

CORBYN

For democratic socialism *Special Issue - Labour Party Conference 2015* £1



Battles ahead by:

Katy Clark **Scotland** Patricia d'Ardenne **Gender** Kate Hudson
Defence Lynne Jones **Membership** Gaye Johnston **Party**
democracy Frances O'Grady **TU rights** Ann Pettifor **Anti-**
austerity Cat Smith MP **Machine politics** Mary Southcott **Votes**



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Editorial Policy

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Newsletter online: to join, email webeditor@chartist.org.ukA new era:
From backbench to frontline

Jeremy Corbyn's extraordinary journey from democratic socialist outsider to Labour leader is remarkable. Corbyn certainly has the longest record and cv of campaigns and rebellion of any post-war Labour leader. His triumph is testimony to both the new mood for change in Britain and for an end of old style politics of focus groups, triangulation and political spin.

He has brought a refreshing honesty, conviction and humanity to politics allied to a radical left programme. His victory was hard fought. From narrowly getting on the ballot, to a campaign that gathered momentum from Andy Burnham's spurning of trade union support to the fateful abstention of the other three candidates on the Tories harsh Welfare Bill, Corbyn became unstoppable. The climax of his victory in the first round with almost 60% of votes, 85% of registered supporters, almost the same with affiliated supporters and a hair-breadth off 50% of members has shaken both Labour's old guard and the wider political establishment. Andy Burnham came a distant second on 19%, Yvette Cooper 17% while Liz Kendall's 4% is an epitaph to Blairism.

Labour party membership was up over 50% to 300,000 plus, with another 60,000 joining in the week following his victory. Registered and affiliated supporters brought the figure to over 600,000. Over 400,000 people voted in the contest, with Corbyn securing 251,417. Most important Team Corbyn grew from a few hundred to 16,000 on the close of poll. It is vital that team remains alive and supporters become active members. This is one of the biggest challenges and opportunities for our new leadership team. Cat Smith MP outlines some of the ways the movement can be developed.

Tom Watson handsomely secured the deputy leadership, with his fearless campaign against the Murdoch empire. His trade union experience should bring weight and grit to the front bench of the opposition.

In a whirlwind of changes Corbyn has put together a diverse shadow cabinet with a majority of women, outstripping the Blair/Brown and Cameron cabinets. Although many New Labourites refused to serve, Andy Burnham sagely accepted the Home Office portfolio. It is vital that a common base line is hammered out for the Shadow Cabinet to project a unified message.

An effective media rebuttal team will be vital. Neil Coleman looks to be a new but different Alistair Campbell figure. Team Corbyn worked well through social media. That must continue but the power of the print and broadcast media is not to be underestimated.

The tasks facing Team Corbyn are manifold, from helping to breathe democracy into the over-centralised Labour Party organisation as Gaye Johnston explains, to refining and practising an entirely new style of doing politics, and projecting an alternative to Tory austerity, cuts and privatization, as argued by Ann Pettifor, assaults on democratic and human rights and imperial adventurism.

Labour's leadership may become more collegiate, inclu-

sive and representative of British society while the practice of the party needs to tame the machine and embrace the movement. A movement to defeat the Tories may not be built in one parliament alone nor by simply knocking on doors during elections. The fire and enthusiasm generated by the Corbyn campaign needs to be sustained into alliances with a myriad of solidarity movements.

The economy will be the major test for Corbyn and John McDonnell as Shadow Chancellor. Progressive taxation: stamping down on corporate tax evaders, investment in infrastructure and manufacturing, a green investment bank, socialising rail and energy are the opening salvos of an alternative to public spending cuts and austerity. Drawing from a huge reservoir of socialist and Keynesian economists it is possible to assemble a team of sympathetic experts to strengthen the economic alternative.

Europe will be one of the immediate test cases for the Corbyn-led party. The Tories are deeply divided with UKIP snapping at their heels. Corbyn has emphasised Labour commitment to the European Union and an intent to counter Tory efforts to further erode social and workers' rights, free movement of people and democracy. With intelligent political footwork Labour could inflict serious damage on Cameron and further expose Tory divisions. Two urgent challenges are Syria and refugees. Corbyn is clear on opposition to bombing and non-UN sanctioned military intervention. Labour is on firm ground in opposing the shameful, heartless policy on refugees. European nations must accept an equitable share of those fleeing war, repression and poverty. The biggest threats in Europe are the rise of nationalism and xenophobia. In the era of globalisation the European Union is a necessary framework to work with our fellow citizens for progressive economic and social policies. Neo-liberals will not always be at the helm.

Chartist welcomes the Corbyn-led Party. For us, and many other campaigners on the Left it represents a huge leap forward for democratic socialists. We have a real socialist alternative to fight for now. The keys to No. 10 are as likely to be won by Corbyn as any of the other candidates. But with Corbyn we will be fighting for Labour values of equality, redistribution of wealth, democracy, peace and social justice; the founding principles of the Labour Party recast in the 21st century. Patricia d'Ardenne (women), Mary Southcott (the South), Lynne Jones (Labour values) and Katy Clark (Scotland) look at some key challenges.

Debate and research on why Labour lost should continue. Internal democracy must prevail. But a new alternative is taking shape on the foundations of a modernised democratic socialism. There are areas of policy and programme that need work: the nature and relation of the modern state with society, the balance of public and private. But the foundation principle of people before profit is being rehabilitated. Corbyn starts with a huge mandate. The wave of enthusiasm that swept him into the leadership should be a wave the whole Labour and progressive movement learns to ride.

The fire and enthusiasm generated by the Corbyn campaign needs to be sustained into alliances with a myriad of solidarity movements

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FOR THE RECORD

Key policy announcements - quick reference guide

Education

"Academies and free schools will remain. They will still exist as schools, but they will come under a different accountability system that will be local...In some places that will be the local authority; in other places that may be the combined authority; and in other places it might be an elected mayor."



Lucy Powell, Shadow Education Secretary
Source: TES 18/09/15

Transport

"We know there is overwhelming support from the British people for a People's Railway, better and more efficient services, proper integration and fairer fares. On this issue, it won't work to have a nearly but not quite position. Labour will commit to a clear plan for a fully integrated railway in public ownership."



Jeremy Corbyn
Source: Sunday Mirror 20/09/15

"We are going to start from the principle that franchises will be brought into public ownership when they expire...Labour's new rail taskforce will look at ways of slashing the cost to taxpayers of subsidising Britain's 'heavily fragmented' rail network which is up to 40% less efficient than the best European railways."



Lillian Greenwood, Shadow Transport Secretary

Footnote: A Trades Union Congress report said that if the 11 franchises due to be renewed by 2020 were awarded to a single public body instead of private operators, £520m would be saved on shareholder dividends and £240m on dividends to Network Rail subcontractors.

Europe

"Being in Europe has protected and improved workers' rights in Britain, giving everyone statutory paid holiday, limits on working hours and improved maternity and paternity leave."

"We are strongly opposed to any attempt by David Cameron to try and weaken these, but the truth is if we want to protect workers' rights the answer isn't to leave the EU, but to get rid of this Tory Government."



"That's why the Labour Party has always been committed to not walking away, but staying in to work together for a better Europe."

Hilary Benn, Shadow Foreign Secretary
Source: Independent 20/09/15

Key electoral tests: Winning in Scotland and London

Packed out meeting halls, queues outside, deafening applause, new volunteers, TV debates and hustings.

Many saw parallels between the electrifying Scottish referendum and the Corbyn leadership campaign with the mobilisation of hundreds of thousands to rallies and discussions. Corbyn packed a whirlwind 100-venue UK wide speaking tour into just three months. But the energy and enthusiasm was infectious. Now this has to be translated into activists and politically sussed campaigners for dem-soc Labour.

Two big electoral tests will come next May with the Holyrood elections in Scotland and the London Mayoral



elections in London. Sadiq Khan triumphed in the London ballot, easily beating Tessa Jowell with 58% in the third

round. He will be the first Asian Muslim candidate for the post but starts with a fair wind. In Scotland the battle will be equally tough but if Scottish Labour candidates embrace the politics of the Corbyn campaign and put up real opposition to the Tories and SNP, opposing austerity and Trident renewal but also championing greater democratic control and socialist economic policies, then the outcome could begin to reverse the damage of the May general election and the almost total Labour wipe-out.

Gender inequality - a vote winner?

Patricia d'Ardenne challenges the Tory policies widening inequalities

The UK risks a widening gender inequality because of Tory austerity policies that affect women and those they care for disproportionately and deleteriously. The coalition of charities - a Fair Deal for Women - has reported that cuts to social services, public sector services and legal aid will downgrade the role of women in every walk of life. The benefits cap will be reduced to £23,000 per annum. Sure Start continues to be cut. Young people's housing benefit between 18 and 21 will be cut, forcing many into homelessness.

Austerity is sexist because most carers and most public sector workers are women. In 90% of families, the primary carer is still a woman. And again it will be women who take the emotional, financial and social strain that austerity imposes. By contrast, the five year tax lock will benefit men who currently earn 19% more than their female counterparts. Therefore it is women - the lower earners - who will carry the greater burden of paying off the deficit.

Corbyn has already recognised and valued women's caring (and often unremunerated) work, which is why so many young women have joined the Corbyn campaign, and enthused about a Party that could be more collegiate and more inclusive. Sixty two per cent of women put him as their first choice, against 48% of men, (YouGov survey). Corbyn's anti-austerity, anti-war, pro-welfare, pro-labour rights, pro-environment programme resonates with so many local campaigns, headed by women, to save hospitals, libraries, keep benefits rights, fight zero hour contracts, evictions, deportations, deaths in police custody, and, of course, the arms trade. By contrast only 25% of women voters supported the Iraq War even though most MPs including Yvette Cooper supported it. Corbyn did not - he has consistently been anti-war. As a result, his leadership has attracted not just new members, but those who left the party.

When Corbyn won so unexpectedly, there was much criticism of

his so called 'problem with women'. It began with his raising the debate about 'women only' carriages on trains. It continued with (and was compared to) his selection of a Shadow Cabinet, where he was accused of rampant sexism from all sides of the political spectrum. Did women really have equal status within the Shadow Cabinet, or was this old style misogynistic Marxism? The (so-called) four great offices of state: Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Home Secretary and Foreign Secretary were all allocated to men. It was immediately pointed out that these positions were given that title in a colonial era, when Britain ruled the waves, and a time when women and most of the working classes were disenfranchised.

Women will find a way to reengage in public debate, public life and public service, without being branded as extremists

In fact Angela Eagle, appointed as Shadow First Secretary of State has now become de facto Deputy Leader in Parliament as well as her role as Business Secretary.

Female representation in the Commons is now at an all-time high in the UK of 29%. Labour has the highest proportion of women in any party at 43%. The current shadow cabinet has 16 women and 15 men, (the Tories have 7 out of 21) - the first ever majority female shadow cabinet in history.

Does this matter, and does it provide sufficient incentive for women voters to support the new Opposition? Corbyn has already shown a capacity to accommodate criticism and the debates will continue. At present the argument that is now being put forward in Shadow Cabinet is that women hold posts that centre on more relevant topics today, and ones which are more likely to benefit women.

A brief perusal of the women in the new shadow cabinet reveals a good distribution of traditional



Corbyn's first cabinet: a majority are women

and more modern roles and responsibilities that will shape the agenda: Business, Innovation and Skills (Angela Eagle), Defence (Maria Eagle), Education (Lucy Powell), Energy and Climate Change (Lisa Nandy), Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Kerry McCarthy), Health (Heidi Alexander), International Development (Diane Abbott), Leader of the House of Lords (Baroness Angela Smith), Transport (Lillian Greenwood), Wales (Nia Griffith), Women and Equalities (Kate Green), Chief Whip (Rosie Winterton), Environment (Kerry MacCarthy), Attorney General (Catherine McKinnley) and Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Seema Malhotra). Young People and Voter Registration (Gloria de Piero) is a new shadow ministerial post, as is Shadow Minister for Mental Health (Luciana Berger). 25% of the adult population and 10% of all children are affected by mental health difficulties with women often the main carer.

All these posts are as significant as any Home Secretary or Chancellor. Women who have turned down one position, where they have not agreed with Corbyn, have been offered and been able to take another. Women at all levels of the party and within the Trade Union Movement will and must play a major role in this process if Labour is to achieve a more decent society. Underlying all these discourses will be the challenge of inequalities in all forms. Women will find a way to re-engage in public debate, public life and public service, without being branded as extremists.

Women will win for Labour.



Patricia d'Ardenne is a veteran of student protest in 1968, NHS consultant and Labour Party activist in the City of London

TRADE UNIONS

A welcome change

Frances O'Grady calls for unity and mutual respect in the new era

I am sure you will join me in giving my warm congratulations to Jeremy, and to Tom. After the disappointment of the general election result, few would have dreamed we'd see so many people - especially young people - cramming into town halls, wanting to get involved; few would have dared hope that Labour had a chance of becoming a genuinely mass party once again.

Labour's purpose is clear: to deliver wealth and opportunity to the many and not the few. That means winning a general election to deliver it. So now the contest is over, on behalf of working people my message to Labour is this: look sharp; pull together; and do what working people are crying out for her Majesty's Opposition to do - get stuck in and oppose.

The slogan for this Trades Union Congress is great jobs for everyone. That means: fair pay, secure contracts, time to spend with your family, a voice at work and respect for a job well done.

But Britain's unions don't just want a fair share of the cake for workers. We know we have to grow the cake too.

Building a sustainable recovery, raising investment and productivity. Yes, and raising wages and living standards too. We want a practical plan to deliver fair shares and greener growth for all.

You would think that it's what the government would want too.

But then they'd have to come up with some fresh ideas.

After all, we've already had five years of their failed remedy.

Remember when they told us that austerity would wipe the slate clean?

The Chancellor slashed taxes for the idle rich and slashed benefits for the working poor.

But we still have a current account deficit on a scale unprecedented in peace time. We have the slowest recovery on record. And our balance of trade just keeps getting worse.

There is a better plan for Britain. The Government should talk to businesses and unions about how to deliver it.

So it seems that this govern-

ment's top priority isn't getting Britain back on its feet. Instead, it wants to cut Britain's unions off at the knees. Barely had the Conservatives took office, than it published its TU reform bill.

History will remember this bill as the biggest attack in thirty years. Not just against trade unions but against our best chance of raising productivity, pay and demand. Because here is a simple truth: you can't create wealth without the workforce. You can't spread that wealth around fairly without trade unions.

So I make no apologies for defending strong trade unions, including making sure they have the right to strike - if they need to. If an employer believed we couldn't strike, it wouldn't bother to bargain.

Let's unite; let's stand proud together; and let's fight to win

We wouldn't have safe workplaces, we wouldn't have paid holidays; and - let's remember the Ford sewing machinists - we wouldn't have equal pay.

But it would be a mistake to see this attack on unions in isolation. It is part of a political strategy to keep the Conservatives in power for a generation.

They know that globalisation has created losers, as well as winners. They know that extremely unequal societies can become extremely unstable. So they've taken lessons from rightwing friends around the world - the US republicans, Tony Abbott in Australia.

And the key lesson? Target those blue collar workers who feel forgotten, derided and ripped off; who can't see any future of skilled jobs or decent reward for a hard week's work.

Then tell them that the Tories are on their side. Tell them you feel their pain. Tell them it's all the migrants' fault. Whip up hatred of claimants. Then steal the TUC's clothes by promising the working poor a pay rise.

Never mind that most people on benefits are working. And never mind that migrants are no

different to any other worker: hoping for a better life; contributing to our country; facing the same struggle to earn a decent living.

Just like my family who came here from Ireland - just like so many of all of our families.

And then there's the European Union. Our country's prime minister in an undignified scuttle around the capitals of Europe, thumping tables, desperate to find some red meat to throw to his backbenchers.

If David Cameron was really battling for blue collar Britain, he'd be fighting for stronger rights. To stop bosses getting away with pitting worker against worker to undercut pay.

Fighting for an investment plan so our young people have good job opportunities and fighting against trade agreements like TTIP, and secret courts, to stop big corporations cannibalising our public services.

The Conservative Party no longer represents the interests of industry in general. Its main purpose is to serve just one. Global finance; it's become the political wing of the City of London.

You know, the Conservatives take every opportunity to claim that Labour is in the pocket of the unions. As if the small amounts of hard earned money given freely by thousands of nurses, shop workers and refuse collectors was something to sneer about.

But the Conservative Party is in a pocket that's a whole lot larger. It belongs to just a handful of rich men. There is only one way George Osborne's strategy to divide people and crush dissent will succeed. And that's if good people of conscience stay silent.

But I can tell you this, the government has woefully miscalculated the resilience of working people and their unions. I ask you to support the campaign plan endorsed by your General Council.

For a fair economy, strong rights at work, great jobs for everyone, world-class public services; and for a free trade union movement.

Let's unite; let's stand proud together; and let's fight to win



Frances O'Grady is General Secretary of the TUC

This is an shortened version of her speech to TUC Annual Congress 2015

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SCOTLAND

Long haul

Katy Clark cautions on over-optimism for the Holyrood elections

Rebuilding Labour in Scotland won't be an easy task. The meltdown of the Labour vote at the General Election had been a long time coming. Scottish Labour has been losing elections for years - at local, Scottish and European levels. All the warning signs were there. In many parts of Scotland people had got used to voting in different ways in different elections year after year. The SNP first won the largest number of seats in the Scottish Parliament in 2007 in a shock result the Scottish Labour establishment has still not really recovered from. In 2011 the SNP then won an absolute majority in the Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Labour Party lost many so called 'safe' seats at that election and the results then were considered appalling for Labour.

The voting system makes it difficult to predict accurately the number of seats Scottish Labour might win next May. If the General Election results in Scotland are repeated or recent opinion polls borne out at Scottish Parliament elections next May, the worst case scenario is that Scottish Labour could be left with as few as 12 to 20 seats in the Parliament far fewer than the 38 we currently hold which was considered a disaster in 2011.

A common response on the doorstep when canvassing for votes over many years has been "well it will be either Labour or SNP" and that remained the position right up to the referendum. Warnings were repeatedly given by some in the Scottish Labour Party to the UK leadership over more than a decade. When Labour was in power the response would come that those complaining simply didn't understand the policies which had not been communicated well enough.

Social attitudes are very similar in Scotland to the rest of the UK. But the political discourse is different. Scottish voters have voted for the Tories in far smaller numbers than in England and Wales.

The New Labour project has been unpopular in large parts of

Scotland (and other parts of the UK) for a long time. The difference in Scotland is that Labour has had competition. The SNP recognised many decades ago that they could not win in Scotland as the 'tartan Tories'. To achieve their dream of Scottish independence and to be a significant political force they needed people to vote for them in the major population centres in Scotland - in the central belt and west coast with their strong industrial history and labour movement tradition. They have therefore deliberately repackaged themselves to become attractive to what are now former Labour voters.

Of course many of the people who have joined the SNP over the last 30 years do have progressive values. But whilst the Party has been careful to wrap itself in the red flag and present itself as left

People are desperately seeking a better kind of politics

wing the reality of what it does in power on many areas of policy such as taxation, transport and energy could not be considered left wing.

Despite all of this if the Scottish independence referendum had not happened I think it is likely that Labour would have done well again in Scotland at the General Election. However Labour's behaviour during the very long referendum campaign and probably also immediately afterwards eroded trust to such an extent that Scottish Labour became a toxic brand. There is little doubt that the way the Yes campaign persuaded much of the left of centre in every community that social justice was no longer possible through Westminster and that a Yes vote could 'end Tory rule forever' was a significant factor. The Better Together campaign and the cross party campaign with the Tories looked desperate and unprincipled. Senior figures in the trade unions and many others had warned against it and many local Parties such as in North Ayrshire only campaigned for a No vote through the United with Labour cam-



London and Edinburgh joined at the hip

paign. The tidal wave did not differentiate to any significant extent between candidates in May as the electorate were quite clear that it was the Scottish Labour brand they were rejecting not individuals.

The election of Jeremy Corbyn and the repositioning of Labour on issues such as privatisation and the economy will help to start rebuilding in Scotland. Jim Murphy accepted that Scottish Labour needed to move to the left. Unfortunately what he did looked contrived and opportunistic. The authenticity of Jeremy Corbyn and his track record over many decades will not have the same problem. It will be easier for people to accept that Labour has changed. But that does not mean that things will be easy and we should not expect quick results. Scottish Labour needs to start building itself from the bottom up. The Party needs to give local campaigners the policies to do that. Far too much of Scottish politics is far too negative. People are desperately seeking a better kind of politics, serious strategies to redevelop the economies of the former industrial heartlands and new forms of democracy which give us greater power over the way we lead our lives.

Labour will start winning electoral positions again in Scotland when we embrace this radicalism and when we are able to give hope. A century after Keir Hardie's death his vision and those of the early socialists are the ones we need to look to as we develop a politics which truly takes on the vested interests and which has the capacity to liberate the peoples of all parts of these islands. Let's commit to do that together.



Katy Clark was Labour MP for North Ayrshire and Arran from 2005 until 2015

Winning the economic debate

Ann Pettifor offers some friendly advice about how to overturn anti-austerity policies

We have much to learn about the proposed policies of the new Corbyn team. But we know that Corbynomics is vehemently anti-austerity. Her Majesty's Official Opposition is determined to reverse the policies promoted by the Conservative government and its allies.

These policies have led to a bailout of the bankers that caused the crisis (via so-called Quantitative Easing, QE,) but also via the nationalization of the losses of private banks like RBS, Northern Rock and Lloyds). At the same time, both the Coalition and Conservative governments used the crisis and its aftermath as an opportunity to slash not just the welfare state, but the state itself.

Corbynomics would reverse this state of affairs by ending such attacks, and by taxing bankers and other powerful entities that evade or avoid their fair share of taxation. They would also draw on the powers of the Bank of England. To achieve a 'Peoples' QE'.

The Bank's powers have been used, as noted above, to bail out the banking system, and many wealthy bankers and other investors. But QE has gone further: it has led to the asset price inflation-assets being owned chiefly by the wealthy. The economics profession, the Bank of England, the Treasury and the Conservative government have turned a blind eye to this inflation.

But when wage or price inflation takes place, the central bank, the Treasury and all economists unite to suppress wage price inflation, often by attacking trade unionism.

Asset price inflation explains why the rich have got richer during this crisis, while the rest of us, reliant on wages and benefits or, as with shopkeepers, farmers and firms - on prices, have got poorer.

Corbynomics proposes to reverse this state of affairs, and to harness the Bank of England to support the economically active as a whole - not just the wealthy.

[As an aside: the Bank of England was nationalized in 1945 by a Labour government precisely because it did not support the economy as a whole during the disaster of the 1930s. It is therefore not in the least bit independent. It is in effect a government department, with some freedom to set interest rates without political interference.)

A Labour government could "harness" the Bank of England, by the Labour Chancellor adding to the Bank of England's existing mandate, and instruct the Bank of England to not address stable prices, but also full employment. The US Federal Reserve has such a mandate, and is asked to manage monetary policy and monetary operations in such a way as to ensure full employment. There is nothing radical in that proposal.

The Bank of England does not "print money" when it engages in monetary operations. It oversees the Mint, which prints the declining number of notes and coins in circulation because we now make more use of bank transfers and credit cards.

Ninety-five percent of the money in the British

economy is "printed" by private banks - each time they make a loan. So it is private banks, not the central bank that must be regulated to prevent inflation - especially if private banks persist in making speculative loans. The Bank of England has begun to clamp down but a Labour Chancellor could demand more.

The Bank of England does not create the money circulating throughout the economy. It only creates 'central bank money' which is only available to licensed banks. It cannot therefore be responsible for price or wage inflation.

The Bank offers banks what amounts to a form of overnight overdraft - to ensure that each night banks can 'clear' or exchange cheques and transfers, and balance their liabilities and assets in such a way as to not go bust.

It can be asked to do more. It can create a form of 'money' or QE that can only be used by banks. It uses this newly-created 'money' or 'liquidity' to buy assets, e.g. corporate or government bonds, from private banks.

The Bank of England either holds on to these assets, or waits until an opportune moment and sells them - at a profit. It hands this profit back to the Chancellor to help lower the government's budget deficit. It is inflationary - of assets.

But we are living in an era of disinflation (the rate at which prices are falling) or even deflation (negative prices.) The causes may be due to oil price falls, because global income, or demand is falling. Neoliberal economics has brought us austerity, privatization, the volatility of mobile, unfettered capital movements, "free trade" and the 'free' mobility of labour.

And deflationary pressures at a time when private debts are still very high, and largely unrepayable, are a profound threat to the economy. This is because deflation causes the value of debt (and of interest rates) to rise, even as incomes and prices are falling.

So far from facing the threat of inflation, Britain faces a graver threat of deflation. And deflation is a threat, because government and banks do not know how to reverse it.

Action by the Bank of England to help the government fund and finance public investment in the



Bank of England : there's more riding on it than you might think

kind of projects that will generate income, will help to counter the threat of deflation.

It can keep the base rate of interest low, and ensure that the government needs only borrow at a highly affordable rate of interest - one that is lower than the income that will be generated by investment to repay the debt.

It can help manage the government's borrowing, by co-ordinating carefully with the government's Debt Management Office - which issues government bonds or gilts.

It can help keep private banks afloat, and set conditions and penalties for central bank support, i.e. to invest productively, not speculatively. This pressure would help increase lending into the real economy, and finance private investment at very low rates of interest.

Finally, at a push, the Bank of England could launch something known as "Helicopter Money" - by directly sending say, £6,000 to every British household. For example, the Chancellor could give every taxpayer a break of £6,000 - by cutting

taxes. Alistair Darling did something like this after the crisis when he cut VAT. President Obama did this when after the crisis he spent \$152bn in tax rebates for low and middle income earners, and tax incentives for firms. There is general agreement that this stimulus helped the US recovery. So a Labour Chancellor could do just as much as a civil servant at the Bank of England to revive the economy, with no threat at all of such expenditure causing inflation. On the contrary, it may well help to stabilize prices.

Mrs Thatcher once famously said that: "There is no such thing as public money. There is only taxpayers' money." This assertion is repeated ad nauseum by politicians in all political parties. Liam Byrne for example made the point that "there is no money left" in his famous note written on departure from the Treasury.

While tax revenues are important for maintaining balance in the government's accounts, the government does not rely on current income from taxation for expenditure. Just as a household does not choose to pay for a house or a car by first saving a share of monthly income, so government does not need to finance expenditure out of current income.

The British government can borrow for sound, long-term investment - that will in due course generate income to repay the debt. It can do so, because despite everything, Britain is a rich country, with talented, well-educated citizens, great infrastructure, a good health system and with a sound reputation in international financial circles. As a result, the British government is considered a safe borrower, and can borrow at low, indeed almost negative (in terms of inflation) rates of interest. The British government is wise to borrow at very low rates, because government investment in non-speculative projects creates employment. And as we all know, employment generates income.

In the case of the individual, employment generates a wage, or monthly page cheque. For the government, employment generates tax revenues, in particular income tax revenues. Once the wage-earner has an income, he invariably spends it, and the government then earns more tax income - this time from VAT. The shopkeeper hopefully makes a profit - and pays the government again - in the form of capital gains tax.

So one employed person can generate three streams of income for a government.

Which is why John Maynard Keynes always argued that it was vitally important for governments to first and foremost "look after employment, then the budget will look after itself." The best way to cut the deficit, is to create full employment - high-skilled, well-paid employment. It is only employment that will cut the deficit.

Right now unemployment is at 5.5% with many young people losing hope of decent, well-paid, secure jobs - and is still far too high. Only when unemployment gets down to 1-2% will Britain be approaching full employment. At that point the budget will be as close to balance as is possible.

Labour should therefore be campaigning alongside the TUC for more secure, highly-skilled, well-paid employment. Because only full employment will cut the deficit.

The Tory Chancellor claims he will cut the deficit, balance the books, and live within our means. But the Chancellor cannot cut the deficit. The government cannot balance the books because the government is not like a household which can balance its budget by cutting spending or increasing income. The government's budget does not depend on what the government does -but on what happens in the economy.

If private companies (like banks) go bust, making thousands unemployed - the government's budget deficit quickly rises. Why? Because the unemployed don't pay taxes. Worse, the government has to pay unemployment benefits!

However, if government borrows to spend and invest - in the kind of income-generating projects that create employment - then government (tax) income will rise and transfers (unemployment benefits, etc.,) will fall.

That is how Labour will win the economic debate!



Ann Pettifor is Director: Policy Research in Macroeconomics (PRIME)

PEOPLE POWER

Mushrooming members

Former Campaign Group chair **Lynne Jones** celebrates loyalty to Labour values

The Labour Party now has twice as many members as the Women's Institute and the potential to outstrip the numbers supporting the RSPB. This is an amazing achievement that can undoubtedly be attributed to the Corbyn effect. I still have in my possession a letter from Tony Blair telling me of his goal to reach half a million members by 2001. By 2001, the number of Party members declined to fewer than that bequeathed by John Smith.

When Blair won the leadership in 1994, one of his first acts was to fly to Australia to get Rupert Murdoch's backing. Although we can be thankful that Jeremy Corbyn will not be currying favour in this way, we can already see an onslaught from the media that makes the treatment meted out to Kinnock and Miliband seem restrained. Even trusted organisations like the Guardian and the BBC are using subtle means to undermine a leader who is perceived to threaten the established order. This makes grassroots activity to build trust within our communities more vital. Social media will be important but let us not fool ourselves that a few tweets or Facebook entries, generally preaching to the converted, will suffice! We must accept that it is the responsibility of every CLP and branch to harness the enthusiasm of new members and supporters to reach out in our local communities.

Importance of Party unity

It is the responsibility of the Parliamentary Labour Party to ensure that we cannot be portrayed as a divided party. So how difficult will this be? How can someone like me, a serial rebel whilst a Labour MP, pontificate on the importance of Party unity?

My answer is that you don't get unity by riding roughshod over the core values of our Party or by dismantling or manipulating the democratic processes through

which people should feel they can exert an influence. The use of these methods is well-documented: controlling debates at Conference and requiring votes on unamendable documents; denying people the opportunity of serving on select committees (Jeremy was one); ignoring the results of "consultations" to the extent that there is little interest in participating. Above all, there has been, within the Parliamentary Party, the ruthless exploitation of the power of patronage and, when all else fails, the use of bullying and arm-twisting.

What I have absolute confidence in is that Jeremy Corbyn understands, more than any other leader, the importance of Party unity. That's because he

Why did we allow them to get away with it?

understands why we, the "usual suspects", felt forced to defy the whip and why so many party members left in disgust at the betrayal of their fundamental beliefs.

What we don't want is a mirror image of what went before, a so-called hard left takeover using the same discredited measures to exclude other points of view. Even though Jeremy has demonstrated his intention not to go down this path, it is claimed that many of his supporters are "intent on revenge" and that he lacks the authority to restrain them. I beg to differ, he has the authority given by party members.

It is claimed that Jeremy has no response to the challenges of the modern world and is a backward-looking member of Old Labour. I have never regarded myself as Old Labour, always being a strong advocate, for example, of our membership of Europe and industrial democracy. I was labelled a right winger in the seventies. My views didn't change substantively, except I became more of a feminist. But

the Party shifted so far to the right that I became stereotyped as "hard left".

If I am "hard left", then so is Jeremy but it is a meaningless, pejorative term. The Jeremy Corbyn I know is not Old Labour. He has always been a strong advocate of civil liberties and opposed New Labour's attacks, such as limiting the right to jury trial. He embraced gay rights when New Labour was being dragged through the European Court of Human Rights, and he opposed Saddam Hussein when he was an ally of the West. He recognises the imperative of acting on climate change and the importance of a symbiotic relationship between the state and private sector to achieve a healthy, sustainable economy.

Looked at evidence

He is not advocating top-down nationalisation but new methods of holding monopolies to account. This will involve changing the rules that prevent the public sector competing for privatised services and encourage the intervention of new players such as co-ops, community organisations and local authorities. Jeremy has looked at evidence that shows that PFI deals and run down social housing make no economic sense and are bad for society, so if that is backward looking, then so be it, but remember, many conservatives share this view.

As none other than Nobel prize winning economist Paul Krugman has pointed out, Jeremy was the only leadership candidate to challenge the bogus Conservative arguments justifying the need for austerity. He accuses almost all UK news media of not only failing to subject Tory claims to hard scrutiny, but also of reporting them as facts. Why did we allow them to get away with it?

Now we have an opportunity to show how the Labour Party is relevant to the majority of voters. I predict that many MPs will be pleasantly surprised by Jeremy's new way of working.



Lynne Jones was the Labour MP for Birmingham Selly Oak between 1992 and 2010.

She is a former Chair of the Socialist Campaign Group of Labour MPs and is now active in Brecon and Radnorshire Constituency Labour Party

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PARTY DEMOCRACY

Will Conference help or hinder?

Veteran campaigner for party democracy **Gaye Johnston** reviews opportunities in 2015

Both before and after he was elected party Leader, Jeremy Corbyn undertook to increase participative democracy for Party members. The Conference promises opportunities. A number of relevant rule changes were circulated to members in May by the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD). Hopefully many will be carried.

Several are designed to empower Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs). There is a proposal to double the number of National Executive Committee (NEC) seats reserved for CLP representatives from six to twelve (including two from Scotland and Wales). This would give CLPs 31% of NEC seats thus increasing grass roots influence. There is a welcome proposal to introduce an NEC appointed Party Ombudsperson to hear and decide on members' complaints about the way the Party has treated them and on breaches of Party rules for example by Party staff. This measure was originally floated in the 2007 Labour Commission Report.

Moving on to Conference: there is a rule change mooted to guarantee that eight contemporary motions are debated (four from CLPs and four from unions). In the current priorities ballot the rules are so unclear to delegates that Conference usually ends up debating only five out of a possible eight. Another proposal would abolish the term "contemporary" for policy resolutions. In practice these have to relate to an event in the month before Conference. This amendment would widen their scope but would exclude subjects addressed by NEC and NPF (National Policy Forum) reports. Instead of the NPF having total control of the Party's rolling policy programme, which Conference can only accept or reject as a whole, there is a proposal that the NPF should establish its own policy commissions which would review the programme annually includ-

ing all new conference resolutions. These revised documents would then be circulated to CLPs, union affiliates, Young Labour and Labour Councillors. These would be able to submit amendments to NPF policy commissions to amend. The NPF would then decide on each document and return it to Party Conference which would make the final decision. Grass roots members would thus have a greater input than at present.

Currently CLPs have to opt each year to put forward a rule change or a contemporary motion or neither. This is unduly restrictive. Another proposal would allow them to do both. Currently when CLPs propose a Party rule change one year, they have to wait another year for Conference to consider it. This is an anomaly

The overwhelming democratic election of Corbyn must be openly accepted; especially by MPs

dating from a defunct 1960s party rule. CLP proposed rule changes should be debated the year that they are submitted.

There are proposed rule changes relating to the selection and retention of Parliamentary Candidates. During the New Labour period candidates were often imposed by the NEC at the behest of the leadership so local Party members had no input into the selection of their candidate and MP with whom they might be stuck for many years. Beneficiaries of imposition included Chris Leslie and Gloria de Piero. A proposed rule change would restrict imposition to extreme cases. In the case of imposition of a shortlist or a candidate, decisions would be taken by a panel of equal numbers of NEC members and representatives of the CLP. There is a rule mooted to stop branches nominating in PPC selections merely from CVs and superficial meet and greet sessions. Instead party and affiliated member branches



would have the right to interview aspiring candidates adequately and make nominations.

Finally, a rule change circulated to party members in May, long before the Corbyn surge, contains a proposal to abolish the trigger mechanism and reinstate mandatory reselection. MPs would face a normal reselection with the proviso that if they obtained an overwhelming proportion of nominations the NEC would declare them reselected. Otherwise a normal reselection would go ahead with the MP included in the shortlist. At present constituencies can be stuck with an idle/unaccountable MP because the trigger is so difficult to pull.

Other action is necessary to open up the Party. The overwhelming democratic election of Corbyn must be openly accepted; especially by MPs. CLPs should use General Committees, other party meetings, seminars and meetings at Conference to discuss with MPs how they support the leadership. They should bear in mind that the present leader was elected by the largest ever majority of electors including a majority of full Party members voting. It is vital that new party members, affiliates and supporters are welcomed and encouraged to participate in party meetings, socials and campaigns. They may need support and information to understand party procedures, rules and policy making processes. It is essential that we must become a united and democratically run party again.



Gaye Johnston is a Vice Chair of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and former Vice Chair of the Labour Democratic Network. Her book "New Labour; was the pain worth the gain?" will be published on the internet in October 2015.

For more information see www.gayejohnston-writer.com

VOTING

Converting the South

Mary Southcott ponders mission impossible

Labour is left in southern England outside London, if our definition is south of the Severn-Wash line, with one MP in Exeter, Cambridge, Oxford, Slough and Southampton, and three in Bristol - a total of eight. In 1987 there were three. In 1997 the total shot up to 45, then dropped back to 10 in 2010. We did best where the LibDems collapsed, but the flip side was so did the Conservatives where Labour supporters had previously helped deliver LibDem MPs.

Pamphleteers have drawn attention to Labour's "southern discomfort", but research shows that southern voters are not very different. It is not policy but communication. During elections all messages are targeted at marginals. Party members and voters exist but without councillors, or MPs, their work is not translated into votes that count.

Making seats broadly reflect the votes has always been resisted because MPs in Labour strongholds don't see that progressive people don't always vote Labour. Fortunately, Trade Unions have a presence in most constituencies. Led by the PCS, the TUC will commission independent research into electoral reform and draw up recommendations. In moving their resolution, Kevin McHugh noted that the Conservative government was elected on just 24 per cent of the electorate. This is the registered electorate.

The late Robin Cook used to say we ought to give Conference medals to all Labour voters in Surrey who have voted Labour without ever achieving representation. What we need to recognise is that people who want a Labour government cannot always do this by voting Labour. The voting system is broken. In 2015 people voted as if we had a PR system. The Conservatives understood how not to lose to UKIP whereas some in Labour complacently assumed that UKIP would let them in by taking Tory votes. The dog that hadn't barked in past elections made an entrance. Conservatives had

always piled up votes in seats they won massively. Now using Ashcroft polling they targeted ruthlessly with individually tailored arguments. Two things came together, Tory targeting in Tory marginals against Labour and LibDems and the willingness of voters to vote as if we had a PR election. People are no longer constrained by the first past the post straitjacket into choosing whether they preferred a Labour or Conservative led government.

Labour should tackle UKIP by countering their arguments and stop taking people in safe Labour seats for granted. Some of the intelligent opposition to electoral reform back in the 1990s argued that once you gave people a choice people would stop voting Labour. Well now they have a PR choice

We need to address everyone in all elections

with UKIP for working class and the Green Party for middle class white people.

Some cannot see how Labour's putting a PR commitment into its 2020 manifesto can have any effect on the 2020 general election. But it will represent Labour has changed, moved away from tribalism and is willing to work cross party to find solutions. Labour has stopped thinking that all we need to do is win over the marginal voter in a Conservative-Labour marginal. The risk of only addressing this audience, the imperative under first past the post, is that we are talking to fewer and fewer people. And when boundaries are drawn we haven't spoken to people who move into some constituencies diluting the potential Labour vote.

This will be particularly true when registered voters in December 2015 are used to draw up the 2020 boundaries unless we spend from now ensuring people are registered. Particularly we need people coming up to 18, "attainers", on the register. We know that the population of university constituencies is vastly underestimated but the problem



Labour seats in the South: filling them is the challenge

affects many young people who move, often in private rented accommodation, often with shared letter boxes with mail never sent on.

Hope not Hate has identified that the already unregistered seven and a half millions are disproportionately the young, the poor and those from minority communities not only the groups that need representation most but are more likely to vote Labour. Be very sure that those in settled accommodation particularly in the "South" will be registered. So locally led voter registration is a must in our inner cities, in our Labour heartlands, everywhere.

Thirteen failed Labour candidates wrote: "Establishing Labour as a Southern party, with a tradition of support, will require a consistent strategy over many years, and one that looks beyond the ultra-targeting in key seats. Constituencies do not exist in isolation - friends, family and (increasingly) colleagues live in neighbouring 'non-target' constituencies. Labour needs to recognise, support and encourage activism across the whole of our regions if we want to build our presence, be a party for the whole of the South and the UK, and win.

Labour retreat is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Unfortunately the "South" is not just in the south. It is surrogate for Tory shires. We need to address everyone in all elections if we are to be a party which has a presence in every region, county and country and have any claim to be a national party rather than one of the north, Wales and London. "Labour's Learning the Lessons" - people need to hear this debate before we all become the "South".



Mary Southcott works with the Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform and is active in Bristol politics

INVESTMENT

Britain needs to get rebuilding

Housing policy guru Duncan Bowie makes the case

With Jeremy Corbyn as Labour Party leader, and Sadiq Khan as Mayoral candidate, the Labour Party needs to develop a programme for the reconstruction of Britain. While the UK economic base is now stronger that it has been for some years, investment in housing and the basic infrastructure of the country has not been given sufficient priority over the last four decades. We are a wealthy country that can fund mega-projects such as the Olympics but which has failed to maintain its housing stock, and has run down its stock of council housing. Transport investment funding has been focused on future major projects such as Crossrail, High Speed One (Eurostar) and now High Speed 2, which are mainly of benefit to London and the Southeast, while transport infrastructure in other parts of the country is inadequate.

Not adequately invested

For decades we have not adequately invested in utilities and we are facing water shortages and an inadequate sewage disposal system. Britain's population is increasing faster than anticipated, partly reflecting both our economic success and the economic and political vulnerabilities of other countries.

From a national perspective, Britain has recovered from the 2008 recession. But the recovery has not been equal across the whole country. Even in the prosperous SouthEast, the gap between rich and poor has increased rather than decreased. Part of the support Corbyn has received is due to a widespread view that the politics of recent governments has done little for lower income households. So the core issue for our new leaders is not economic growth *per se* but how to invest in infrastructure and services for all households and ensure that all households are able to access these resources - this is the Benthamite agenda of seeking to ensure that

Government achieves the greatest good for the greatest number of people - the many not the few. As wealth is currently narrowly concentrated and largely privately owned, perhaps not quite 1:99, but perhaps 20:80, this demands a redistributionist agenda. As home ownership is now the main source of wealth appreciation and therefore inequality, as Corbyn recognises, this issue has to be tackled head on.

Labour went into the last general election committing a future Government to spending no more than the coalition government and reducing the deficit. In 2008, Labour was cautious about operating Keynesian measures to increase spending as a counter-cyclical measure to maintain economic stability in a market downturn. The position is now very dif-

We need a policy of investment in social housing

ferent. What Labour has failed to recognise in recent years is that just as decisions on spending priorities are a matter of political choice, so decisions as to how to raise the revenue to fund investment and services is also a matter of political choice. In both the 2010 and 2015 election campaigns, Labour got locked into debates about the form spending cuts would take, because it was not prepared to argue the positive case for tax. Tax is, after all, a community contribution from corporations and individuals who can afford to contribute. The proceeds ensure a basic standard of services and quality of life for those less fortunate.

Richard Murphy, who is Corbyn's economic adviser and has written for *Chartist* in the past, argued this case in his 2011 book, the *Courageous State*. As far as housing is concerned, myself and others have argued in *Chartist* and elsewhere that we need a policy of investment in social housing and a property and land tax system which incentivises the effective use of housing and appropriate new housing develop-



Housebuilding: not enough for over 30 years

ment and which is focused on meeting housing needs rather than just facilitating wealth appreciation by investors, whether UK based or international. The same argument applies in the case of transport and utilities and components of social infrastructure such as schools and hospitals. Any role for private finance and private management should be within the overall objective as to whether this is of benefit to the users of these services.

Relatively simple

The options for tax policy are relatively simple and not novel - a more progressive income tax, a wealth tax, taxes on asset appreciation and reforms to council tax to introduce a more progressive system and which incentivise the most effective use of the housing stock. Labour needs to be much more explicit about the limitations of the market and the positive role for public ownership - not just at a central government level but also at regional, local and neighbourhood level. The 2008 recession demonstrated how the market can fail, but the market never operated for the greater good even in the pre-2008 boom period. It is now the time to argue for a fundamental shift in the party's approach to the state, public investment and taxation. This month's events have shown that we have far more public support for our policies than we realised - we owe it to the next generation to act.



Duncan Bowie is a senior lecturer in spatial planning at the University of Westminster and Reviews Editor of *Chartist*

TRIDENT

Current Trident policy has to go

Kate Hudson on putting Trident into the Strategic Defence and Security Review

The Labour Party now has to address its policy on Trident. Not just because its new leader is opposed to nuclear weapons, but because parliament will decide whether or not to replace them early in 2016. Of course Labour has a policy - currently backing replacement - but the pre-election National Policy Forum agreed that Trident should be included in the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), for a proper consideration of whether Britain really needs nuclear weapons for its security or not.

Labour isn't in government, so it cannot determine what is included in the SDSR. But it has nevertheless recognised that such a debate needs to take place before the replacement decision. So Labour cannot simply go into a parliamentary Trident vote on its old policy - this has to be reconsidered within the party.

Jeremy Corbyn has already indicated that such a debate will take place within the party and will inform policy-making on the future of Trident. In my experience of speaking at CLP meetings, there are two main issues that come up in discussion.

One is that having an anti-nuclear policy would be a vote loser and would make Labour look soft on defence. You only need to look at opinion polls - a majority against Trident for many years - and listen to much military opinion, that Trident is useless and the money would be better spent on troops and conventional weaponry, to know that

this is an argument from the past.

The other is jobs. What about the 6,000 jobs in the nuclear weapons sector? The advantage of having a Labour leader who has a background as a trade union official is that even though he is firmly anti-Trident he is also pro-employment. His plans for a Defence Diversification Agency (DDA) will finally deal with one of the Labour Party's chief failures - to provide a just transition away from the production of weapons of mass destruction to socially productive industries with high-skilled jobs.

For too long the Labour leadership has used the jobs argument as cover for its pro-nuclear position. "You can't cancel Trident," they say, "because jobs will be lost."

Jobs with peace and prosperity

But extensive research - and common sense - shows that with the money spent on Trident reinvested, far more skilled jobs could be created in sectors that would help us all, from housing to sustainable energy to medical equipment.

What has been lacking up until now has been the political vision and economic commitment at top levels of Labour, both to making that happen and to assuring the workforce that this is a genuine and serious commitment.

There can be no doubt that Jeremy has that vision and commitment and it is vital that the labour and trade union movement backs him up.



Trident: time for a rethink

Although the question of Trident replacement has put this on the agenda, it has far wider significance for industry as a whole - there has to be an industrial strategy, not just for the defence sector, but for Britain's entire economy.

For this to really work there has to be genuine workforce involvement. This is at the heart of Jeremy's commitment to a DDA which will be established 'jointly between workers, industry and government.' This will enable a real transition - a change in the narrative which the Labour leadership has imposed, away from "weapons are good for jobs" to "jobs with peace and prosperity."

This is all part of the essential debate around Trident. It is very much to be welcomed - and it is in the interests of the Labour Party and the country as a whole.



Kate Hudson is secretary of CND

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WESTMINSTER VIEW

End of machine politics?

Cat Smith MP on changing Labour's political culture

For those of us who watched Jeremy Corbyn speaking at events across the United Kingdom the scale of his victory should not have come as a surprise. We saw the long queues of people waiting outside venues, many unable to get in to hear him speak. We also saw the overwhelmingly positive reaction of those who did hear him.

When the results were announced though, even for us, the numbers were astonishing. 422,871 people voted in the leadership election, of those 251,417 voted for Jeremy. Over 88,000 registered supporters, many of whom were engaging with the party formally for the first time or who after Blair, New Labour & Iraq were re-engaging with us once again, cast their ballot to vote for a fresh start. In the 24 hours following Jeremy's victory over 15,000 people decided to join the party. We now need to make sure these people are not just numbers on a ballot or a membership database but are instead our activists, part of a mass movement determined to build a fairer, more equal and more compassionate society.

Members and supporters are only going to want to deliver leaflets, knock on doors and talk to voters on behalf of the Labour Party if they feel valued and listened to. For too long the Labour leadership have taken our membership for granted, depending on members to volunteer their time to get our message across but ignoring their views when they feel it's inconvenient.

This was most acutely demonstrated recently by the way in which the party leadership shamefully ignored the 2013 conference vote to re-nationalise the railways and Royal Mail. It should be obvious that people are more likely to give up their time to help secure a future Labour Government if they have been given a meaningful say in the policies which that Government will pursue. There has been much discussion since

Jeremy's election of the party's position in the European Union referendum. Personally, I believe we should be letting members have their say and I am extremely optimistic about the positive and inclusive vision of Europe that they will put forward for us to campaign for.

The Labour Party has always been part of a wider movement. We need to start demonstrating this better. As an MP in a marginal seat I know the importance of knocking on doors and talking to voters but people are only going to listen if they know we are on their side. Otherwise we will simply be seen as part of a self-serving political elite. At the last election I lost count of the number of times I was told that all political parties were the same. I know that not to be true but we need to look at why that is the impression we have given.

Sadly all too often in recent times we have stood aloof from activities taking place outside of the

Westminster bubble or electoral cycle. From public sector strikes against real-term cuts in pay to students protesting against tuition fees or disabled people occupying Parliament to voice their anger at the closure of the Independent Living Fund,

Labour's support has been lukewarm at best. Perhaps most damningly over the past two to three years the anti-austerity movement has largely taken place with Labour sitting on the sidelines. We need to be visible again, on picket lines supporting striking workers, on demonstrations both nationally and locally, for example fighting alongside communities opposing fracking. Some have derided the idea of Labour being 'the party of protest' as if it is somehow an alternative to being in Government. The reality is that it is only by standing alongside those fighting this Government that people will see us as a genuine alternative to the Tories. One which is worth voting for.

Thankfully we have elected a leader who gets this. Jeremy has not only demonstrated himself to be a committed champion of party members' rights he has also been on probably more picket-lines and demonstrations since his election to Parliament in 1983 than any other MP in that time. I firmly believe the era of machine politics is over. It's time to start being a movement again.

Cat Smith is MP for Lancaster & Fleetwood and shadow minister for Women and Equalities



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