to break-up the mesh of low productivity jobs and build the base for new manufacturing, as Theresa May claims hers is, would be keen to side with the ambitions of youth against the 'just getting by' mentality of age cohorts that have come to think their best days are behind them. But these young people are much scarcer in the UK than

they need to be if they are to provide the critical mass that would truly support a revolution in the jobs market. This contrasts with the demographic profiles of developing countries, where the proportion of the population in younger age groups (i.e. aged 30 and below) is in the region of 50%-60% of the total.

## **Increasingly well-educated**

Moreover, the young people of the world are increasingly well-educated. During a remarkable period of progress since 1950, global illiteracy rates have fallen from around 65% to just over 14% today. At the higher levels of education attainment the evidence is similarly optimistic. By 2020 an estimated 850 million people will be educated to post-secondary school levels, with further increases to reach 1.6 billion people by 2050.

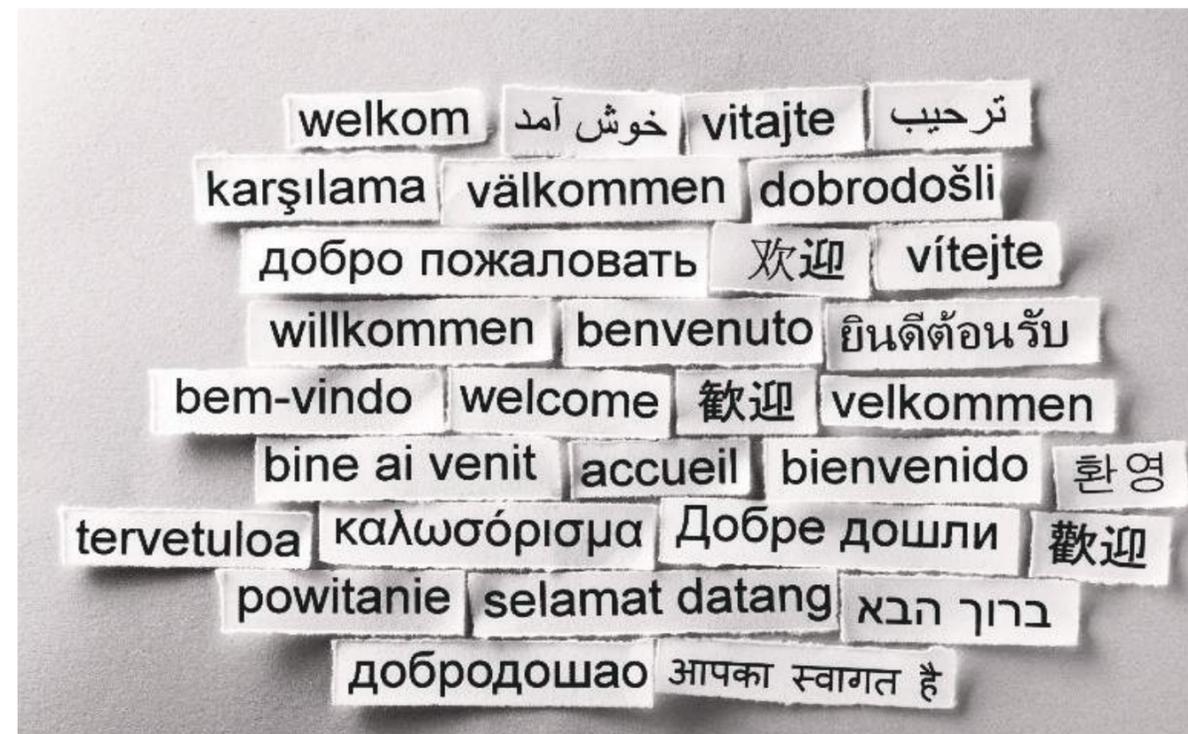
The demographic argument in favour of immigration is generally limited to stressing the role of support ratios between young working age contributors and elderlys. This leaves it open to the objection that, since the young tax payers inevitably get older and become dependents, then the fix achieved through an inflow of migrants is temporary at best.

Where the contribution of young people becomes significant once again is the more substantial and long-lasting gains that come from the innovation and productivity increases. These occur whenever well-educated young people are brought into play within economies where youth and skills have become increasingly scarce. This is what makes Mrs May's repudiation of immigration so perverse: the sweeping modernisation of the UK economy, which she hopes will be ushered in by Brexit, will flounder if it does not find ready and waiting a dynamic workforce ambitious for the sort of progress which might just be possible in the period ahead.

## **Stifle the chance**

What we are likely to see instead is a right wing government imposing a bureaucratic straightjacket on the movement of people. In generating even greater difficulties for growing businesses to find the workforces they need, and in imposing on those few fortunate to get in a burdensome regime that inhibits their capacity to make personal plans for their lifetime progression, the government will stifle the chance of achieving the much-needed transformation of the UK economy.

One would hope that the Labour party would be astute enough to have recognised these facts. In Scotland the SNP administration buzzes with a desire to achieving change through immigration policies which are not only broad in terms of the numbers they wish to see come into the country, but also generous with regard to the rights to be extended to the migrants themselves. The same argument is there to be made in the case of the rest of the UK. The Labour party needs to be to the forefront in making it. **C**



Don Flynn is the outgoing director of the Migrant Rights Network and a member of the Chartist EB

## Gunning for tax avoiders

As the United Nations agrees to convene a global conference on ending tax havens and tax avoidance Labour published the first stage of its review of HMRC reports **Mike Davis**

**R**eforming HMRC\*, the Report of an independent panel led by Professor Prem Sikka, commissioned by Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell sets out the basis for a Labour Government (or any government serious about increasing Treasury revenue from the rich) to boost public revenues and end the scandal of companies like Vodafone, Google and Facebook paying peanuts on multi-million pound earnings.

The contents of the report form a submission to Labour's policy making process; they do not constitute Labour Party policy nor should the inclusion of conclusions and recommendations be taken to signify Labour Party endorsement for them. However, the report makes a powerful case for a fundamental shift of policy on tax collection that Labour is likely to adopt.

At the September launch chaired by Rebecca Long-Bailey, Shadow Treasury minister, she spoke about the allegations HMRC is too close to big business, is inadequately resourced, reveals a lack of accountability to parliamentary committees and has over recent years failed to provide an effective service.

Prem Sikka outlined the recommendations which include support and protection for whistleblowers, challenging sweetheart deals and making the accounts of public companies fully transparent. Jon Christiansen, who heads the Tax Justice Network, emphasised the importance of exposing tax havens, drawing on his experience of campaigning in the Channel Islands.

McDonnell reported the tax gap from HMRC could be as low as £35 billion or as much as Richard Murphy reports at £120b. He said that the Danish government had paid £1 million for access to the Panama papers that had revealed industrial scale tax evasion and avoidance by multinationals. The Tories reduction of the Corporation tax bill to 20% had not produced investment, espe-

cially by the big corporations that were holding £560b in earned income. He pledged Labour would return to corporation tax levels of 2012.

The opening summary explains 'Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) performs a vital task in collecting taxes, enforcing tax laws and delivering services to taxpayers. Against a background of reductions in resources, it has experienced considerable difficulties in meeting the service expectation of taxpayers and challenging organised tax avoidance.' Having investigated the problems, including a loss of over 30% staffing, the report proposes a range of fundamental reforms including:

1. The formation of a Supervisory Board, consisting of stakeholders, to watch over HMRC Board to give it direction and enhance its public accountability. The Board shall act as a bulwark against corporate capture and inertia and be accountable to parliamentary committees.

2. The Supervisory Board should support and protect tax whistleblowers.

3. Additional investment in HMRC resources and staffing.

4. HMRC needs local knowledge and must respond to citizens' concerns. This is best achieved through a network of local offices and staff with local knowledge.

5. HMRC should have a well resourced internal investigation and prosecution unit. This would strengthen its in-house institutional knowledge base.

6. HMRC should offer competitive financial rewards to its staff.

7. Stronger parliamentary oversight.

8. The tax returns, related computations and documents of all large companies must be made publicly available. The public availability of corporate tax information will improve the quality of information available to parliamentary committees to scrutinise the effectiveness of HMRC in meeting its objectives.



**Professor Prem Sikka**  
who led the panel  
commissioned by  
Shadow Chancellor of  
the Exchequer **John**  
**McDonnell**

9. Parliamentary committees should be empowered to examine any tax information, no matter how sensitive. It would be up to the relevant parliamentary committee to decide whether scrutiny of any documents and practices should be conducted in private or closed meetings.

10. The backlog of tax cases creates uncertainties and anxieties. This is also unfair to taxpayers. The judicial capacity to hear cases should be expanded.

11. Various reports published by HMRC should contain information that enhances transparency and accountability.

12. Public pressure is a vital ingredient in transforming HMRC. It should not be diluted by the introduction of fees to challenge tax assessments.

13. HMRC needs effective tools to combat sham. We recommend a rewrite of the General Anti Abuse Rule (GAAR). HMRC should be guided by the Department of Justice and/or a panel of retired judges, rather than by corporate elites.

The next phase of the HMRC review will be a PCS union staff survey and assessment of resources needed followed in the new year by a seminar to discuss the legislative basis for tax law. This work is of vital importance in providing Labour with a comprehensive toolkit to tackle a global problem. It should include Labour in European and UN wide cooperation to ensure the corporations have no escape routes from tax justice. **C**

\*Reforming HMRC: Making it fit for the twenty-first century University of Strathclyde  
Downloadable from: [http://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/57756/1/Sikka\\_etal\\_2016\\_reforming\\_HMRC.pdf](http://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/57756/1/Sikka_etal_2016_reforming_HMRC.pdf)

## UN faces call for disarmament pact

**Daniel Blaney** reports on defence diversification and a missed opportunity by Labour

**A**t the Labour Party Conference, Shadow Foreign Secretary Emily Thornberry stated that achieving a breakthrough on nuclear disarmament internationally would be a test by which a Labour foreign policy should be judged.

This is a welcome sentiment but it was disappointing that conference more generally lacked the very contemporary international context which the Conference Arrangements Committee deemed not to be contemporary –

namely that a potential breakthrough came this August, when scores of nations used their participation in the UN Open Ended Working Group on nuclear disarmament to resolve to call on the UN General Assembly to convene a 2017 conference to negotiate a legally binding agreement to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination.

Many of us are working hard for a world without nuclear weapons (and ongoing multilateral efforts overseas give us far greater hope than warm words about multilateralism at home), but whether Trident replacement is scrapped expeditiously, or the expensive programme continues (thwarting international progress)

only to be abandoned later, the rapidly changing international climate on disarmament means disarmament at home should be considered by all in the labour movement to be getting closer.

What this all suggests is that work needs to start now on defence diversification. Unite the Union committed to this at its policy conference in July 2016 when it stated it would campaign "to secure a serious government approach to defence diversifica-

tion, enabling Britain to pay its part in nuclear disarmament".

Trident replacement isn't the job protector it is cracked up to be. CND has calculated that approximately 11,250 civilian jobs are directly dependent on Trident (and many of these jobs would continue working on decommissioning for the foreseeable future.) As CND says in its 2016 publication Trident and Jobs: "People's livelihoods matter. But an objective appraisal of the jobs associated with Trident and its replacement will demonstrate



**Nuclear missiles: time to talk about disarmament again**

that these are among the most costly jobs ever created" with a current price tag £205 billion for Trident Replacement.

Whilst scrapping Trident could release funds for a jobs 'guarantee' for the affected workforce at existing salary levels, no such jobs guarantee exists within the current programme. Overall employment on the existing Trident system fell by 57% between 1992 and 2006. The Nuclear Education Trust's Report

on future of Barrow suggests employment on the Successor submarine programme would start to fall from 2023 from a peak of between 6,000 and 7,000. By contrast 12,500 were employed at Barrow in 1990. Nuclear weapons are no jobs guarantee.

The mantra – sometimes adopted for political convenience – that past diversification projects have failed should be challenged. The Scottish CND with the Scottish TUC published research during 2016 titled 'The

Case for a Scottish Defence Diversification Agency' which cited many successful diversification projects internationally and identified common themes: adequate preparation, financial resources and statutory direction. Many of the communities have the location and skills base to diversify into environmental, marine, and renewable technologies.

As part of a coherent industrial strategy Labour must honour Jeremy Corbyn's pledge to establish a Defence Diversification Agency, in conjunction with the unions. Its role will be to redeploy defence workers, diversify their skills, rebalance the economy and promote growth not austerity.

With a prospective global ban of nuclear weapons rising up the international agenda, the labour movement in Britain needs to get to grips with these issues with a fresh urgency – hence Labour CND's recommendation that a 'Shadow' Defence Diversification Agency be established which reports annually to the Labour Party conference until a Labour Government is returned to power and establishes a statutory agency. **C**

**Daniel Blaney**  
works for Labour  
CND

# Time for an anti-Tory alliance ?

Trevor Fisher reviews the case for a Progressive Alliance

The question of a Progressive Alliance (PA) is now on the political agenda. Calls for an anti-Tory alliance are heard from figures as diverse as Corbynite MP Clive Lewis, Corbyn aligned journalist Paul Mason and elements in the SNP, Plaid Cymru and notably the Greens. Compass supports an Alliance, saying “thousands now back it” (September 27th briefing). But the idea of a PA needs millions to back it to work, and it is undeveloped.

It is also run counter to the dominant theory in the Labour Party that the Party is on course to win the next election. The leadership contest carried the strapline it was about “the next Prime Minister” and this was echoed at Labour Conference this year. While some Labour polls show a majority of members would back a PA, the conference was all about what Labour would do in government. Yet the long term electoral decline of the Party means a parliamentary majority is a pipe dream.

Labour has suffered electorally outside its traditional heartlands like London. Scotland is lost for the next election at least and UKIP is making inroads despite losing Farage, as the EU referendum showed, particularly in the North East. Even before the boundary review, Labour's chances were slim.

The chances of a majority are not only growing slimmer as the polls turn against Labour but give May the opportunity to reduce Labour to a rump. An early election seems slim because of the Fixed Term Parliament Act, but with Labour doing badly and UKIP in disarray pressure on May to cut and run is growing. An early election would defeat Labour, yet grasping this seems beyond the Labour membership.

But it is well understood outside the party, and the Progressive Alliance is the consequence. If Labour is to govern it

must have third party support, and working this up before an election seems logical. Yet it is also fraught with problems, particularly if the Tories use it against Labour. There is no doubt that fear of the SNP holding Labour to ransom was a key reason for Miliband's failure in the last days of the 2015 campaign.

Arguments against include the difficulties of achieving any agreements that would not lead to public disputes inside the parties – the Labour Left is already arguing PA would water down pure socialism, though as David Pavett has said, even with Corbyn the Party is unlikely to be pure socialist. The SNP would not stand down in Scottish seats for Labour and the Lib Dems and Greens have few seats where they matter, so a 1903 type electoral pact is unlikely.

The net effect of negotiation could increase the fear of unstable government on the lines of the French Fourth Republic. Electors want to know what they are getting and a single party that can form government is attractive – as was proved in 2015. Paradoxically a move aimed at preventing the Tories winning a majority could lead to the Tories doing just that. If May can Hoover up the 3.8 million UKIP votes over Brexit, the mountain that an anti Tory alliance has to climb would grow even bigger.

A more viable strategy than a formal alliance is to campaign on specific issues where there is anti-Tory agreement. Politicians working together on joint platforms, gets the electorate used to co-operation, reducing fears of a post election coalition. Issues where this could happen are clearly the threat of a one party state – the virtual gerrymandering of the boundary review can be opposed by a nexus of politicians campaigning for pluralism. Organised registration of the young makes a lot of sense, as the individual registration system has been disastrous, leading to a

cull of young voters.

The Brexit campaign must unite opposition forces and where Nicola Sturgeon has led on opposition to xenophobia, others must follow. However it is not just anti-foreigner feeling that is worrying – the rise in homophobic and racist attacks is part of the turning away from modern society. May is pandering to this to win over UKIP votes. The battle to block her initiatives can unite politicians who want a pluralistic and tolerant diverse society.

A formal Progressive Alliance is less viable than working together across issues. I once argued Britain looked like Weimar, but the BNP was countered. However the xenophobic right morphed into UKIP and took over the Tory Party. May is pandering to it, and the future is very bleak if it is not rejected – Progressives simply have to work together. **C**

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# The masking of the Syrian democratic revolution

Phil Vellender finds the left silent on Russian and Syrian bombing

In September 1819, Percy Bysshe Shelley, arguably the greatest and angriest English radical poet, first heard the news of the Peterloo Massacre in Manchester. By now an exile in Italy, he furiously wrote to a friend in London. His words still resonate 200 years later:

“The torrent of my indignation has not yet done boiling in my veins. I wait [to] hear how the Country will express its sense of the bloody murderous oppression of its destroyers...”

Shelley, a convinced Republican, knew exactly whose side he was on, as his response, *The Mask of Anarchy*, so amply demonstrates. Fast forward to Britain in 2016, and what presents itself is really another Shelleyan exercise in ‘masking Anarchy’, not for once by the British establishment alone, but, rather by many avowedly anti-war activists from the British Left. Anarchy's agents attacking Aleppo in 2016 speak Russian and Arabic, the ‘ghastly masquerade’ we are watching, seemingly struck dumb by the fearful symmetry of Putin's missiles and Assad's barrel bombs, is the Russian destruction of Aleppo aimed at bolstering the Bashar al-Assad regime's drive to smash the now retreating, if not still fully defeated, democratic revolution of the Syrian people. Yet from most of the anti-war left there has been hardly a whisper.

We do not have to go too far back in history to see the British Left showing the world how to rapidly respond to glaring international outrages. Just ten years ago, when Israel attacked Lebanon in the ‘July War’ of 2006, the news broke on Wednesday, 19 July and, only three days later, 100,000 demonstrators hit the streets of London. Perennial conspiracy theorists apart, many to be seen blogging about Syria and the Middle East, or filling the schedules of RT, most people accept that what is happening to Aleppo is an outrage. Yet it is ‘liberal’ commentators rather than socialists who

have led the way in condemning Russia and the Assadists' devastating Aleppo siege.

Natalie Nougayrede (*Guardian* 08/10/16) pointed out the frightening parallels between the Russian Aleppo onslaught and Russia's very own shock and awe tactics in Grozny (winter 1999-2000) remarking that Jeremy Corbyn spoke out against that particular Russian imperial atrocity. Jonathan Freidland (*Guardian* 14/10/16) latched on to the mealy-mouthed hypocrisy of Chris Nineham, who had told the BBC, utterly without irony, that if Stop the War joined any protests outside the Russian embassy that would merely fuel the “hysteria and the jingoism” currently being whipped up against Moscow, neatly ‘masking’ the Russian role in augmenting the level of civilian hysteria in Aleppo.

## Jeremy Corbyn's own position on Syria is problematic

The reasons why other more, or less, earnest and sincere activists take part in this ‘masking’ of Russian violence in Syria are manifold, but Jeremy Corbyn's own position on Syria is problematic. It was a lack of a coherent line on Aleppo that enabled Boris Johnson to opportunistically fill a Labour Party policy vacuum, one partly created by Corbyn's apparent adherence to Stop the War's perspective, a world view that was certainly very useful in tackling the pressing task of opposing the neo-Con War on Terror agenda, but one which today seems increasingly unfit for purpose.

In essence, Corbyn's position is one of ‘campism’. This interpretation of events by some on the Left in the UK and the USA sees international politics in terms of competing ‘geopolitical camps’. One flaw is that it fails to take into account that America's power has diminished – that the US now has to commit ever more resources in order to remain competitive with its two imperialist rivals (Russia and China) on the



Bombing: A daily ordeal in Syria

Image : © Bo yaser/ Wikimedia Commons

world stage. Moreover, under Obama, dealing with America's defeat in Afghanistan and Iraq has meant American foreign policy (see Egypt) has shifted away from ‘regime change’ to ‘regime salvaging’.

But even more significantly for socialist supporters of the Syrian democratic revolution, ‘campism’, by its simplistic framing of Syria as a battleground for proxies of two opposing imperialist camps, slyly disconnects the Syrian people's struggle against a brutal dictatorship from the wider context of the Arab Spring. In doing so they write off this fight for freedom and democracy as ‘too complicated’, recalling a similar narrative advanced by British commentators opining on the war in Northern Ireland in the 1970s and 80s.

By his advisors characterising Russian barbarism in Aleppo as ‘irrelevant’, Corbyn risks potential reputational damage. He is at heart an activist MP-leader, one defined by his courageous defence of revolutionary movements and oppressed peoples' struggles against all tyrants. Should Mosul turn into America's Aleppo, then he will be compromised, and risk being associated, along with others on the Left, as having helped ‘mask’ Russia's anarchy in Aleppo by abandoning the very notion of agency that he always accorded, for example, to the Palestinians. Agency means that Syrians have already, and can again, ‘Rise like lions’. Let Shelley inform Jeremy Corbyn's approach to Syria. **C**

# Unbalanced Britain: housing crisis

Matthew Brown on a defining issue of our time

Corporate power and our me-based culture is what Independent Labour Publications Barry Winter has said characterizes Britain today. Housing is the focus of a new pamphlet from ILP that brings together a range of perspectives on what it calls the 'defining issue of our time'. It contains articles from three of the contributors to the ILP's 'Unbalanced Britain' workshop on the housing crisis, held in March 2016 in Leeds.

This was the most recent in an ongoing series of discussions under the Unbalanced Britain theme which began in 2014 to consider various symptoms of our divided society.

How 'me-based culture', and the politics that accompanies it, has been manifest in the area of housing is explored in this 20-page publication by Quintin Bradley, senior lecturer in housing and planning at Leeds Beckett University; Simon Jose, who researched and edited Labour MP Fabian Hamilton's November 2015 report, Building Homes for Britain; and Ellen Robottom from the Leeds-based campaign Hands off our Homes.

## Current struggles

Between them they examine the housing crisis from an academic, political and campaigning point of view while Winter's opening piece puts current struggles against the Tory government's housing policies in the context of previous campaigns, namely the Glasgow rent strikes during the First World War, and the 'Bermondsey revolution' led by Ada Salter with her 'beautification' of south east London in the 1920s and '30s – both, incidentally, led by ILPers.

Now, writes Winter, "the hard-won gains made by the early housing struggles are being cast aside in favour of the ruthless pursuit of profit. Many people are

suffering as a result... Past struggles show that reliance on the market alone cannot provide housing of sufficient quantity and quality."

Indeed, as pointed out in the Introduction, "the [current] government's housing policies make matters worse for the majority while serving the interests of the few... This shows something is profoundly wrong with how our society is working: how unbalanced Britain is today."

For Bradley, none of this is unintentional, but part of a deliberate attack by the Tory government, "a policy weapon against the beliefs and attitudes that sustain the welfare state".

"Much of the attack on the welfare state has been about constructing a new common sense view in which the private market is regarded as the only fair sys-

**The hard-won gains made by the early housing struggles are being cast aside in favour of the ruthless pursuit of profit. Many people are suffering as a result...**

tem for distributing goods and rewards," he says. "In this view, it is seen as unfair when people don't pay their way – meaning, when they don't pay market prices they are seen as getting something for nothing."

Under this 'common sense', then, housing benefit is unfair, yet subsidising people buying high-priced housing while getting rid of affordable homes in high-priced areas fits the very definition of 'market fairness'.

This absurdity, as he points out, is challengeable, not least because "the housing market does not operate according to any of the rules of the free market".

"The challenge for affordable homes, and for human wellbeing, can be fought and won on econom-

ic grounds," he says. "But it is really a battle about fairness, about how we encourage a society of care and hope. These are the messages that still have the power to move and to convince."

## New basis for Labour policy

Part of the job of convincing is down to politicians, of course, and Jose's piece outlines how he and Hamilton, the MP for North East Leeds, set out to rethink housing and establish a new basis for Labour policy around three core ideas – giving councils the power to build again; setting up a national housing investment bank; and establishing regional public housing authorities.

Quite what impression their report will make on Corbyn and co remains to be seen. In the meantime, people on the ground are struggling against the worst effects of the Housing and Planning Act and it's to these campaigns that Robottom looks for signs of hope.

"It is clear that the struggle for decent affordable housing is a long-term one," she writes. Indeed, it has been going on for more than 100 years. **C**



\*Unbalanced Britain: Housing in Crisis is published by ILP and available for £3.50 from [www.independentlabour.org.uk](http://www.independentlabour.org.uk)

The next meeting in the ILP series on Unbalanced Britain will be in Leeds in March 2017. The focus will be education and speakers will include author Melissa Benn. Details from [www.independentlabour.org.uk](http://www.independentlabour.org.uk)

# Make Votes Matter

Joe Sousek and Klina Jordan ask will the Labour Party answer the people's call for real democracy?

Working with the Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform, Make Votes Matter is the cross-party campaign to introduce Proportional Representation to the House of Commons by 2021.

With today's House of Commons less representative of British people than at any time since women won the vote, it's tempting to see our electoral system as being in unprecedented crisis.

Our majority government was backed in 2015 by less than a quarter of the electorate - just 37% of votes cast. Almost a quarter of those who voted backed either the Green Party, Liberal Democrat or UKIP candidates - but these parties now share 1.5% of Parliamentary seats. And the result of the EU Referendum must be seen, at least in part, as a measurement of contempt for a Parliamentary system over which voters have little influence.

Indeed when Owen Winter - then a sixteen year-old Member of Youth Parliament; now a director and spokesperson of Make Votes Matter - started a petition in May 2015, it was undoubtedly a perception of unprecedented democratic crisis that drove 237,000 people to sign it.

But in fact, the effects of our electoral system are neither unprecedented nor new. Since WWII, First Past the Post has set the brutal terms of British electoral politics - as it has done in every country where it is in use. Incentivising conflict over cooperation; emphasising battleground constituencies over safe seats; empowering minority over majority. Strikingly, it has disproportionately delivered Conservative majority governments.

Of the last sixteen General Elections, a decisive majority of voters backed parties to the left of the Conservatives thirteen times. Yet the Tories formed majority governments on half of these occasions and governed once in coalition.

Government and legislation by majority - rather than minority - is crucial to real democracy, because it is that which gives every member of society a say in decisions that affect us all. This ensures that decisions are made by the widest set of interests - not rewarding few at the expense of many, but distributing social goods amongst all the citizens.

This is borne out by the evidence. Of 34 OECD nations, the eighteen with best income equality use systems of PR, while the lowest six performers either use FPTP (UK, USA) or face radically different societal challenges (Chile, Israel, Mexico, Turkey). Countries with PR spend nearly 5% more on average on social expenditure than majoritarian countries, and correlate with higher scores on the UN Human Development Index.

Environmental controls and action on climate change are significantly better in PR countries, military expenditure as percentage of GDP is on average half that of majoritarian systems, and a majoritarian electoral system has been identified as the single most important indicator of how likely a democracy is to go to war.

So the campaign for Proportional Representation is a reaction to the sheer injustice of the most disproportionate election in British history. It is also a continuation of the perennial struggle for a better, more equal society.

Formed from social media following Owen Winter's petition, Make Votes Matter has inspired a new generation of young activists to join with experienced campaigners and voters whose votes have never mattered



Image: Make Votes Matter

throughout decades of elections.

It has developed into a grass-roots movement of local campaign groups and mass demonstrations, and built a cross-party alliance formally backed by five of the seven major parties: the Greens, Liberal Democrats, Plaid Cymru, the SNP and UKIP. To overcome the entrenched status quo, it is vital that all who want fair votes continue to come together on this single issue.

The Labour Party in particular is crucial to any foreseeable scenario in which PR is introduced. That's why Make Votes Matter is working closely with the Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform to ensure that PR is in the Manifesto for the next General Election.

There is reason to be optimistic. Support for PR now spans all wings of the party - with support from John McDonnell, Cat Smith, Jonathan Reynolds, to Chuka Umunna, along with union figures and vast numbers of rank and file members. In May, 10,000 people - including 2000 Labour members and seven Labour MPs - signed our letter to Jeremy Corbyn urging him to back PR. Both leadership candidates have stated they are open to a constituency based system.

At the Labour Party Conference this year, Make Votes Matter and the Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform organised a large fringe rally. Speakers included Cat Smith, Clive Lewis, Chuka Umunna, John McDonnell, Jonathan Reynolds, Mark Serwotka, Owen Jones, Polly Toynbee, Stephen Kinnock. The event became a watershed moment for PR. **C**

To find out more, go to [www.makevotesmatter.org.uk](http://www.makevotesmatter.org.uk) or [www.facebook.com/lc4er](https://www.facebook.com/lc4er).

## Love and country

Patrick Mulcahy is not enamoured

The true story behind the film 'A United Kingdom' has more dramatic moments than writer Guy Hibbert and director Amma Asante can include. It tells the story of how the Prince Regent in waiting of Bechuanaland (now Botswana), Seretse Khama (David Oyelowo) fell for a white British insurance clerk, Ruth Williams (Rosamund Pike) married her but was prevented from ruling the country first by the Labour British Government and then by the Conservatives under Winston Churchill (a five year ban was made permanent by the latter). A secret report on Seretse's suitability to rule was suppressed until Labour MP Tony Benn and others came to the couple's rescue.

All of the above, which represents but one low point in Labour's foreign policy, is included in broad strokes. In real life, there was enough incident to fill in a mini-series, including an audience with the Bishop of London, William Wand, who instructed them that they could not marry in a church – the couple had to wed in a registry office. Ruth's employer, Cuthbert Heath, the insurance department of Lloyds, was equally unsympathetic, threatening to transfer her to New York to prevent the wedding; Ruth was forced to leave her job. The period in which Seretse and Ruth lived in London with their first child is glossed over. The film does not go into the nuclear issue – that Britain prevented the union so as not to upset South Africa, from which it required uranium deposits to develop its nuclear capacity.

The problem with telling a story such as Seretse and Ruth's in dramatic form is that it lacks the real cathartic moment that offsets the trauma that preceded it. It is not simply that Seretse is allowed to return to his country with his wife and child as a private citizen – it is that he led his country to independence. The film stops short of widening the story out into one of a small African country taking control of its affairs – oh, if the film had been made a few years after the Brexit vote – and while that makes sense in commercial genre terms, it is disappointing dramatically.

The film also lacks a point of view, being told neither from Ruth's point of view or Seretse's but cutting between the two. Asante doesn't utilise cinema's great power of allowing you to share the thoughts and feelings of a film's central protagon-

ist. Instead, the film concentrates on a shared problem at the expense of authentic moments. When Seretse is introduced taking part in an amateur boxing match and lowers his guard after his opponent insults him, the scene is symbolic rather than realistic; the film continues along this line. The casting of sit-com actor Nicholas Lyndhurst (of *Only Fools and Horses* and *Goodnight Sweetheart*) as Ruth's father diffuses some of the tension in their scenes together – is Lyndhurst old enough to be Pike's dad?. Jack Davenport plays an amalgam of British officials who advised against Seretse's choice of bride; this too cheapens the drama.

The performances are good but not exceptional. For about twenty minutes into the film, Pike attempts a Thames Estuary accent to reflect Ruth's South London upbringing, but then drops it. Her impersonation of a queenly wave, though it is elicits a laugh, is out of place – Ruth didn't have the newsreel footage of Queen Elizabeth II to imitate; she was Queen of Bechuanaland a few years before Elizabeth ascended to the throne. Asante and Hibbert show Ruth and Seretse bonding over jazz and a sense of social justice but the film doesn't have the 'Hollywood' scenes of the couple winning over their immediate household. If you are going to invent scenes, the filmmakers could have done more with stressing how Ruth wasn't like a diplomatic wife living far away from World War Two whilst others suffered privations. As an ambulance driver, she got stuck in.

As for Oyelowo, he embodies Seretse's passionate conviction, but doesn't go deeper into his character, expressing the doubts of a man separated from his culture during his formative years. The idea of portraying an African leader as struggling to understand his desires in relation to the duties placed upon him by birth is an interesting and potentially radical one – we are used to seeing African leaders as saints or despots. It is disappointing that Asante doesn't try to fill this representational vacuum.

*A United Kingdom* plays like a Hollywood movie with its manipulative emotional button pushing stripped out. This will reduce its chances at the box office. It has this quality in common with Asante's previous film, *Belle*. You wonder whether Asante's next project will be a biopic of Queen Charlotte, King George III's bride, said to have African heritage; it would complete a trilogy of sorts. **C**



*A United Kingdom* opens on 25 November 2016

## Borders no barrier

Jackie Bowie on migrant journeys

THE NEW ODYSSEY  
Patrick Kingsley (Faber and Faber,  
£14.99)

Supported by maps showing the various, treacherous and fluctuating routes into Europe, photographs and first hand accounts, Patrick Kingsley draws the reader into each migrant journey.

The dramatic opening chapter introduces Hashem al Souki, a Syrian civil servant fleeing the war, crammed into a leaking boat, soaked and covered in vomit, in an attempt to reach the Italian coast. We are to learn of his progress from his diary and interviews as he crosses French, Austrian, German and Danish borders into Sweden where he hopes to gain "Permanent Residency" and the right to apply for his wife and three children to join him.

Hashem is perhaps the inspiration behind this serious, but very accessible book as the author acknowledges his heroism, resilience and personal qualities of love, dedication, parenthood and dignity.

Throughout *The New Odyssey* we learn of many other, perilous journeys, in particular the routes taken across the Sahara Desert, known as "The Second Sea" for its dangers, where the journey to Europe via Libya begins at Agadez in Niger for Nigerians and Senegalese and at Khartoum for Eritreans and Somalis taking the Eastern routes.

Kingsley does not spare the details of the fate of those smuggled across the Sahara who often die of thirst, are lost in sandstorms or captured by bandits or, if they arrive in Libya, are frequently captured and tortured.

The immediacy of the descrip-

tion of the desperate, desert journeys and the authentic interviews with the smugglers themselves, portrayed as businessmen and women making a living, invites the key question in Kingsley's text: why? A suggested response is as follows: just as "no one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land", no Eritreans risking their lives in the Sahara would do so if the regime they were fleeing from

Are they "economic migrants", as Theresa May, former Home secretary, and many others would have it? Kingsley meets many who admit to fleeing in search of work and a better life.

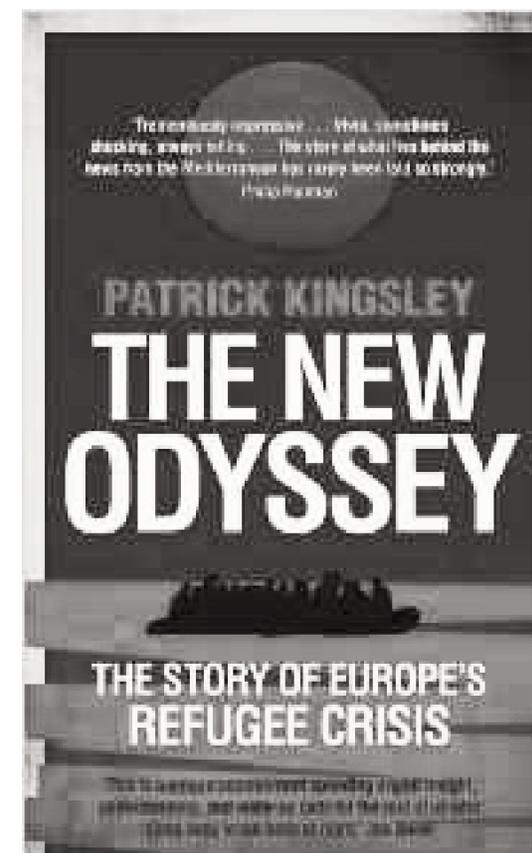
However, they amount to only a quarter of migrants, according to the UNHCR. Kingsley suggests, however, that by the time many reach Libya, they have more in common with refugees, such is the treatment they receive en route.

The answer to one question is certain according to Kingsley and that is that the flow of migrants will continue from the developing to the developed world, and that not even fences, patrols and even short term investment in developing countries will decrease emigration. He sees this posing an important challenge to Europe and cites the conditions of Syrians in Turkey and Jordan, with restricted access to the labour market, the chaotic and inadequate reception and processing of refugees who survive the Mediterranean crossing into Greece, despite heroic rescues and medical and social care offered by residents and charities alike.

In addition, closing of borders such as Hungary begs a further question, why? The author argues, convincingly, that a

pan European settlement programme on a large scale is essential as migrants will continue to reach Europe despite all risks.

Perhaps we need to learn from Hashem al Souki who has faced the trauma of fleeing, uncertainty and delays around his status, the difficulty of adjusting to new cultures and the anxiety of separation from loved ones and yet continues to see the goodness in human nature.



## Triumph of the Revolution

Steve  
Cushion  
on Cuba

**LEADERSHIP IN THE CUBAN  
REVOLUTION: THE UNSEEN STORY**  
Antoni Kapcia (Zed Books, £16.99)

There is a widespread belief that the Cuban Revolution is mainly the work of Fidel Castro, abetted by his brother Raul and their comrade Ché Guevarra. This belief is behind the many attempts on Castro's life by the CIA and their associates among the extreme right wing terrorists in the Miami exile community. Tony Kapcia sees a much more complex situation with a wider circle of leadership that changed over time. Of course, the Castro described by Kapcia is a skilled political operator, but one who operates in a milieu where there are loyalties and personal relationships as well as political differences and economic interests, a milieu where there was considerable disagreement and debate from which a consensus and a collective leadership has emerged.

In the period before the January 1959 "Triumph of the Revolution", the internal political differences within the July 26th Movement (Movimiento Revolucionario 26 de Julio, MR-26-7), remained below the surface, unity in the face of the brutal dictatorship being seen as more important than differences about the shape of the society which was to follow. This would all change in January 1959 when Batista fled and the Rebels arrived in Havana; the moderate wing of the movement argued that the overthrow of tyranny was the final goal, while the left among the rebel fighters felt that this was just the beginning of a radical change to the whole social and economic base of the country. Kapcia spends a lot of time discussing the events of the insurrection and the first few years of the Revolution, arguing that this period is crucial to understanding the structure of the leadership thereafter. He is particularly interested in the various crises that affected the course of events; as he puts it: "a

revolution without crisis may not be revolutionising anything".

Fidel Castro had to keep this disparate movement together without giving the United States government the excuse to call them "Communists" and launch an invasion before the Cubans had the means to defend themselves. The situation became much clearer following the invasion of Playa Giron (Bay of Pigs), the "Cuban Missile Crisis". It was out of these two trials that the shape of the revolutionary leadership would emerge. Kapcia sees three roughly concentric circles of such leadership, with a hierarchy of respect and influence, centred



on those who had been with Fidel in the attack on the Moncada barracks in 1953 along with those fought in the Rebel Army in the Sierra Maestra. The next level is formed from members of the MR-26-7 underground in the cities and furthest from power the ex-members of the Partido Socialista Popular (PSP), as the Cuban Communist Party was then called. The bond created in those early days would endure for the next 50 years.

A particularly useful part in "Leadership in the Cuban Revolution" is the account of the

careers of those ex-guerrillas who became important second rank leaders. Names that crop up from time to time in other books and articles, without an account of their background, receive pen portraits of their origins and career development.

The women in the revolutionary leadership are often neglected, Celia Sánchez as "Fidel's secretary", Vilma Espin as "Raul Castro's wife" and Haydeé Santamaría as "Armando Hart's wife". However, Celia Sanchez, who had organised much of the groundwork for the Granma landing and who fought in the Sierra, went on to play a crucial role and was central to the whole political process. Haydeé Santamaría had been involved in the Moncada attack and would go on to play an important role in the cultural life of the revolution as head of the Casa de las Americas. Vilma Espin had a history of opposition to the dictatorship preceding the outbreak of the guerilla war and fought in the rebel army as part of Raúl Castro's Second Front. After the rebel victory she founded and led the Federación de Mujeres Cubanas (FMC, Federation of Cuban Women), which was probably the most successful of the "mass organisations". All of these fit Kapcia's criteria for inclusion in the inner circle of power, through their involvement in Moncada and the guerilla struggle.

Tony Kapcia has written a book that is of considerable use to people already knowledgeable of the course of events, indeed much is taken for granted that the general reader would probably not know. But within the context of the title "Leadership in the Cuban Revolution", it does exactly what it says on the tin. The depth of detail about the personalities involved and their personal and political relationships paints a convincing picture of a collective leadership, a vanguard collective certainly, but much wider than most commentators recognise.

## Misguided, ignorant and casually racist ?

Rory  
O'Kelly on  
social  
security

**FOR US ALL**  
Andrew Harrop (Fabian Society, £9.95  
or Free online)

Since 2010 Social Security has been more of a Dutch auction than a debate, with the parties competing over who can think of more ways to do harm to the poor. For this reason alone Harrop's attempt at serious analysis is welcome.

He gets three things absolutely right. The first is that the biggest problem with working age benefits is that their levels are too low and are on present policies set to decline still further. The second is that the distinction between those who pay into the fiscal structure and those who draw out is illusory. Almost everyone does both at some points in their lives, and many at the same time.

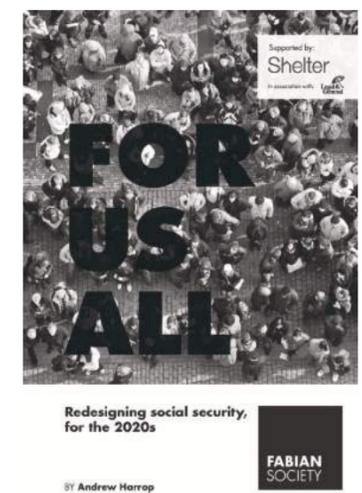
The author's third important insight is that gains arising from tax allowances are directly comparable to cash benefits from Social Security. Coalition/Conservative policies of increasing tax allowances in real terms while freezing benefits (including Child Benefit) has transferred income from poor to rich and from children to adults. Obviously the former was deliberate but it is less clear whether increasing child poverty was an actual policy objective or simply an unintended consequence of a rhetorical stance which pitted 'workers' against 'claimants'.

If Harrop had pursued the logic of his argument rather further he might have questioned the entire concept of the 'affordability' of benefits. Increasing taxes and benefits moves money from the rich and adults to the poor and children while reducing them does the reverse. Why do we refer to movement in one direction as a 'cost' and in the other as a 'saving'?

Regrettably however the idea of raising income tax is still usually too scary to contemplate though, to his credit, Harrop does (in a rather shy footnote on p. 109) point out that Government should transfer the entire funding of the NHS to income tax instead of rip-

ping off the National Insurance Fund.

A major (and common) weakness of the book is a lack of historical awareness. The whole period between Beveridge and 2010 is a complete blank. Most of the questions raised here were addressed and (some of us might think) solved by the Social Security Pensions Act 1975 but Harrop seems not to have heard of this, with sometimes comical effects. An inconclusive discussion of the practicability of relating working age benefits to earnings would have been improved if he had realised that did happen until 1982. His ignorance some-



times goes even further back. Considering how long contributory benefits for sickness should be paid he rejects (on somewhat peculiar grounds) the obvious answer that the benefits should last as long as the incapacity does, without noting that this was accepted without question for the first 60 years of the National Insurance system.

Another weakness (common among those who look at Social Security from an economist's viewpoint) is a rather dismissive attitude to 'welfare rights' issues. There are many complex and labour-intensive systems such as the sanctions regime, the benefit cap, the bedroom tax, in-work conditionality etc. specifically designed to make some of the

poorest people in society even poorer. These are now of more than marginal significance. Getting rid of the whole lot would be exceptionally well targeted expenditure and would also be a major administrative simplification.

Overall, however, this is a good introduction to the theory of Social Security. It covers the basic choice between contributory and means-tested benefits reasonably, pointing out the defects of means-testing but also the difficulty of abandoning it completely starting from where we are now. The author tends to avoid direct political comment. One thing that leaps out of the pages is that the destruction of social housing starting in 1979 was a complete catastrophe, both as housing policy and as Social Security policy, but the point is not made explicitly. Some contemporary shibboleths such as the desirability of increasing employment rates and the need to worry about voluntary unemployment are accepted unthinkingly.

Finally, there is an interesting but rather misguided treatment of the idea of a universal basic income. This is gaining some political traction recently but only because tax allowances are so ludicrously high relative to benefit levels. This is a problem, not a solution, and if it were addressed the inherent craziness of the basic income concept would re-appear.

Harrop does not go down the basic income route but suggests a partial approach to it by gradually coveting personal tax allowances into cash 'credits'. This has problems which he does not fully explore. More striking however is what he sees as an advantage; the fact that converting allowances into credits would make it easier to deny them to foreigners.

It is a depressing example of the current coarsening of political discourse that this sort of casual racism is seen, even in relatively enlightened circles, as not even controversial but as simple common sense.

Free online: <http://www.fabians.org.uk/publications/for-us-all/>

BOOK REVIEWS

**Andy Morton**

on a crossover between industrial relations and political theory

# Social democratic politics

**ETHICAL SOCIALISM AND THE TRADE UNIONS - ALLAN FLANDERS AND BRITISH INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS REFORM.**  
John Kelly (Routledge, £95)

This book is interesting, an invaluable read and is a timely crossover between two disciplines - industrial relations and political theory - that have come to operate at some distance from one another. This coming together of 'industrial relations and social democratic politics' is also particularly timely given the re-emergence of work and labour issues within the Labour party's debate about its future. Works like this therefore offer important contributions to a debate that has already unearthed themes of ethical socialism, social movement trade unionism and communitarianism, but has only produced some worthwhile proposals on 'labour market reform'.

Author John Kelly places this discussion about industrial relations and ethical socialism nicely into biographic about Allan Flanders - an academic who formed part of the core group of heavyweight post-war scholars which included Otto-Kahn Freund and Hugh Clegg. The book's chapters run chronologically, dealing with Flanders' own intellectual development within the context of Second World War, the Cold War, the troubles of the 60s and 70s and the Thatcherite period entered post-1979. Kelly's description of Flanders' drift from the radical leftism of his youth to the ethical socialism that framed both his politics and his analysis of industrial relations is the key theme of the book.

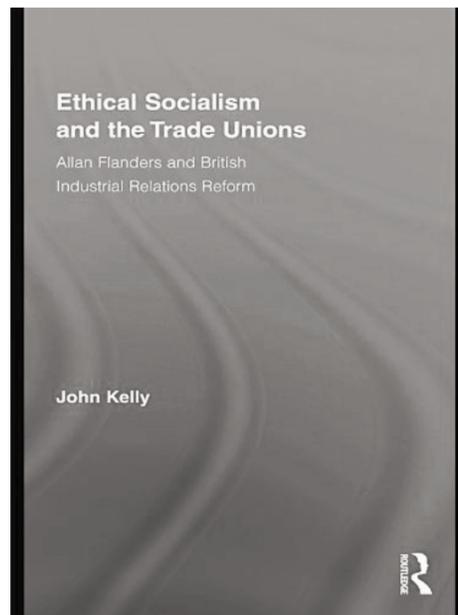
Flanders saw the institution of collective bargaining as of central importance and the primary institutional means of providing worker welfare, not the militant wage struggle and strikes. This view of the labour condition as an employment relationship has obvious political theory implications, as it moved Flanders away from the Marxist polemic and toward that of ethical socialism. As the post-war period quickly became the Cold War era, Flanders' drift to an anti-communist social democracy was set around the key role that collective bargaining could play in matching together economic reform and

social progress through initiatives such as productivity bargaining. Collective bargaining was about negotiation and humanising the interests of capital. Kelly's treatment of Flanders' work is far from sycophantic, and at several points is prepared to be critical when reviewing the failures of some of ideas of corporatists like Flanders. Productivity bargaining was a key area to receive such treatment. Chapter 8 is key in this regard. Kelly starts this chapter by critiquing a Flanders phrase: 'management can only gain power by sharing it'. As Kelly correctly notes, employers could easily gain power through helpful policy and legal reforms (delivered in the 1980s), restructuring drives and cultivating unemployment as a means of disciplining labour (Marx's 'reserve army of labour'). This of course all happened, and in regards to 'control' this is clearly correct. What Kelly also mentions earlier in the book however is that Flanders' reforms were directed to economic benefits of productivity bargaining. Productivity was a huge problem in British industry in the 1960s (as it is now, although we don't talk about it so much). Kelly also noted that the proposals of Flanders and others were not too successful, as Flanders himself conceded. The role of employers and industrial structure was more important in this failure than the proposals themselves.

Collective bargaining in Britain was progressively destroyed with bargaining coverage dropping from 70% in 1980 to 25% in 2010. No country in Western Europe witnessed this sort of decline. Moreover, other countries in Europe had started to implement such productivity in working time based bargaining with some success. There are reasons why most of Western Europe has been able to marry higher productivity with less inequality than we see in Britain: collective bargaining acted as a venue to make workers part of a process of reform than mere ser-

vants to it. Recently, proposals to create German style works councils have been tabled both by Blue Labour types and even the current Conservative government. In his failed bid to become Labour leader, Owen Smith proposed the return of wage councils abolished in the 80s and 90s. This book offers important historical and theoretical context these discussions and sits well with two sets of proposals found in Institute for Employment Rights pamphlets by John Hendy and Keith Ewing: A Manifesto for Collective Bargaining (reviewed in Chartist #266) and the more recent A Manifesto for Labour Law.

Many might disregard a book that offers a part-biography of a seemingly obscure and now deceased academic. Placing Flanders' intellectual life, struggles and shifts within the changing ideas and policies of the 20th century however, tells us a good deal about why industrial relations, work and labour market matters are so central to the offer the left puts to voters. From 1994 onwards, the left was told that any 'labour market reform' discussion no longer had any space for equality, fairness and collectivism. This has now changed, but Flanders' offering also creates space for a social democratic view of collective institutions of workplace democracy that is distinct from Marxist or other radicalism.



# Looking for uranium

**Nigel Watt**  
on a Cold War story

**SPIES IN THE CONGO**  
Susan Williams (Hurst, £25)

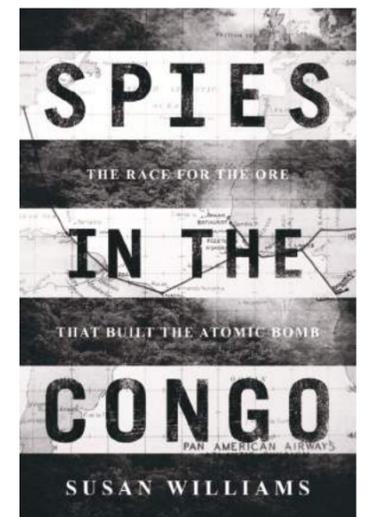
Susan Williams has built up a reputation for solid research into controversial historical events with her books - "Colour Bar" (on Seretse Khama now to be the subject of the opening film United Kingdom at the BFI Festival in October) and "Who killed Hammarskjöld?" This new book is also painstakingly researched and beautifully written. It is the story of how during the Second World War the Americans (with some help from the British) stopped Germany from obtaining uranium from the then Belgian Congo. It is a thrilling story. The Shinkolobwe mine in Katanga was the only main source of the mineral in the 1940s and not many people, including nearly all the characters in this book, knew what uranium was for. So the whole process had to be kept a secret and sold as stopping the smuggling of diamonds.

The story is complex and the

reader needs to refer to the lists of characters (and their code-names) and of acronyms that the author has provided. Some of the spies were attached to diplomatic missions, others as staff of companies such as Texaco and Pan American Airways. If there is a hero it is Dock Hogue ("TETON") who plays a central role, later becomes a writer and, like most of those who got near the uranium, died fairly young. Williams fills in the political background well: Belgians who were either pro-Nazi or waiting to see who would win; British colonials; Roosevelt and Truman at the end of the story.

The atmosphere of colonial times comes across clearly. The Congolese hardly get a mention. Their only role was to mine the deadly material (and suffer from devastating radiation later). At independence the mine was sealed in concrete. This is yet another important part of the history of the "resource curse" that has and will continue to punish the Congo. It started with the exploitation of wild rubber by

King Leopold II and continues today with coltan, gold, hardwood, water.....and for more details of the current problems I can also recommend another book, Congo's Environmental Paradox by Theodore Trefon (Zed books).



# From free love to tableware

**Duncan Bowie**  
on communitarianism and eugenics

**ONEIDA**  
Ellen Wayland Smith (Picador, \$27)

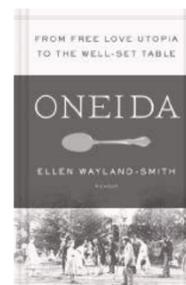
This is the story of the Oneida communitarian settlement established by John Humphrey Noyes in rural New York state in the 1848. Although Noyes wrote a History of American Socialism, which was a study of Utopian Socialist settlements in the US, Oneida was dissimilar from the numerous Fourierist, Icarian and Owenite communities, in that Noyes, a somewhat extreme 'perfectionist' Christian, believed not just in the sharing of property but the sharing of sexual partners, on the rather curious and not entirely biblical notion, that monogamy was selfish. The sub-title of the book refers to Free Love, but it is clear that the sexual lives of the Oneida community were strictly regulated by Noyes and the other settlement leaders, who had to authorise each sexual relationship. This was because Noyes believed in the notion of selective

breeding, a rather extreme form of eugenics. The community therefore created a generation of what were known as 'stirpicults' the products of selective breeding. Noyes himself clearly took advantage of his system by breeding with a number of younger women.

Wayland-Smith, herself descended from participants in the selective breeding process, has researched diaries and other surviving papers from the community to trace the narrative of the experiment and the impact, often traumatic, on the participants. The community was disbanded in 1880, at which point, those women with children but without partners, either had to find a partner to marry to join more traditional society, or be cast into oblivion.

The Oneida settlement started off as an agricultural community. They then diversified into making animal traps, including giant traps for bears, before taking up the manufacture of silverware, building a factory which

employed 'hirelings' from outside the community. The Oneida community became a commercial company, though one controlled by one of Noyes' 'stirpicult' offspring, Pierrpoint Noyes and other descendants of community members. His silverware was targeted at middle class households and Wayland Smith reproduces examples of the advertising material for 'community silverware', presenting the importance of a 'well set table' to a newly married woman wanting to satisfy her husband. During the Second World War, the factory produced shell casings. The story is an example of how far a communitarian settlement can move away from the principles of its founder, though it is perhaps fair to say that Noyes principles were hardly socialistic. The book's cover has a picture of the Oneidans playing croquet, not normally regarded as a communitarian sport.



## BOOK REVIEWS

# Planning land and homes for all

**Mike Davis**  
on an  
innovative  
narrative

**THE RADICAL AND SOCIALIST TRADITION IN BRITISH PLANNING**  
**Duncan Bowie (Routledge, £95)**

Subtitled from Puritan Colonies to Garden Cities Duncan Bowie's historical survey is an exhaustive mapping of the central strands of the best in developments in housing provision over 200 years and the vision that sustained progressive thinking.

This is a partisan review. Bowie is our reviews editor. Even without that caveat any reader would be hard pressed to deny the scholarly research and concise summaries of the many individuals and social movements, from the late 18th century to 1914, seeking land and planning reform and homes in an environment fit for all.

The book delivers on its claim to be the first narrative account of radical and socialist texts and organised movements for progressive land reform. Drawing on the author's own extensive collection of source material the account moves from Puritan colonial settlements to Benthamite utilitarian planning, Owenite and utopian communitarianism, Chartist land reform efforts and the plans emanating from the socialists of the First International, including Marx and Engels.

Most chapters provide extensive quotes from contemporary sources with Bowie's informed critical commentary. Most 19th and 20th century historiography focuses on reformers with philanthropic middle class or aristocratic backgrounds. What is refreshing about this study is the relocation from shadowy margins to centre-stage of the many working class radicals and socialists who wrote, organised and campaigned for an alternative approach to land and living.

Perhaps the most fascinating chapter is on the London working class radicals and Chartists. Land reform did not figure in the Six

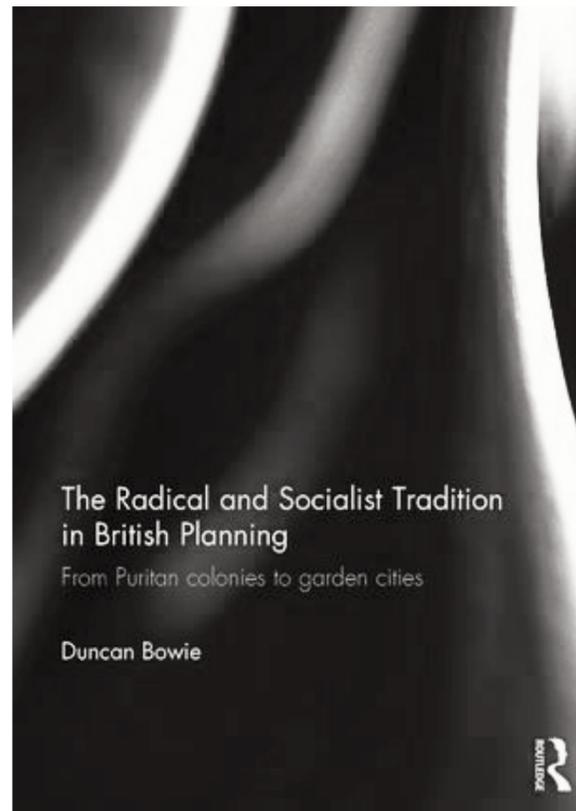
Points of the Charter. However, it was 'the Charter and something more' that did open up the question. After the 1848 defeat, Chartist land settlements developed in a utopian effort to provide houses through savings and allocation through ballots. Alongside this strand of 'post-Chartism', the 1851 Convention adopted a social programme advocating land nationalisation. The engraver and Mazzinian republican William Linton preferred a tax on land. A prominent Chartist leader Bronterre O'Brien helped inspire

Martin James Boon assume greater prominence as precursors of the garden city ideas of Ebenezer Howard and JM Keynes's ideas on resettling the unemployed on vacant land. Boon focussed not just on the vision of public ownership but also the means for achieving it. The radical MP George Howell picked up and developed Boon's ideas with detailed calculations of the amount of waste land, location, people needing housing and how development could work.

Sometimes the sheer volume of sources and references can be jaw-dropping. Names and sources weave through the narrative with extensive listings at the end of each chapter. Few books will contain so many references to land and housing reform. The study reminds us of the huge importance of the socialist movement in the 19th century.

The chapter on visionaries and garden city pioneers uncovers the background to the flowering of socialist and radical planning around the First World War. The final chapters look at the institutionalisation of planning and housing and summarise the key influences on change in the unfolding 20th century.

This book provides a brilliant overview of where the movement for progressive change on land and homes has come from. Order it though your library. It deserves a reprint in affordable paperback and a place on any housing activist's bookshelf.



The Radical and Socialist Tradition  
in British Planning

From Puritan colonies to garden cities

Duncan Bowie

cooperative land settlements in Kansas USA similar to earlier utopians and Owenites seeking solutions in the New World.

Other familiar figures find a voice: Marx who championed common ownership of land and stood against individual ownership and cultivation; John Stuart Mill who promoted a more moderate Land and Tenure Act. William Morris, the Arts and Crafts movement also receive significant consideration. Lesser known figures like

Visit the website for lots of images and source documents.  
<https://radicalsocialistbritishplanning.wordpress.com/>

**Duncan Bowie**  
on  
the Balkan  
Stalin

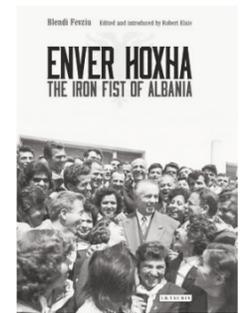
**ENVER HOXHA: THE IRON FIST OF ALBANIA**  
**Blendi Fevziu (I B Tauris, £25)**

This is the first biography of Hoxha in English, published 31 years after his death and 25 years after the collapse of the communist regime of his successor Ramiz Alia. It is written by an Albanian journalist and is based on archives and interviews with those who knew Hoxha or, in the case of those who are dead, their surviving children. It was originally published in Albanian in 2011.

It is a grim story and one that should be read by all those on the left who had some sympathy for Hoxha's regime. It is a story of Hoxha's rise to power, aided in the resistance against the Germans by the British, who abandoned the monarchist followers of exiled King Zog in favour of the communist partisans. Hoxha was effectively appointed as secretary of the Albanian communist party by Tito's Yugoslav communists, which meant that on the liberation of the Albanian capital, Tirana, in July 1944, Hoxha became prime minister of the provisional government. Hoxha came into power by ensuring all his rivals were killed, first the royalists in the Balli Kombatar, then the social democrats, then his rivals for the communist leadership. They were first slandered,

then tortured and then executed.

What is curious about the book is that it tells you almost nothing about Albania under Hoxha - how the communists governed the state, their policies, their achievements and their legacy. The book is almost entirely about Hoxha's shifting political alliances, who he collaborated with, who plotted against him and how he took revenge. Fevziu was only 16 when Hoxha died so will have a relatively limited memory of his regime. However the book is clearly well researched and has traced the original written instructions for numerous executions signed by Hoxha personally. These included practically all his friends from his schooldays and colleagues from university (he studied in Montpellier in France but never graduated) and many of his relatives. He succeeded in dispensing with most of the members of his politburo during his 41 year rule, including driving his deputy, Mehmet Shehu, the nationalist general who took Tirana from the Germans in 1944, to suicide in 1981, just as he had ensured the death of his previous deputies. Perceived rivals, many of whom were actually devoted loyalists, wrote notes praising their executioner in an attempt to save their families, generally with little effect. Spouses and children of the executed were either executed them-



selves or imprisoned and forced into hard labour for decades. There is a story of a former nationalist intellectual and member of the Albanian parliament, who in his 70's, is found by Hoxha guarding a pigpen. Where Hoxha did not execute his rivals, he liked to humiliate them.

Fevziu also tells us little about Albania's relationship with other communist countries; the split with Yugoslavia, who had once stage were on the verge of a union with Albania, with Albania becoming the seventh Yugoslav republic; the break with Moscow after Stalin's death as Hoxha rejected Khrushchev's reformism; the withdrawal from the Warsaw pact and Hoxha siding with Mao in the Sino-Soviet dispute - those twists and turns followed so closely by sectarian factions on the British far left in the 70's and 80's. Each diplomatic shift increased Albania's isolation, strengthened Hoxha's dominance and reinforced the poverty and oppression within the country. This is a grim book but an important one.

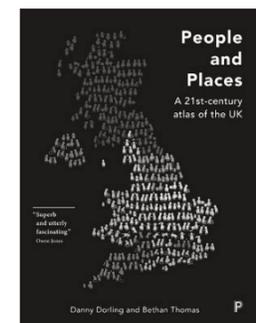
**Tony Manzi**  
on  
mapping  
Inequality

**PEOPLE AND PLACES: A 21ST CENTURY ATLAS OF THE UK**  
**Danny Dorling and Bethan Thomas (Policy Press, £22.99)**

As one of the most influential writers working in contemporary geography, Danny Dorling's work has been invaluable in understanding the changing social composition of the UK. In this book, written with Bethan Thomas, the authors use innovative mapping techniques, based on 2011 Census data (updated with analysis of social trends), to provide a highly accessible and richly detailed insight into the political, economic and social changes since the first edition was published in 2001. The book provides a comprehensive visualisation of social change, cov-

ering sex, marriage, religion, ethnicity, health, poverty, education, employment, housing and migration. The key message of the book is that 'everything is connected' and whilst there has been much discussion about the dominance of London and the South East in public policy, the book highlights the full extent (and complexity) of social division. In distinguishing between what the authors term the 'London Areas' (the South) and the 'Archipelago' (the North), the book outlines the prevalence of both affluence and deprivation within different regions. To take one striking fact - by 2011 there were 14 London boroughs with poverty rates higher than Glasgow or Belfast (compared to five in 2001). The great value of the book is that in an era where

expertise can be casually dismissed and where facts can be treated with disdain, it supplies the necessary tools to combat many misconceptions within much contemporary public discourse. Who knew cartography could be so exciting?



YOUTH  
VIEW

# What Labour could learn from Momentum

Harry  
Hayball  
on  
changing  
meeting  
culture

Harry Hayball is secretary, Village BLP, Dulwich and West Norwood CLP. He writes in a personal capacity

This September, John McTernan was a surprise visitor to The World Transformed, the political festival Momentum organised alongside Labour Party conference. Appearing on the BBC the following day, McTernan commented favourably on how inclusive, engaging and participatory the atmosphere had been, despite his disagreement with the ideas being discussed. That even McTernan – not exactly known for his soft opinions on the Labour left – could draw these conclusions, says a lot, I think, about Labour and Momentum respectively: regardless of the ideas involved, everyone in Labour could learn a lot from Momentum's more engaging and dynamic way of doing politics.

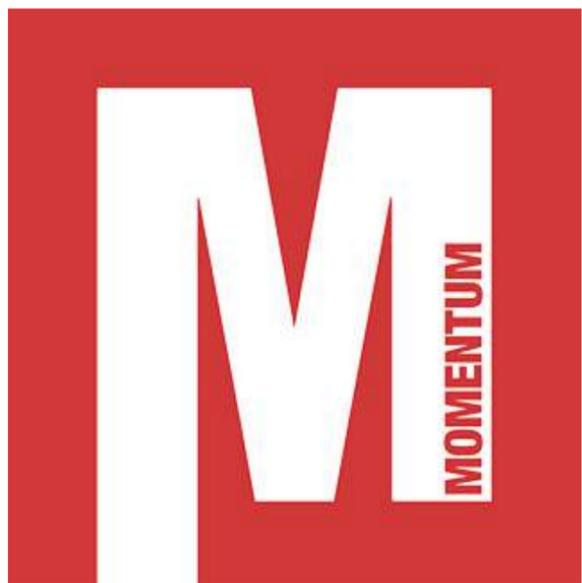
I joined the Labour Party in September 2015, and attended my first meeting, at the constituency level, that October. The hall was absolutely packed, evidently predominantly with new people, and to a degree that was apparently exceptional for the local party. Everyone new was, formally, welcomed – but there was no attempt to engage or get to know the new members, and the meeting followed a traditional format, with party reports, a speaker and a few questions. Most people, I think, never came back.

Fortunately, I had sat next to someone who had been involved in local phone-banks for Jeremy Corbyn's leadership campaign.

On his invitation, I attended what became a local Momentum group. The contrast with the Labour meeting was enormous. At

M o m e n t u m events, we were, for example, invited to

write down, on post-it notes, our individual answers to various key questions: what issues Momentum should focus on, how it should function, and so forth. As we placed these on sections of the wall, people categorised them by topic. Everything was then summarised, and the key topics selected from our contributions. We then split into groups to discuss whichever of those topics we most wanted to get involved in – what we thought about the issue, what we could do about it, and so forth.



The participatory and inclusive methods of those early Momentum meetings have not always been maintained, or fully implemented, by every local group. But there is, generally, a much more engaging and dynamic organisational culture within Momentum: more willingness to be flexible and informal, and to find ways to enable everyone to participate.

In Labour, we generally sit in rows, listen to reports and speeches from others, stick fairly rigidly to the agenda, and then, in the (usually brief) period allocated to discussing motions, take it in turns to speak at and against each other. As thanks for joining a political party, paying our fees and actually turning up to local meetings, we have to sit through repeated lectures about canvassing and donating more money, which would make anyone feel

guilty, no matter how much one canvasses or donates. It's not surprising that, from what others tell me, until recently our local party was all but moribund.

Since becoming a branch secretary in January, I have progressively tried to bring some of the culture I have seen in Momentum into Labour. In our July branch meeting, we split into four groups to discuss three key issues of the day – how to respond to the referendum, how to bring more young people into the party, and the leadership question. Each group wrote on a large piece of paper

the key thoughts, discussion points and ideas that arose. We looked at each topic in turn, and after each one, reported to the other groups what we had discussed. This structure enabled far more people to contribute to the discussions, and also helped bridge gaps between different wings of the party, with long-time Blairites and new Corbynites directly exchanging their thoughts. At our October meeting, we had a similar group discussion, and this time, based partly on feedback from the July meeting, moved the

rather dull and repetitive business of officer reports (and lectures on canvassing) to the end of the meeting, rather than the start.

These are just small steps towards making local Labour meetings something that those who aren't political diehards would be interested in attending – and actually coming back to. We cannot know at this stage how significant a difference such changes could make for Labour, in terms of attendance at meetings and engagement in other party activities like canvassing. But personally, I think this is the way forward for politics, and something that should be embraced by all wings of the party. And for those of us who are going to be attending the meetings regardless, it will, at the very least, make them that bit more enjoyable. **C**

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