

# CHARTIST

For democratic socialism

#293 July/August 2018

£2

## Taking back control?

*Peter Kenyon & Mary Southcott*

*Brexit follies*

*Don Flynn*

*Hostile environment*

*Elly Schlein*

*Italy turns right*

*Glynn Ford*

*Trump in North Korea*

*Anna Paterson*

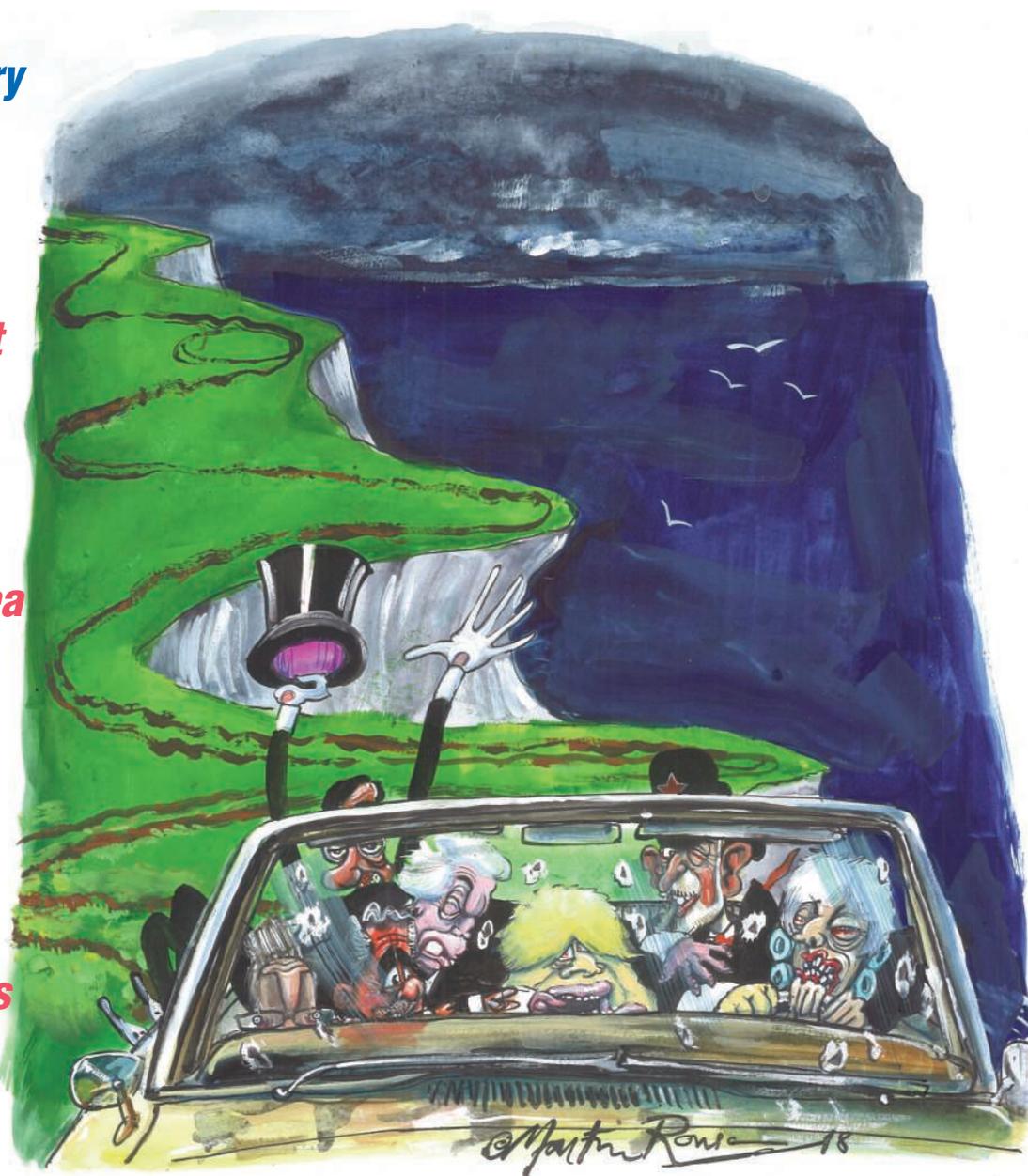
*Putin's power-play*

*Duncan Bowie*

*Labour housing*

*plus*

*Book & Film reviews*



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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

## Editorial Board

CHARTIST is published six times a year by the Chartist Collective. This issue was produced by an Editorial Board consisting of Duncan Bowie (Reviews), Andrew Coates, Peter Chalk, Patricia d'Ardenne, Mike Davis (Editor), Nigel Doggett, Don Flynn, Roger Gillham, James Grayson, Hassan Hoque, Peter Kenyon, Dave Lister, Puru Miah, Patrick Mulcahy, Sheila Osmanovic, Marina Prentoulis, Robbie Scott (Website Editor), Mary Southcott, John Sunderland.

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**Toynbee Hall**

**28 Commercial Street E1 6AB**  
**(Nearest tube Aldgate East)**

### Speakers:

**Marina Prentoulis, Catherine West MP, Ian Bullock, Bryn Jones, Prem Sikka, Becky Boumelha, Apsana Begum, Duncan Bowie**

# CHARTIST

FOR DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM



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Cover by Martin Rowson

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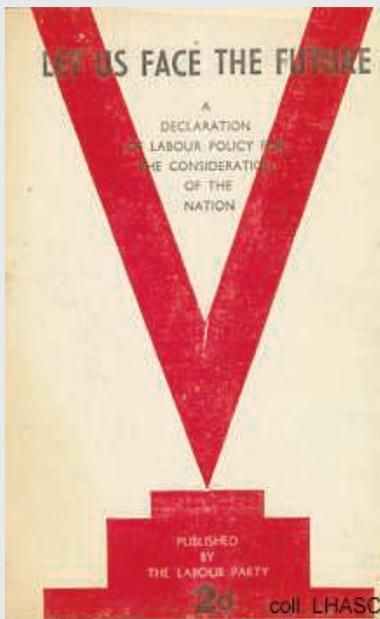
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## OUR HISTORY

# OUR HISTORY - 79

## LET US FACE THE FUTURE 1945

This document is the Labour Party's manifesto for the 1945 General Election. It was the product of extensive discussions within the party and beyond on Britain's post-war future. At the time of the publication, Germany had been defeated but Britain was still at war with Japan. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were still in the future. Labour withdrew from the wartime coalition to fight the election: Attlee had been deputy prime minister; Morrison had been Home Secretary; Bevin had been Minister of Labour, so leading Labour MPs had had extensive experience of government. Morrison had overall responsibility for the preparation of the manifesto, which was drafted by Michael Young who was Labour party head of research, having before the war directed the political and economic planning think tank. Young later helped found the Open University, the consumers association and the Institute for Community Studies, later becoming Lord Young of Dartington and a founder of the Social Democratic Party's Tawney Society. Young also published in 1947 Labour's Plan for Plenty, just as budget cuts were beginning to bite. Young also wrote a series of discussion papers for the Labour Party, including *Small Man*; *Big World*, which a critique of a centralised welfare state, and *For Richer, for Poorer* on socialist values in a consumerist society. The best study of wartime domestic policy making is Paul Addison's 1997 study: *The Road to 1945*. Stephen Brooke's 1992 book on Labour's War is also useful on the party's wartime policy development. There is also a biography of Young by Asa Briggs. Young commented on his initial draft of the manifesto "It is neither necessary or desirable for the document to be too long, too detailed, or to get much beyond what can be done in the full lifetime of a single Parliament...We require a document that is both broad and clear- constituting a straight challenge from the Left – and which will strike the average elector as good sense."



"Britain's coming Election will be the greatest test in our history of the judgment and common sense of our people. The nation wants food, work and homes. It wants more than that – it wants good food in plenty; useful work for all, and comfortable, labour-saving homes that take full advantage of the resources of modern science and productive industry. It wants a high and rising standard of living, security for all against a rainy day, an educational system which will give every boy and girl a chance to develop the best that is in them.

"The Labour Party stands for freedom- for freedom of worship, freedom of speech, freedom of the Press. The Labour Party will see to it that we keep and enlarge these freedoms, and that we enjoy again the personal civil liberties we have, of our own free will, sacrificed to win the war. The freedom of Trade Unions must also be restored. But there are certain so-called freedoms that Labour will not tolerate: freedom to exploit other people; freedom to pay poor wages and to push up prices for selfish profit; freedom to deprive the people of the means of living full, happy, healthy lives.

"All parties say so – the Labour Party means it. For the Labour Party is prepared to achieve it by drastic policies of re-planning and by keeping a firm constructive hand on our whole productive machinery; the Labour Party will put the community first and the sectional interests of private business after. Labour will plan from the ground up – giving an appropriate place to constructive enterprise and private endeavour in the national plan, but dealing decisively with those interests which would use high-sounding talk about economic freedom to cloak their determination to put themselves and their wishes above those of the whole nation."

We appeal to all men and women of progressive outlook, and who believe in constructive change, to support the Labour Party."

## LETTER

# Correction & Solidarity

Dear Chartist

I was pleased to see the photograph of Brent Labour Party members in the last Chartist. However the caption accompanying the photo was incorrect. This was not Brent Labour campaigning. This was a demonstration after swastikas and other Nazi graffiti appeared in our local streets in Dollis Hill overnight, allegedly the work of a Polish far right group.

This demonstration brought together predominantly Labour Party members but also other local activists and members of the local Jewish community. This was particularly pleasing given all the hype around the grossly exaggerated claims of anti-semitism in the Labour Party

Incidentally we did campaign in the local election and won 60 out of 63 seats. A net gain of 4.

Best wishes

Dave Lister

Brent South CLP

# Brexit farce –time running out to stop the show

**T**heresa May's government stumbles on towards a massive car crash over Brexit. The Withdrawal bill narrowly edged its way through parliament (with vacillations and half promises on a final vote). But the big decisions on customs union, trade agreements and avoiding a hard border in Ireland, which could unravel the Good Friday Agreement in Ireland, remain unresolved. Airbus and Siemens illustrate the threat to thousands of jobs.

Divisions deepen between Scotland and Westminster over removal of devolved powers to Holyrood. A belated bid to offer settled status to 3.4 million EU citizens in the UK is still short of full citizenship.

Meanwhile the EU negotiators, led by Michel Barnier, wait for the government itself to come to a settled negotiating position. **Peter Kenyon** picks over the mess examining the options for the government and more especially Labour. With Keir Starmer leading the challenge and largely keeping the Tories feet to the fire it's time for Labour to move on from its position of studied ambiguity. He looks at the People's Vote option now being pushed by the transport union TSSA, Another Europe is Possible and 100,000 strong demo on 23 June, with pressure for a parliamentary vote and the status quo until a new arrangement in the EU is agreed.

**Mary Southcott** speaks up for the 48% remainers and links the campaign against Brexit to voting reform. She argues against a second referendum and for Labour to come out strongly for a customs union and single market.

The message is the same: Labour needs to prepare for a general election at any time and commit to working for a new deal in Europe to protect jobs, working conditions, the environment and human rights founded on values of socialist internationalism. The Tories ever-fearful of the threat of a Corbyn government are preparing the ground. A combination of sweeteners (£20b over five years for the NHS) combined with democratic curbs involving boundary changes reducing Labour seats and voter id. in an effort both to suppress votes and weaken Labour. **Kabul Sandhu** and **Dermot McKibbin** report on the id threat. Housing and education will be critical issues for the campaign. **Duncan Bowie** gives two cheers for Labour's new housing policy while **Miriam Scharf** highlights the creeping privatising of schools behind the academy programme. **Stephanie Clark** adds a further note on the profiteering GP at Hand in the NHS.

The recent 18th May State of the Economy conference led by Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell covered many of the key economic battlegrounds: creation of secure well-paid employment, investment in sustainable development, tackling tax dodgers, workplace rights, a progressive fiscal policy. The elephant in the room was Brexit with only one workshop and very little discussion of the potential impact let alone a supranational strategy for ending austerity through a common European

recovery programme. While there is much positive alternative economic thinking, tackling global capital must be at the heart of the strategy. And that requires at minimum a European perspective.

Storm clouds are gathering over Europe. While beleaguered Greece has been joined by Socialist led governments in Portugal and Spain the populists and racists of the far right are gaining ground. **Elly Schlein**, an Italian left MEP reports on the outcome of the March Italian general election which finally produced a coalition between the populist Five Star Movement and the far right Northern League. Early coalition actions to block refugee ships and deport Roma people indicate a xenophobic direction of travel akin to Orban's government in Hungary and others in Eastern Europe. Whilst this is not the 1930s the growing crisis of neoliberal capitalism is producing many of the extreme right and fascist movements we saw then.

**Don Flynn** highlights the shameful policies of the May government in promoting the hostile environment of which the Windrush scandal is only one manifestation. He argues Labour needs to free itself from any culpability with a forthright defence of free movement putting solidarity in place of hostility, trade union rights and security in place of exploitation. **Dave Rosenberg** puts a spotlight of Tory double-standards on anti-semitism highlighting links to racist groups.

Almost daily Trump seems to add fuel the fires of reaction: the scrapping of the Iran nuclear deal, declaring trade war on China and Europe with big tariffs on steel and aluminium, scuppering peace prospects in Israel/Palestine (see **Richard Burden MP**) while implementing an inhumane family splitting border policy at home.

**Glynn Ford** reports on the events in North Korea and assesses the meaning of the Kim-Trump treaty. Authoritarian human rights-denying governments need challenging everywhere. **Andy Roberts** calls on Jeremy Corbyn to change tack on Cuba while in midst of World Cup attention **Anna Paterson** sounds warnings on Putin's Russia.

Labour did well in the May local government elections gaining hundreds of seats across the country. Election psephologist John Curtice put Labour on course for being the largest party if the results were repeated in a general election. Brexit is likely to be the trigger for a government collapse. Labour needs to be ready. That means a manifesto commitment to membership of a customs union and single market, rejecting any Tory deal or no deal and going into the election with a commitment for a transitional period for as long as it takes to secure a new deal with the EU. Trump is post-referendum. America First translates May's fantasy global Britain into a real vassal state. Our closest allies are in Europe. We need to reforge a new relationship.

# Catastrophe awaits

Paul Salveson says it's time for the North to have an independent voice on Brexit

There's an easy assumption amongst some pro-Remain campaigners that much of the North is a lost cause given the large majorities for leave in many Northern towns and cities. Yet there's growing recognition that a large part of that vote was motivated by a vague but real sense of marginalisation and a desire to hit back at 'them' – whoever they might be. At the same time, some Labour 'leavers' still push the idea that 'most' Labour voters in the North voted to leave the EU. This is a very questionable assertion – my suspicion is that much of the 'leave' vote in Northern working class communities came from people who were not regular voters at all, many turning out to put two figures up to the EU and 'the establishment'. Trying to justify one's acquiescence for Brexit on the basis of what MPs' and pundits think which way Labour supporters voted is dodgy, to say the least. This is on top of any 'change of mind' that people might have had since the vote in 2016.

Most Chartist readers would probably agree that the consequences for Britain in leaving the UK range from dire to catastrophic. Yet there is a regional element to this, and ironically the areas likely to suffer most from Brexit are the ones that voted so strongly to leave.

The IPPR has done some very useful research on the impact of Brexit on the North. It makes the point that "The North of England depends more heavily on trade with Europe than other parts of the country, and has been a significant recipient of EU funding." (Brexit North: Securing a united voice at the negotiating table, IPPR 2016).

The IPPR paper focussed on the economic implications of the result. IPPR argues that alongside trade and funding issues, "the North has distinct economic assets and interests that will be affected by Brexit. This includes strengths in key sectors such as advanced materials and manufacturing, energy generation, distribution and storage, health innovation, and the digital economy."

Add to that the vibrant higher education sector in the North



St George's Flag over Teeside. Image:Getty

which has done very well out of EU research grants and other funding programmes. Many towns and smaller cities – such as Bolton, Huddersfield, Chester, Sunderland, Preston and Hull – are increasingly dependent on the economic clout of their universities and any faltering in their performance will have huge knock-on effects.

The North needs to fight back against Brexit with a common voice, but how? The IPPR report makes some interesting points about the lack of a coherent voice for the North to articulate a clear stance on Brexit, unlike the devolved nations and London. It says "the nascent and patchy development of combined authorities, metro-mayors and devolution 'deals' in the North means that the region is not well-placed to formulate a coherent response to Brexit that will match those of the devolved administrations for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, or that of the mayor of London or other well-established lobbying groups. Furthermore, it is quite impossible for central government to deal meaningfully with the demands of over 30 upper-tier local authorities, and 11 local enterprise partnership areas, in the North one by one".

Can't disagree with that. IPPR North has played an important role in providing space to debate how the North should be governed and is one of the few 'think tanks' to question the value of the current third-rate devolution offered to Northern cities. The

IPPR argues for a 'Northern Brexit Negotiating Committee' to determine the type of Brexit that the North needs, and speak with one voice in the negotiations, rather than have others shape the debate". That's a valuable suggestion and in the short-term is probably the only option – but is really "mekkin' th'best out of of a bad job" as we might say up 'ere. What the North really should have is an elected regional government with something like the powers of the devolved nations (after all, there's 15 million of us).

But committees and commissions tend to attract the great and the good who like being on committees. A Northern Brexit Negotiating Committee could put itself at the head of a powerful movement which brings together campaigners, local authorities, further and higher education, voluntary associations, businesses and individuals who want to avoid the catastrophe which is facing Northern communities, industries and universities. The risk is that we'll end up with a committee of politicians who don't want to upset their masters (Tory or Labour) in Westminster.

There are growing voices across the UK arguing for a second referendum that would, in all likelihood, stop Brexit before any more harm is done to the country. The North has very strong and specific interests in this and needs its own voice, alongside our friends in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, London and the English regions. **C**

Paul's website is  
[www.paulsalveson.org.uk](http://www.paulsalveson.org.uk)

# Nuclear blank cheque

**Dave Toke** on how the Tories are deliberately forgetting their nuclear lessons



Wylfa Nuclear Power Station

**F**or the sake of artificially massaging down the price paid for electricity from the proposed Wylfa nuclear plant the Government is about to commit the country to pay for billions of pounds of almost inevitable construction cost overruns. In doing so the Tories will be junking their opposition to doing such a thing. In 2010 The Conservative Party election manifesto stated that: 'we agree with the nuclear industry that taxpayer and consumer subsidies should not and will not be provided – in particular there must be no public underwriting of construction cost overruns'

There was a very good reason for this manifesto commitment. None of the nuclear power plants currently operating in the UK were constructed according to their original cost estimates. They were built during the time when electricity was nationalised, and so the costs were spread around all consumers and there was limited transparency about the economics of building nuclear plants. The Tories decided that there should be no more wastage of public money on nuclear plant which soaked the public purse. They wanted competition in electricity generation.

According to the Electricity Market Reform law (initially proposed at the end of 2010) nuclear power should only have the same incentives as other low carbon fuels. But it has emerged that if this was done literally, there

would not be any nuclear power stations built since various other low carbon options are much cheaper. But now that memories of the past problems with building nuclear power plant have receded, or been airbrushed from political memory, this principle has been gradually stripped away to return us to the past. The past of the nuclear blank cheque.

How it can possibly be the case that the Wylfa project will be sold on a 'cheaper' price than Hinkley C (£92.50 per MWh in 2012 prices) despite the fact that the projected cost of building Wylfa is actually higher than Hinkley C per GW of capacity? The Wylfa project is said by Hitachi, the developers, to cost £20 billion, the same as Hinkley C (being organised by EDF). Yet Wylfa is about 10 per cent smaller in generating capacity compared to Hinkley C. Around £77 per MWh have been kited as the suggested price tag for Wylfa for electricity consumers.

The price of the contract given to EDF to build Hinkley C was seen to be very large. So there was great political pressure to reduce this price. But the nature of nuclear power is that it is very expensive, so all the Government could do was to fake the price by giving 'below the counter' financial incentives. Of course this price can be reduced on paper if the state takes at least part of the risk and invests and lends money at cheap rates. But in real life not only is this mechanism not being made available to other low car-

bon fuels, but the taxpayer will end up paying a much higher price than advertised through a different route - when the time comes for the project investors (including the Government) to pay for the almost inevitable cost overruns.

The remarkable thing is that despite this effort at price fakery, the price agreed will still be a lot higher than that available for installing large amounts of onshore and offshore wind and solar power.

The nuclear industry appears to have lobbied successfully for this return to the past, a past where nuclear power was financed by opaque means, and its expensive nature hidden by the fact that the state effectively offered the developers a blank cheque. Of course the British body politic will find out to its disgust that there will be billions of pounds paid out when the fund initially vested in the development is exhausted - thus revealing the grotesque fakery of the allegedly 'cheaper' price of the Wylfa project compared to Hinkley C. That won't happen for quite a few years since, no doubt, despite the usual wildly optimistic projections of delivery dates, the plant will not be constructed for a number of years yet. It will be long enough to ensure that the architects of this sorry deal are out of office and unavailable for comment from their retirement mansions. **C**

**Dr David Toke is Reader in Energy Politics at the University of Aberdeen**

## BREXIT

# Brexit bromide

While a Brexit bonus is a lie **Peter Kenyon** checks out progress and sees opportunity at this year's Labour Annual Conference



March for Europe

**T**his is a long shot. But some brothers and sisters in Britain's trade unions, some affiliated like TSSA (the Transport Salaried Staff Association) and others not like the Royal College of Midwives are backing another referendum on the Tories' Brexit deal with Brussels. Public opinion according to latest opinion polls is in favour. Chartist has been equivocal. We would prefer a General Election with the Labour Party positioned to offer the country an opportunity to vote for hope, not despair over the Tories' bungled Brexit.

The omens are not encouraging. An early General Election seems illusory. The public, having been suckered into the Tory civil war over Europe, voted Leave (maybe shock horror encouraged unwittingly by Russian gold). Revelations that there was no contingency planning for a 'Leave' vote have left Leave voters desensitized to the impact of their decision – post 29 March 2019.

Labour MPs representing Leave constituencies appear to have been administered the largest doses of Brexit bromide. A recent conversation with a northern Labour MP who shall remain nameless told me proudly that what his constituents needed was a Labour government and its pro-

**Corbyn's readiness to risk appearing to deliver Brexit has created a running sore both inside the Parliamentary Labour Party and in many parts to the Party on the ground**

posed National Investment Bank. Quick as a flash, I said: "Wouldn't it be great if the European Investment Bank could back this urgently needed source of additional capital in the UK's neglect-

ed regions?" Lordy, lordy, his reaction was very dismissive. "That's not possible," he asserted, "We are leaving." I smiled.

Mounting interest in a People's Vote offers Labour an opportunity. This needs to be cast as a referendum on the Tory mess. Any such referendum would be contingent on Parliament deciding that would be appropriate in the event of the May government losing a 'meaningful vote' in the House of Commons opposing whatever deal the British government is able to secure in Brussels. At the time of writing it looks as though the Government will be defeated over this issue in the House of Commons. So Parliamentary sovereignty over Brexit may be asserted. All that remains is for the Government to conclude a Brexit deal, which looks less likely as each day passes.

The choice(s) for Labour are continue to depend on parliamentary manoeuvres led by Brexit shadow secretary Sir Keir Starmer or broaden out its attack lines by inviting the wider



Who's leading who? Davis & May

Labour Movement to inform future policy. That could be linked to parliamentary and extra-parliamentary action as well as providing a fresh focus in the event of an early General Election.

Recent sessions of Prime Minister's Questions show the Labour front bench is ready to take on the Government over its

## [T]he HMRC estimate of a cost of over £20b to leaving the EU in addition to the £39b settlement

conduct of the Brexit negotiations. Piling on the pressure to fix the 'Brexit – Tory mess' idea in the electorate's mind would be a valuable preliminary to an Annual Conference debate in Liverpool in late September.

Corbyn's readiness to risk appearing to deliver Brexit has created a running sore both inside the Parliamentary Labour Party and in many parts to the Party on the ground, particularly among younger members. But it appears to have kept many Leave voters on Labour's side, so far.

Those inside the Labour Party bemoaning 'a lack of leadership' or 'a lack of vision' or 'gifting Brexit to the Tories' ought to be asking themselves how will voters react to Labour reneging on the outcome of the EU Referendum. Similarly those inside the Party demanding Brexit ought to be asking themselves is it going to deliver better prospects for jobs

and investment.

Feeding the groundswell of discontent with the Tories – and it must be the Conservative Party as a whole that is targeted – should be the leitmotif of Parliamentary Labour Party activity until a Brexit deal is delivered, whether dead or alive. Voters need reminding repeatedly – there is no Tory Brexit bonus – it was a lie. There are no alternative trade deals under the Tories – it was a lie. National sovereignty will be surrendered with a Tory Brexit, and so on.

This will not be achievable in current circumstances. Too many of Labour's elected representatives in Parliament are Brexit bromide dependents. For Labour's electoral ratings to enjoy another major uptick, Labour MPs in so-called Leave constituencies need to be working over the summer wising their voters up to the realities of the Tory mess – surrendering our right to have a say, continuing to pay into the Brussels budget, accepting European Court of Justice rulings. We should be relaunching that old rallying cry from across the pond – no taxation without representation – to justify the Remain option, when the time is right.

Constituency Labour Parties have an opportunity to table so-called contemporary resolutions to Party conference.

*Chartist* editor Mike Davis has tabled one for his local party:

### Labour & Brexit - Conference notes:

**\*British households are £900 worse off following the vote to leave the EU;**  
**\*the economy is now 2% smaller than**

**forecast before the referendum;**  
**\*a rise in racist attacks and abuse since the referendum;**  
**\*an almost 20% devaluation of the Pound in relation to the Dollar and Euro;**  
**\*a relocation of many businesses to European states;**  
**\*the threat to the peace process and Good Friday Agreement with the introduction of a hard border in Ireland;**  
**\*the HMRC estimate of a cost of over £20b to leaving the EU in addition to the £39b settlement;**  
**\*Trump's election and declaration of a protectionist trade war:**  
**This BLP/Conference further believes the Tories will either exit with no deal or manage a bad deal that will not protect jobs or workplace rights or safeguards for environmental and human rights including full citizenship rights for EU citizens in Britain.**  
**This branch/BLP/Conference resolves to:**

**Call on the party in parliament to reject any deal which fails to sustain these current rights and conditions. Support the proposal to negotiate for as long as it takes to secure these terms, through a transition period for continued membership of a Customs Union and single market. Campaign in a general election for the option of retaining membership of a reformed EU. To work with our European partners for:**  
**- an end to EU austerity policies with**  
**- a European recovery programme for jobs, rights, benefits and economic security that the British and other European peoples deserve, after ten years of austerity, worsened employment, reduced pay and welfare deprivation.**

The affiliated trade unions also have rights to table such resolutions. In the face of mounting evidence of the job losses in the UK arising from Brexit uncertainties, it would seem negligent in the extreme if they did not link staying in the EU Customs Union and possibly the Single Market to Labour's ambitious and necessary anti-austerity programme for jobs and investment. What is certain is they will not seek to embarrass Labour's leadership. Nor should rank and file members, but that is an idle wish. As long as Labour has dropped any pretense of negotiating a 'Better Brexit' or delivering a Brexit bonus, an open debate at Conference can only help seal the idea in the electorate's mind that 'Brexit means a Tory mess'. **C**

# Shifting the Paradigm

**Mary Southcott** argues that not only does our voting system warp our politics and divide our country but explains the narrow EU referendum victory for LEAVE. She believes a Labour victory from reengaging our heartlands, reversing BREXIT during the transition or backstop is better than desperate calls for 'Norway' or a people's vote.

In a Somali café in St Paul's, Bristol, on 23 June 2016, during Eid when normally closed in daylight, Labour ran a REMAIN committee room. People came in from the street to discuss how they would vote. The WARP knock-up sheets excluded core Labour voters but we went out to them and although tempted by the LEAVE promises on NHS and jobs which resonated with older Jamaicans, we won them round. But Labour did not trust its supporters, who needed often to be told Labour's policy was REMAIN and was frightened we would be knocking up for BREXIT.

Think back to when Labour thought that the rise of UKIP was a good thing as it "split the Tory vote". In 2015, Lynton Crosby worked out exactly what policies would prevent their vote haemorrhaging, Cameron won the election outright and the referendum was legislated. For those who say extremists would benefit from PR if UKIP had MPs, look at how they hijacked the country under first-past-the-post. Our voting system gives us a winner-takes-all culture.

When half the country votes one way and the other votes another, there is no "will of the people" or "democratic mandate" for BREXIT. We know from the British Election Study that "Labour is the party of REMAIN not just in the south and London, not just among the young, but in every age group, every social grade and every region of the country. In safe seats and marginal seats, in REMAIN voting seats and LEAVE voting seats, it was the REMAIN voters, whether Labour supporters, new voters or voters from other parties who helped deliver Labour's shock result in June 2017."

What we witnessed was an inducement to non voters in general elections, due to voter suppression in Labour majority seats, to vote because in a Referendum they counted. Pre-Corbyn Labour was not about appealing to people



who under our current voting system could be taken for granted. We fought elections at the margins with switch voters and dumbed down our policies to fit their priorities and anxieties. In 2017, Labour changed the centre of gravity by arguing for the popular vote so voting Labour made sense wherever you live. We fought a PR election without a PR voting system, and lost.

Now areas which were ignored are waking up to the fact that they too need the voting system to change so their 'vote mountains' translate into influence. This Bootle or Easington effect is where turnout is lowered by our voting system. Other voter suppression measures are highlighted in the Conservative manifesto:-

- Boundaries based on equalising the registered voters underestimate the population often living in Labour seats, especially where the population 'churns' with young people and others living in multi-occupation.
- A reduction in seats down to 600 will affect the precious MP-constituency link and leave more people unrepresented.
- Identification to vote is not so much about absolute numbers who are turned away but those who are put off voting before they go.
- Not having votes at 16 linked to citizenship education and registration in schools affects the result not only of general elections but

referendums.

EU citizens who have lived in the UK for years should not have been deprived of a referendum vote which affected them directly.

The quick fix of a people's vote which might at the margins reverse the result, but will leave the divisions and disillusion, is not the answer. We need to see this for the constitutional crisis it is. With no written constitution this is difficult for the UK and marks us out from other EU countries. We need an opportunity to update the way we are governed.

Those watching Poldark can see the relationship that some MPs have with their constituencies has not changed much, but people have. No one person can represent the political views of their constituents, particularly on cross cutting issues which divide most parties. We need to recognise that populism is not the only thing invading our politics. The social media, with or without constraints expected in press and broadcasting, education levels, the onset of automation, the money slushing around in campaigns, the accurate targeting of individual voters (did I mention Cambridge Analytica, Paul Dacre or Richard Murdoch?), means it is catch up time for politics. Jacob Rees-Mogg is not the only person living in the wrong century. Our whole system and political culture is.

The blame game UK politicians and media played over Europe, taking credit for all the good and pointing to the EU for the rest, has to stop. We need a paradigm shift in our politics. We need to move from binary to what Rawls called "overlapping consensus". Of course we need to bring back control but to the lives of individuals, by devolving down and sharing up. Soft power is not exercised just at Westminster or in the EU. It needs people to know how they can influence decisions made in their name. It is wherever people meet and can have influence. **C**

# Two cheers for Labour housing policy

Mind the gaps says **Duncan Bowie** but the new policy does put social housing back centre stage.

About two weeks before the local elections, Jeremy Corbyn and shadow housing minister, John Healey launched a new housing policy. While this got little press coverage and came out too late to influence local Labour election manifestos, it is nevertheless an important document and more lengthy and detailed than policy statements the party has produced recently on other policy areas. There is much in the statement to be welcomed and an advance on previous Labour Party policy statements on housing, which have generally focused far too much on helping home owners. The new focus on the need for more social rented homes, including homes to be provided directly by local housing authorities is long overdue, as is the proposal to suspend the 'right to buy', though the statement could have gone a step further with a commitment to follow Scotland and Wales by abolishing the scheme once and for all – something we should have done in 1997. We also now have a commitment to requiring a ballot of existing tenants and leaseholders on estate regeneration schemes, which follows Sadiq Khan's change of tack in London in response to tenant lobbying.

The review has adopted a relatively narrow framework and the statement does not adequately consider a number of policy areas, including planning policy, financial policy, fiscal policy and benefit policy, which impact directly on the ability of national and local government to deliver housing policy objectives, and on some aspects seems to be behind rather than ahead of government thinking. The Conservatives and the civil servants in Whitehall have finally realised that there is both a shortage of social housing and a problem with the quality of the existing housing stock. The fire at Grenfell has forced a policy rethink and the Government has not just brought back funding for



Labour's policy to help the homeless

new social housing (though not nearly enough) but is also looking at issues such as land acquisition costs and land value capture. Labour still has some catching up to do.

One of the key problems with housing policy is that what is now called 'affordable housing' is not affordable by many middle-income households, and certainly not by lower income households. The term 'genuinely affordable' as used by Sadiq Khan and in the new policy statement is inadequate. Social rented housing affordability should be defined as rent and service charges being no greater than 30% of net average household incomes for the lowest quartile of household incomes in the relevant local authority or housing market area. We also need clear criteria for determining affordability for other forms of sub-market housing including shared ownership. Planning policy targets relating to affordable housing should be applied on this basis, with developments not meeting the appropriate affordability definition being treated as market provision and not complying with affordable housing policy or contributing to affordable housing targets.

We need more clarity on Labour's social rent targets – rent levels, security and volume – with sufficient grant per home for local authorities and housing associa-

tions to fund family sized homes as well as smaller homes. These should be at social rents (discounting the value adjustment factor in the target rent regime). Grant funding for shared ownership homes and other forms of discounted home ownership should be terminated and replaced with equity-based loans.

It is important that resources be allocated on the basis of relative housing needs, not just under competitive bidding regimes or bilateral agreements with city regions, local authorities or Housing Associations. Councils as statutory housing bodies must have the central role. There must be a nationally consistent methodology for assessing the comparative housing requirements of each local authority area, both in relation to the needs of the existing stock and the need for additional homes and national resources should be allocated to local authorities (and not directly to housing associations or private developers) in relation to this needs assessment. While we should support the removal of nationally determined limits on local authority borrowing, the Labour Party needs to be explicit in recognising that direct central government subsidy is required both in relation to the improvement of existing stock (including retrofitting in relation to fire

**Duncan Bowie is author of Radical solutions to the housing supply crisis (Policy Press 2017)**

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## ITALY

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safety), the undertaking of estate regeneration schemes which protect the quantity and quality of social rented homes and for new social rented homes (to avoid dependence on private funding/developer-led schemes).

The cost of land, investor speculation in land and in planning permissions is one of the main obstacles to the provision of housing affordable by households on lower and middle incomes. Current legislation (including the 1961 Compulsory Purchase Act) must be amended to give a power to LAs and Mayors to CPO land at Existing Use Value. We also need direct central government funding for Local Authority led estate regeneration (separate from funding for new build) to avoid dependence on private funding/developer led schemes

which involve loss of social housing.

There are several other gaps in the Labour Party's policy. We need to be more specific about reforms to the local government funding regime, including retention of needs-based formula grant and the removal of national caps on council tax levels. Councils need the flexibility to introduce new council tax bands with higher rates. The party must develop a policy to reform stamp duty, council tax, capital gains tax and inheritance tax to make the housing market more stable and to incentivise effective use of existing and new housing stock.

The section on planning in the policy statement is weak. We need a policy on national spatial planning on housing growth, regional and sub regional planning, appropriate locations for

sustainable development, clear criteria for Green Belt reviews and a commitment to the abolition of Permitted Development for office/industrial conversion to housing. We need a policy on density to ensure densification is managed to support appropriate housing supply rather than focusing on maximising returns for developers and investors.

While the focus of this review is on increasing housing supply, the party needs to develop Policy on homelessness and supported housing. We also need to ensure that housing associations return to their original objectives of focusing on meeting the needs of lower income households and others who cannot access market housing and to have much tighter regulation of housing associations. Tenant empowerment on its own is insufficient. **C**

# Italy's new government's *liasons dangereuses*

**Elly Schlein** outlines the dangers of the new populist/rightist coalition

Three months after the Italian general election, which represented a real shock for the national political framework, a new government was sworn in on the June 1st. Led by Giuseppe Conte, a politically inexperienced academic, with the support of the Five Star Movement (M5S, with 32% the largest vote share) in coalition with the extreme right, former secessionist party Northern League (that managed to overcome Berlusconi within the centre-right coalition with 17% of the votes).

After protracted negotiations the two parties adopted a contract as a programme of their government. It includes contradictory measures (a flat tax and a minimum income scheme, just to mention two of them) which will be impossible to implement. While commentators were still reading through the contract and trying to figure out how to define such a coalition, it took less than two weeks for the new Minister of Interior, Matteo Salvini, leader of the Northern League, to make it clear.

The first three moves were to

risk a diplomatic crisis by claiming that Tunisia "is only sending criminals to our country", to announce a political alliance with Viktor Orban "to rewrite EU rules", and to close down the harbours and leave the Aquarius ship in the middle of the sea with its 629 desperate people fleeing the hell of Libyan jails. With these three moves he completely overshadowed both the new Prime Minister and the M5S giving a strong signal to the EU: the nationalists are growing on a common front. There is a paradox when it comes to the new nationalists: they're strengthening each other with the same rhetoric of hatred and walls, that in the end would put them one against the other. In such a context both the EU and Italian people have a lot to be worried about.

To understand this unprecedented situation, we need a deeper analysis of the March election. At the last elections the centre-right coalition, formed by Berlusconi's Forza Italia and the extreme right Northern League and Fratelli d'Italia, emerged as the biggest block with around 37% of the votes. This outcome was again expected and foreseen in the polls during the campaign.



**Elly Schlein is an Italian left MEP**

The real surprise was the impressive result of the Northern League that for the first time overtook its ally Forza Italia, questioning Berlusconi's undisputed role as leader of the coalition.

The M5S, founded by the comedian Beppe Grillo in 2009 and led by Luigi di Maio, became the largest party. Matteo Renzi's Democratic Party was outdistanced by M5S recording its worst result in its history, with about 19% of the votes, halving the historic 41% obtained in 2014 European elections, and confirming the crisis of European social democracy.

The result was unexpected by other forces on the left, including the recently established left coalition 'Liberi e Uguali' led by the former president of the Senate Pietro Grasso. The coalition, aimed at creating unity between Possibile, Sinistra Italiana and Movimento Democratico Progressista, was unable to offer a convincing alternative and innovative leadership and lists. It just exceeded the 3% threshold, entering Parliament with 18 MPs.

What led to such an outcome? First of all, there was clearly a

strong wave of protest against 'the system', against a political class that has been basically the same over the last 20 years and has failed to address the structural problems of the country or deliver the answers the citizens need. The winning forces have managed to present themselves as something new and with no responsibilities for the failures of the past, despite the fact that the Northern League participated in previous Berlusconi governments, despite the internal democracy issues and the disappointing performance of the M5S in governing Rome.

The protest is also the sign of an entire country struggling because of the persistent economic crisis since 2007. This has affected people's income and well-being - the middle class in particular - but also their expectations about the future. For the first time since the end of World War Two, living conditions have dramatically worsened through the crisis, and sons and daughters face a much more difficult and precarious situation than their parents had in previous years.

Yet, the country appears deeply divided not only in terms of inclusion, but also geographically. The map of the electoral results cuts the country in half: the colours of the League in the Northern area (the League started as a regional secessionist party, and was recently transformed, under the leadership of Matteo Salvini, into a nationalistic party of Le-Penist imprint); and the colours of the Five Star Movement in the Southern area.

The main reforms pushed by former Prime Minister, Matteo Renzi, became very unpopular among citizens. The employment reforms drastically decreased the rights of workers and increased labour market flexibility, but failed to deliver the promised results (90% of the new contracts are time limited). The school reform, aimed at imposing a business oriented management of education, raised protests by both teachers and students across the country. Even on environment the choices of the youngest Prime Minister in Italy's history were quite conservative: no embrace of a new and more sustainable model of development based on limiting emissions, energy efficiency and renewable sources, or opposition to the concrete and oil lobbies.

In summary, the Democratic Party-led coalition governments

were criticised for adopting right wing policies, with very few exceptions. This created a fracture with traditional centre-left voters, who either abstained, or decided to vote for what they perceived as a radical change.

Furthermore, the Democratic Party suffered from the strong rejection of the constitutional reform with the referendum held in December 2016, which led to Renzi's resignation as Prime Minister. However, the resignation did not bring any self-criticism or a real change in the line of the government led by his successor Gentiloni.

The March vote was not so much an anti-European vote, since the winning forces decided not to campaign openly against the Euro (even if both the Northern League and the M5S were quite openly against it in the past).

Yet, the stance of the M5S on the Euro is also, at best, ambiguous. In the past few years its positions have been markedly anti-European, to the point that the Movement had supported the idea of a referendum on Italy's exit from the Eurozone. It even formed an alliance with Nigel Farage's Ukip in the European Parliament. More recently, however, the M5S has gradually shifted to a more nuanced, eurosceptic posture.

At the same time the vote appears to be a vote against big coalition governments, as the voters expressed a strong negative judgement on the last four big coalition governments and punished the two forces that kept that option on the table, namely the Democratic party and Forza Italia. Funnily enough, we ended up with a new big coalition government between two forces that in the campaign were opposing the idea, but also opposing one another.

Their success can also partially be explained by their policies for the economy. On the one hand, the institution of a flat tax, *pièce de résistance* of the League and much to the liking of the industrial North's demands for a lower fiscal pressure. On the other, the introduction of a basic income for citizens promised by M5S, appealed to the Southern voters torn apart by unemployment.

Both parties have also exploited the issue of migration, fanning the flames of the hardship faced by Italy with respect to the reception of migrants. Italy was indeed left alone, alongside Greece, to

receive those fleeing war, torture, extreme poverty and hunger. The failure of the relocation mechanism stands as an example of the national selfishness of European partners. Of 160,000 relocations promised by EU Member States, only 30,000 migrants have actually been relocated from Italy and Greece in two years. The political forces that have used a stronger language against migrants and promised harder measures on irregular migration and massive returns, have managed to boost their support following the wave of other extreme right and nationalist forces in other countries.

It is difficult to predict how the balance within the new government's partners will develop. But one thing is certain, the country has gone to the right, therefore the progressive, left and green forces, in all their forms, must really get their act together. We need to reconnect with the most vulnerable, the excluded, the many that feel left out and deprived of any hope for their future. It means rebuilding a vision that puts centre-stage the fight against inequalities, fighting the xenophobic rhetoric that directs people's anger towards migrants, while hiding much bigger issues, like multinational companies evading taxes and stealing huge resources that could be used for welfare services and improving lives.

It's going to be a long and difficult path to regain credibility. But no-one else will do it for us, so we'll have to get even more engaged, to build a common project that offers new solutions based on old values to the challenges on which our future is at stake: migration, climate change, tax justice, common foreign policy, and the social dimension of the EU that is still underdeveloped. But since these are all European and global challenges, we have to face them together at the right level. That's why, in order to confront the global front of the nationalists, we need a European front of the left, progressives and environmentalists. We should resist the polarization between establishment and nationalism and find our space by pushing for a radical change of EU policies and structure, in order to give substance to the same principle of solidarity that today is dangerously at risk. Without solidarity there is no European Union. Let's build it for real. **C**

# VOTER ID

## Bromley pilot problems

**Dermot McKibbin** looks at the scheme in Tory dominated Bromley

**B**romley Council was a pilot authority for the voter identification scheme in the recent local elections. Both the council and the Electoral Commission admitted that there had never been any electoral fraud in the borough, though that was the rationale for the scheme.

Bromley opted for a system whereby voters had to show either a particular form of photographic identification or a particular alternative form of identification. Alternatively, a potential voter could apply to the council for a certificate of identification. All postal and proxy votes are exempt from the requirements for the scheme.

There were numerous problems with the scheme:-

1. According to the BBC website that relied on information supplied by the council, 154 voters were unable to vote and 400 returned later with the correct identification. However, the

council has not published any detailed information about the impact of the scheme to facilitate public scrutiny.

2. Labour lost 1 seat by 20 votes with the Lib-Dems losing another by less than 50 votes. It is entirely possible that this scheme cost Labour this seat on the council.

3. The council had to be lobbied to publish their equality impact assessment.

4. This assessment did not accept that the 8% of the borough's population who do not speak English would be adversely affected by the scheme. However, following the intervention by a Labour councillor it was agreed that translations would be provided. There is no evidence that this decision was carried out. American studies have revealed that ethnic minority groups suffer disproportionately from voter identification schemes.

5. The council accepted that some elderly people in the borough would not have the nec-

essary identification. They agreed to promote the use of a postal vote for this group. This did not happen.

6. Publicity that was paid for by central government gave the misleading impression that you could only vote in person at the election.

7. The treasurer of Beckenham CLP was told initially by the polling clerk that he could not vote. When he challenged them, the clerk relented. We do not know how many voters lacked the confidence to challenge council staff. Nor do we know how many people did not vote as they had no identification at all.

8. In one Tory marginal ward, 28% of the votes cast were postal votes. All Tory election leaflets promoted postal voting. There was no co-ordinated borough-wide campaign by Labour to encourage postal voting or to stop the scheme.

Labour needs to devise a strategy to stop this scheme being rolled out nationally.

**Dermot McKibbin is a member of Beckenham CLP**

## Voter ID - using the American playbook

**Kabul Sandhu** reports on Tory plans to suppress voting

**T**he local elections in May witnessed the introduction of voter ID in five council areas, four Tory and one Lib-Dem controlled. There was no uniform requirement. In some a driving licence or a bus pass; in others a birth certificate. There will be a repeat trial next year and if considered successful it will be rolled out nationally.

What does success mean? The Electoral Reform Society has said that nearly 4,000 people were denied the vote in these trial areas. So, a successful democracy?

Mendacious self-serving arguments have been put forward by the Tory press and supporters suggesting voter fraud is widespread and that we already need id for a whole host of services.

The counter to the first point is that at the evidence points to voter fraud being miniscule. In data relating to 2015 elections there were 26 allegations of in-person and 11 relating to proxy voting fraud - a massive total of

37. As for the second point: when voting, citizens are not asking for a service but demanding to exercise a right to cast a ballot.

Why this sudden interest by the government in voter ID? The Tories have been looking across the Atlantic. The US has a long and inglorious tradition of voter suppression of African Americans and minorities. The Democrats in the southern states formerly maintained white political supremacy through the erection of such hurdles as literacy tests and poll taxes. Nowadays it's the Republicans engaged in reducing the votes of sections of society unlikely to vote for them, once again African Americans and minorities. Their tactics include photo id, fewer polling stations, shorter opening times, polling stations located in places requiring a car to access and depriving ex-felons of the right to vote.

The Tories have observed and learnt. They too are trailing in support among minorities and young people. Suppressing their vote is the name of the game. Voter ID requirement is just the

latest weapon in the Tory armoury. Universities can no longer bloc register their students. Individual rather than household registration will reduce the numbers of young eligible voters in this age of 'generation rent'.

The tactics are clearly designed to hurt Labour support. What should be the response? Labour should call these measures what they are: anti-democratic, tilting a level playing field that should exist between opposing political parties in a liberal democracy.

Labour should point out that the real problem is not voter fraud but rather woefully lower voter turnout, especially in local elections where 30% can be a good turnout. Surely in a healthy democracy a ruling party would want all its citizens to vote? But maybe not this survive-at-any-cost government and party.

**Kabul Sandhu is a member of Basildon CLP**

# Save our schools

**Miriam Scharf** explains how academies have drained resources from public to private and looks at a Newham fightback.

**A**cademies came in under Blair with loads of money and the remit to improve under-performing schools in deprived areas. But the programme was a way to introduce privatisation into education. The Tories recognised the potential of academisation, and the number grew dramatically under the coalition government, from 203 in May 2010 to nearly 4,500 by 2017. Local authorities were not allowed to bid for new school places, which were to be provided only by academies and free schools. Maintained schools were encouraged to become academies and big business entered the education market, starting up academy chains taking on more and more schools in Multi-Academy Trusts.

Damien Hinds, the new Secretary for Education, has confirmed that academies are no better than maintained schools. Indeed the National Education Union has data from government sources showing that on many criteria from pupil results, progress of disadvantaged students, numbers of qualified teachers, teacher retention, and others, maintained schools are better than academies. On school improvement local authorities do better than academies. The taxpayer has footed the bill for academy conversions, at 25k a time, and watched as land, building, assets and the service itself, are transferred from public to private hands.

It became clear, however that just leaving to market forces was not going to work and neither was leaving the only oversight of all schools to central government. Something between the government and the schools was needed, hence the creation of a 'middle tier'. Regional Schools Commissioners were appointed, supposedly to oversee the system. But in fact RSCs often commissioned academies and then moved on to become CEOs of those same academies! When schools became businesses it's not surprising that corrupt practices bloomed. Many started to fail, both as businesses and schools. The scandal of acade-



Protest against academies

my chains abandoning schools, 21 in the case of WCAT in September 2017, was one predictable outcome. Money for children's education going to sky-high salaries and pension pots for academy CEOs, freed from national agreements, was another. The Tories had already dropped the policy of total academisation. In May 2018 Hinds announced that only schools in Special Measures would be forced to academise.

So the academisation programme has faltered, but what are we, the unions, the Left, and the Labour Party doing about it? The NUT opposed academisation in 2008 and the Anti-Academies Alliance, supported by the union, was set up. But there has never been a national fightback; schools were left to fight alone. And they have.

Cut to Newham, September 2017, where the council was dropping the last vestiges of school support, trading its remaining services and introducing a commissioning model. Ambitious headteachers set up MATs and were looking to take over or in their words 'help support', other schools. Over 50% of secondaries and over 60% of primaries were not yet academised.

But something was stirring: it was the union. The NEU sent in new organisers. Petitions outside school gates revealed strong parent interest. The union branch saw a dramatic shift electing a new strong team of activists and a new Branch Secretary. A minority of headteachers were happy to let

anti-academy union members address their governing bodies and speak at staff meetings. But the level of school union meetings, petitioning at the gates, loud parent meetings, lobbies of governing bodies and bigger union meetings, led to indicative and formal ballots for strike action at a number of schools.

The battle to save our schools in Newham had started. Union members leafletting at school gates tapped an extraordinary level of parent support.

The struggle from below at every school threatened with academisation has to continue. Wherever union members and parents respond there is a chance of winning. But in the face of education cuts, and with no change of government imminent, school leaderships will continue to feel vulnerable. Schools can retain autonomy, forming alliances, partnerships and federations with other schools.

An important problem is that the Labour Party's National Education Service proposal is not clear about academisation. Labour talks of 'standards not structures', cover for keeping academies. Corbyn has said he is opposed to academization and the Left need to hold him to that. Academies should be brought back into local authority control so that we can build an education service where every local school is a good comprehensive school, and where problems arise, the local authority and community have a role in resolving them. There is a lot of work to be done here! **C**

## IMMIGRATION

# Solidarity is answer to hostile environment

Following Sajid Javid's appointment as Home Secretary **Don Flynn** looks at the harms caused by the 'hostile environment' policy, prospects for change and what a serious Labour policy might look like.

One of the advantages of having to follow up on an act as draconian and wrong as the 'hostile environment' scandal is that you have plenty of space to row back from and get accolades for doing 'the right thing'.

That is the place where the new home secretary Sajid Javid got himself to in the weeks following his appointment as Home Secretary. His insistence on the term 'compliant environment' has been interpreted by some as a start to unpicking the policies which had been responsible for the hounding of people who had been resident in the UK for decades but not always having documentation in a neat and tidy fashion to prove it.

Elderly Commonwealth nationals it seems are now been invited to attend hospitals for radiotherapy treatment which they had previously been told would only be provided after an upfront payment of £50,000 plus. In Jamaica the hunt is on for 63 people wrongly deported from the UK, (though, and whisper it quietly, it seems that some of these were shipped out during the last years of the Labour government).

There are other beneficiaries from the mood change. Self-employed highly-skilled migrants threatened with removal because of minor errors in their tax returns have been told their cases will be looked at again. The NHS, banned from recruiting migrant doctors because of a requirement that this was only possible if they paid wages of over £300,000 a year, has been told this policy will be eased.

The Holy Grail of the demand for immigration reform for the last eight years – that international students be removed from net migrant targets – also stands a chance of being granted, with the advantage to government being that it can then claim to have hit the magic figure of 'immigration in the tens of thousands, rather than hundred of



thousands', has finally been achieved.

Less reassuring

Javid's package stands a good chance of placating at least some of the government's journalist critics who were drawn into condemnation of the hostile environment policies by the manifest evidence of the harm being done to luckless long-established UK residents. Those closer to the coal-face of control policies as they impact on migrant communities in the parts of the country where they are established are a long way from being so assured on these matters.

Though Home Office enforcement officers might feel themselves a little more reigned-in regarding the exuberance of the way they descend on workplaces and neighbourhoods where migrants are present in dense numbers, the system still equips them with a formidable array of powers which grants them the authority to question, arrest and detain indefinitely anyone whose papers are not entirely in order. Whilst 60-plus year olds might be treated with more circumspection we should still be alert to the plight of people in their mid-twenties with not much more claim to being British than living here since they were toddlers.

Is there any sign that the Labour party is learning any of the lessons of this debacle and building them into its policies? The impressive charge against the hostile environment, led by David Lammy, Diane Abbott, Dawn Butler, and others with intimate connections with the 'Windrush Generation' gave heart

that lessons were being learnt about the nature of immigration enforcement that would bear fruit in a new Labour approach. Diane Abbott is working hard to set out a platform for policies which have a stronger base in human rights and a social justice perspective; but how deep is that going into the party's mainstream?

Gordon Brown for one does not seem to be on the email list on which new ideas are being thrown about. True, the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer and ex-PM is a somewhat marginal figure as far as the current Labour leadership is concerned, but it is likely that his views still have a degree of influence among the large body of centrist Parliamentarians.

In a speech reported in *The Guardian* given in London in early June the former Labour leader is reported as setting out a "six-point plan for dealing with concerns about migration." The items listed were a mixture of, in themselves, anodyne concerns about the need to ensure no undercutting of wages by migrants; registration of jobs to give local people a chance to apply; registration of migrants on arrival in the UK; through to the tougher-sounding 'possible' removal of migrants if they failed to find a job within nine months.

Economic migrants

This is the sort of vacuous over-claiming for the capacity of the state to manage economic migration through tinkering with labour market structures which got Labour into such big trouble with a large part of its electorate in the first place. The insinuation that migrants pursue strategies to deliberately undercut established wage levels now looks pretty feeble given the evidence of resurgent wages and conditions battles taking place in sectors like cleaning, catering, and delivery work, where the newcomers seem to be the one group of workers still trying to wage war on the industrial front. An unequivocal policy from Labour in this issue would simply say it will do what

**Don Flynn is former Director of Migrant rights network**

is necessary to ensure that trade union membership and representation rights will be available to migrant workers and that employment and living wage legislation will work in their interests.

But so much of the conversation around immigration policy on the centre left concerns itself with making gestures intended to placate the anxieties about immigration that Labour itself allowed to grow out of control during its thirteen years in power. Even though there is no evidence that hollowing out the rights to freedom of movement which EU nationals enjoy will translate into secure jobs with better wages and conditions for natives, it remains the presumption that these will have to go as a part of a renegotiated agreement with Brussels.

No real gains for Labour's working class voters maybe, but at least it will be an opportunity to revel in the one way in which solidarity can be demonstrated nowadays – solidarity with the prejudices which have been allowed to take root in the national conversation about immigration over the last fifty-odd years.

The down-side is that tough-talk about controlling immigra-

tion must produce some activity in the way of enforcement which the government can put to the people to show it really is trying. The Tories gave us the fully-fledged hostile environment as a demonstration of its intent, and now seems to be living to regret it. What will a Labour version of the same look like?

Lefty journalist Paul Mason offers something in a recent *New Statesman* article: "suspend free movement temporarily while signing up to the principle." Thanks Paul – that is going to make a lot of sense to the good folk of Stoke-on-Trent and Sunderland.

A Labour 'hostile environment'?

More realistically ideas continue to circulate about the ways in which flows of migrant workers can be channelled into specific jobs and industries – requiring vigorous policing of the internal borders of the UK jobs market to ensure that no migrant ends up in a job she has not been certified as being entitled to take. A difficult task but manageable maybe if we presume that we can get the social security system, the banks, the NHS, private landlords, the DVLA on-board, all to play their

role in sustaining the – what? – hostile environment?

That is Labour's dilemma. You play the game of running a labour market that delivers job-ready proles to capitalist businesses; you strive to manage the political problem of massaging the resentment that will come from generating a mass of bullshit jobs for citizens, and a 'hostile environment' for migrants will appear somewhere along the line.

There is an alternative. Take the principled high ground. Challenge the very idea that the interests of British workers are in fundamental conflict with those of migrants. Overhaul immigration policy to rid it of all the threats to secure residence rights and equality of treatment for newcomers. Throw open the doors of the trade unions to everyone who arrives here from day one. Come up with a battle plan to challenge exploitative working conditions and minimal level wages. In other words, do all that is needed to transform the hostile environment into a place where real solidarity between all working people is once again possible, and let's see where all this takes us. **C**

# Stand up to all racism

**Dave Rosenberg** highlights Tory links to antisemites & racists

**A**ntisemitism, Islamophobia and other forms of racism rise in tandem, as we have seen in Donald Trump's America, and are seeing today in central and eastern Europe, where far right forces are growing in strength and entering government.

Jewish bodies report a significant increase in antisemitic abuse and attacks in 2017. Where the perpetrators and their motives have been identified, most of these incidents are connected with far right ideology. And on the watch of Theresa May. Yet, bizarrely, Jewish leaders are trying to damn Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party, the very party responsible for practically every piece of anti-discrimination law in Britain, laws which were first put in place while many Tories were investing in apartheid South Africa and condemning anti-apartheid activists as communists and extremists.

If the Board of Deputies and



**Jacob Rees Mogg and Gregory Lauder Frost at a meeting of the Traditional Britain Group**

the Jewish Leadership Council, and their bigoted DUP friends, want to belatedly take a stand against all racism, they might want to look instead at the groups attached to the Conservative party who are developing ever closer relations with the Alt-Right and Identitarian Movement, and who are promoting white supremacism, opposition to multiculturalism, and state-assisted repatriation of immigrants to their "natural homelands", such

as the Traditional Britain Group (TBG). This group was founded by Tory Party member Gregory Lauder Frost (currently its Vice-President), and presided over by Tory peer Lord Sudeley.

In the 1990s Lauder Frost happily shared a platform with Holocaust revisionists and deniers such as David Irving and Ernst Zundel. He has described the Nuremberg trials as a "farce", and said he was opposed to Britain declaring war on Nazi Germany. Much more recently he was taped by an undercover reporter calling Stephen Lawrence's mother, Baroness Lawrence, a "nigger", and radio presenter Vanessa Feltz, a "fat Jewish slag".

Tory MP Jacob Rees Mogg gave a talk to The Traditional Britain Group, led by Tory members. They have called for the removal of one monument from Parliament Square – the statue of the great anti-racist fighter and leader Nelson Mandela. Why am I not surprised? **C**

## NORTH KOREA

# The Pyongyang Paradox

Glyn Ford on the Trump gamble in Korea

Pyongyang is trapped in a paradox. The very measures it felt essential to ensure its long-term survival were precisely those that put it in short-term jeopardy. Kim Jong Un's Byungjin Line - which gave equal weight to the building of the nuclear deterrent and the development of the economy - was designed to provide the security, time and space to allow the economy to grow. The ultimate intention was to see the country transformed into a variant of Vietnam or China. Yet the nuclear strand of the policy threatened to precipitate a 'preventive' strike by Washington and its 'Coalition of the Willing' including the UK triggering a second Korean War with devastating consequences for Northeast Asia, millions dead on the Peninsula and a global recession.

Burnt deeply into Pyongyang's psyche is the fate of earlier countries targeted by Washington. The demise of Iraq, Libya and Syria are understood as the result not from their possession of Weapons of Mass Destruction, but rather from their lack. When, in 2003, Libya formally renounced its nuclear programme, a sceptical North Korea rejected the immediate invitation from Washington to follow suit. Barely a month before Kim Jong Un succeeded his father in 2011, the film of Muammar Gaddafi's brutalisation and murder was seen as proof positive of the perils of trusting in the 'international community'. Trump's National Security Advisor, John Bolton's recent exhortations of the 'Libyan model' is the cross before the vampire. It was this that triggered the pushback from Pyongyang and the consequent threat by Trump to cancel the Summit before Bolton was temporarily sidelined and the North toned down the rhetoric.

The North's belief that while the US continues to pose an existential threat, regime survival necessitates both an independent nuclear deterrent and economic growth. But the nuclear defence is also driven by military necessity and labour shortages. Going nuclear is a sign of weakness not strength. North Korea has long lost the conventional arms race.



Kim and Trump

Despite spending a quarter of its GDP on the military, the North is outspent by the South - which has an economy that is fifty times larger - by a factor of five, year on year. Every time there is a naval clash along the Northern Limit Line (NLL) (the disputed maritime boundary between North and South), awareness of the disparity is reinforced by the comparative casualty figures. A conventional war between North and South would see Seoul victorious.

The nuclear deterrent's second rationale - after ensuring the safety of the regime - is to free manpower and resources to be decanted from the army into industrial and economic development. Industrial and economic growth requires manpower. Instead, manpower has been sequestered in Pyongyang's million-man army. This reserve army of labour needs demobilising if the economy is going to take-off. Yet all is rendered moot by the economic embargo.

The question for Kim after Singapore is can he trade his nuclear deterrent for international security guarantees and a comprehensive settlement of outstanding issues. The Trump Summit was more spectacle than

substance. That was the easy part. Thrashing out the detail and delivering the process over years will be orders of magnitude more difficult with lots of opportunity for allegations of cheating and non-delivery and mission creep by Washington, like with Iran, demanding compliance with elements not covered by the Agreement. It will be all too easy to fail. Yet the alternatives are worse. All the options facing the US as regards North Korea take the world to hell in a handcart save for diplomacy. The three alternatives are: first a preventive military strike; second 'changed' regime through covert action and subversion; third the imposition of an increasingly brutal sanctions regime barely short of an economic blockade leading to military adventurism by Pyongyang or civil unrest. In practice this deadly trinity will be intimately interlinked as a three lane highway to war. Yet despite Theresa May's complicity by sending UK military assets for Joint Military Exercises in South Korea, that may involve Britain in another interventionist war, Labour in the Commons remains silent. **C**

**Glyn Ford is the author of Talking to North Korea; Ending the Nuclear Standoff to be published by Pluto Press in September**

# Cuba –time for human rights & democracy

An end to the Castro regime in Cuba prompts **Andy Roberts** to call on Jeremy Corbyn for a change of approach.

**I**n April 2018, Miguel Díaz-Canel was sworn in as the new president of Cuba. He has promised ‘reform’, but how radical will this be? And what will the attitude of Labour’s leadership be?

Jeremy Corbyn has a very good record on human rights – in some cases. Not least his doughty support for the rights of the Chagos Islanders, for whom I have also campaigned for many years. Corbyn was for many years the much-respected Chair of the cross-party All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Chagos Islands, and is knowledgeable and eloquent on this topic.

However, I am extremely troubled by his strong advocacy for the Cuba Solidarity Campaign and the one-party regime in Cuba. While I do not agree with the counter-productive US economic blockade on Cuba, as a democratic and libertarian socialist, I object fundamentally to a regime which fails on every basic democratic principle: freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, free elections with a plurality of political parties, the existence of independent non-governmental and civil society organisations, and not least, independent trade unions – trade unions in Cuba are state-controlled organisations, not autonomous workers’ organisations.

Owen Jones, rightly, drew attention to this issue in his Guardian article of 18th December 2014. “The US embargo is disappearing; so, too, must Cuba’s dictatorship. “There were many dictatorships that called themselves “socialist” in the 20th century: almost all fell, and their lasting contribution has been to sully the cause of socialism. Democracy is a universal right, not something that only some peoples or some cultures deserve. Having an exceptional healthcare and education system, or defying a concerted attack by a global superpower, does not mean being let off the hook when it comes to allowing your people to vote for

whoever they want.” In her 2016 article, following the death of Fidel Castro, Forget Fidel Castro’s policies. What matters is that he was a dictator, Zoe Williams comments that: “Pluralism, democracy and universal rights are the foundations of progressive politics. One man, even if he’s a woman, does not get to govern by force and decree. One oppressed group, even if it’s dentists, is an oppression of everybody. One nation, even if it’s tiny and exports a lot of doctors, is as great an insult to the principles of the left as one dictatorial superpower”.

Even more seriously, this recent report from Human Rights Watch, World Report 2018: Cuba. Events of 2017, details the continuing systematic repression of dissenters in Cuba. It reports (among other things) that: ‘The Cuban government continues to employ arbitrary detention to harass and intimidate critics, independent activists, political opponents, and others. The number of arbitrary short-term detentions increased dramatically between 2010 and 2016, from a monthly average of 172 incidents to 827, according to the Cuban Commission for Human Rights and National Reconciliation, an independent human rights group that lacks official authorization and the government considers to be illegal.

The number of detentions dropped significantly in 2017, with 4,537 reports of arbitrary detentions from January through October, a decrease of 50 percent compared to the same period in 2016.

Detention is often used preemptively to prevent people from participating in peaceful marches or meetings to discuss politics.

And on trade unions: ‘Despite updating its Labor Code in 2014, Cuba continues to violate conventions of the International Labour Organization that it has ratified, specifically regarding freedom of association, collective bargaining, protection of wages, and prohibitions on forced labor. While the



Castro and his successor

law technically allows the formation of independent unions, in practice Cuba only permits one confederation of state-controlled unions, the Workers’ Central Union of Cuba.’ 4,537 arbitrary detentions in 10 months are not just ‘flaws’, as Corbyn shamefully implied in a statement following the death of Fidel Castro, but are an inherent feature of the repressive one-party political system in Cuba.

To support a regime which commits such abuses of basic human rights and democratic principles is a deplorable double standard. Labour should be supporting the earliest possible introduction of basic democratic principles and standards in Cuba, without any “ifs and buts”?

I recently spent time in Gdansk, Poland, where I visited the Solidarity Museum, which was for me a very moving and emotional experience, as I was a strong supporter of the Polish Solidarity Campaign in 1981-83, during the period of martial law. I know very well that the tyrannical form of “state socialism”, which existed in this region before 1989, and on which the Cuban political system is consciously modelled, is not, in any way whatsoever, the way forward for the left in the UK or elsewhere.

Quite apart from the issues of moral principle involved, any suggestion of sympathy for such regimes actively undermines the democratic left in our country. **C**

## RUSSIA

# From soviet state to capitalist kleptocracy

**Anna Paterson & Alexandra Zernova** say the left needs to see Putin's Russia for what it is

In the Summer of 2017 BuzzFeed published an investigation of 14 recent suspicious deaths in the UK of opponents of the Russian regime. Then in early March came the attempted murder in Salisbury of former double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter, using a military-grade nerve agent. Eight days later, another Putin opponent was murdered in London. No serious independent Russia or security analysts believe there is any plausible explanation for the Skripal attacks that does not involve Russian security structures in some way. Moreover, Russia has form – having murdered Alexander Litvinenko with polonium in London in 2006.

The attack came during an election campaign in Russia in which Putin hailed Russia's ability to upset the international appletart. Putin, who has served as President for 14 of the last 18 years, was re-elected on 18 March. Two serious opposition candidates planned to stand against Putin in 2018. One was Boris Nemtsov, murdered near the Kremlin in 2015, on the orders, the Nemtsov family believe, of human rights-abusing Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov. Kadyrov was awarded a medal by Putin the month after Nemtsov's murder. The other serious opposition candidate, Alexei Navalny, whose exposure of corruption has been a thorn in Putin's side, was prevented from running.

Putin's regime comprises a group of cronies around the Kremlin who use their power to loot the public purse and rely increasingly on repression of all opposition. Left wing activist Sergei Udaltsov and liberal Alexei Navalny were both arrested and detained after protests in 2012, and were described by Amnesty International as 'prisoners of conscience'. Udaltsov served over four years in prison. Many Putin opponents have been imprisoned on trumped up charges, including two regional governors last year, and the former Minister of Economic



Putin and close friend Arkady Rotenberg

Development in January. Theatre director Kirill Serebrennikov was unable to attend Cannes this year as he is under house arrest on embezzlement charges. He had criticised Russia's annexation of Crimea and voiced support for the LGBT community, which faces appalling abuse and harassment. It is not only individuals who are targeted. In January, a 2012 law requiring NGOs with any foreign funding to register as 'foreign agents', already used to target a range of civil society organisations, was used to dissolve a well-known trade union.

Meanwhile Russia's economy is smaller than Italy's, has a modest per capita income, but an unusually high number of billionaires. Some 77% of wealth is held by the richest 10%. Putin's first two terms saw a rise in living standards but years of low or no growth from 2012 have seen wages and living standards fall and the poverty rate increase. Sanctions have played some role, but this is also the result of falling prices for oil and commodities exports, on which the economy remains chronically dependent. Federal budgets have been cut, the Kremlin has increased the income it extracts from regions, and increasingly indebted regional governments are struggling to meet their social spending requirements. Yet mili-

tary spending is disproportionately huge. Russia spent 17.5% of overall government expenditure on the military in 2016, proportionately more than the US. This funds Russia's military involvement in Ukraine and its support of the murderous Assad regime.

Wealthy Putin associates love London. They own property here and send their children to British schools. Expressions of outrage and diplomatic expulsions, in the absence of stronger measures, arguably allowed Putin to use the Skripal incident to maximum effect domestically without paying much of a real price. But the UK is in a uniquely powerful position to apply pressure on the Putin regime where it really hurts – in the lifestyles and pockets of regime cronies. Yet our government has been reluctant to apply the same level of stringent financial measures targeting the assets of corrupt foreign officials held abroad that the US passed in 2012. The conservatives need to be held accountable for their reluctance. These points were made by Labour after the Salisbury attacks, but they were fatally diluted by hesitant, even obfuscatory, language over Russia's responsibility, and unhelpful noises off from some who have a track record of defending Putin.

Parts of the British left struggle to grasp the authoritarian capitalist kleptocracy that is post-soviet Russia, still seeing Russia as a helpful counterweight to US power. Unfortunately, in a multipolar world, those whose foreign policy is based the crude principle that 'my enemy's enemy is my friend' are apt to end up with the wrong friends. The current Labour leadership would be wise to consult, and actually listen to, a wider range of academic and other expertise on Russia, as well as Russian activists. Opposition figures in Russia are paying a personal price for their activism which few of us have ever had to pay. The least they should expect from a party built on principles of internationalism is some measure of solidarity. **C**

**Anna Paterson has a PhD in Russian Foreign Policy, and is a member of Tower Hamlets Labour Party  
Alexandra Zernova is a human rights lawyer**

# Can Labour be a party for socialism?

Andrew Coates on a history of the Labour Left

**T**he election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party in 2015 and his re-election in 2016 have been followed by a number of pacy biographies. There have been other efforts to explain the victory, often as part of a global rise of ‘outsider’ politics. By contrast Simon Hannah’s *A Party with Socialists* in it, is an account of the North Islington MP’s leadership within the long history of the Labour left inside the party.

An issue hangs over *A Party with Socialists* in it. There may be socialists in Labour but can Labour become a vehicle for socialism? The late Ralph Miliband, Hannah observes, came to consider the party unfit for socialist purpose, unable to create a “radically different social order” (*Postscript to Parliamentary Socialism*, 1973)

The Labour Party, Hannah states, was created as a Broad Church designed to represent the “entire labour movement”. He suggests that the seating is arranged around two wings. There is the ‘transformative’ current - the socialist left - which aims to change society radically, facing sustained opposition from the Establishment. Seated separately have been the ‘integrative’ battalions in the Parliamentary party and major trade unions. Outside and inside office, they try to avoid friction by making peace with the Powers that Be.

*A Party with Socialists* in it ably covers more than a century of differences between right and left from the foundation of the Labour Representation Committee in 1900 onwards – a vast sweep. But historical reminders are often extremely relevant.

To explain the background to Blair and Brown’s modernising project it is useful to look at the 1950s ‘revisionist’ debate, between figures such as Anthony Crosland and Aneurin Bevan. This centred on the balance between social and private ownership and making property serve “social purposes”. In the 1970s this again became a live issue. While the first stirrings of the neo-liberal privatisation agenda could be seen inside the Conservative Party, Labour

appeared to be rethinking the ‘balance’ between public and private in the opposite direction.

The Alternative Economic Strategy (AES) came onto the Labour agenda. Stuart Holland’s version of the AES aimed to create “new public ownership and social controls in the meso-economic sector”. It included nationalising the 25 top manufacturing companies to “harness the market power of big league firms”. Along with planning and rights to workers’ participation, it aimed to tackle inefficiency, to create jobs and end the decline in British profits and competitiveness. Hannah notes that the AES included protectionist measures (*Strategy for Socialism*, Stuart Holland, 1975).

As Hannah notes, capitalists were unlikely to welcome the AES without ferocious opposition. Wilson, the leader of the ‘integrationist’ wing of the party, never intended this to happen. Only a shadow of the AES, a National Enterprise Board, that helped prop up some failing enterprises and the Bullock Report’s plans for corporatist works’ councils, torpedoed by the unions themselves, remained. Avoiding ruffling the established powers ended with accepting an austerity programme in response to IMF demands. For Hannah this was “capitulation to international finance”. Efforts to bring together companies and workers through ‘Social Contract’ wage restraint ended in the 1979 Winter of Discontent.

The 1980s rise and fall of ‘Bennism’, with Benn’s narrowly thwarted deputy leadership bid in 1981, saw the left rally around the former Cabinet Minister. His socialism, in Hannah’s account, was that of a “constitutionalist political reformer”. He based his ambitions on “genuine national sovereignty” and wider democracy including extra-parliamentary activism. Some saw this as transformative ground for socialist activism; others considered that it placed too great a hope in a reformed Parliamentary system. It encouraged the belief that if the levers of the Labour Party were won, a sovereign left government could detach itself from the world economy, and bodies such as the IMF and implement the

discarded AES. This idea remains popular on the left amongst those wishing for an independent Britain ‘taking back control’ from the European Union.

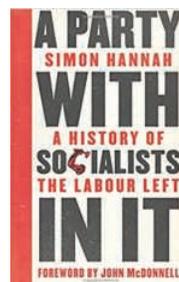
Hannah surveys the left’s defeats in the 1980s. The first pitched battle was on the question of inner-party democracy. The chapter *The Broad Church Collapses* is valuable in covering with a critical eye the main players, the inward looking and often fractious activities of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD) and the Labour Coordinating Committee (LCC).

Neil Kinnock’s modernising ambitions, a move to the centre, are widely said to have foreshadowed the 1990s dominance of Tony Blair’s team. Did Neil Kinnock isolate the left only by ditching radical policies and purging organised factions? Certainly Kinnock’s moves to remove policy making from Conference and NEC control were important to activists.

Others suggest that the search for policies adapted to new constituencies appearing with ‘post-Fordist’ times played a part in the modernising agenda. A fierce inter-left polemic took place on the decline in the power of the industrial working class (*The Forward March of Labour Halted?* 1981). Ideas about a post-Fordist production or a postmodern world may have had a limited appeal. But wholesale industrial run down, the defeat of the miners’ strike, and the widespread closures that followed, saw the pillars of the labour movement disappearing.

There were efforts to develop a response through new left policies in the late 80s, notably at the Socialist Movement Chesterfield Conferences called by Tony Benn, the Socialist Campaign Group and the Socialist Society, including Labour left journals and radical non-Labour forces. They attempted to learn from the experiences of municipal socialism shut down by Thatcher and the balance-sheet of the 1980s class conflicts. This initiative merits more coverage than the many pages devoted to the expulsion of the Militant platoons that

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## LABOUR LEFT

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claimed to represent the socialist vanguard. Blair and Brown may have ended in a progressive umbrella hard to distinguish from a liberal desire to inject justice over market outcomes. Yet they were not only an acceptance of the neoliberal consensus but also a response to its appeal and to a changing class configuration. Their relaxed attitude to finance and acceptance of privatising public services, not to mention participation in the invasion of Iraq, were disasters. The Third Way ideology was vapid cover. But not every single policy was unwelcome, as can be seen as Universal Credit replaces Tax Credits. Stealth redistribution, nevertheless, now means little as the modernisers' centre-ground has dried up. There is little space for Labour in a 'neo-liberal' consensus following the 2007-8 banking crisis. Accepting Conservative austerity plans, apparently eternal fiscal features, means attacks on bedrock public services. Put simply, why indeed should the majority pay for their mistakes?

This is an invaluable account not just of the history of the Labour left but of the future prospects of the Corbyn leadership. Hannah ends with hope that 'capitalist realism' is ending. Jeremy Corbyn's leadership may open up many possibilities. As John McDonnell puts it in his Introduction, Labour can be a "genuinely transformative party". Momentum, in this view, is not just an effective electoral machine to support Jeremy Corbyn. It helps extend Labour's influence amongst the public, and tips towards being a social movement for change. It would equip the practical idealists with the Parliamentary muscle to carry

open-minded socialist ideas into effect. If Labour came to power would it also be needed to counter business and right wing attempts to sabotage the project? Could it develop a new, better version of the AES that avoids its pitfalls? The alternative, offered by the factionalising remnants of the modernisers, is an attempt to jump on a 'progressive' bandwagon driven by French President Emmanuel Macron. It is a bit of everything, except a realistic way of tackling a decade of government austerity.

Those who had given up on transforming the Labour Party would also deserve a mention, not least because many of them are now against party activists. A Party... has nothing about the short-lived Socialist Alliance (its main challenge in the 2001 election, with derisory votes), Respect (George Galloway MP), or the more recent Left Unity Party. All of these bodies involved ex-Labour left-wingers. Many could offer not entirely happy experiences of working directly with left factions and the larger Leninist groups which shape their take on Corbyn's Labour left and Momentum. This gap too contrasts with the large space devoted to Militant. No doubt it was 'witch-hunted', but Militant's top-down discipline and claims to lead the socialist fight have long limited its impact within the Labour left and more recent attempts to form electoral alternatives to the party.

Hannah states that the 1940s left tended to assume that their main disagreements with the Labour leadership were over the speed of change, not over principles. The collapse of the ecumenical endeavour during the

Blair-Brown years largely put an end to this way of thinking. For many on the left the turn to 'social liberalism' cut the ground under the feet of any common endeavour.

Another initiative, which Hannah could have mentioned, is the People's Assembly movement of protest against austerity that united trade unionists, both the Labour and non-Labour left and a wide range of activists. The status of affiliated supporters allowed many to have a voice within the party, which it was easy to transfer into full membership after Corbyn's election.

It is striking that British Labour, alone among established European left parties, has undergone this development, perhaps indicating that its structures are not such an obstacle to the left after all.

The Blair leadership appeared to cut off any chance for the Labour left or these ideas continuing as a serious 'transformative' current in the party. Leo Panitch and Colin Leys, dedicating their book to the independent left-wing academic, concluded, at the zenith of New Labour, that the "route to socialism does not lie in transforming the Labour Party" (*The End of Parliamentary Socialism* 1997).

Nevertheless in the mid-1990s the Centre Left Grassroots Alliance (CLGA), broke the 'sealed tomb' of the left under Tony Blair, and in 1998 got four left-wingers elected to Labour's NEC. The CLGA was broader than the CLPD or Labour Briefing. There is no account of the role in the CLGA or Labour Reform and other 'soft left' forces, including Tribune and contributors to the present magazine. **C**

**A Party with Socialists in it. A History of the Labour Left.**  
Simon Hannah.  
Pluto Press  
£12.99

## Printer ad

# Democratic reformism or revolutionary centralism?

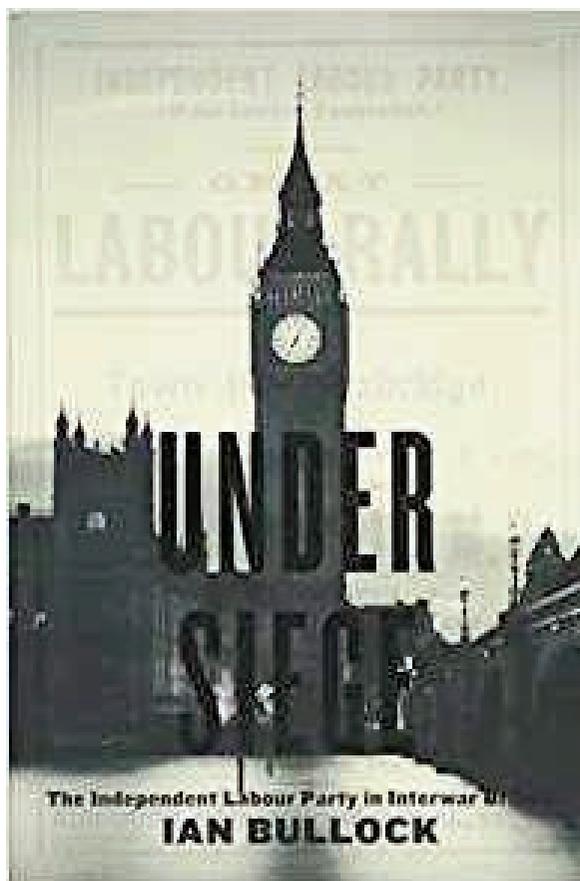
**Duncan Bowie** on the interwar Independent Labour Party

**I**an Bullock's new book, *Under Siege*, is a study of the Independent Labour Party in the interwar period. It should be of interest to Chartist readers as the ILP tried to find a political route between the reformism of the Labour Party and the revolutionary centralism of the Communist Party. Its traditions combined ethical socialism and Marxism. It sought to combine the advocacy of socialism within parliament with the development of socialist agitation outside parliament. It was nor anti-parliamentary or anti-state. It had a strong focus on building democratic organisations at all levels of the political structure as well as a strong belief, almost obsessive on intra-party democracy.

Much of the book focuses on the ILP's troubled relationship with the Labour Party. With the Labour Party's 1918 constitution allowing individual membership and leading to the establishment of constituency Labour Parties, the ILP's historic role as the organisation of individual socialists (in contrast with trade unions) was superseded with the ILP's new role becoming one of a pressure group within the party. As many of its leaders such as McDonald and Snowden moved to roles within the Labour Party, and then to roles in government, first in 1924 and then in 1929, many ILP members faced conflicts of loyalty while as an organisation, the ILP's challenge was how they could advocate policies to the left of the mainstream party, and at times criticise Labour in government, while still being seen as part of the Labour family and avoid either marginalisation or expulsion.

The title of the book however refers primarily to the ILP's relationship to the Communist Party, although the ILP could be seen to be under siege by other challengers. As an organisation to the left of the Labour Party, the ILP, from Bullock's perspective, was under siege from the Communist Party and from communist supporters. Throughout most of the interwar period, leaving aside the

Class against Class period of 1929-34, in which both Labour Party and ILP members were seen as 'social fascists', communists were often members of the Labour Party and/or the ILP. The ILP, as a marxist party, was respectful of the achievements of the Soviet Union and as a supporter of socialist unity, was tempted by the apparent world-



view of the Third International, while opposed to its rigid centralism. The book therefore focuses on the ILP's attempt to promote the unity of the world socialist and communist movements through its prominent role in the Vienna Union, known as the 2 1/2 international and its attempts to have an associational relationship with the Third, which was not acceptable to the Comintern leadership. With the ILP's disaffiliation from the Labour Party, and with the Labour Party banning communist members, the ILP became a target for communists seeking to influence the wider

movement.

The ILP were supporters of the United Front, despite their troubled relationship with the Communist Party, but as the Communist Party moved to advocate a Popular Front, including members of 'bourgeois parties', not just liberals but dissident Conservatives, the ILP found itself on the left of the Communist Party and host to a group of Marxist critics of Stalinism, led by C L R James. The main threat to the ILP's survival however came from a group of communists within its ranks, led by Jack Gaster and Carl Cullen of the London based Revolutionary Policy Committee, who sought to achieve the incorporation of the ILP into the Communist Party and nearly succeeded in doing so, only themselves abandoning the ILP once they had weakened it through establishing what was in effect 'a party within a party'.

It was the ILP's decision to disaffiliate from the Labour Party in 1932, just as the Labour Party was moving to the left, that led both to its marginalisation and increased factionalism. With its parliamentary representation reduced to five as the vast majority of ILP members who were MPs choosing the Labour Party over the ILP, the ILP's political power base was reduced to Glasgow, and even in Glasgow, Pat Dollan, leading ILP'er who became Glasgow Provost seceded to form his own Scottish Socialist Party. The Lancashire ILP, the ILP's main working-class base in England, led by Elijah Sandham, seceded to establish an Independent Socialist Party. Ex ILP'ers within the Labour Party, including Noel Brailsford, established the Socialist League, funded by Stafford Cripps but an effective policy making group until it was itself expelled from the Labour Party. Clifford Allen had joined MacDonald's National Labour Party in 1935, becoming Lord Allen of Hurtwood, and active in the cross-party Five Years Group until his early death

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in 1939.

The ILP's commitment to internal democracy can however be seen as one of its weaknesses, though Bullock clearly views this as one of its strengths. On its foundation in 1893, the ILP's national administrative committee (NAC) was neither a policy-making or directing body. Its successive leaders, of whom Clifford Allen and James Maxton were the most prominent, repeatedly acted independently of the NAC, while divisional groups and ILP MP's alike often disregarded or contested ILP conference decisions. The establishment of an Inner Executive committee in 1934 not only belied the ILP tradition but failed to resolve internal conflicts as this committee was not itself united. The Abyssinia crisis of 1935 demonstrated that the ILP leadership could not resolve conflicting views on imperialism, self-determination, political democracy and an

historic anti-war if not totally pacifist position. Neither John Paton, the secretary or Fenner Brockway, the chair, could hold the party together, with Paton leaving, becoming Labour MP for Norwich in 1945. Brockway only rejoined the Labour Party after 1945, returning to parliament in 1950, joining the House of Lords in 1964 and continuing his political activism until his death in 1988 at the age of 99. It is however not surprising that in the months before the outbreak of war in September 1939, that the ILP, recognising how marginalised it had become, was considering reaffiliation to the Labour Party. The war however deferred this decision and the ILP in fact struggled on till 1975, when it converted itself into Independent Labour Publications as a publishing and pressure group within the Labour Party.

The interwar ILP has been the subject of previous studies,

notably Dowse's 1966 pioneering volume – Left in the Centre. We also have Pimlott (1977), Jupp (1982), Corthorn (2006) and Spalding (2018) on various aspects of the British Left in the 1930's. Much of the second half of Bullock's book parallels the narrative of Gidon Cohen's 2007 *Failure of a Dream* on the post disaffiliation ILP. The advantage of Bullock's book is that it focuses as much of the development of the ILP's policy as on the factional disputes, and the coverage of the ILP's political advocacy in the 1920's, including its living wage campaign, is excellent, bringing to the fore some of the ILP's leading thinkers such as Fred Jowett, Fred Henderson, Frank Wise, John Middleton Murry, Arthur Creech Jones, Charles Trevelyan and Noel Brailsford, socialist theorists and activists from whom we can learn much. **C**

**Under Siege**  
**Ian Bullock**  
**Athabasca**  
**University Press**  
**£34**

## GP at Hand (in till)

**Stephanie Clark** reports on shocks on the road of NHS 'modernisation'

**G***P at Hand* is a new threat on the scene, based in London. It offers fast access to an NHS GP via a mobile app, but excludes complex health needs or complications such as pregnancy, and only affords face-to-face contact with a GP to those able to travel to its nearest centre. It is a clear example of cherry picking. The unwary have signed up in thousands in London not realising that they are automatically de-registered from their local GP practice. Local GPs in east London report confused and angry people turning up at the surgeries they were previously registered at when denied the care they need by GP at Hand.

It is not clear how *GP at Hand* has secured a contract when it does not meet the GP requirement to be open to all. GP at Hand is destabilising general practice through siphoning funds away from GPs who serve the whole community and whose patients with high health needs are cross-subsidised by the largely well majority. And now the rapid expansion of, mostly young, patients registered with *GP at Hand* has also caused a shock

£18m of losses to the health commissioners hosting *GP at Hand* in west London. Discussions with NHS England on a bailout are in train, and a planned roll out beyond London has been halted for the time being.

*GP at Hand*'s technology partner is Babylon Healthcare, owned by Ali Parsa, a former investment banker and CEO of Circle Health.

### SubCos

Part of the trend of privatisation of non-clinical services, created since the Health and Social Care Act are NHS Subsidiary Companies (SubCo). Set up by NHS Trusts ostensibly to avoid VAT, SubCos employ hospitals' ancillary staff transferred across to them. Cost savings will be achieved by employing new staff below NHS rates. The nature of the companies also allows for a future sale to the private sector. To date, 19 providers have established a subsidiary company to manage their estate, and 16 more have told staff they are considering the move.

### Contract Failures

Elsewhere we have Serco's falsification of its performance data in its out of hours GP care in Cornwall ending its contract in 2013, and Coperforma losing its



2015 contract for hospital transport in southern England for its shambolic performance of missed appointments.

A report by the NHS Support Federation documents the shocking prevalence of failure by private companies in delivering NHS services since 2012 - pulling out of contracts because of failing to make profits or recruit enough staff or to meet standards of care or falling into insolvency. Circle's catastrophic failure in care standards as well as financial management at Hinchingbrooke Hospital is an example. Now comes news in 2018 that Circle is backing out of bidding in the renewal of its contract to continue running the Nottingham Treatment Centre - whilst threatening to sue the local health commissioners for reducing the value of the contract.

**Bryn Jones is a sociologist and Labour Party member**

# Death of a Superstar

**Patrick Mulcahy**  
on a  
troubling  
biopic

**A**claimed as one of the most successful female entertainers of the 1980s and 1990s, Whitney Houston achieved notoriety as an out-of-control drug addict whose marriage to fellow celebrity Bobby Brown ended in divorce, whose (former manager) father John Houston tried to sue her for \$100 million dollars and whose only daughter, Bobbi-Kristina, took her own life three years after Whitney's own death by drowning on February 11, 2012, aged 48. Her tragic story is told in the troubling and troublesome documentary, 'Whitney', helmed by British documentarian and feature film director, Kevin MacDonald ('Touching the Void', 'The Last King of Scotland').

The documentary is troubling because its subject never appears to speak for herself, not in a way where she appears to have control. Born and raised in Newark, New Jersey, Whitney began her career by literally mimicking her mother, Cissy Houston, a backing singer for Aretha Franklin (amongst others) at a concert in which Mom was apparently too indisposed to perform. 'I wanted to see if she could cut it', the elderly but still formidable Cissy tells an off-screen MacDonald sternly. Whitney's first television appearance in 1983 (singing 'I wish I was home') went down a storm and after eliciting interest from two record companies, who showered her on successive nights with flowers and increased financial offers, she ended up signing with Arista Records. Her success was meteoric, with songs like 'The Greatest Love of All' and 'Saving All My Love for You' but her private life was more complex. Her closest friend and confidante, Robyn Jackson, who subsequently joined her staff as advisor, was a lesbian. Rumours abound – the absence of Jackson's voice is a great gaping hole in Whitney's narrative – but Whitney dated guys, including Brad Johnson, who though interviewed offers little insight. Eventually, at an awards show, Whitney bee-lined

for Bobby Brown, a hit singer with 'My Prerogative', who was singularly unable to cope with her stratospheric rise, after the success of her first foray into acting, 'The Bodyguard'.

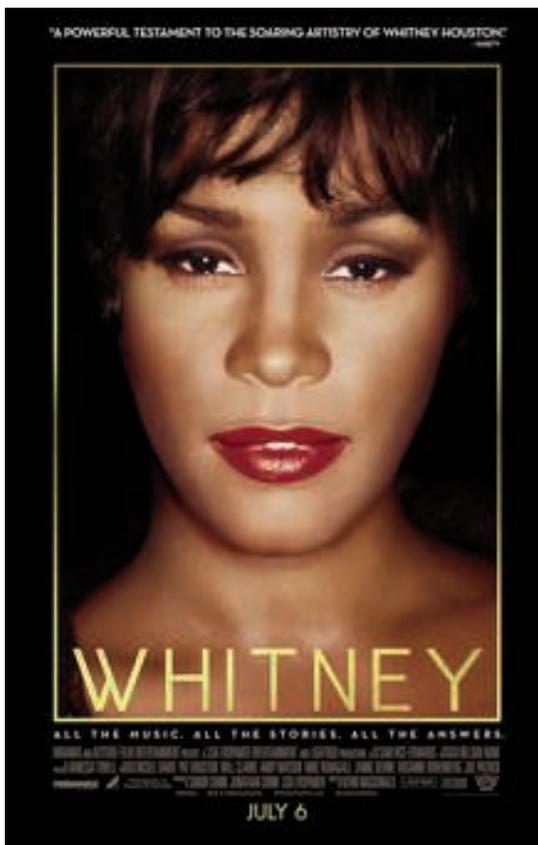
As we watch the highlights of her career, a pattern emerges, though not one pointed out by any of the interviewees, including many members of her extended family and Bobby Brown himself: Whitney adapted and then transcended the material she was

some extent, by home movie footage, including some that shows Whitney and Bobby out of synch in the recording studio and the pair completely high on drugs. We see her nosedive interview with Diane Sawyer, in which the interviewer confronts Whitney about her substance addiction. 'Crack is wack,' Whitney announces. Most shocking of all in the interview is the absence of an authentic voice, a consciousness freed to speak for itself. Even in one-to-one interview, Whitney sounds mediated, at best and most relaxed relating the plot of someone else's story.

Behind Whitney's decline is a mitigating factor which Macdonald delves into in the final twenty minutes – that as a young girl, Whitney was abused by her cousin Dee Dee Warwick – Macdonald shows Whitney speaking out passionately against child abuse in an interview in 1990, one of the few times where she sounds authentic. It accounts for Whitney not leaving Bobbi-Kristina behind when she went on tour, though Whitney's daughter underwent a trauma of a different sort, watching her mother disappear into addiction.

The film is troublesome because, finally, it is made by a (white) director who to some extent is exploiting Whitney's fame and decline for an awards magnet documentary.

It is telling that Whitney bonded with Michael Jackson: both were driven by disciplinarian parents, came from musical families, achieved superstardom when they least able to cope with it, had issues with working within white culture (one interviewee speaks of a 'double consciousness' necessary for black talent to thrive) and finally succumbed to drugs. Macdonald reflects on the parallel, but doesn't hold 'white culture' to account. The movie isn't that much different from a sensationalist TMZ documentary and frankly Whitney Houston and African American artists in general deserve better. 'Whitney' premiered at the Edinburgh International Film Festival and opens in UK cinemas in July



The film is illuminated, to

BOOK REVIEWS

# A check list for the next General Election

**Peter Kenyon**  
on Labour policy

**FOR THE MANY: PREPARING LABOUR FOR POWER**  
Ed Mike Phipps  
O/R Books, £12

Mike Phipps has done the Labour Movement a great favour. Who reads Election Manifestos? Come on, hands up! This handy 225 page collection of essays brings together contributors from the left of the movement sandwiched between Ken Loach – Preface and Jon Lansman – Afterword. John McDonnell MP endorsed Phipps’ book as a “vital contribution”.

Most commentators agree the Labour Party 2017 Election Manifesto was a significant contributor to an astonishing outcome at the polls. Phipps in his Introduction sets out a credible case for using it as a template for the next election. “the key to understanding Corbynism lies in recognizing that it combines much more long-standing democratic socialist values with an inclusive and unifying approach to political practice”, he writes. Irrespective of whether May’s government collapses tomorrow or clings on until 2022, Labour has to hold on to that idea. One of his more erudite contributors, Jeremy Gilbert describes the 2017 General Election as an historic turning point in which “neo-liberalism no longer presents itself as unchallengeable common sense,

defining a political terrain from which nobody can depart for any distance.” In plain language, I think Gilbert meant ‘Blairites – piss-off’. Phipps reminds his readers that the Manifesto was a statement of hope, and its policy provisions offered a sense of taking back control of Britain’s economy from the forces of globalization. Moreover, Phipps concludes Corbyn himself extended authenticity to the electorate.

So far so good. Personally, I’m obsessed with Macmillan’s readiness to defer to events, and Wilson’s maxim that “a week is a long time in politics”. So, readiness for another General Election is an ever-present preoccupation. In this regard, Phipps’ compendium falls short. Brexit is the elephant in this tome. Or at least the ‘real politik’ of the Tory civil war, which Labour has been dragged into, surely deserved an honorable mention? In the context of a ‘no deal’ or a Tory Brexit, Labour is going to have its work cut out (should it win power at the next election) – ‘Creating an economy that works for all’ penned by Hilary Wainwright just ignores the issues. A chapter on negotiating Brexit with Ewa Jasiewicz remains an enigma – just like Brexit itself. Happily, contributions on Education, Health and Housing include pertinent check list material. Chris Williamson MP skips over why we lock so

many people up in his contribution on security. But Jeremy Gilbert offers some relevant insights into the manifesto section on “Leading Richer Lives” He tackles a mealy-mouthed approach to devolution head-on. “What is missing is any real acknowledgement – even implicitly – that social change depends on actually building up forms of democratic power which are appropriate to the challenges of 21st century capitalism.” En passant, he blames Labour’s economists who authored the manifesto for losing their way. Well, things can only get better. David Beetham’s contribution on Extending Democracy has some highly relevant observations about the revolving doors between government and the private sector which have to be legislated against in his view. But he concludes by genuflecting to proportional representation. Enough said. Chapters on Equality and a Global Britain bring up the rear together with a self-congratulatory Afterword by Momentum leader Jon Lansman. For those Labour Party members pressing for an Annual Conference debate about Brexit and Labour’s position in the event of an early General Election, there are useful sound-bites for your two minutes at the rostrum in Liverpool at the end of September.



**Peter Kenyon**  
on banking and the future of the global economy

## Wishful thinking

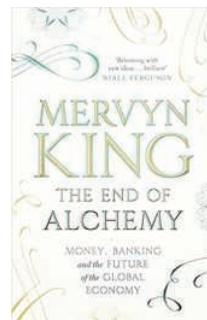
**The End of Alchemy**  
Mervyn King  
Little, Brown, £25

This tome has been lurking in the Chartist list of books to review for too long. No wonder. Authored by a former governor of the United Kingdom’s central bank, the Bank of England, it reveals little sense of responsibility on the office holder’s part for the financial crash of 2007-08. “There was a general misunderstanding of how the world economy worked,” King pronounces. He justifies the book as an opportunity to explore economic ideas. His own record of events and the accompanying Bank papers will be made avail-

able when the 20 year rule permits their release, he tells us. Frankly, I wonder why there isn’t a public clamour for them to be released immediately for those better placed to analyse them to deploy their skills and cast some light on the events for which King and others were responsible and paid not insignificant salaries to oversee the banking system on our behalf.

King calls for reform of money and banking. If that was his conclusion after the crash, why so little progress in the years that followed while he remained at the

helm in Threadneedle Street? Perhaps, Labour’s Treasury team should seize the opportunity King offers when they gain office. In his concluding chapter entitled, The Audacity of Pessimism (whatever that means) King tells us: “Events drive ideas, and the experience of crisis is driving economists to develop new ideas about how our economies work. They will be needed to overcome the power of vested interests and lobby groups.” I can’t help thinking that politicians and activists on the left are already ahead of the curve in that regard.



# Reflections after 50 years

**Andrew Coates**

on Political Protest and Its Enemies

**The Long '68**  
**Richard Vinen**  
**Allen Lane £20**

**R**ichard Vinen begins *The Long '68*, trying to pin down 'the thing'—radical movements and rebellion that marked the year. His focus is on the democracies of the industrial West. Countries, from the USA, to Western Europe, above all France, saw “generational rebellion of the young against the old, political rebellion against militarism, capitalism and the political power of the United States, and cultural rebellion that revolved around rock music and lifestyle.”

The book captures working class revolts, not only the largest General Strike in French history (22% of the population), which saw student-worker solidarity, but the rising industrial militancy in Britain and the Italian 'Hot Autumn' of 1969-70. As this date indicates, Vinen's panoramic history does not end in one year. It covers “les années soixante-huit”, the long 68, not just the événements of the year itself but also the movements and the turmoil that endured into the 1970s with long-term effects.

This is an excellent starting point from which to consider “the long term importance of 68...in the ways that it interacted with mainstream politics.” Over the last months a flood of French politicians and commentators have endorsed this take. The legacy of inter-sectional “gauchisme culturel” (cultural leftism) and the reaction of the “génération anti-68”, from conservative liberals to Marine Le Pen, remain very live issues.

The Long 68 traces the origin of the American New Left, to the post-war writings of Michael Harrington and C. Wright Mills, the radical Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the civil rights movement. Vinen emphasises that this left had long been suspicious of the “labour metaphysic” and the organised working class. The “Vietnam generation” had good reason to resist being drafted to fight US wars. There were protests against the war, for racial justice and student radicalism, violent American policing of dissent, alongside colourful groups like the Youth

International party (Yippies). The counter-culture had a global impact, not just in music and art but also in journals such as the UK *International Times*, *Oz*, the French *Actuel* and others.

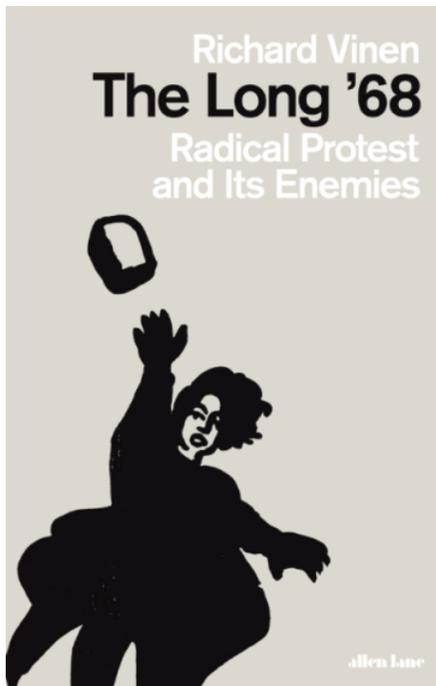
The sections on France focus more on the year itself and its aftermath. There is a strong narrative leading from the Nanterre occupation, the ‘Sorbonne Commune’ “the night of the barricades” the mass strikes, the Grenelle trade union accords, and the Gaullist counter-march on the 30th May. He is keen to root the events beyond the doings of fig-

backlash, from within the gauchiste movement. Some from the ‘Mao-spontex’ *Gauche Prolétarienne* went from attacking the Communist Party, and exalting the Chinese Cultural Revolution, to hysterical rejection of Marxism and socialism. (French Intellectuals against the Left. Michael Scott Christofferson. 2004) The legacy of this ‘anti-totalitarian’ moment in the mid-1970s forms the backdrop to the present crisis of the French left and its efforts to find an identity after the collapse of Communism.

After the relative calm of British protests, its student movement and new left, The Long 68 turns to the German left whose extra-parliamentary opposition could be considered as a precursor of the once radical Green Party. Germany was marked by another post-68 turn. The attempt by the Red Army Faction to wage war on the German state ended with a poisonous complicity with pro-Palestinian terror, tainted by anti-semitism. One could say that much larger Italian armed fractions involved a fringe of the left in an equally disastrous – morally and politically – cycle of murder and repression that only benefited the right.

Is free-market capitalism, the ‘consumer society’ a spectacle that has re-sold what it can absorb from the long 68? Certainly a wish to break down hierarchies and a desire for greater personal autonomy and respect could be seen as part of the new Spirit of Capitalism. It could equally be seen as the premise for demanding universal human rights, and the multitude of post-68 movements, from feminism, gays, to a humanist approach to ecology.

These could be seen as individualist themes that sap still further the already declining pillars of the left in the organised labour movement. Vinen discusses these issues lucidly but in an avuncular tone. But amongst those who are ‘anti-68’ we see cultural issues that have again become political. The right wants to re-establish the Sovereignty of the Nation, an Identity that is first in a world hierarchy. Against this the generous internationalist spirit of the long 68 is needed as much now as then.



ures like Daniel Cohn-Bendit, but in “new forms of regionalist protest” Later in “missionaries to the working class”, Vinen benefits from recent studies of ‘établis’, leftists, (not exclusively Maoists, as he appears to think) who post-68 took up jobs in factories and farms.

The King's College historian could have also taken advantage of the celebrated studies of 68 by Hervé Hamon and Patrick Rotman (*Génération.1987*) not to mention the 2016 history of the largest new left group committed to the 68 movements the Parti Socialiste Unifié by Bernard Ravenel. These would have helped fill in the sketchy details of leftist personalities, from the Trotskyist Alain Krivine to future Parti Socialiste PM, Michel Rocard. More serious is little consideration of the intellectual

## BOOK REVIEWS

# Will social democracy be the end of capitalism?

**Don Flynn**  
on a rebel  
voice

**How Will Capitalism End?**  
**Walter Streeck**  
Verso £10.99

**H**omer Simpson once lamented that 'To Kill a Mocking Bird' had absolutely nothing to say about how to kill a mocking bird, and the same pang of disappointment grips the reader of this book on reaching its concluding pages. Capitalism, shabby, inefficient, exploiting and cruel, unfortunately remains in situ as the final chapter on the 'public mission of sociology' draws to a close.

Streeck is the rebel voice in Germany's Social Democratic Party – hostile to globalism and austerity; hostile to the erosion of national democracy; and hostile to the European Union itself. The reasoning that brings him to these points is impeccable enough in itself: the abandonment of the post-war settlement in the 1970s in response to a global profit squeeze and the consequent world-wide inflation; the explosion of public debt in the 1980s; the rise in private indebtedness that triggered the collapse of financial markets in 2008 are the staging posts in the three crises which have brought us to where we are now.

All of this moved the world along from an epoch of collective action to a place where managerialist jargon rules and the policy initiatives become the exclusive preserve of technocrats. Polyani's warnings about the dangers of the over-commodification of society – extending it to cover labour, land and money – went unheeded as neoliberal ideologues won influence over politicians for a doctrine that unfettered markets would prove to be self-regulating.

It was not long before 'systemic disorders' began to show themselves in the form of oligarchy and corruption. Obscene inequal-

ities in wealth and power have the effect of demoralising civil society and rendering the rebirth of solidarity and collective action to remedy social wrongs less and less likely. Capitalism becomes increasingly disordered, but no successor as yet appears on the horizon.

In the face of these developments Streeck refuses the route that most of his fellow social democrats opted for: the attempt to reconstitute the democracy which he sees as once holding

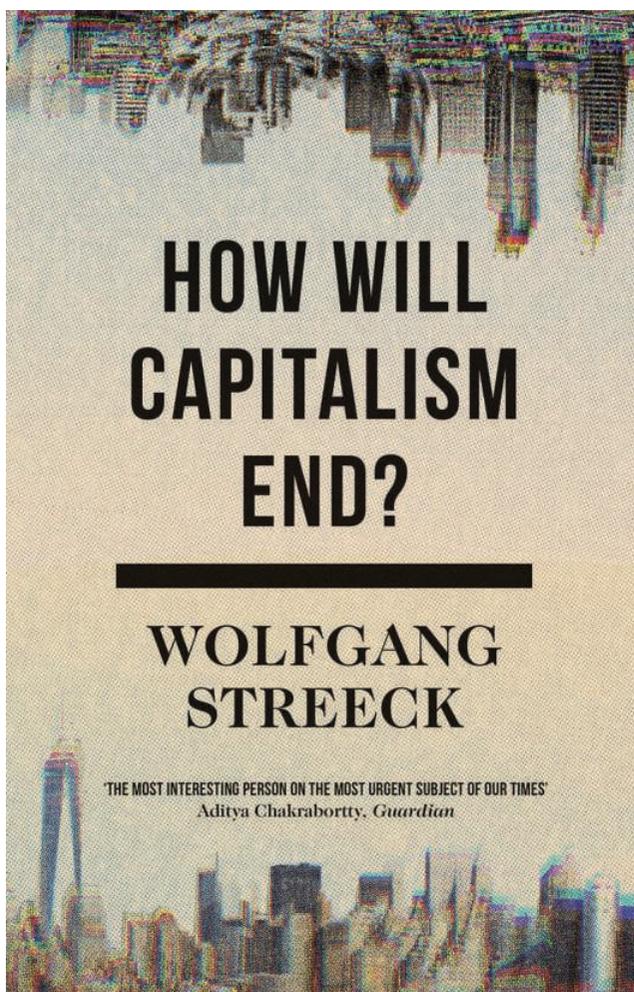
the other cash-strapped Mediterranean nations, but even prosperous Germany, which has imposed a veritable wage freeze on its working class and committed itself to years of austerity in its public finances.

The EU misled the social democratic parties of the continent into thinking that the goal of improved public welfare could be pursued by encouraging populations to act as consumers in a single market, rather than citizens within a political state. But the market was constructed out of a jumble of out-sourced business concerns, private debt mis-managed by financialised credit systems, and mechanisms that demanded labour supply be kept high and wages low. Working class citizens were never going to prosper in this arrangement. Their disillusionment is being felt today in the right wing populist revolts underway across the region.

Streeck's account of capitalist decline and corruption is compelling and, speaking for myself as a critical 'remain' voter, his critique of the EU rings true enough as far as it goes. But, having lambasted his social democratic comrades for the choice they have made across the last four decades he has little to say about the weaknesses of a political tradition, the embodiment of the virtues he extols of citizenship, solidarity and collectivism, which capitulated so compre-

hensively when the neoliberal tide swept in during the 1980s.

This is a great weakness in a body of work that appeals for a return to the social democracy of the 1960s as the best that is on offer for the left today. It might be the case that there are other ways of awakening the slumbering beast that is the European working class but waving the flag of the supposedly *trente glorieuse* is not one of them.



capitalism in check at the level of the nation state, and reproduce this restraint by way of a supranational European res public. This was always going to lead progressive politics down a blind alley. The task of integrating diverse nations into a single system which, above all else, would facilitate the accumulation of capital, was doomed to overwhelm the democratic principle. He sees the victims as not just Greece and

# Exploitation rules

**Mike Davis**  
on a  
graphic  
manifesto

**The Communist Manifesto**  
**Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels**  
**Adapted by Martin Rowson**  
**Self Made Hero £12.99**

Marking the 200th anniversary of Karl Marx's birth our resident cartoonist Martin Rowson has conquered new heights in this graphic adaptation of Marx & Engels' classic work.

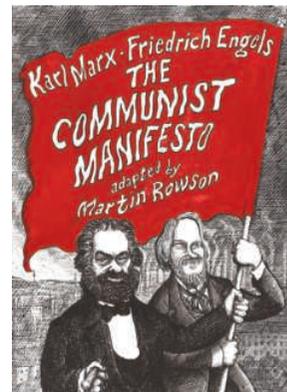
Written in 1848 at a time of revolutionary upheavals across Europe The Communist Manifesto stands the test of time in many of its predictions in terms of wealth inequalities and class struggle, though not yet the demise of capitalism.

Quoting sections of the Manifesto Rowson creates vast

panoramic scenes of machines and exploitation peopled by oppressors and oppressed with the ubiquitous Marx and Engels in various commentary positions clutching a red banner. Marx is later depicted at a Q&A gig in a 'Kapitalist Komeedy Club'.

A great introduction for those who haven't read the original with some timely comic quips on parallels with our current political and social scene.

Satirical, witty, funny, yet darkly relevant this book should be an international best-seller. In fact, I'm told translation rights have already been bought in Germany, Russia, France, Brazil and China while it sold out its first UK print run in less than two weeks.



# Post-colonial scramble?

**Nigel Watt**  
on African  
wars

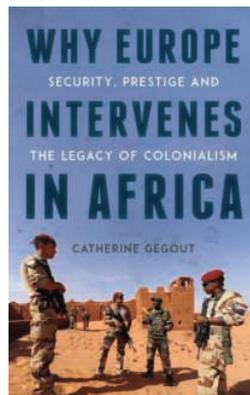
**Why Europe Intervenes in Africa**  
**Catherine Gegout**  
**Hurst £35**

This book is an amazingly comprehensive study of all the different interventions - military, diplomatic, financial - by France, the UK and the European Union from 1986 to the present. (Europe of course includes the UK.) The author has formulated a theory, classifying each intervention according to what she perceives as the European actor's motive as core realism (concern for its own interests, especially security), economic realism (trade relations), normative realism (prestige), ethical realism (usually humanitarian) and neo-colonialism (post-colonial spheres of influence).

There are chapters detailing the many interventions by France, the UK and the European Union, and US participation is often referred to as well. France, the biggest player, has intervened no less than 35 times. Up to 2004-7 the former French countries were a neo-colonial backyard originally named *Françafrique* and France was the main trading partner with very chummy relations with many African presidents. The language has changed but the prestige of France and its weight in the EU are still bound up with its African links.

The UK withdrew from its African empire much quicker and

more decisively than France and it has only intervened militarily five times (and in some cases just to protect British citizens) but it has been quite active diplomatically and financially. Its interest has remained with the ex-colonies: a military presence in Kenya and direct intervention in 'Blair's war' in Sierra Leone. The EU has spent lavishly though the



European Development Fund and it has supported initiatives, especially conflict resolution, in Burundi, the DRC, Darfur, Chad and the CAR. Gegout denies that humanitarian relief has ever been a major motivation for any of the players, just a contributory factor. One exception might have been if the Nigerian president, Goodluck Jonathan, had not rejected the British offer to help recapture the girls abducted by Boko Haram from Chibok.

Europe has not always been

united in its approach. Anglo-French rivalry has a long history and has more recently become a battle for linguistic supremacy. The division became glaring in the case of Rwanda, where France played a dirty role, being solidly behind President Habyarimana of Rwanda and helping Hutu refugees escape to the Congo where they re-formed after the genocide; Britain and the US were not innocent either. Both voted to reduce the UN perforce at the crucial moment. Both were behind the RPF and Kagame has rewarded them by detaching his country from Francophonie, changing to English and joining the Commonwealth. Elsewhere the UK reckoned places like Ivory Coast and Mali were French problems and the French left Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe to the Brits. Libya was different. The divisions here were within the EU, with Germany sensibly declining to take part. The Libya attack was also dependent on US support, as indeed indirectly were some of the other interventions.

This is a fascinating subject and the author casts a critical eye over all of it, but a relaxing read it is not, as much of it consists of a detailed catalogue of events which can seem repetitive in the sense that the same interventions are referred to under different headings in different chapters. It's the sort of book that is best kept on the shelf for reference.

# BOOK REVIEWS

## How Brexit made the left wing case for democratic renewal

Don Flynn  
on BREXIT  
and Trump

**The Lure of Greatness**  
Anthony Barnett  
Unbound, £8.99

Anthony Barnett is best known for his work as protagonist of a democratic revolution which, when it takes place, will provide the people of these northern European islands with the sort of constitutional arrangement which will make their rulers accountable.

Though influential with the Charter 88 movement he set up thirty years ago to campaign for a written constitution, and through the openDemocracyUK website which he cofounded in 2001, Barnett's ideas have been treated with something close to contempt by 'practical' politicians operating in the established mainstream.

Those disdaining Barnett's enthusiasm for things like electoral reform and a legal basis for popular sovereignty dismiss him as a metropolitan chatterer who stands aloof from 'bread and butter' issues which are supposed to be the content of 'real life'. 'Ignore democracy issues at your peril', is the response that has been coming back across the years: 'One day your neglect of the system which is supposed to make our governors accountable to the people they govern will come back and bite you'. That day came about in the small hours of Friday 24th June 2016, when the result of the referendum on membership of the EU became clear.

Barnett's argument is that the slim vote in favour of Brexit came about because of the frustration which the people-of-England-without-London felt on precisely this issue of the way in which they were governed. That segment of the UK population that lives in English towns with populations of less than 300,000 had good reason to feel this angst. Over the years since the 1980s they had been exposed to the debilitating effects of globalising economic policies which stripped away a large part of the industries which had provided their communities with decent jobs and

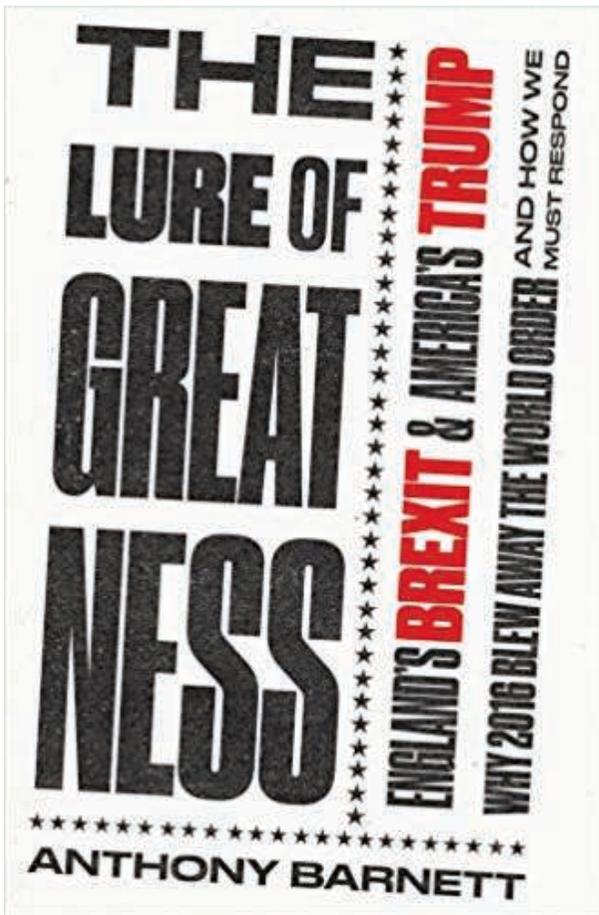
opportunities for life.

He persuasively argues that the anger and disillusionment with the way they were governed was displaced onto the EU and its Brussels-based commission, rather than the Westminster government which has been the real driving force behind neoliberal open markets and the constraints placed on the public sector. He tests this thesis against the

Westminster rather Brussels. Wales, with its majority 52.5 to 47.5 percent vote in favour of Brexit, seems to subvert this take on the matter, which Barnett hints as coming from the fact that it is a 'long-colonised and linguistically divided country'. But it was in England-without-London, with 46 million inhabitants, and an 11 per cent majority vote in favour of Brexit, which swamped the pro-remain majorities in the parts of the UK with devolved government.

Barnett argues from this that the historic failure to devolve government to the English regions had contributed to the widespread feeling of 'they're not listening to us', evident throughout these recent years of populist agitation, to be deflected onto Brussels and the EU rather than Westminster. He sees the governments led by Blair and Cameron as playing an active role in sustaining this delusion; each creating an aura around themselves that they were acting in the UK national interest, and shared the frustrations of the British people whenever their aspirations were apparently blocked by some EU regulation.

The book deserves a wide readership among the left in the UK. There is much to be picked over on points of detail in Barnett's analysis, but his grand thesis that the UK is a poorly governed country, equipped as it is with a constitution that fails to place power close to the people and grants the ruling elites the maximum discretion to do as they please, has to be right. The struggle for a better democracy ought to be as much a part of the left's programme for change in the UK as opposition to austerity and the socialisation of the economy. This book hints at what this advocacy for democracy might look like.



response of people in other parts of the UK and had a devolved executive authority which has had some capacity to deflect the worst of what government from No 10 has had to fling at them during this time.

The evidence for this proposition comes from the referendum results in Scotland, Northern Ireland and London. Devolved governments in the first two and a powerful executive mayor in the third had helped sustain a viewpoint which saw the real source in the creation of austerity and hardship in the shape of the immediate protagonist of national and regional authority as being

# Birth of American Empire

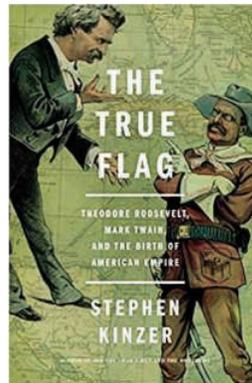
**Duncan Bowie**

on  
American  
Imperialism

**The True Flag**  
Stephen Kinzer  
Henry Holt \$28

This is a study of the origins of American Imperialism in the 1898 Spanish-American War. Kinzer is an American journalist who writes on contemporary American foreign policy and this book is clearly written to demonstrate the dangers of imperialistic foreign policy. The American justification for their intervention was to liberate the oppressed Spanish colonies – Cuba, the Philippines and Puerto Rico, but also Guam.

The Americans then in effect annexed all these dispersed island states. Hawaii also became part of the US, though this was at the request of expatriates who governed the islands, the indigenous monarchy having been deposed. Cuba was allowed some



form of self-government, though under American military supervision. In the Philippines, the US imposed a military occupation, with military and civil governors (including the future US president William Taft) waging a war on the Philippines who led by Emilio Aguinaldo, having driven out the Spanish, understandably considered themselves betrayed

by the Americans who they thought had come to their assistance.

Guam and Puerto Rico also became American colonies without representation in the US Senate or Congress. Kinzer relates the story of the American imperialists, led by Secretary of State for War, Theodore Roosevelt and more reluctantly President William McKinley, and the anti-imperialists led by Mark Twain, social reformers such as Jane Addams, Andrew Carnegie, William Jennings Bryan, Booker T Washington, Carl Schurz and the former president Grover Cleveland. They argued that imperial expansion was contrary to the American constitution and the principles on which the United States was founded. The book is a useful reminder that the notion of the US as a world power is relatively recent.

**Nigel Watt**  
on African  
wars

# Perspectives on South and West Africa

**Africa, Empire and Fleet Street**  
Jonathan Derrick  
Hurst £35

Jonathan Derrick was on the staff of the weekly West Africa magazine. He has also studied African responses to colonialism and published other books on the subject. This book follows the career of Albert Cartwright who edited West Africa from 1917 until 1947. He had started his career in South Africa where he was involved in the turbulent politics of the Cape in the era of Cecil Rhodes and the Jameson Raid (1996). He edited the South African News during the Boer War and had some sympathy with the Boers as the underdogs. He was even jailed for accusing Kitchener of war crimes in that war.

Back in England he took on the role of editor of West Africa which was one of a number of journals, some very short-lived, catering particularly for business people involved in the rapidly expanding exploitative trade with British West Africa (Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and the Gambia). West Africa survived and although its readers were

mostly in England or white 'coasters' in Africa it never excluded African viewpoints and gradually gained an African readership. Like his contemporaries Cartwright believed in colonialism and expected it to last for the foreseeable future but, unlike most colonial civil servants, politicians and journalists, he did not despise the growing number of 'Western educated' Africans. He could see that they were the future and he began to question the model of Indirect Rule (by traditional Emirs) promoted famously by Lugard in Northern Nigeria. Yet even as their racism intensified – and he was no racist - he remained sympathetic to the Boers, the Afrikaners. Rather controversially he also considered it unjust not to return her colonies to Germany and it was only when Hitler began to show his true colours that he changed his opinion.

Recording as it does the history of the times through the press, this book gives a very interesting perspective, first on pre-1914 South Africa and after 1918 especially on British West Africa and its commercial links at a time when colonialism was at its most

confident and, towards the end of the period, on the first stirrings of African nationalism. The future Nigerian leaders, Azikiwe and Awolowo, both feature in the book. Big commercial developments of the time include cocoa in the Gold Coast, palm oil and groundnuts in Nigeria and minerals in Sierra Leone. Lever Brothers and the United African Company were major players, as was Elder Dempster (ED), the mighty shipping line that almost monopolised the West Africa trade. ED sponsored the monthly West African Review which was the stable-mate and competitor of West Africa and which also survived until after 1945.

Cartwright was also involved with important personalities including Lord Milner, who was Governor of Cape Colony and later in Lloyd George's cabinet; E.D.Morel, also a journalist, who had exposed the 'red rubber' scandal in the Congo and wrote books critical of British policy; and the great imperialist, Lord Lugard. I was especially interested to read about the early history and politics of WASU, the West African Students Union, which I remember visiting in 1960.



WESTMINSTER VIEW



# Palestinians demand justice on 70th anniversary

**Richard Burden** on UK complicity in the deadly Israeli blockade of Gaza

**Richard Burden**  
in MP for  
Birmingham  
Northfield

**T**he last few months have been the deadliest in Gaza since 2014. Around 131 Palestinians have been killed and more than 13,900 injured since protests began in March this year, most of them from the use of live fire by the Israeli military. But the situation in Gaza is bleaker than that. Gaza has been suffering from the shattering effects of an eleven-year closure by land, air and sea. Conditions on the ground are shocking. The Strip only receives a few hours of electricity each day, over 96% of water is undrinkable, the health service is on the brink of collapse and the rate of poverty stands at 40%. That is the reality of living in Gaza today and is the context in which recent events sit.

The worst part about the situation in Gaza – and the deadly events in the last couple of months – is that we knew they were coming. Back in 2012, the UN warned that Gaza would become unliveable by 2020. Since then, UN coordinators and organisations on the ground have said that threshold has already been crossed. We also knew that the 70th anniversary of the Nakba anniversary – when Palestinians were first displaced from their homes back in 1948 – would increase tensions and result in protests in Gaza and the West Bank. For the US President to choose the day before that anniversary as the day to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem was deliberately provocative and foolish. It takes us further away from constructive dialogue and a peaceful resolution to the conflict, while also destroying any credibility the USA had to act as an honest broker for peace.

With the situation on the



Swedish activists on their way to protest the Gaza blockade

ground growing worse by the day and with no international agreement or plan to address the crisis in Gaza, it is incumbent on us to not stand idly by and wait while things continue to get worse. That is why MPs from all parties have been calling on the government to do more, not only to begin to address the urgent need for humanitarian support in Gaza, but to be more proactive in working toward and securing a solution for Israel and Palestine which is so sorely needed.

But perhaps the greatest humanitarian issue of all is the right to life. That is why it is so important that there must be accountability for the shocking number of deaths and injuries in Gaza in recent months – deaths and injuries that are continuing week by week. The United Nations Human Rights Council have taken the first step towards that accountability by setting up an independent commission of inquiry into those deaths. Inexcusably, the UK government decided to abstain from voting in favour of setting up that inquiry, instead choosing to throw their lot behind an Israeli inquiry which would have next to no chance of being impartial and independent. The inquiry will be going ahead, but it remains to be seen whether the UK government will now get behind it and encourage all parties to comply fully with the investigation and recognise its outcomes.

There must also be accountabil-

ity in the UK's sales of arms to Israel. In the past two years, export licenses to Israel have been provided by the UK for categories of arms and arms components for a whole host of weapons, from sniper rifles and assault rifles to tanks and helicopters. That is despite UK and EU rules which prohibit the granting of export licences where the equipment is likely to be used for internal repression or in violation of international humanitarian law. However, when I asked UK ministers how they were checking whether arms imported from the UK were being used against Palestinians in Gaza, I was told that the government “do not collect data on the use of equipment after sale”. That simply isn't good enough. The UK government must be accountable for the arms export licences it grants and the uses to which those arms are put. That is why I and other MPs have been calling for the suspension of arms sales to Israel until we can be confident they are not being used in contravention of their licence conditions.

With further protests taking place week after week and with more deaths and injuries adding up, we cannot let Israel continue to act with a culture of impunity and with no consequence for their actions. The international community must step up where the US has stepped back and provide leadership to efforts for a peaceful resolution to the conflict based on accountability and human rights. **C**

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