

# CHARTIST

For democratic socialism

July/August 2016

#281

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## Scuttled by the right

*Post-EU referendum  
analysis plus*

*David Lister on the Tories*

*Mary Southcott interviews*

*Bristol's new Mayor*

*Robin Hambleton*

*on Devolution*

*Prem Sikka*

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*Anti-semitism*

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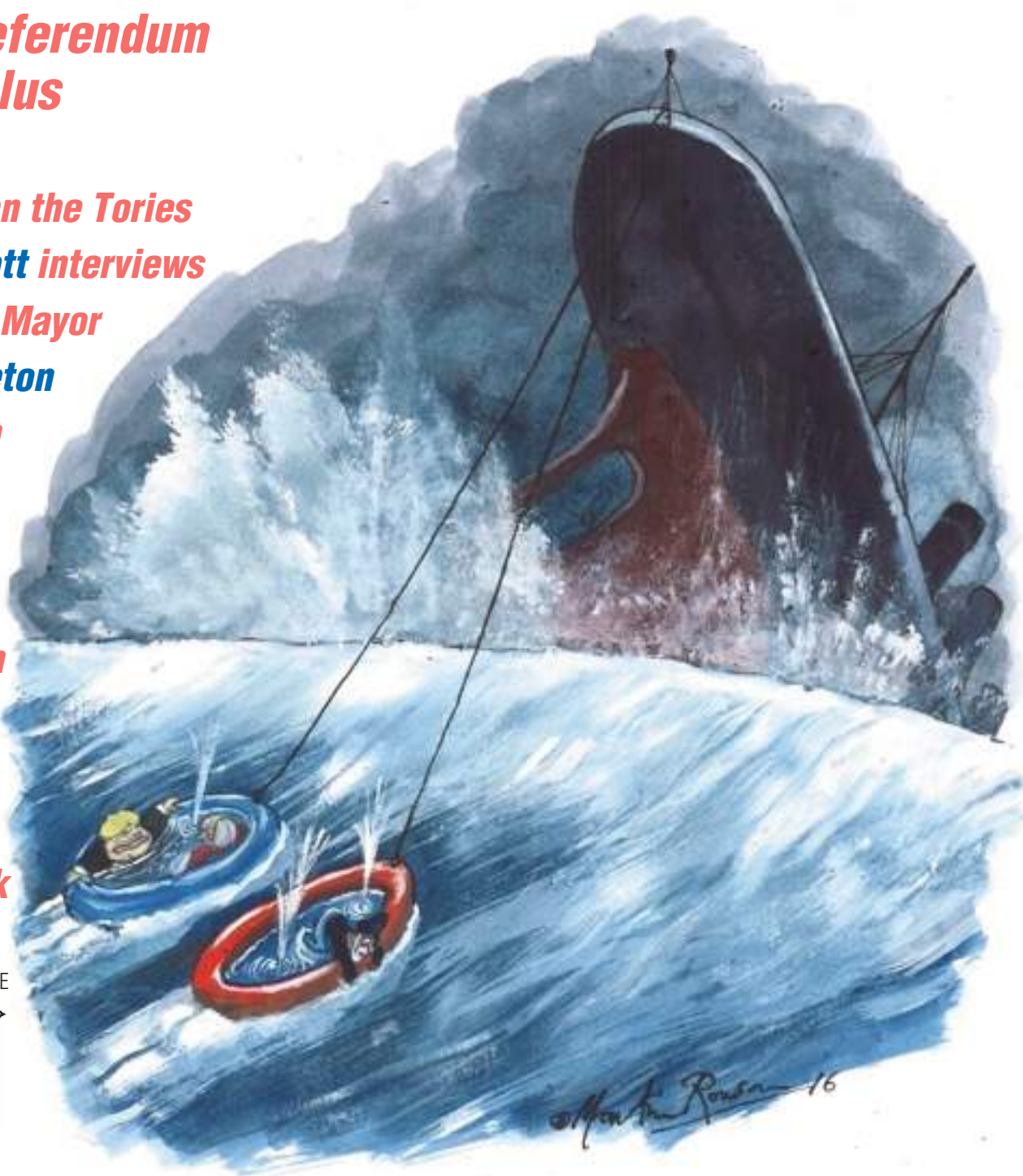
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## Editorial Policy

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

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

CHARTIST is not a party publication. It brings together people who are interested in socialism, some of whom are active 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), Peter Chalk, Mike Davis (Editor), Nigel Doggett, David Floyd, Don Flynn, Roger Gillham, Tehmina Kazi, Peter Kenyon (Treasurer), Frank Lee, Dave Lister, Andy Morton (Website Editor), Mary Southcott, James Grayson, Patricia d'Ardenne, Sheila Osmanovic and Patrick Mulcahy.

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Cover by Martin Rowson

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# The struggle continues

**U**K voters made history on 23rd June. It was always going to be close, in the event Brexit won the European Union referendum by 51.9% to 48.1% on a 72% turnout. Labour campaigned for an 'In' vote as did this magazine. Like Corbyn, we were in for internationalism, in for reform, in for working with socialist, social democratic and green allies in Europe for a new course building on the social rights and environmental protections already in place. So we have to acknowledge a failure.

But for the Tories it has marked a massive split, a huge miscalculation and defeat for Prime Minister Cameron with his resignation paving the way for a Tory leadership election and a likely victory for 'Leave' campaigners Boris Johnson or Michael Gove by October. Momentum were right to say that 'Much of this vote reflected anger in communities which have experienced many years of industrial decline with the subsequent loss of secure employment. Many such working class communities have been utterly neglected for years by those in power. Millions appear to have chosen 'Leave' to vote against the unfettered globalisation that has seen living standards stagnate or fall, as the cost of living rises. We share this scepticism of big business dominance, austerity and distant elites, be they British, European or Global, and share that demand for a country where working people have control.'

It is difficult to calculate the ramifications of the vote. Scotland voted strongly to remain as did Northern Ireland. This raises constitutional questions of fresh referendums in those devolved nations to vote on maintaining EU membership independently of England and Wales. The process of negotiating a Brexit with the EU, or trade agreements with 27 member states will not be easy and will run for at least two years from the point of invoking Article 50. Inevitably far right and nationalist forces in other member states will be emboldened by the UK vote and press for exit while existing leaders will hold fast to the core principles of free movement in capital, services and labour, in seeking to shore up the Union.

The UK result was as much a protest vote against the austerity policies of this government as it was against the EU.

We would further echo the Momentum statement that 'Many 'Leave' voters usually vote for Labour or are working people Labour should represent. Now the Party and the whole labour movement needs to show the country that it alone can offer working people genuine control over their lives, workplaces and communities.'

The nasty nationalist undertone of the Leave campaign reached a nadir with the racist 'Breaking Point' poster campaign by UKIP, part of a xenophobic drum beat ramping up a hate climate on immigration and refugees, within which Labour MP Jo Cox was murdered in cold blood by a neo-nazi sympathiser.

Anti-politics is what UKIP and the Tory right have played to in their narrow, nationalist 'take back control' populist rhetoric. An Imperial nostalgia bubbles not far below the surface.

The Tory Remain campaign enlisted virtually the

whole establishment bar the monarchy with Osborne threatening an emergency austerity budget. For much of the campaign Labour was shut out of the debate as the media seemed mesmerised by the blue on blue contest. Working class voters in the north and Midlands clearly saw the vote as a way of telling the government that we are not 'all in it together'.

Wealth has not been spread. Westminster and business elites dominate, there is a marked intergenerational split, and a divide between metropolitans and those in small towns and rural areas. The vote has also been a revolt of the disadvantaged and alienated. It highlights the failure of the state, of politicians to use the state to redistribute wealth and properly resources our infrastructure. Working people have endured seven years of reduced living standards, huge cuts to public services, housing misery, cuts in social security and this surging inequality while the big banks and the corporate rich have further enhanced their ill-gotten wealth. Sir Philip Green at bankrupted BHS is the latest example of this unacceptable rip-off capitalism. Prem Sikka exposes the scandal in this issue.

Labour needs to find ways to reconnect with its working class heartlands outside of London. John McDonnell has said Labour needs to hear the messages, to understand what is being said and change. This is the course he and Corbyn have embarked on in promoting an investment led, digitally smart, anti-austerity and sustainable recovery programme. While redoubling our efforts to prevent migrant scape-goating, Labour will offer security for precarious workers by ending zero hours contracts, tackling short term working, protecting agency workers, promoting trade unions, boosting the living wage and facilitating a voice in the workplace.

The message also involves progressive taxation at home and international action on tax avoidance and evasion. It is a course that does not involve rejecting immigration but welcoming it as an economic and social benefit. Labour has said the posted workers directive (which allows the minimum wage to be undercut) should go, while the Migrant Settlement Fund for local authorities must be reinstated so councils can help integrate new communities. Leave campaigners said we don't have enough homes, or schools or health care to cope with more immigrants. We say, immigrants staff our health and social care services, our transport services. We say 95% of EU migrants are in work contributing to the economy. We say build a million new homes for social rent, end the scourge of house purchase for profit, reinstate Labour's Building Schools for the Future programme, invest in the NHS instead of constantly underfunding and privatising.

It was 'immigration what won it' say many pundits. Don Flynn examines the opportunist and often racist misuse of the immigration issue by the Leave campaign showing that globalisation means people will inevitably be on the move in a shrinking world seeking out opportunities for work, travel and cultural enrichment. We have argued strongly that nation states alone cannot combat the malign side of globalisation, hence the need to work multi-nationally. Further, while there are wars and repressive regimes

there will be refugees seeking sanctuary. Jackie Bowie highlights the plight of unaccompanied minors.

Leavers also offered the false prospectus of reclaimed British self government. What many Leavers deceitfully ignore is the fact that British voters do elect representatives to the European Parliament and elected ministers meet in the Euro Council of Ministers to debate policy. This is a level of shared sovereignty. The democracy 'Leavers' talk-up is that of an antiquated, over-centralised Westminster, with increasingly reduced powers for locally elected councils, an unelected monarchy and Lords. Less than 10% of UK legislation began in Europe, all is made in the British Parliament.

Although we are set to leave the EU we are an internationalist movement. Labour should continue to subscribe to an ambition of being part of a

reformed European union. We need to work with our allies and friends across Europe and beyond in the shared struggle against austerity, to tackle climate change, to build a sustainable economy with full employment and a Europe fostering peace and social justice.

By October we will have a new Prime Minister. It is quite possible that despite fixed term five year parliaments we might well face a snap general election. Labour needs to prepare now by going on to a war-footing. Talk of leadership challenges can only damage and undermine the Party's ability to mount a united offensive to reclaim government from a discredited and wounded Tory party. The struggle continues.

## Anti-politics is a danger to democracy

**T**he murder of Jo Cox is a reminder of how fragile is our democracy. The populist anti-politics of Nigel Farage, Boris Johnson and their fellow-travellers has damaged our democracy - their attack on 'the establishment', totally cynical as they themselves have been consummate establishment politicians, has whipped up fears of Europe and migrants as a threat to England's culture and traditions and 'greatness' (the focus being on England not the UK as a whole) and the cause of all England's problems. This is in many ways replicating the anti-politics of some elements on the left.

Having worked with a number of organisations campaigning on housing over the last few months, I have been depressed by the hostility amongst people who see themselves as being on the 'left' to politicians at both national and local level and a contempt not just for parliamentary democracy but also for local democracy. Politicians at both national and local level have to make difficult choices. While some are self serving and ambitious, the greed and dishonesty of the few has contributed to a widespread distrust of politicians as a collective group. But most people active in politics whether at national or local level are trying to serve their communities and pur-

suing 'worthy' interests – and I mean 'worthy' in a positive sense.

Jo Cox was one of the best. The politics of protest has a role but we also need active participation in the mechanisms of representative democracy. We need to channel anger into something more productive than hatred. Those who march on the streets, shouting their hate, or on vilifying individual politicians on social media, while cowardly protecting their own anonymity, need to consider whether there is a more productive way to engage in the political process and to impact on political decisions at all levels in the political structure.

Contrary to Livingstone's autobiographical title, voting does change something, whether it is electing your local councillor or Member of Parliament, or even your member of the European parliament. Politics has to be about persuasion not about intimidation. The politics of hate is not the way forward and those who inspire hatred cannot disassociate themselves from people who turn hateful words into hateful action, violence, and in this case murder. Our body politic is sick and we all need to take some responsibility for restoring its health.

DUNCAN BOWIE



# Oh to be in England

**Paul Salvesson**  
on an ugly nationalism

It's not difficult to work out why many Northern working class voters have favoured Brexit. The media has spent years creating a groundswell of animosity towards 'immigration' that feeds into a sense of grievance and disempowerment. The right has been able to exploit that, notably by the rise of UKIP in places like Rotherham and other former industrial northern towns. We can argue as much as we want about the rational case for staying in Europe, not least the support for investment in skills, transport and other infrastructure. But the pro-Brexit argument is based on emotion, a sense of anti-elitism and a strong dose of racism, despite the leading figures in Brexit being very much part of this country's elite.

There's an merging nationalism which sometimes describes itself as 'British' but is in fact 'English' to its core and is actually quite hostile to Scotland and Wales, even though its political expression, UKIP, appears to be doing fairly well in Wales. I've argued over the years that there are many different kinds of 'nationalism' and some can be quite benign – the sort of 'civic' nationalism that you get in Scotland and particularly Wales. The form of nationalism emerging in England is anything but benign, the nationalism of a big country with a strong imperial past which feels aggrieved by all sorts of things – loss of status, immigration...I could go on. 'Let's make Britain great again!' sums it up. Yet when Britain was 'great' it was only great for the few, not the many. If there is a vote to leave, there will be a rapid acceleration of that ugly nationalism, supported not just by Farage, but Johnson, Gove and the ascendant Tory right.

There are many aspects of 'England' which I love – its landscape, its huge diversity, its remarkable political, cultural and scientific achievements. But I have to go along with the argument that the nation state is in its death throes and the future lies with strong, democratic regions and power devolved to the lowest appropriate level. And within that, a willingness to federate and work together across regions and amalgams of regions – in bodies such as a reformed EU could be. As nations decline you see the emergence of some nasty viruses – such as that we're seeing develop in England now, based on a backward-looking longing for past greatness which is hostile to other countries, distrustful of 'foreigners' and sees the sort of society popularised in 'Downton Abbey' as the ideal to aim for. No amount of academic conferencing, articles in Progress or wherever will make this somehow 'progressive'.

Yet despite the fundamentally reactionary nature

of English nationalism, there are elements of the Labour Party that want to 'engage' with it. Tristram Hunt and John Denham are the foremost advocates of attempting to co-opt English nationalism but there are plenty others following in their wake. It's incredibly dangerous. Attempting to give a progressive gloss to something which inevitably tugs you to the right will do little to help Labour regain support in its Northern heartlands and could lose it support in cities like London, Manchester and Birmingham.

There is an alternative, in progressive, democratic regionalism. Labour has gone along with the Conservatives' devolution agenda and done precious little to influence it. Corbyn is sceptical of 'the Northern Powerhouse' but doesn't offer much in its place. Labour's pragmatic council leaders like Richard Leese are happy to take what's on offer and not worry too much about democratic accountability. What we're actually seeing is power being handed

over to local politicians elected with a local remit who are taking on the duties of what, anywhere else, would be the responsibility of democratically elected regional governments. In the medium to long term, this process is likely to make people more, rather than less, disenchanted with politics.

Strong regional governments covering sizeable areas would be able to work positively with each other, Scotland, Wales and Ireland (north and south). The English nationalist alternative is having a hugely dominant 'England' which would (if they had any sense) scare off not only the Scots but also the Welsh. And it would be an 'England' completely dominated – politically, economically and culturally – by 'the South'.

There are people in the Labour Party who 'get it' regarding democratic regionalism. It's a pity Corbyn and his leadership team have yet to grasp it. By taking a positive view of initiatives like 'The Northern Powerhouse' but saying 'let's strengthen it by having it made democratically accountable' they would be able to have a distinctive position which relates to people's sense of identity – local and regional, within a federal Britain which plays a positive role in Europe and the world. A truly federal Britain which brings together Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, London and the English regions has a lot to offer. Potentially, the Republic of Ireland could have a stronger relationship with this new entity. Strong regional governments covering sizeable areas would be able to work positively with Scotland and Wales without having 'England' completely dominated by the South.



**St George Fancie(r)s: sugar coated but bad for you**

# Injustice in South Yorkshire

Events at Orgreave in 1984 and Hillsborough in 1989 are inextricably linked. Keith Savage examines the history of two policing catastrophes

The village of Orgreave is just south of Rotherham. It is, at first sight, an unexceptional place but it is likely to live long in the history of British industrial relations. It was the site of a coking plant and during the miners' strike of 1984-85 it briefly became the focal point for protest against the use of scab labour.

On June 18th 1984 what has come to be known as the 'Battle of Orgreave' took place - an event the like of which it is hard to envisage being repeated. Tristram Hunt is not known for hyperbole and his summary is chilling. "Almost medieval in its choreography, it was at various stages a siege, a battle, a chase, a rout and, finally, a brutal example of legalised state violence."

Clearly this wasn't a 'battle' - for that to have been the case it would have required two sides in engage in combat. What happened at Orgreave was a police riot, a rout of people out to defend their jobs and communities.

Quite, simply pickets and supporters of the striking miners were attacked and assaulted by police on horseback. Repeated police charges were ordered by South Yorkshire Assistant Chief Constable Anthony Clement. Afterwards over 90 pickets were charged with riot and violent disorder offences, that collapsed when they came to court and eventually, in 1991, South Yorkshire Police paid out £425,000 in compensation for those wrongfully arrested and prosecuted. No police officer of any rank has ever been charged for wrongdoing in connection with the riot or the subsequent legal proceedings.

What makes these events worse are the apparent links between them and the Hillsborough stadium tragedy five years later. The Yorkshire Post, to its credit, has published clear evidence connecting the two policing catastrophes and showing how the government - at the highest level - interfered in a bid to effect a miscarriage of justice. The same police force, some of the same senior officers, and an advising police solicitor were involved in both Orgreave and Hillsborough.

It is evident that a culture existed within the force that sanctioned the falsification of evidence and which set it above the law itself and the communities it was established to protect. The South Yorkshire Police in the 1980s was semi-military in the way it was commanded and its actions were condoned by politicians and the media. Just as the Liverpool supporters were hideously blamed for the

deaths at Hillsborough, so miners were blamed for a pre-meditated police attack at Orgreave. It is legitimate to ask if Hillsborough would have happened had the same police force not got away with its brutality at Orgreave.

Following the outcome of the Hillsborough inquiry there is mounting pressure for a full public inquiry into events at Orgreave so that evidence that has been tampered with or hidden can be properly scrutinised. A letter pressing for an inquiry has been sent to Theresa May signed by Conservative, SNP and Lib Dem, as well as Labour, MPs. South Yorkshire police and crime commissioner Dr Alan Billings regards an inquiry as inevitable.

Barbara Jackson, secretary of the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign (OTJC) has said, "The huge public and political demand for a Public Inquiry about Orgreave since the Hillsborough verdict has been really uplifting for the OTJC but the Government are dragging their heels in reaching a decision about whether to pursue a public inquiry.

We are hoping however that we will get a positive response from the Home Office before the end of this month (June 2016)."

Kevin Horne, a miner arrested on June 18, 1984, and a member of OTJC said, "The experience at Orgreave was terrifying. We were only there because we were fighting for our jobs and the futures of our families and communities. We were met by a police force who literally ran riot, attacking and beating us at random with what seemed to be an intention to frighten us into submission."

"An inquiry should help us to expose the real truth of what happened on that day, achieve justice and make it easier for both the mining community and the police to move on".

Rotherham MP Sarah Champion has asked the Home Secretary to agree to an inquiry in Parliament and has also argued that something needs to be done to rebalance the scales when it comes to high-level legal inquests: "For victims fighting for truth and justice, it is essential that Labour's amendments to the Police and Crime Bill are accepted. Labour is asking for parity of funding for legal representation of families and institutions of the state. There is currently an uneven playing field in inquests, where public bodies are using tax payers' money to hire top lawyers to protect themselves. Individuals and families do not have the same access to public funds."

**What happened at Orgreave was a police riot**







# Freedom of movement: Labour's feeble defence dooms its cause

**Don Flynn** calls on Labour to tackle exploitation in the labour market

There is no denying the fact that anxieties over immigration has been one of the major reasons why 52% of voters opted for 'leave' in the EU referendum.

The presence of higher numbers of immigrants in local communities and workplaces is for many people become the most obvious reality of the neoliberal globalisation that has made life so much worse for them.

Easier to comprehend as the source of difficulty in getting accommodation at an affordable rent or mortgage than the ineptitude of the government in failing to build houses; always available as scapegoats when bosses lay staff off or push down on wage rates; just what is needed when wriggling off the hook for allowing local schools and hospitals to fail the communities they serve, immigrants are ever available as the explanation for rising misery levels when the real reasons are considerably more complicated.

Jeremy Corbyn got into hot water with media pundits for setting out the view that there is no obvious limit to the capacity of a country like Britain to absorb newcomers and get them functioning as value-producing wage-earners. Radical as this might sound to people with a conservative outlook on life, it is actually the very thing that students of economics are told to get their heads around in year one of their studies as the proper response to the gloomsters who cling to the 'lump of labour' fallacy. Labour is a positive input into any national economy and its availability produces growth which ought to, all thing being equal, produce benefits for the entire population.

The problem for the supposedly left wing proponents of remain appeared to be that most of them did not really believe this fact themselves. Accepting at face value the complaints about immigrants so often offered up on the proverbial doorstep, the MPs who were supposed to be leading local campaigns seemed too often to be conceding the argument and

offering it no challenge.

As a consequence we are now facing the grim prospect of seeing the scrapping of the right to free movement which have been one of the main mechanisms for redistributing wealth between the rich and the poor of Europe for the last forty years.

The benefits of free movement come from the fact that it allows wage earners in low wage/high exploitation segments of economies to move to places where they can strike a better deal in terms of the cost of their labour. But that is not the end of it. It is also an important defence for workers in higher paying areas who have an interest in stifling of competition from the type of arrangements which exist in the rising species of global species of export processing zones which suck jobs out of high wage areas in order to seize the advantages that come from the super-exploitation of people whose lack of the right to free movement means they are trapped in conditions which typical require eight hour days at low rates of pay.

Labour could have argued the case for free movement much better than it did during the course of the referendum campaign. The dangers that really loom for working people are more closely linked to capitalism's proficiency in directing global supply chains made up of workers trapped by national borders and the absence of a right to free movement.

The bogus concern that right wing Brexiteers expressed for a supposed discriminatory effect of free movement with the EU – claiming that it prevented workers moving from countries in Asia and Africa with whom Britain has connections through the Commonwealth – should have been countered by a promise to extend free movement to all workers who are compelled to labour in supply chains managed for the benefit of UK transnational companies.

The priority now lies in uniting Labour and the trade unions around a commitment to secure the rights of EU nationals who



**Labour exploitation: this type was dealt with in the 19th century. Now it's time to tackle the 21st century turbo-charged version**

have established themselves in the UK prior to the now inevitable Brexit. The growing anti-migrant moods which have been associated with opposition to the EU have led government to claim more powers to deprive citizens of the other EU states of residence rights when they experience unemployment of six months or more. Migrant support groups across the country have been reporting a huge increase in deportation notices being served on EU nationals in recent times, with hundreds and possible thousands being expelled from the country.

If Labour is ever going to account for itself in the national argument over immigration – a task which it has proved an abject failure – in recent times, then it has to strengthen its analysis of the role that turbo-charged labour exploitation plays in the business plans of modern capitalism, and to explain just how brutal and savage this system is whenever the right to freedom movement is denied.

# Tory ministers: Unbelievable

**Dave Lister** on the Tory civil war and how truth is the biggest casualty

We all know that Government ministers can be somewhat economical with the truth, but what has been striking in the EU referendum campaign has been the scale of the accusations of dishonesty made by some leading Tories against others, often involving members of the same Cabinet. It will be interesting to see how cohesive the Tory leadership remains now the campaign is over. Given its small Commons majority, will there be disaffection among some Conservative backbenchers, putting that majority in peril? There is clearly a great opportunity for Labour to exploit these likely Tory divisions over the coming period.

The campaign has also drawn in some 'blasts from the past'. Thus John Major accused leading Tories in the Brexit campaign of using misleading figures and Michael Heseltine denounced "preposterous, obscene remarks" by Boris Johnson, who likened EU expansion to Hitler's plans for Europe. Accusations from the Brexit side include Ian Duncan Smith's reference to George Osborne's "Pinocchio's nose" and Boris Johnson's description of Cameron as "demented" and his claim that Cameron's previous pledge to reduce immigration had been "cynical". Brexit also pointed out that Cameron said during his negotiations with EU leaders that his view on the referendum would depend on the outcome of these talks. Yet during the referendum campaign he claimed that leaving the EU would be economically disastrous.

The UK Statistics Authority stated that the Brexit campaign's declaration that EU membership costs the UK £350 million a week was "misleading and undermines trust in official statistics" and that our net contribution is actually £136 million a week, just over 1/3 of the amount claimed. Yet a Tory spokesperson did not appear to be nonplussed by this when interviewed on BBC news and this figure continued to be displayed on the side of Brexit campaign buses.

The question that next arises is whether this level of mendacity is

really new. Arguably distortion of the truth has played a significant part in the Tories' success in maintaining their hegemony over the recent period and further in the past. For instance there was Churchill's claim in the 1945 general election that life in Labour Britain would be like living under the Gestapo. Fast forward to the 2008 crisis and it is clear that the Tories and later their Lib Dem allies in the Coalition Government were successful in pinning the blame for the crisis on Labour – nothing to do with the bankers or events in the USA apparently.

Now whatever our explanation for what happened then, there is no doubt that the Conservatives were demanding more deregulation of the City, not less in the lead up to 2008. And whatever out view of this decision, bailing out the banks was a massive drain on resources. It is also at least arguable that there were seeds of recovery in the final period of the Brown Government that were destroyed by Osborne's subsequent austerity measures. And yet right through the Coalition Government and beyond the same old story was trotted out that Labour had ruined the economy. Unfortunately Labour politicians very rarely attempted to refute this claim.

In the 2015 election campaign I believe that Cameron's use of this claim yet again contributed hugely to the Tory victory, as did his assertion that if Labour became the biggest party they would go into coalition with the SNP, which might not have been a bad idea but was denied by Miliband. The Tories have also been less than honest in outlining their neoliberal agenda. Cutting back on services is apparently solely in order to reduce the deficit and has nothing to do with their ideological commitment to shrinking the state and privatising everything that moves. Further distortions of the truth play an important part in relation to the details of this strategy. For example, the drive towards forced academisation of schools, which has been diverted to some extent but will almost certainly be implemented in the end. 'Daughter of Gove' Vicky

Morgan and her lackeys in the DfE continue to assert that academies achieve better results than community schools when the evidence suggests that this is not the case.

How do the Tories manage to get away with all this? I would argue that the answer partly lies in the lack of political education in this country. The inconvenient truth for us is that too often people believe what they read and see in the media and there is an unfortunate reluctance among many people to adopt a critical approach to the media and the propaganda from political parties. The Tories also benefit from the disinclination of a significant proportion of those who suffer most from the effects of their policies to vote whilst others abstain because they are cynical about all politicians, not just Tories. Therefore the role of activists in working to counteract these tendencies is of crucial importance. Campaigning on the doorstep is clearly a key means of engaging with the electorate and I despair when Labour canvassers are instructed to just stick to a list of formulaic questions such as who did you vote for at the last election and who do you support now?

And what of the future? There is a massive opportunity for Labour to exploit the divisions in the Tory ranks. What is needed is clear and decisive Labour leadership and the development of policies that will appeal beyond the 64% of Labour supporters who identify with Corbyn. The aim must be to win in marginal Westminster seats that Labour failed to win or win-back under Ed Miliband's leadership in the 2015 election. This will obviously not be easy. A neo-Blairite approach failed in the last two general elections and we can take heart from the evidence that many working class UKIP supporters are apparently attracted to left-wing policies, such as renationalisation of the railways and utilities. Sadiq Khan has shown what an effective campaign can achieve. The task for Labour supporters is to demonstrate that this need not only be true in London.

**Dave Lister is chair, Brent South Constituency Labour Party**



# Place-based leadership – new possibilities?

**Robin Hambleton** draws lessons from abroad for the devolution debate

A radical restructuring of political power in England is underway. Notwithstanding the lofty rhetoric about so-called 'devolution', the central state is taking ever more power to itself.

This super-centralisation of the state is taking place without adequate public debate, still less thoughtful consideration of the implications for local democracy.

## Centralisation on steroids

The proposal to end local council control of England's schools, made by Chancellor Osborne in his Budget Speech in March, is only one of a growing number of 'command and control' measures the Conservative Government is introducing.

The Education and Adoption Act 2016 will not devolve power to trusty head teachers, as ministers claim. Rather the powers will pass to relatively invisible and unaccountable trusts who, by the way, will not need to include parent-governors in their governing arrangements.

It is hardly surprising that many sensible Conservative councillors are up in arms. They know that the performance of the vast majority of local authority maintained schools is on the rise, and that the ministerial push to force 'academisation' on every school is purely ideological.

The centralising features of the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 are just as worrying. This misnamed Act offers groups of local authorities – so-called 'combined authorities' – the opportunity to put forward proposals for increasing the power of their city region or sub-region.

The government claims that this legislation is designed to strengthen local government. Thus, on 14 May 2015, immediately after the General Election, Chancellor Osborne, rushed to Manchester – his constituency is in Trafford on the west side of the conurbation – to make a speech on



Westminster v provincial powerhouses – all a question of who controls the purse strings

'Building a Northern Powerhouse'.

In it he said that '... the old model of trying to run everything from the centre of London is broken' and that he plans to 'deliver radical devolution to the great cities of England'.

However, critics note that the rhetoric about a 'Northern Powerhouse' masks a dramatic centralisation of power. Under the new Act ministers get to pick and choose which localities are to be granted extra powers, ministers decide the criteria to be used in assessing bids, ministers review area-specific proposals on a case-by-case basis and, astonishingly, these so-called devolution deals are being negotiated behind closed doors.

## Introducing an international perspective

Locally elected politicians and civic activists in other countries view the super-centralisation of the English state with incomprehension. No other western democracy is pursuing a centralised 'command and control'

strategy of this kind.

They point out, gently of course, that it is, perhaps, not surprising that England is bottom of the European league in voter turnout in local elections. They note, correctly, that the decline in voter turnout in English local government elections mirrors the removal of powers from the local state.

## Inclusive City

In international research carried out for a new book, *Leading the Inclusive City*, I have examined, on a global basis, why some cities and localities are far more inclusive and more successful than others.

This research suggests inspirational place-based leadership can make a big difference to the quality of life in any given locality.

Central governments have a key role – they can either help or hinder their cities, regions and localities. The international evidence shows that any authentic devolution of power to localities must pass two tests.

First, do the elected local

authorities have constitutional protection from interference by higher levels of government?

Second, do the elected local authorities have a range of substantial tax-raising powers?

The Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 fails both these fundamental tests.

Rather the government appears to want to decentralise blame, nicely ahead of time, for the truly massive spending cuts that the government plans to impose on local government in the next four years.

## A progressive way forward

It is wise for local leaders in the UK to look abroad to countries where meaningful devolution is well established. For example, in Germany, Sweden and the USA elected local authorities are entirely free to do things differently.

There is no question of the central state imposing specific requirements on particular elected local authorities or telling them how much tax they can raise locally, still less picking off

individual groups of local authorities in a centralised deal making process.

International experience points to three key lessons for the debate about the future of local governance in England.

First, to talk of 'devolution deals' is entirely the wrong language. The idea that the agreement of citizens to the way they wish to be governed is to be reduced to a process of secretive 'devolution deals' is offensive. Rather ministers should state openly and clearly the principles that they believe should guide the re-negotiation of local/central relations in England. These should be debated, agreed and then be applied in an even handed way to all areas of the country.

Second, it is essential that English local government should have constitutional protection from an increasingly autocratic central state. Sir Charles Carter, in his imaginative synthesis of a major programme of research, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, on local/central relations in the UK, showed that UK local authorities, if they are to mean anything, must have the

'freedom to do things differently'. This fundamental insight must underpin any sound system of elected local democracy. In other countries this freedom enables public innovation to flourish.

## Constitutional convention

Third, the evidence presented in my book shows that no other democratic country is pursuing a policy of centralisation on steroids. If England is to prosper we need a constitutional convention – one that takes account of the voices of civil society, local government and the regions, as well as the political parties. In this way we can construct a fair system of local/central relations, one that enjoys wide support and promotes a culture of innovation in local governance.

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**Robin Hambleton is Professor of City Leadership at the University of the West of England, Bristol. His latest book – Leading the Inclusive City – is published by Policy Press.**

## OUR HISTORY - 67

### Leonard Woolf - Socialism and Cooperation (1921)

Woolf was a civil servant and a member of the Fabian Society. He wrote for radical journals including the *Nation* and the *Manchester Guardian*. In 1916 he wrote a book on International Government for the Fabian Society, which became one of the blueprints for the post-war League of Nations. He was an authority on international affairs and in 1920 wrote *Economic Imperialism and Empire and Commerce in Africa*. Woolf was a friend of Margaret Llewellyn Davies of the Cooperative Women's Guild and wrote *Socialism and Cooperation* for the ILP as well as a pamphlet on International Co-operative Trade for the Fabian Society. Together with his wife Virginia, he ran the Hogarth Press. In the interwar period Woolf was an active member of the Labour Party's advisory committees on international and colonial affairs. After the Second World War he published three volumes on political science, focusing on the mass psychology of war. He published five volumes of autobiography, surviving until 1969.

"As against the capitalist and capitalism, I would go as far, probably, as the most extreme Guild Socialist or Red Communist in the demand for



emancipation of the worker. But socialism itself implies that what is true against capitalism is untrue against the community of consumers. My suggestions...will be seen to be all directed to establishing joint control and a balance of power within the framework of industry between the organised consumers and the organised producers. I believe that joint control and balance of power to be essential to the transition stage to pure socialism, for without it there will be exploitation of one class by the other and the growth of a rational psychology of consumption and production will be impossible. And, as a matter of fact, if the capitalist were eliminated, there would obviously be a far greater danger of the consumers being exploited by strong organisations of producers than of the consumers exploiting the organised producer. ... So long as the psychology of capitalism remains, all power of exploitation is dangerous to the community, and in the transition period I wish to see it neither in the hands of the consumers nor co-operators, nor in the hands of the workers and producers. That is why I believe that the immediate object of the socialist should be to eliminate the capitalist and establish a balance of power between producer and consumer."



# Young gifted and black

Marvin Rees is the first mixed race Labour mayor in Bristol. **Mary Southcott** interviewed him after the funeral of Carmen Beckford, the first Race Relations Officer in Bristol, and the day after the death of Jo Cox MP

**F**irst congratulations on being the first elected Labour mayor of Bristol. Many of us working on your campaign thought you would win which is why we selected you. Why was it a surprise to others? Perhaps some people thought leadership did not look like me or there was an assumption that George (Ferguson, the first elected mayor) couldn't lose.

One of your first actions was to appoint your rainbow Cabinet. What was your thinking about the party make up and why so many women? We had three principles. It needed to be excellent, people needed to have expertise; committed to cross party and we wanted a gender balance for the challenges facing politics. So it was straight forward. Labour had a majority. We won the space for Conservative, Liberal Democrat and the Green parties. We faced a bit of flack afterwards. A number of people said you have a majority now so you don't need to go cross party. But that would have made us liars. We didn't say 'we would have cross party if...unless we get a majority'. We have shown we are true to our word. Diversity of thought is absolutely essential. Organisations which have access to women work better. It can change the way we think and approach politics and understand the city. We have six women to four men.

## Very divided city

As you know you didn't win in the first round on first preferences, but you won overwhelmingly on second preferences, how does that make you feel and help you heal a very divided city? It does feel as if there is a degree of goodwill. We invested in that by delivering on our promises on the cabinet. It is very symbolic of our approach to the way we do politics. I'm hearing that and hear it from some of the other party leaders as well that we have a space to offer a new way of working

with politics in Bristol and they are taking us up on that offer.

What do you feel personally when Bristol, a city built on the slave trade, elected you with your personal background? It makes it clearly special to me. There was a Rush service here at St Mary Redcliffe (a highlight of Bristol's civil calendar) and I was invited because I was the mayor. It was Bristol's establishment and I just thought 'I'm in'. It's amazing. It also feels special to Bristol's black community. There also is an element of healing between communities. When people say 'We elected this guy.. you're one of us'. That collective common experience and identity transcends what people may historically have seen as racial boundaries.

Do you think healing Bristol is a bit like reconciling your own experience of having a mixed heritage and your early and later experience. That's definitely a part of it. I made a documentary in

Bristol in 2007, on how I as a mixed race man, made sense of the racial fractures of the city. I recognise that racism is real. It is raw and I have been at the raw end of it. I don't go home to my white mum and say you're a white person I need you to apologise to me. It doesn't work like that. How do we get to the point where we can talk honestly and frankly about race and racism? We maintain loving relationships. It may surprise you I don't talk to my mum about race all the time. We recognise it as a reality. It is just the context in which we live but we treat it as a fact rather than an emotional burden.

Is mental health still a passion?

Absolutely, it is one of our primary commitments to make a mental health intervention in the mental health, wellbeing and resilience of every primary aged schoolchild in the city. That is about their own ability to manage and strengthen their own mental health and also awareness of building good relations they need,



which offer them their social capital for their resilience and make sure they are not in abusive relationships going into the future. That is good for them, their families, good for Bristol and its economy.

## Key issues

My family is convinced that after Obama mixed heritage people are the future but what do you think are key issues for those dealing in mental health mixed race young people today? There is still an element of 'What are you?' A very well-known black actor interviewed me the other day. We had a little joke because he started to say 'alongside the experiences of someone like me, a full ...'. He was going to say 'full black'. I said 'you struggling for a word?' and we laughed about it. That is a product of the perversity of racism which offers these categories which are not enough to define anyone. White is not enough to define you, black is not enough to define me or my dad. Yet we have to have these categories if we are to understand the world. Then people like me come along and the categories are really problematic because they are

not really real. I have to describe myself as mixed race otherwise you don't understand what we are talking about. And yet these are the identities with which we have to understand the world.

Are there specific inner city issues which you would like to help deal with and what do they have in common with the mainly white outer estates which are largely neglected. We are talking about economic inclusion and political voice. All the social relationships come around that. We can never have a meaningful relationship of equals if I know that either my children or I are more likely to be unemployed, get worse educational or mental health outcomes, or die early because they are poor. If we get the economics and the politics right that is about having equality of power and voice. That is why it is so important to have gone for a gender balanced cabinet to ensure the voice of women is strong in the city. There are a number of political appointments I shall make from the BME, such an awkward term, people in Bristol. Political voice is essential. It will change the nature of the way we think about Bristol. In some senses I become irrelevant because what I have done is to create a new way of leading Bristol.

Depending what happens in the referendum will you be able to lead a movement against the cuts in local government resources and the reduction of autonomy for local government that implies. I

will be looking to lead that movement. It will be harder if we do vote out, not because of the nature of Europe but the nature of the people who are using the BREXIT campaign to advance a new economic order. The irony of it is that they are putting public services and poverty on the agenda in the name of BREXIT when they are the staunch advocates of the neo classical liberal 'get government out, let the markets take care of things', which will kill people, make life shorter. That is not a fear campaign. That is warning people that if these guys take over we are going to be stuffed. And it will be much harder for me to work at a local government level to create the kind of Bristol which people need and to take care of the most vulnerable.

## Core city mayors

Have you joined with the mayors in other cities to say this? I need to reach out to the core city mayors.

What about the devolution to a metro mayor in the Greater Bristol area? I am supporting it but on balance, not as an enthusiastic supporter. Not because of what the devolution deal offers us at the moment but because if we don't take it we will be punished by central government in the same way as if we leave after BREXIT Europe could punish Britain to set an example to other countries who might consider leaving. If we don't take devolu-

tion, central government will start emphasising their finance, their investment and their listening ear to those places which have gone for the devolution deal. I wouldn't have done it this way around. Imposing a new political position on an area is a problem for me. But the alternative is much worse.

After the death of Jo Cox I wondered if you believe we should discuss issues which allow racism to flourish and be used against the better interest of our society and its cohesion? I am fully signed up to addressing these issues. I want to talk frankly and honestly about racism. We have to talk about class. So hopefully you bring some political literacy among the white working class, as to the economic shared interest they have with people who are being pushed around in the world by global forces, made refugees. They will also realise their shared interest with second generation migrants. A proper understanding of racism won't simply point out the differences between us. It won't blame white poor people. What it will do is say: this is racism, this is in relationship to class and here's the common interest of people who have been excluded and left out.

This will be a legacy for Carmen and Jo, but also to people like myself that come from a migrant family from Jamaica and my white Welsh mining family and white English family from Bristol. Poverty on all sides.

**Add for printer**



# Cynicism behind anti-semitism row

**Julia Bard** dissects the issues in the recent anti-semitism furore in the Labour Party and finds the issue is being instrumentalised for other political purposes

*“The Queen had only one way of settling all difficulties, great or small. ‘Off with his head!’ she said, without even looking round.” (Alice in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll)*

As far as we know, between 20 and 30 people who are alleged to have expressed antisemitic ideas have been suspended from the Labour Party. Some have not been given a reason or even been told directly that they have been suspended. All these allegations relate to comments rather than actions. A few are actually anti-Semitic. Others are offensive or carelessly expressed. Some are critical of Israel or Zionism but not antisemitic at all. Most of them pre-date Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership.

The latest round of accusations started in April with the revelation that in 2014, at the height of the Gaza War, Bradford MP Naz Shah had posted on Facebook a joke that was doing the rounds about relocating Israel to the USA. This one was splashed all over the media and Naz Shah responded quickly, making an exemplary apology and resigning as parliamentary assistant to John McDonnell.

Many Jewish people supported her, including Bradford’s rabbi and David Aaronovitch, who tweeted, “When somebody does something wrong or stupid, and then apologises fully, it seems perverse not to welcome their apology.” Several Jewish groups were successfully challenging the right-wing, Zionist narrative when Ken Livingstone jumped in to claim that Hitler supported Zionism “before he went mad and ended up killing six million Jews”. He was promptly suspended and refused to apologise on the grounds that he was “not sorry for telling the truth”. This reignited the whole issue, which blazed on throughout the local/mayoral elections. The timing was not accidental.

Jeremy Corbyn responded constructively by setting up an Inquiry into antisemitism in the Party chaired by Shami Chakrabarti. Many Jewish groups and individuals submitted statements and evidence, challenging the claim that ‘anti-semitism is rife in the Labour Party’ and teasing out the arguments about Zionism, anti-Zionism, anti-semitism and other forms of racism.

It is important to acknowledge that anti-semitism does come from more than one direction. It would be miraculous if the left, including the Labour Party, were immune to an ideology with such long and persistent roots. But I am not aware of any Jewish people who go to meetings in trepidation about being attacked for being Jewish nor of any socialists who daub swastikas on Jewish gravestones.

The conflation of anti-semitism with anti-Zionism and the use of the accusation of anti-semitism to stifle debate have a long and dishonourable history as a device to discredit campaigns for justice for the Palestinians in particular, and Jewish involvement in left wing and anti-racist activism in general. So is there any substance in the claim that criticism of

Israel or Zionism is anti-semitic? The short answer is, no. How could it be racist to criticise the actions of a state? The leadership of the mainstream Jewish community argues otherwise, claiming that Zionism is central to Jewish identity and, therefore, to challenge Zionism is to attack Jews per se. If this were true, it would be a manifestation of anti-semitism. But Zionism is not, and never has been, “central to Jewish identity”. It is a political ideology which emerged in 1897 as one of a number of nationalist movements. It has been contested since its inception and it is entirely legitimate to express all kinds of views about it, whether you are Jewish or non-Jewish.

To claim that Jewish (or any other) identity rests

silence criticism of Israel’s draconian and illegal actions, which include collective punishments, demolition of Palestinian homes, imprisoning Palestinian children, strangling the Palestinian economy, cutting off water supplies, uprooting orchards, discrimination against Arab citizens of Israel and more.

One of the groups dredging up ancient tweets and posts is the Jewish Labour Movement (JLM), formerly known as Poale Zion (Workers of Zion). The JLM claims to represent all Jewish Party members and has made a bid to be responsible for education about anti-semitism within the Party. However, along with its affiliation to the Labour Party, it is affiliated to the World Zionist Organization and

The other is the result of political shifts within (and beyond) the Jewish community. The Israeli government’s rising violence, intransigence and racism are undermining support for Israel and Zionism amongst diaspora Jews. The community is polarising. On one side is an increasingly aggressive right wing, which brooks no critique or even discussion of Israel’s behaviour and policies. On the other, more people are coalescing around left positions; some, particularly young Jews, are articulate in their critique of Israel and support for the Palestinians. Challenging the Israeli Embassy’s narrative, they define themselves as members of a diaspora community alongside other minorities, and do not place Israel or Zionism at the centre of their identity or politics. These assertive young Jews, bizarrely, would be defined as anti-semites according to the Labour Party Compliance Unit.

Many Israeli dissident groups would also have crossed that line by campaigning against the occupation, refusing army service, rebuilding Palestinian homes, recording human rights abuses and more. Indeed, recently an army general and the Mayor of Tel Aviv have made critiques of the occupation that could have got them suspended from the British Labour Party. Israelis are not the same as the Israeli government, and both the Jewish community here and Israeli society are heterogeneous and conflicted, so we need to identify and make common cause with the most progressive elements in both. An example of this is the response of Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign, which has welcomed the fact that there will be no state-sponsored Israeli acts in this year’s Edinburgh Festival, while making a clear distinction between these and non-branded Israeli shows. There are also Zionists who are alarmed at the cynical misuse of anti-semitism and Holocaust history to attack and silence opponents. Some are principled anti-racists, who work tirelessly to support refugees and protect victims of racism. They are allies in our insistence on the right to speak and debate freely.

Zionism, anti-Zionism and anti-semitism are complicated sets of ideas with a long history and we need to be nuanced in our understanding of them. The alternative is to degenerate into ‘four legs good, two legs bad’ politics, which fails to recognise that political affiliations can change and simply mirrors the stance of those who don’t dare to argue politically. We need to ensure that people are confident enough in their understanding to analyse, investigate and speak freely about Israel-Palestine, not to be afraid of false accusations designed to taint any opposition, but to defend the historic opportunity that a socialist leadership of the Labour Party has opened up, to campaign for peace with justice and an end to the human rights abuses that underpin the occupation of Palestine.

**Julia Bard is a freelance journalist, a member of the NC of the Jewish Socialists’ Group and the Editorial Committee of Jewish Socialist magazine.**



on any single pillar – whether it is Zionism or religion or Jewish culture – is to contort a complex, shifting, historical concept into a simple set of imperatives. A political ideology, which is by its nature open to question, can’t be an essential component of Jewish identity; therefore, criticism of Zionism cannot be assumed to be anti-semitic, though there are instances of anti-Zionism being close to or used as a cover for anti-semitism and we shouldn’t be afraid to challenge them.

In the Labour Party, anti-semitism is being instrumentalised, without apparent concern for its victims, in two ways. Firstly, it is being used as a weapon to undermine the left-wing leadership of the Labour Party. Secondly, it is being invoked to

open only to those who sign up to its programme. This excludes all non- and anti-Zionist Jewish members and probably a few progressive Zionists as well. Since it derives its conception of anti-semitism from its Zionist/Israel-centred perspective, it cannot prioritise the interests of Jews in Britain or in the British Labour Party over what it believes to be the Israeli state’s interests. It is to be hoped that Chakrabarti will recommend that if such a task is to be given to a Jewish body, it must be one that is open to all Jewish Party members.

There are two reasons why fears are being whipped up now. The first is that this is an attempt by an unholy alliance of Blairites, Tories and the Zionist establishment to unseat Jeremy Corbyn.



# No dilemma - It is STILL in Europe!

**Sheila Osmanovic** on a Hackney restaurant and lessons from former Yugoslavia

This article is written immediately in the aftermath of BREXIT declaring unambiguous victory on leaving the EU as the voting results from the 23rd June Referendum have shown. Those who supported 'Remain', including myself, are bewildered and saddened by the amount of unexpected xenophobia and anti-intellectualism expressed by the great majority of the British people who predominantly, albeit surprisingly, originated from the most deprived regions. The common sense would dictate that these regions unite their workforce against sectarianism, parochialism and elitism. It is only in the unity that the hard-working people can overcome the barriers of injustice, inequality and overwhelming class chasm galloping over the British Isles during the last 20 years. The reason, however, is simple – voters were goaded to scapegoat immigrants. I am of an opinion that these voters were misled, if not blatantly deceived. I firmly believe Britain should (have) remain(ed) as a part of the EU not only because I am a British-European but for the fundamental reason of preserving: harmony, peace and humanity.

London is a great example of these cosmopolitan values. It is a planet on its own and flourishes because of the diversity and richness of different people and cultures intermingling within this great city. Many European youth, Greek, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese particularly, have come to London recently in search of job opportunities since their economies have been hit by neo-liberal austerity policies. But they also brought great benefits to London and its inhabitants. A great success story is Mazi Mas - a social enterprise dedicated to supporting women from migrant and refugee communities. Founded by a Greek -American woman, the restaurant provides opportunities for women who aspire to careers in the food industry to gain paid work experience, develop their skills, tell their stories, and connect with the wider public. The restaurant was set up with the funds

received from the European Social Fund, and subsequently established its place in the heart of Hackney. The restaurant and bar incorporates values of ethical sourcing and dedication to community involvement. The locals benefit by munching on the amazing international cuisine, whilst encouraging work placements of women chef-migrants-refugees.

Britain historically, London in particular, has been host to a whole range of immigrant communities from all over the world. The Yugoslav break-up of the 1990s brought a whole wave of refugees and migrants from Yugoslavia. Today a great majority of these people represent an important part of British society contributing to the country's economy and its cosmopolitan fabric.

Indeed, the former Yugoslav Federation in its make up mirrors Europe. It can serve as the most immediate parallel example of the prosperity enjoyed as a direct impact of unity in diversity and the damage suffered from spreading xenophobia and homophobia. 22 million Yugoslav people lived in harmony for over 50 years creating high profile football and basketball clubs, popular music, well-known scientists and Nobel-prize winning authors. Yugoslavia prospered on diversity and richness of cultures and traditions succeeding as a peoples' run economy and people-belonging society with free health care and first class free education for all.

However, the early 1990s witnessed a completely different trend in Yugoslavia. Whilst the Berlin Wall brought long-awaited unification for the German people, it signalled separatist voices for the Yugoslav population. Each one of the six former Yugoslav Republics commenced secessionist moves, some in the most violent manner. At first, this animosity was generated by hostile speeches reinforcing the idea of an inability to continue living together in the federal state.

Racist and ultra-nationalistic announcements from various leading political figures destroyed the mutual trust and sowed the seeds of Yugoslavia's destruction. The carnage that followed was



very difficult to stop. That is because there are always a minority of fascist elements in every society ready to jump on and abuse an opportunity. It is precisely these elements that led and committed genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The second week in July 2016 will see the commemoration of the 21st anniversary of the Bosnian Genocide in which 8372 men and boys were killed in less than three days.

This commemoration should remind us of the dangers of separatism, nationalism and xenophobia. The healing has taken time but is at its beginning. For example, almost all of the Serbian officials have apologised for the Genocide. Karadžić was convicted on the Genocide count, albeit for Srebrenica only, and the internally displaced persons were able to go back to their homes. There are vociferous voices that call for regional cooperation and all the former Yugoslav Republics have come together to form partnership agreements. Moreover, each of the former Yugoslav Republics aspires to become a member of the EU.

This is where the irony lies: the former Yugoslav Republics dream of joining the EU at the time when Europe seems distant and fragile. Europe is a beacon for all those longing for security, peace and safety. Britain should not have only took a part but should had instigated a lead with its international experience and richness of different cultures. Britain could have become a beaming European lighthouse, not an isolated Tory workhouse. Britain and its people want to be able to break free from the chains of xenophobia and racism and therefore - as long as the intellectualism rains over the mighty British conscience - there is no dilemma – it is STILL in Europe!

**Dr Sheila Osmanovic leads a consulting organisation, chairs a disability charity and is a member of the Chartist Editorial Board**

# Bhs: the corporate pension rip-off

**Prem Sikka** wants pension schemes protection from bosses in the wake of the Bhs saga

There is an unresolved tension between corporations and social responsibility. People want responsible capitalism, but corporate elites resent anything that constrains their ability to extract high returns for themselves and shareholders. After the Second World War, under pressure from strong trade unions and governments keen to improve the quality of life for ordinary people, many corporations operated defined benefit (DB) pension schemes. These guaranteed a certain amount of pension to their workers. However, this social settlement has been weakened by the corporate quest to make profits at almost any cost. Tax avoidance has been supplemented by dilution of pension rights and outright closures. At the end of 2015, only 11 of the FTSE 250 companies operated a DB pension scheme.

Corporations are abandoning their pension responsibilities. One strategy used by directors is to ignore pension scheme solvency, extract as much cash as possible and then dump the company. This has been the case at Bhs, one of the UK's biggest retailers.

Bhs entered liquidation on 2 June 2016. Its 2014 accounts showed a pension scheme deficit of £139m even though employees paid all their contributions.

Bhs pension scheme had been in deficit for all years from 2003 to 2014, with the exception of 2008. For an insolvent company, obligations due to a pension scheme rank as unsecured creditors i.e. they are only paid after secured creditors (e.g. banks) have been paid. The only real possibility of rescue for Bhs pension scheme is an insurance company buyout, which would require an injection of about £550m. The chances of this, or any amount, coming from liquidation are zero. Some 20,000 Bhs past and present employees are facing massive cuts to their pension rights.

How did Bhs get into this state? Sir Philip Green bought Bhs for £200m in May 2000 and sold it for £1 in March 2015. Between 2001 and 2008, Bhs reported profits of £498m and

losses of £416m from 2009 to 2014. The overall profit for the entire period was only £82m. It paid dividends of £423 million during the period 2002 to 2004 even though the pension scheme was in deficit for 2003 and 2004. Bhs directors used a variety of intragroup transactions and creative strategies to extract returns. Altogether, Bhs may have generated over £930m for the Green family. Despite the extraction of high returns and a consistent failure to address pension scheme deficits, the auditors did not raise any red flags. The Pensions Regulator did not express any displeasure.

In a lax regulatory environment, other companies are also ignoring pension scheme obligations. A June 2016 report by investment advisors AJ Bell showed that 54 of the FTSE100 companies with a pension scheme deficit paid £48bn in dividends in 2014 and in 2015. In 2014, the same companies had £52bn deficit on their pension schemes. The dividends paid by 35 of the FTSE100 companies were bigger than their pension scheme deficits. In 2014, Royal Dutch Shell had a pension scheme deficit of £6.7bn, but paid out dividends of £7.5bn and £8bn in 2014 and 2015. AstraZeneca had a deficit of £1.87bn in 2014, but paid dividend of £2.2bn and £2.4bn in 2014 and 2015. British American Tobacco had a deficit of £628m, but paid £2.8bn and £2.9bn as dividends in 2014 and 2015. Vodafone had a deficit of £549m but paid dividends of £3bn and £3.04bn for 2014 and 2015. The directors' preferences are self-evident.

The above state of affairs is the result of deliberate choices made by company directors. They have neglected employee interests and prioritised shareholders. One might look to the government to compel corporations to honour their pension obligations, but that is not so. Tata Steel is trying to sell its UK business. Potential buyers are concerned about the £485 million pension scheme deficit. So the government is proposing to introduce legislation to dilute pension scheme members' rights which will hit thou-



**Sir Philip and Lady Green living it up on the backs of Bhs pensioners?**

sands of past and present employees. Anything done here has implications for DB pension scheme members elsewhere.

Workers, past and present, need to make a common cause to protect their pensions and demand reforms. A key requirement is to disrupt the neglect of pension schemes from within and outside the corporation. Employees need to be represented in significant numbers on the boards of companies with more than 500 employees. This will enable them to challenge excessive dividends and neglect of pension scheme finances. Companies with deficits on their pension schemes should not be permitted to pay dividends. Companies with pension scheme deficits should be required to submit a plan to the Pensions Regulator explaining how they will eradicate the deficit. The Regulator should respond by approving the plan or otherwise. In the event of liquidation, pension scheme should rank as a preferential creditor i.e. be paid before any creditor is paid.

**Prem Sikka is Professor of Accounting at Essex University**



# Small victory for unaccompanied children

**Jackie Bowie** says resettlement process needs to be speeded up

The "Calais Judgement" of January 2016, in favour of allowing four Syrians, three minors and one vulnerable, dependant adult, to be reunited with family in the UK has been well documented\*. The case was ground-breaking in that the Dublin agreement, previously cited in such cases, only allows family members to apply for asylum in the UK once they have applied for asylum in the country they arrive in; France in this case. The ruling in this case was that: "The Secretary of State's refusal to permit the swift admission to the United Kingdom of the [first] four applicants would interfere disproportionately with the right to respect to family life under Article 8 ECHR"

Also well illustrated in the national and international media are the appalling and inhuman conditions of the camps at Calais and Dunkirk which have been described as worse than in refugee camps anywhere in Europe and beyond. Citizens UK identified 157 children with family links, surviving in Calais. Thanks to Lord Dubs' amendment to the Immigration Bill on 9th May this year, the Government agreed to admit some 300 children from France, Greece and Italy who have family ties here in the UK, a decision which had enormous cross-party and public support.

Lord Dubs' plea that, given that the UK has officials working with the French authorities, it might be possible to speed up the process of identifying children in Calais who have relatives in Britain so they arrive in time to start the school term in September seemed very reasonable. Where newly arrived secondary school children are able to join a school very early in September, preferably during an induction period, or even better, at a late stage of the Summer term, they benefit from early socialisation and familiarisation with the school routine, rules and traditions of a UK school. It also enables staff to assess and pre-

pare targeted academic and pastoral support for the new arrivals. Many UK schools have years of experience in welcoming and teaching new arrivals, be they refugees or European migrants, despite the diminishing resources, documented below. Providing resources are appropriately targeted initially, particularly in terms of English language teaching provision and classroom support, and there is good safeguarding practice, including regular communication with parents and foster parents, refugee pupils make good progress. Unaccompanied minors are often eager to resume the normality of life at school, attend regularly, work hard and set an example to their peers. These are brave and resilient children, despite the trauma and loss they have experienced.

Although, according to Richard Harrington, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for refugees, the system of re-uniting families is operating much faster, UNICEF states that this does not reflect the situation for children in Calais. Current estimates from NGOs working there say that, at the current rate, it will take more than a year to process the 150 cases known about. According to UNICEF, it would take only another ten immigration officers to ensure all eligible children in Calais to arrive by September.

Equally, the Government needs to allocate resources, as in the Section 11 (1966 Local Government Act) and Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) provision in the past, to allow Local Authorities to appoint sufficient, appropriately trained, social workers and foster carers and enable schools and Further Education Colleges to retain, appoint or train appropriate staff to support the acquisition of English and ongoing academic achievement of refugee pupils. Child mental health services, already stretched, must also be readily accessible. If such resources are not deployed, these teenage children will not only be longer deprived of the right to



family life, but will be further disadvantaged by delays and inadequate care in the UK, spending their first weeks or months on school waiting lists, glued to a computer screen at home, or perhaps "hanging out" in the urban jungle of our inner city shopping centres.

**Jackie Bowie,**  
former  
Teacher/Coordinator for English as an Additional Language in Secondary schools in Croydon and Brent and currently a volunteer at Southwark Day Centre for Asylum Seekers

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# Time for co-operative socialism?

**John Courtneidge** looks beyond neo-liberalism

The seminal book *The Spirit Level* by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett (2009) gives the evidence that greater income equality is ecologically-sustainable and more peaceful: offering a better world, good for everybody and everything. So what would their world look like? This is my plan. It's called Co-operative Socialism. It concept has already been adopted as an alternative to capitalism by Labour Action for Peace (2013) and Occupy London (2015).

This idea has an interesting pedigree. In his 1937 'Left Book Club' book, *The Labour Party in Perspective*, C R (Clement) Attlee wrote: 'The aim of The Labour Party is the establishment of the Co-operative Commonwealth. Its objective, expressed in the Party constitution, is "to secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the means of production, distribution, and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service."' (Page 137, Chapter VI, Socialist Objective).

Subsequent events, starting with the landslide victory of The Labour Party in 1945, enabled Attlee in his capacity as Prime Minister to start implementing this objective through a combination of Nationalisation, the Welfare State, a social-democratic 'Mixed Economy' and Keynesian Economics: funded through a mixture of progressive taxation and commercial money borrowed at interest.

This thinking was not a left-wing preserve, the economist John Maynard Keynes realised the scope for collective provision too. In his *Essays in Persuasion - Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren* (1930)\* Keynes wrote: 'I see us free, therefore, to return to some of the most sure and certain principles of religion and traditional virtue - that

avarice is a vice, that the exaction of usury is a misdemeanour, and the love of money is detestable, that those walk most truly in the paths of virtue and sane wisdom who take least thought for the morrow. ... But beware! The time for all this is not yet. For at least another hundred years we must pretend to ourselves and to every one that fair is foul and foul is fair; for foul is useful and fair is not. Avarice and usury and precaution must be our gods for a little longer still. For only they can lead us out of the tunnel of economic necessity into daylight.'

That date of 2030 or so is not far away. My vision is for a full democratic and co-operative socialisation of the economy: a mixed economy of worker- and community-co-operatives, as part of a much-more income-equal Wellness Society, all lubricated by a not-for-profit, co-operative 'National Wealth Service'. So how could this idyll arise?

As Keynes observed above, and as experience from the 1970s onwards has shown, voters in western democracies are increasingly reluctant to elect Parties proposing 'deficit/interest-bearing debt'-funding mechanisms with which to advance their programmes: the Nationalisation, Welfare State/Mixed Economy Keynesianism.

To help create, nonviolently, the greater income equality, and greater income and economic equity that *The Spirit Level* evidence illuminates - and that Co-operative Socialism is designed to help achieve - the concept of 'Co-operative Commonweal' (ie, of collective, co-operative wellness) is key. This idea requires that, democratically, we act co-operatively - to convert our economy into appropriate co-operative enterprises and work-places - a mixture of co-operative social enterprises and co-operative solidarity entities - so that every person, and every organisation, has respectful, time-limited 'co-operative care-ship' of appropriate land and knowledge

resources. As a result, true equality and equity is socially-, sustainably- and transparently-created.

To do this, it is clear that we have to transform the economic system in which we live, so that:

- Each population, co-operatively together, is in control of their economic life,
- All work is for the long-lived benefit of all: caring for the long-lived benefit of the whole global ecology - and all its inhabitants - rather than for short-term, selfish gain.

This requires changes to the central features of present-day economics:

- The ownership of land and natural resources, workplaces and knowledge used for profit:
  - The practices of money- and credit-creation for profit and of money-lending as interest-bearing, debt-for-profit;
  - The consequential inequity of income (in terms of the division for working-age adults as incomes earned by some through paid work and unearned by others through privately-taken rent, interest and profits);
  - The consequential inequality, insecurity and (often) immorality of individual incomes and;
  - The consequently-created culture of rampant crime, fear, debt, ill-health and insecurity: all as a result of increasing income inequality as evidenced in *The Spirit Level*
- My vision assumes:
- Everyone has the security of a fair, guaranteed income
  - All collective human activities are consistent with the Co-operative Values and Principles, and
  - Friendship, care and co-operative care-ship/co-operative stewardship of, and with, the planet is our central task.

Accordingly, in terms of the evolution of a social and co-operative UK, Europe and world, this 'Co-operative Socialism' becomes a model and beacon, for the future.

**John Courtneidge**  
is

*\*Essays in Persuasion - Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren* <http://www.econ.yale.edu/smith/econ116a/keynes1.pdf>

For further information go to : <http://www.co-operativesocialism.org/dir/>



# Power of the narrative

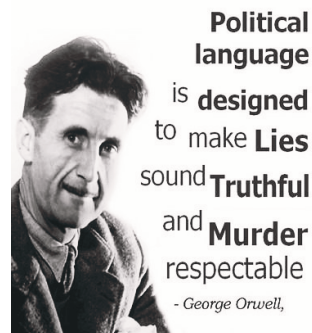
Contemporary politics consists of the usual timeless formula of Machiavelli – namely: rule by force and fraud – but now with the current emphasis on fraud, writes **Frank Lee**

*Defenceless villages are bombarded from the air, their inhabitants driven out into the countryside, their cattle machine gunned, their huts set on fire with incendiary bullets: this is called pacification.” (Politics and the English Language - 1946)*

*“There is a high probability that Russia will intervene in the Baltics to test NATO’s Article 5 ...” (Anders Fogh Rasmussen, ex head of NATO, February 2015).*

It would be true to say that the language of politics and power - machtpolitik or realpolitik - is patently neither objective, nor particularly interested in the pursuit of truth. Quite the contrary in fact. If we take the above examples, the first is simply an attempt to mask what is an international war crime into a reasonable policy of ‘humanitarian’ intervention. All rather reminiscent of the language that evolved during the Indo-China wars, e.g. ‘we destroyed the village in order to save it.’ The purpose of the second assertion was simply designed to ramp up the current war psychosis in order to justify the eastern expansion and build-up of NATO on Russia’s western frontiers. Please note that Mr Rasmussen isn’t saying that a Russian intervention is possible, or even probable, but highly probable. This seems somewhat strange as Russia couldn’t wait to get rid of the Baltic states when it declared its independence in 1991, and now we are expected to believe that it wants to invade those same states. It is said that knowledge is power, in fact the reverse seems more accurate. Those who control the means of communication are now able to create a virtual reality. This is nothing new. The father of modern Public Relations, Edward Bernays, postulated that ‘invisible’ people create knowledge and propaganda and rule over the masses, with a monopoly on the power to shape thoughts, values, and citizen response. One of Bernays’ great admirers was Nazi propaganda chief Josef Goebbels who was to apply his theories with alacrity during the Nazi

ascendency 1934-1945. In our own time this mass manipulation was identified by Edward S Herman and Noam Chomsky in their seminal work *The Manufacture of Consent* first published in 1988. Turning to George Orwell, it was during his period in Spain during the war against Franco (1936-39) that he first became aware of the political potentialities of modern mass communications systems. At the time he was serving in the military wing of POUM (Workers’ Party of Marxist Unity) sister party of the British ILP which he later joined - 1938. He wrote: “I must say something about the general charge that the POUM



Political language is designed to make Lies sound Truthful and Murder respectable

- George Orwell,

was a secret fascist organization in the pay of Franco and Hitler. This charge was repeated over and over in the Communist press ... according to the Frenti Rojo (the Valencia Communist Newspaper) “Trotskyism, is not a political doctrine; it is a capitalist organization in league with the Fascists, a Fascist terrorist band, and part of Franco’s 5th column”. What was noticeable from the start was that there was no evidence to support this accusation; the thing was simply asserted with an air of authority”. (My emphasis - FL) Yep, sounds familiar. Orwell’s pessimism in this respect reached its terminal stage in his disturbing dystopian novel, 1984. This manufacture of a virtual reality is now common currency in the mass media. The press in particular – including the putatively left-wing publications, the Guardian and the Independent – pretty much operate as an appendage to the ‘invis-

ible’ people, or are the ‘invisible people’ identified by Bernays. A case in point being a recent snippet in the Independent which read: “At least 60,000 people have died in Syrian government jails during the 5-year conflict, according to a report by the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR)...”

Closer examination reveals that Mr Abdulrahman has lived in Coventry since 2006 and owns a shop which he runs with his wife. Nonetheless he asserts that his sources were “serving officials seeking to expose what is going on.”

So we get one guy in Beirut publishing a report based upon another guy who has lived in Coventry since 2006 and who claims to have contacts at high levels in the Syrian government. Yeah, right!

The post-modernist denial of the possibility of objective reality is now firmly entrenched in reactionary elite circles. It involves, 1. ‘Groupthink’ defined as a process where a group with similar backgrounds and largely insulated from outside opinion makes decisions without critically testing, analysing and evaluating ideas and outcomes. 2. ‘Doublethink’, where two incompatible thoughts can be carried on at the same time. Finally, 3. Double standards. Describing the behaviour of your opponents as despicable, inhuman and a violation of human rights, when ‘our’ side is doing exactly the same. Of necessity this involves all of the above mechanisms.

The Goebbels propaganda template was/is disarmingly simple: tell a lie, preferably a big one and then repeat it endlessly until it seeps into the popular consciousness. This information war is now the primary political phenomenon of our times, and the mass media speaks with one voice.

As Orwell said: ‘To begin with the era of free speech is closing down. The freedom of the press in Britain has always been something of a fake, because in the last resort, money controls opinion.’ (Why I join the Independent Labour Party – 1938)

# Lessons from Labour’s 2015 defeat

**Peter Rowlands** on why the Cruddas Report misses the mark

The independent inquiry by Jon Cruddas and others, ‘Why Labour lost in 2015 and how it can win again’ was published in late May, bringing together previously published and new material on the 2015 election. Although its conclusions are largely wrong (and used as yet another reason to attack Corbyn) it is nevertheless a serious contribution that needs to be considered critically and the recent Brexit vote makes this even more important.

The framework for the report is a so-called ‘Values mode analysis’, which makes use of a (US inspired?) values typology to classify the whole population. The unspoken assumption behind the model is that values determines voting intentions and any political party has to appeal to more than one type.

There are three types, all of a similar size: Pioneers (34%) who are socially liberal, idealistic and hold universal values; Prospectors (37%) who are aspirational, acquisitive and pragmatic, and Settlers (29%) who are socially conservative, traditional and value social order, family and community.

The analysis shows that Labour support consists increasingly of Pioneers – just 34% of the electorate - and is consequently not representative of the electorate as a whole. Prospectors are seen as being affiliated to the Conservatives and Settlers to UKIP.

It is debatable whether this typology is anything more than a cobbling together of stereotypes with an academic gloss. Are these characteristics / values sets coherent? Are they mutually exclusive? What is the evidence? And does the central assumption hold true? Surely, the way people vote is affected by an exceptionally wide range of factors including, of course, the one repeated time and again: economic credibility.

However, the crucial facts in terms of how people voted are not in dispute - as opposed to Cruddas’ guesswork about why they did so – and the starting point has to be a detailed analysis of this.

Although the report does not say so, perhaps the values based theory could explain the basis for the support for Corbyn? Since 2005, with broadly the same level of support, Labour’s support is clearly more left wing.

The report repeats the proposition that Labour lost because it did not convince voters that it would deal with the deficit or manage the economy competently. Few would challenge this, and it is an obvious point to make. Labour’s messages on the economy came across as confused and it notably failed to defend its record in government. But what about the support (or potential support) for an anti austerity agenda? This is simply not explored. Given that no-one was saying that the deficit didn’t matter (even Bob Crow said how important deficit reduction was!) the Conservative message on this

**The key problem with the report is that it is essentially passive in that it sees no alternative to an accommodation with social conservatism**

was clear. it was hardly surprising that it appealed to pragmatic ‘prospector’ voters.

In Scotland the report notes that the SNP has successfully fused nationalism and radicalism and on this basis suggests that an English Labour Party would be a good idea. Really? Would it be possible or politically desirable to achieve an equivalent fusion with English nationalism? Without doubt the whole question of English identity, federalism and regionalism is worth exploring. The problem is that English identity is largely fused with politically reactionary attitudes (which UKIP channels very successfully). Accommodation in this area is fraught with difficulty.

The report is right to say that those who have deserted Labour for UKIP, many of whom have been loyal Labour voters for most of their lives, must be taken seriously. But it does not follow that Labour needs to marry socially conservative attitudes with a radical economic agenda. Surely a move to the right on immigration

and welfare to attract the minority of Settlers back from UKIP is more likely to alienate and demoralise (more numerous) Pioneers – the very people who were inspired by the radical vision promoted by Corbyn. The ‘Blue Labour’ route, which this report advocates, was part of the Miliband formula, and it failed utterly. Any if the values based analysis holds true, it will continue to fail.

That does not mean that the things like family, community and individual responsibility are not important. But too often the thinking about social conservatism, resistance to change and negative attitudes to immigration boils down to nothing more than the facile observation that older people are more socially conservative, and the task is to adapt to these views.

It is statistically true that voting intentions are higher amongst older people than younger people, and Labour must increase its ‘grey’ vote. One way might be to remind this group of ‘Pension Credit’, one of New Labour’s most significant reforms (introduced in the late 90s and surprisingly little remembered) which lifted large numbers of pensioners and older workers out of poverty. There must be many UKIP voters who are beneficiaries of this.

The key problem with the report is that it is essentially passive in that it sees no alternative to an accommodation with social conservatism. This is highly debatable, particularly in a period that has seen so much political volatility and switches of political allegiance. Thinking and political outlook can and does change, as the methodology in the report accepts, but does not explain. In the aftermath of the Brexit vote, a strategy to address this is even more important.

Support can be built, but only on the basis of a genuine vision and an agenda for change. This will not happen until the left takes the initiative, stops talking to itself and starts to fashion and widely promote a radical vision for change which recognises and appeals to a wide range of motivations, interests and outlooks.



# Foundations for a new economy

**John Sunderland and Brian O'Leary** report on a ground-breaking Labour conference

Jeremy Corbyn issued a call to action at Labour's packed "State of the Economy" Conference in May: "Building an economy for the future requires bold ambition - a new economics". This was one in John McDonnell's "New Economics" series of debates to improve understanding about future policy options.

It was, by any measure, an extraordinary event which attracted huge numbers even though publicity by the Labour party was minimal. For the leadership of the party to convene a high level meeting to discuss economics and economic policy - and actually allow party members to contribute to the debate - is unprecedented in recent memory. The lack of publicity and the irritating fact that the promised live broadcast had to be tracked down to John McDonnell's facebook page (rather than being front and centre on Labour's website) demonstrates how counter-cultural this was.

Labour's Shadow Chancellor, John McDonnell opened the conference by saying the aim was to see how Labour could "transform capitalism" into delivering a "fairer, democratic sustainable prosperity shared by all". His objective was to "rewrite the rules" of capitalism and break with the 'free market' ideology of the neo-liberal agenda.

McDonnell backed up his rhetoric with concrete proposals. He set out his ideas on "People's QE" (Quantitative Easing) and a National Investment Bank. He also announced a proposal to give councils the opportunity to offer cheap, local-authority backed mortgages and to introduce rent regulations in major cities to ease excessive charges and to offer support to those in debt. The plans go much further than the Tory right-to-buy scheme and tap into the concerns of a whole generation.

The highly entertaining key note speaker Ha-Joon Chang presented a compelling argument that the strategy adopted by previous governments (including Labour) had weakened manufacturing and industry in favour of a "rentier economy" based on finance, property and other

unproductive services. In doing so, economic advisers have looked to Switzerland as an example of a country which has thrived due to its financial services. He pointed out that in terms of manufacturing output per person, Switzerland is ironically an economy which is actually one of the most industrialized.

Speakers highlighted the fact that the banks have still to address the causes of the 2008 meltdown, and are still failing the economy. The focus on regulations aimed at avoiding future bank failures has done little to increase the supply of finance to fund business growth. QE has acted as a safety net for the wealthy and stoked the boom in house prices while small business remains starved of finance. The regulatory approach has also led to perverse incentives & unintended consequences.

As Ana Nesvetailova explained, the unregulated world of hedge funds and "shadow banking" has prospered: this unregulated sector has grown globally to \$125 trillion. Capital is migrating to where it can make quick returns with the least interference and is estimated to equal around one third of global finance. Due to the opaque nature of trading in this unregulated sector, there is serious uncertainty about the risks being taken. The trigger for the crisis of 2008 was an unsustainable mountain of credit and debt, including explosive derivatives. The growth of the unregulated markets has massively increased the likelihood of a repeat scenario. And since the UK economy is tied so closely to the fortunes of the City, the repercussions would be equally serious. We need to be prepared.

At the moment, regulation and 'Big Government', in the form of proactive fiscal & monetary policy is seen as the means to deal with the impact of a shadow banking disaster. But now the question is, is that enough or even possible?

The over-exposure of the UK economy to the casino economics of the financial sector is not the only problem. As money chases short term returns, investment in the productive economy has declined and business equally looks for easy returns and the

flexibility of the zero-hours workforce rather than the long term investment in skills for the future.

In the session on fiscal and monetary policy, Michael Burke provided a convincing account of how the weak economic recovery in the major economies was not due to a lack of consumer demand, but one major factor: the failure of business to invest. The recession saw UK investment collapse due to the "credit crunch", not consumption. It was the same story in all the major economies.

Large companies are hoarding cash, small businesses are just hanging on and governments were cutting back on public sector investment. Indeed, British capital has the lowest level of investment to GDP of the major capitalist economies. Weak and even falling investment had lowered growth rates and this has held down incomes.

In this situation the obvious answer is a plan for growth based on public investment, and of course there is one issue which we know needs massive investment, which is the green economy and the need to switch track to a sustainable future.

The problem might not be government deficits and debt, but the ballooning and arguably more menacing UK current account deficit. The pledge to reduce debt to GDP, without continued austerity, depends upon the increased investment generating growth, and growth in a world where demand is stagnant or worse. These are enormous questions and many still remain unanswered.

How would increased investment actually produce future growth? Is there a future for traditional manufacturing industry in the current climate? Which are our future potential growth sectors? Will low productivity restrict a recovery?

By initiating a debate with members to challenge the orthodoxies of the past, McDonnell has not only engaged some of the most interesting contemporary economic thinkers, he has also created an alternative purpose for Labour's machine: democratic debate.

**Patrick Mulcahy**  
on Loach  
on film

# Fifty years of struggle

The extraordinary five-decade career of Ken Loach in filmmaking is examined in Louise Osmond's documentary, *Versus: The Life and Films of Ken Loach*. For a film produced by Loach's own company, Sixteen Films, it is surprisingly – actually not so surprisingly, if you know the man – warts and all. The banned documentaries (*Questions of Leadership*, *Which Side Are You On?*), the death of actress, Carol White (star of *Cathy Come Home* and *Poor Cow*) and the commercials (*Caramac*, *McDonalds* – 'talk about betrayal,' Loach remarks at one point) are all here. It has some genuine surprises: Loach loves musicals and once danced on stage with Sheila Hancock. You wonder why he hadn't made a modern version of *The Threepenny Opera*. He was also a bit of a ham actor, before joining the BBC as a television director and forging a relationship with Tony Garnett, interviewed at length here.

The luxurious problem with the documentary is that there is too much to include. It also takes knowledge of some of his work for granted. Loach makes films that explore social struggles: individuals are placed in 'them and us' situations, usually about working class people where they fight to be heard. Loach's films are not about victims but for the most part about laying bare injustices. They ask the audience to form an opinion about whether a social system is right, to understand the world differently.

Loach's technique is (again for the most part) to attempt documentary realism, to 'avoid' acting. He casts performers (night club singers, comedians) often with little or no screen experience, outlines the set up, films in sequence and surprises the actor during the scene to get as natural a reaction as possible. Unsurprisingly, he rarely works with the same actor twice. His films rarely feature 'names' - Brian Cox, Frances McDormand, Adrien Brody and Eric Cantona are exceptions. Some of the stars of his films have subsequent screen careers: Bruce Jones, Ricky Tomlinson, Crissy Rock, Ian Hart and Martin Compston. Many, like Kes star David Bradley, do not.

The film explores some of the tensions in his career. Loach's films are not balanced, although his latest, the Palme D'Or-winning, *I Daniel Blake*,

about a man in his late fifties (comedian Dave Johns) who loses his job after suffering a cardiac arrest and struggles to get his disability support restored to him, is more nuanced than most. This leads to difficulties when being transmitted on television, when broadcasting licence requirements come into play. The series, *Questions of Leadership*, about union leaders working in collusion with management and selling out their members, was pulled from transmission by Channel Four in the early 1980s. Loach uses the vulnerabilities of his cast to bring truth to a scene, but he cannot offer an after-care service. Carol White became a star as a result of the TV drama, *Cathy Come Home* and *Poor Cow*, then went to Hollywood, became involved with drugs and died young. Bruce Jones, a featured actor in the TV soap, *Coronation Street* had similar difficulties. The documentary explains how *Cathy Come Home*, a BBC 'play for today' shot atypically for 1960s television on location, sparked a national debate about homelessness; 90% of a studio audience had heard of the drama. But few of Loach's films have had a similar social impact. *I Daniel Blake* may (I hope) prompt an overdue review of the benefits system.

Osmond's film looks mainly at the work. She also interviews Loach's four children. His daughters provide welcome humorous relief as they explain how they wrote to Channel Four to complain about the treatment of their father. When he found out, proud Ken was furious. Osmond stresses Loach's steely determination. He may look like a bank clerk but has a ruthless streak. When his production of Jim Allen's 1987 play, *Perdition*, which explored the collusion between some Jewish leaders and the Nazis in World War Two, was banned, Loach castigated Royal Court director Max Stafford-Clark in front of the entire cast for his cowardice.

What the documentary proves is that film rather than television or theatre is the freest medium to explore or at least air ideas. The one absentee interviewee is Loach's regular producer Rebecca O'Brien, seen in the film during production of *I Daniel Blake* in Newcastle. We don't hear about her struggles on his behalf. Perhaps, atypically, this might be one Loach film that gets a sequel.



***Versus: The Life and Films of Ken Loach* was released in cinemas on 1 June and will shortly be released on DVD by Dogwoof Films**



# Saving lives in war

**Duncan Bowie** on humanitarian dilemmas

**TODAY WE DROP BOMBS; TOMORROW WE BUILD BRIDGES**  
Peter Gill (Zed, £12.99)

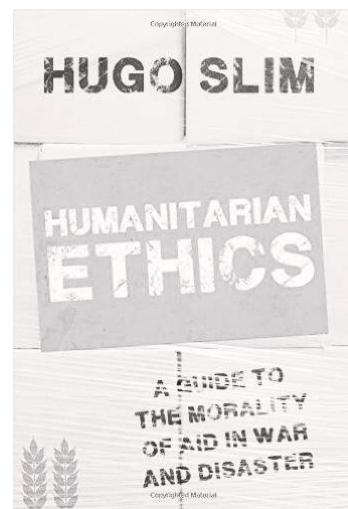
**HUMANITARIAN ETHICS**  
Hugo Slim (Hurst, £18.99)

Gill is a journalist, who has previously written on the politics of the Ethiopian famine and a study of the early work of OXFAM. The subtitle of this new book is 'How foreign aid becomes a casualty of war'. The book presents case studies from the front line of aid in war-torn countries – the Syrian/ Turkish border, Somalia, Afghanistan and the North-West frontier states of Pakistan. The book focuses on the dilemmas faced by aid workers in their relationships with Western and national governments and with warring dissident groups in each of these countries – Al Shabaab in Somalia and the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Gill examines the challenges of aid workers seeking to remain politically neutral while delivering aid and the complexities of UN integrated approaches that seek to combine military and humanitarian intervention.

## Preserve neutrality

Gill studies the attitudes of different aid agencies – the International Committee of the Red Cross and Medecins sans Frontieres, who seek to preserve neutrality, even if this can limit their effectiveness. While some other charities in effect become collaborators with the occupying forces. This can put the safety of their own aid workers at risk. Gill studies the reaction of different agencies to both changes in UN and national governments' policies and their response to military incidents arising from both occupying and resistant military forces.

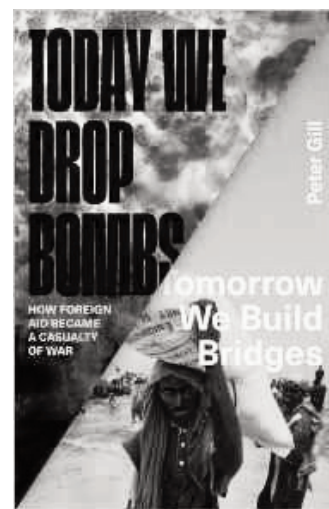
The study makes for grim reading and can only enhance one's respect for those aid workers who put their own lives at risk to help others. But it also helps us to understand the dilemmas of agencies and individual workers as to whether or not to abandon the people they are trying to help in order to save their own lives. Reading this book coincided with re-watching *The Constant Gardener* and that horrific and



apparently realistic scene in which the aid workers in South Sudan are evacuated by plane leaving the refugees in the camp to be slaughtered and raped by the Janjaweed.

Slim's book studies the same dilemmas from a more philosophical perspective. The book is subtitled 'A Guide to the Morality of Aid in War and Disaster'. Slim has had extensive experience with a range of humanitarian agencies and is currently a research fellow at the Institute for Ethics, Law and Armed Conflict at the University of Oxford. He examines the theological and philosophical basis for the principles of humanitarianism from Aristotle, David Hume, Adam Smith and Martin Buber as well as from contemporary philosophers such as Peter Singer. He considers the principles of sympathy, responsibility and empathy to seek to arrive at a universal ethics.

As with Gill, Slim focuses on the principles of neutrality and independence, but he then moves on to consider what he calls dignity principles (respect, participation and empowerment) and then stewardship principles (sustainability and accountability). He then discusses the application of ethics at different levels - intimate ethics (personal care), operational ethics (for project managers) and strategic ethics (for leaders of international organisations), before turning to the parallel human rights agenda - the right to life with dignity, the right to receive humanitarian assistance and the right to protection and security. He recognises that a rights based approach can bring



humanitarians into conflict with national states which may insist on their sovereign right to determine appropriate responses to both natural and non-natural disasters against what they perceive as external interventions.

In considering the application of humanitarian ethics in practice, Slim reviews the principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement and their disaster relief code of conduct, the Humanitarian Charter promoted by the Sphere project group of humanitarian agencies established in 1997 (<http://www.spherehandbook.org/en/about-us/>), before presenting 23 principles of good humanitarian donorship produced by a group of international donors in 2003 (<http://www.ghdinitiative.org/ghd/gns/home-page.html>.)

## 'Worthy' interventions

Both books seem to have been published in order to influence the World Humanitarian summit held in Istanbul in May. (<https://www.worldhumanitarian-summit.org/>) Whether or not these 'worthy' interventions will have a positive impact on the lives and deaths of the populations of war-torn areas will be difficult to assess but both authors need to be thanked for their contrasting but complementary studies and propositions. Whether politicians and war lords who start wars and the fighters who continue them will take notice and refrain from war crimes is another matter; not a matter under the control of humanitarians.

**Mike Davis** on seeing through austerity

**THE MINISTRY OF NOSTALGIA**  
Owen Hatherley (Verso, £14.99)

The onset of recession/austerity occasioned a flood of 'Keep Calm and Carry On' posters, tea-towels, and mugs. Owen Hatherley takes it as the starting point for a coruscating polemic against a nostalgia for the war time stoical British spirit and elements of the Left that hark back with rose-tinted spectacles to the immediate post-war years.

From the marketing of a 'make do and mend' aesthetic to the growing nostalgia for utopian past that ever existed a clever and ideological consumerist scam helps mask the realities of austerity blighted modern Britain. Further it forms part of a dangerous Colonel Blimp mentality of accepting government imposed conditions of hardship and cuts.

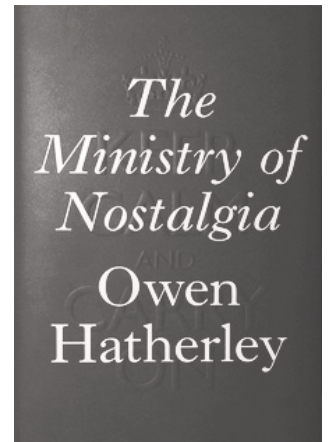
His subjects range from Ken Loach's film 'The Spirit of '45' and other documentaries, Turner prize shortlisted art, London vernacular architecture to Jamie Oliver's cooking. The worthy, well-intentioned, alongside the blatantly consumerist all come under fire for their part in the manufacture of a lie, the creation of false history.

Why recast recent history in the warm glow of a mythic British past? As consolation for the violence of neo-liberalism, the pillage of public assets, the privatisation

of common wealth argues Hatherley. Architecture and culture are Hatherley's primary subjects and his critique of modernist architecture and social democratic urban planning is telling. He cites the make-over of inter-war and 1950s council estates by developers as heritage buildings to be sold at inflated prices, giving examples from various London boroughs. 'In Britain today we are living through exactly the kind of housing crisis for which council housing was invented in the first place, at exactly the same time as we're alternately fetishising and privatising its remnants', he pointedly summarises.

His discussion of George Orwell's 'progressive patriotism' and his view of England as a family with the wrong people in charge is nuanced, illustrating the complexity of Orwell's view. In recalling Orwell's indictment of British imperialism and consequent impoverishment of subject peoples in Asia and Africa Hatherley highlights Orwell's prescription of western austerity to correct the north-south wealth imbalance. So Orwell escapes Hatherley's 'austerity nostalgia' branding.

Despite the attempts to sentimentalise and sell post war austerity our cities remain centres of convivial multi-culturalism into which 'politics has erupted' over the Coalition's five years. He con-



trasts TV poverty porn with the people of Derby Road, Southampton who refused to take part in Immigration Street and the 'Focus E15 Mums' of the London Borough of Newham who occupied disused council flats destined for gentrification and demolition. In defying austerity nostalgia, along with Occupy and UKTax Uncut these people showed buildings should be a necessity of life not something for the heritage industry or the developer's bottom line.

This is a challenging and forward looking polemic that warns against over-celebrating the health, housing and social achievements of the Attlee governments, indicts cynical austerity myth-making and urges us towards something more empowering, liberating and socially democratic.

# Not a coup

**Comrade Corbyn**  
Rosa Prince (Biteback, £20)

This is the best researched biography of Corbyn so far, and compares well with a number of other, briefer and less considered, products rushed out in the aftermath of Corbyn's surprising accession to the Labour Party leadership. Despite its author being a Daily Telegraph journalist, it is perhaps the most judicious study we have seen.

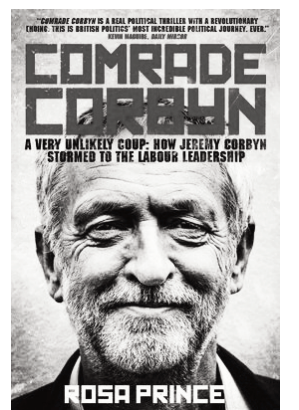
It is certainly not a hatchet job and is sympathetic as well as not uncritical. It provides a solid history of Corbyn's past political activities and principles, which as far as I can tell, is accurate.

There is material on Corbyn's

fairly complex personal life, but it is presented in a reasonable rather than journalistic manner, stressing the seriousness of Corbyn's principles and the difficult personal decisions he has faced. The book gives a blow by blow account of Corbyn's leadership campaign, but also offers what is sometimes called 'deep background'.

Prince does not try to analyse the political factors which impacted on the Corbyn's victory nor does she seek to predict the consequences for the Labour party's organisation, policies and chances of political power. The book is subtitled 'A very unlikely coup'. The term 'coup' is inappropriate, as Corbyn's leadership was the

product of a well organised campaign within a democratic process, his success reflecting the weakness of the four other candidates as much as its own strength.





## Sheila Osmanovic on Croatia in WW2

**CROATIA UNDER ANTE PAVELIC – AMERICA, THE USTASE AND CROATIAN GENOCIDE**  
Robert B. McCormick (I.B. Tauris, £69)

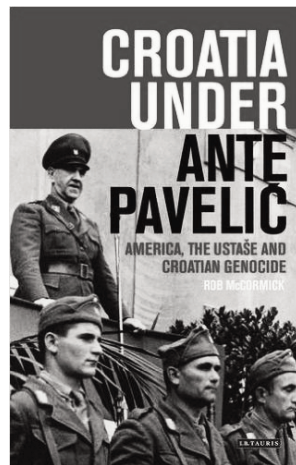
This book contains an impressive account of the previously unpublished classified documents from the American and British archives. The author also makes an ardent effort to corroborate the information by interviewing Pavelić's own son-in-law. These offer an invaluable insight into British and American foreign policy and intelligence operations during World War II, particularly their firm stance towards confronting consolidating communism in Yugoslavia. The author skilfully explains that both America and Britain were ready to harbour and protect a notorious war criminal in order to further their foreign policy goals. In broader terms, the book offers historical context to understanding the ambiguous approach of America and Britain to conflict resolution during the Yugoslav break-up of the 1990s.

McCormick also draws on the available sources from the Vatican, which show that powerful official channels were essen-

tial in smuggling gold and the jewels from the Croatian treasury in order to enable Pavelić and his subordinates to escape as well as to furnish their lifestyles in exile. The Vatican used religious arguments to mitigate the atrocities the Nazi regime of Croatia committed during the WWII, explaining that these were part of God's will to fight atheists and the evils of Yugoslav communism.

In this way the Vatican formed a symbiosis with the West. One of the main objectives of Britain and America after WWII ended was to successfully fight communism, which has emerged as a defining feature of post-WWII Yugoslavia. The relations with Tito and Yugoslavia were strained and made even sourer following the lack of intention to surrender captured Croatian war criminals.

The documents McCormick presents point to active British involvement in assisting in hiding the fugitive Pavelić and later facilitating his escape to Argentina where he peacefully lived as a kindly aging construction engineer, ready to be used to destabilise Yugoslavia and its brand of communism. In the same fashion, Britain was hosting the fugitive Yugoslav king and his family, who were also collaborat-



ing with the Nazis and were supporting murderous royalist Četnik forces, who also fought against Tito and the Partisans.

Četniks committed some of the ghastliest war-crimes in the WWII Yugoslav bloodshed. The book curiously omits to mention this, and in its first half reads as pro-Serbian propaganda, quite commonly repeated to justify Serbian crimes in Croatia during the recent 1990s wars. This is the book's main weakness. Reading the first few chapters requires some serious reservations. In addition, background knowledge of Yugoslavia and its complicated WWII affairs are of paramount importance because not all accounts are accurate, particularly the ones referring to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## From cradle to grave

**LIFE OF THE PARTY: BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN**  
Dave Cope (Lawrence and Wishart, £45 h/b)

Everything you always wanted to know about the British Communist Party from its birth in 1920 to its demise in 1991 is concentrated in the 362 pages of this book. Any one of the listed annotated publications from mammoth theses and proclamations of the Communist International to pamphlets on rent strikes or the Spanish Civil War will give you the inside story of an aspect of the Party. Dave Cope was born into a Communist family and spent much of his life working for the party. Since the 1990s he's been in the Labour Party. Cope has done a brilliant job—assisted by his role as a major seller of leftist

books, previously manager of Progressive Books in Liverpool and then at distributors Central Books in London—in providing the definitive reference work on the Party which at its height in the 1940s could claim two MPs and over 60,000 members.

This is an invaluable comprehensive listing of all known publications of the CPGB and its various outlets, from Modern Books, Our History, pamphlets, books and magazines to related articles and memoirs. There are 7,273 entries with useful indexes on names and topics, revealing a huge output.

In an original piece by Cope on how material written on and by the CPGB was distributed he offers the first overview of the artists and designers who worked on the material. Andy Croft discusses the representations in fiction of imaginary and real CP

members while Bert Hogenkamp lists documentary films featuring the CP and discusses the film companies behind them. Kevin Morgan writes on past and current approaches to the history of the CPGB. I would have liked to see more examples of pamphlet covers and illustrations by renowned artists like James Holland and James Boswell and latterly Ken Sprague, both to illustrate the work and break up the catalogue-like pages.

Cope has mined a deep vein of political and cultural life about a significant section of the left in Britain. It should be the 'go to' book of reference for any historian, researcher or activist who wants to find out more about the CPGB's 71 years of activity.

## Duncan Bowie on the rehabilitation of Harold Wilson

**HAROLD WILSON**  
Andrew Crines and Kevin Hickson (eds) (Biteback, £20)

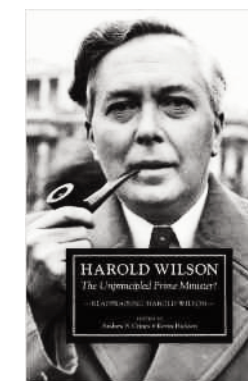
This series of essays constitutes a reappraisal of Harold Wilson as Prime Minister. The subtitle is 'The Unprincipled Prime Minister?' We should perhaps acknowledge the question mark as this reappraisal to mark the centenary of Wilson's birth does challenge the general condemnation of Wilson, who the essays present as a pragmatist rather than unprincipled - the nature of New Labour and the Blair regime certainly shows Wilson in a better light. There have been previous reappraisals of Wilson's governments – for example Clive Ponting's 1989 volume 'Breach of Promise', the title somewhat showing a lack of objectivity by this disillusioned former civil servant, and the three volume 2003-4 Manchester University Press review of the 1964-70 Government by Steven Fielding, John Young and Jim Tomlinson, as well as the biographies of Wilson by Pimlott and Ziegler. We also have the memoirs and diaries of Crossman, Castle and Benn. Wilson's own memoirs, being rather tedious self-justifications, have not helped his legacy. Wilson's second government of 1974-76 tends to be overshadowed by the economic crisis and Wilson's own sudden resignation and the Winter of Discontent of 1978-9 that brought Thatcher to power.

We need to remember that Wilson was not only intellectually clever with a track record as economist, civil servant and Minister, but coming from a lower middle class background, he was both modest and a contrast to his

predecessors: Churchill, Eden, Macmillan and the former Earl Home. He was seen as a breath of fresh air against this aristocratic Toryism, bringing the 'white heat of technology' to the generation of a 'New Britain' (the title of his collected 1964 campaign speeches).

The essays review both the themes of the Wilson administrations such as Wilson's pragmatic socialism and his perspective on social change, before considering specific policy areas – economic and industrial policy which in many ways dominated both governments, education and social policy, the constitution, devolution and Northern Ireland, foreign and defence policy and European integration (or lack thereof given the failure to get the UK into the Common Market). There is an interesting chapter on Wilson's attitude as a Methodist to the social and sexual reforms pursued by Roy Jenkins and a rather strange chapter on Wilson's policy on sport.

There is little in this volume on welfare and housing policy, which is covered more fully in works on Crossman and Crosland. There is nothing on Wilson's relationship with the Soviet Union, which is covered very fully in a new book by Geraint Hughes (to be reviewed in a future Chartist). The ambition of Wilson's approach to national economic planning could perhaps have been recognised more fully – rereading the 1965 National Plan demonstrates how far Thatcher and New Labour moved away from Government actually taking some responsibility for the UK economy. Rhiannon Vickers' chapter on foreign policy does recognise the significance of Wilson ensuring



that Britain kept out of the Vietnam war, a decision that annoyed the Americans, in strong contrast to Blair's subservience to American foreign policy objectives.

The last set of essays in the volume are brief perspectives from politicians and academics from left, right and centre and a final appraisal by the historian (Lord) Kenneth Morgan. Perhaps the most revealing is from the left-wing academic David Coates who in 1990 published a study of the 1974-79 Labour governments which criticised Wilson and Callaghan for failing to challenge capitalism and introduce socialism. Coates now comments that 'with the benefit of hindsight, it is the modernising radicalism of Harold Wilson that needs to be recognised by left-wing critics of New Labour....The contrast between Tony Blair and Harold Wilson is a salutary one to make..... just how quickly any examination of the weaknesses of New Labour necessarily triggers in the open-minded a re-evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of its Old Labour predecessors'. For all the limitations of the Wilson governments, there were residual and radical strengths there that the current Labour Party leadership might do well to re-examine, and perhaps even attempt to replicate.

## Economics made a bit easier

**MACROECONOMICS: A CRITICAL COMPANION**  
Ben Fine and Ourania Dimakou (Pluto Press, £19.99 pb)

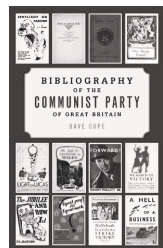
**MICROECONOMICS: A CRITICAL COMPANION**  
Ben Fine (Pluto Press, £19.99 pb)

There is no point in pretending that these two books are must reads for everyone. Most of us would not get past the covers. But Ben Fine, Professor of

Economics at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London has turned his 40 years' experience to casting light on both the macro- and micro-dimensions of his much maligned science. The Macroeconomics volume was co-written with Ourania Dimakou a recent graduate of economics now lecturing at SOAS. The authors aim is to reintroduce critical thinking to economics, whether macro- or micro-. When you get to

the end they encourage you to revisit specific chapters in the belief that you will understand what they are postulating better. Be warned these texts require dedication. But if you are a politician who has been duped once too often by economists then these books will at least better equip you to adopt a more critical stance with your advisors. They will leave you under no illusions, there are no quick fixes

## Mike Davis on a definitive reference work





## Susan Pattie on the Armenian Genocide

Dr Susan Pattie was project manager of the Armenian Genocide Centenary in Washington, DC and Director of the Armenian Institute in London

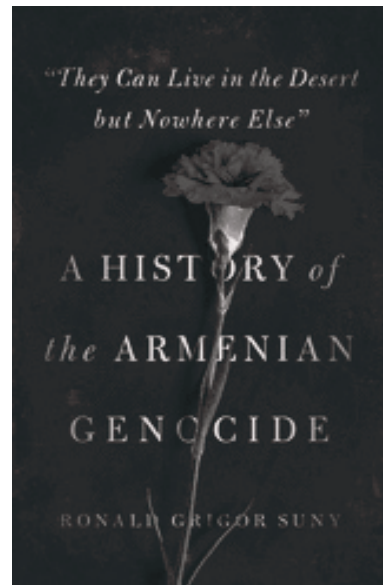
# Why millions died

**“THEY CAN LIVE IN THE DESERT BUT NOWHERE ELSE”: A HISTORY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE**  
Ronald Grigor Suny (Princeton University Press, £24.95)

Among the many publications released in 2015, the centenary of the Armenian Genocide, Ronald Suny’s *“They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else”: A History of the Armenian Genocide* stands out as a transitional text. It both brings together and amplifies the numerous foundational books and articles by scholars of the Armenian Genocide and points the way towards an engagement with the wider world of human rights scholarship and informed activism. Using further archival materials, Suny looks at the motivations and attitudes of the Ottoman perpetrators, exploring the Genocide’s context and implications in greater depth than earlier works. While many Armenian scholars and activists have projected the simple assumption that if the Armenian Genocide is recognized, others will be prevented, Suny’s work details why this necessary step is insufficient.

Accessible and concise, while still complex enough to do justice to the relationships between Armenians, their rulers and their neighbours over the centuries, the book’s central focus is on the changing meaning of nation for both the Ottoman leaders and Armenian activists (and later survivors). As in his earlier writings, Suny explores how ‘historians of nationalism have in recent decades emphasized how much creativity, imagination and pure invention went into the reconceptualization of the modern nation.’ While this passage refers to the Armenians, the theme continues through the book, looking also at how Ottoman leaders attempted reforms of their imperial structure, eventually opting for the perceived strength of the modern nation-state based on an ‘historic’ shared ethnicity and religion.

Through comparisons with other imperial histories and structures, Suny shows that like its European counterparts, the Ottoman Empire was built on hierarchy and subjugation. However, it also tolerated and facilitated difference through its Millet system of governance, underlining an imperial state-



building effort rather than a ‘nation-building project’, aiming to maintain hierarchy, not homogeneity. A brief overview of Armenian history includes observations of the trials of living under heavy taxation and insecurity but Suny also describes the special conditions that enabled Armenians to make contributions to Ottoman society not only as merchants, traders, factory owners and farmers but as actors, writers, directors, photographers, musicians, teachers, architects and a variety of other trades, forbidden to Muslims.

The tenuous balance that prevailed during the earlier centuries was sharply disturbed by the promotion of sedenterization of Kurds and the settlement of incoming Balkan Muslims in the late nineteenth century. Armenians remained loyal to the Ottoman Empire, their home, looking to the West but also Russia to protect them and enforce reforms within the

Empire. For the genocide to take place as it did, with the participation of local people, encouraged and directed by the state, distancing had to take place between former neighbors and co-workers, beginning with the re-imagining of the Other. The perspectives of Turkish and Kurdish people were directed to evolve from seeing the Armenians as not just different but as a threat to their security, as a reason for their poverty, as a menace to their future.

Suny summarizes his thesis by relating this back to the leadership of the Empire. ‘Those who perpetrated genocide operated within their own delusional rationality. The Young Turks acted on fears and resentments that had been generated over time and directed their efforts to resolve their anxieties by dealing with those they perceived to threaten their survival – not with their external enemies but an internal enemy they saw allied to the Entente – the Armenians.’ The constructed enemy was foundational to building a new identity for a new state, a fundamental change from an empire based on a diverse population to a nation-state based on ethnicity, language and though secular in name, a particular religious background.

Addressing the question of Genocide denial, Suny points to other examples of states (such as the United States, Israel, Australia) emerging after ‘the removal and subordination of native peoples who had lived on its territory prior to its founding’. Facing history, coming to terms with a difficult past is the first step of a state aiming to create a stable, inclusive present and a productive future for all its citizens.

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## Bob Littlewood on activism

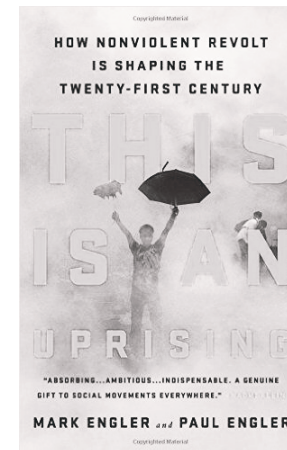
**THIS IS AN UPRISING: HOW NONVIOLENT REVOLT IS SHAPING THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**  
Engler and Engler (Nation Books, £17.99 hb)

In recent years we have seen Occupy, the Arab Spring and numerous smaller single issue direct action campaigns get widespread public attention.

This book will encourage activists who believe that nonviolent direct action is the way to transform society. It is an analysis of what works, using a wide range of examples: the secrets of Ghandi’s success, how civil rights were won in the USA, the overthrow of Milosevic, victory in the struggle for gay marriage and other major transformations.

There are detailed accounts of how such uprisings achieved their aims, which show that far from being spontaneous and unplanned (as media coverage would have us believe) they are the result of sophisticated planning. All actions are different, but there are common elements – disruption e.g. interrupting a public event, sacrifice – activists taking serious risks, thereby strengthening their commitment to the cause and escalation – bolder acts of non-compliance, often to the point where media coverage of repression provides moments

Bob Littlewood is a Redbridge Labour councillor



where genuine popular support is achieved and the politicians have to act or regimes fall.

So this book is part history, part well researched account of the art of successful protest and part ‘handbook’ for a new generation of activists.

Can the crises of growing inequality and climate change only be solved by movements adopting these strategies and tactics? Established left wing parties and trade unionists share with those adopting direct action approaches a firm belief in solidarity and collective action, but in practice they behave differently and tend to work through the ‘system’. The authors remind us that even when American trade unionists took to the streets after

the 2008 crash, mobilising many people, they got very little coverage. By contrast Occupy was more effective in terms of drawing wide public attention. And yet it is easy, notwithstanding the triumphs of Martin Luther King, Ghandi, the Serbian students and other successful movements cited to conclude that Occupy and the Arab Spring were ‘failures’. Here Engler and Engler point out that even when movements appear to get nowhere, they at least manage to mobilise large numbers of people who might involve themselves again when the time is right.

There is a lot of direct action here at the moment – migration, housing, anti-austerity are obvious examples. Undeniably some of those involved in direct action on, say, housing see Labour Councillors and MPs as opponents. It’s easy for those of us on the left to be mystified, even resentful when a Labour Council is the target of protest. Perhaps there is more willingness to cooperate in the current climate?

The authors have put together something approaching a theory about how nonviolent action can succeed based on a large amount of empirical evidence. The book will inspire a new generation of activists and give food for thought for all on the left.







# A kinder politics is possible

A tragic death of a campaigner for refugees, peace, a social EU and a better world. **Chartist** salutes **Jo Cox**, Labour MP for Batley and Spen, murdered in cold blood, at the height of the EU referendum campaign. Jo was a fighter for refugee rights, a women's champion, advocate for local democracy and an articulate voice for the people of the Yorkshire constituency she had represented in parliament for just one year.

**Her colleague, Cat Smith MP, writes:**

“My only regret is that I didn’t get to know Jo better. As we entered Parliament together just over a year ago, I knew instantly she was a bundle of energy, passion and Yorkshire grit all packed into one – petite at five foot – woman. In the early days we joked about clothes, getting lost around the maze of corridors and adjusting to life as a new MP but soon I came to realise she was

smart, compassionate and incredibly knowledgeable. It’s been a pleasure I will forever treasure to sit in the chamber and listen to Jo speak on Gaza and human rights.

“I can’t begin to understand how we can ever get over the shock and the grief of losing Jo so violently and so suddenly. It’s apparent she was surrounded by love – her husband Brendan’s plea for love to defeat the hate just hours after losing his wife is testament to Jo – she picked a good one in Brendan! I hope that

her children will always know that their mum was a beautiful person inside and out, that she wouldn’t have wanted the hate that killed her to win, and for that to happen we must show though love that a new kinder politics is possible – and quite frankly necessary.”

CAT SMITH IS MP FOR LANCASTER AND FLEETWOOD AND SHADOW CABINET MINISTER FOR VOTER REGISTRATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE

**Neighbour, Paul Salveson writes:**

Jo Cox, one of our finest and most principled politicians, is dead, murdered by a deranged right-wing fanatic. By the time this appreciation appears, many words will have been written about Jo and even more tears will have been shed. She was an outstanding MP and a truly lovely person whose presence warmed everyone around her. Writing this just three days after her murder, I still find it difficult to watch the television news without crying and still occasionally harbour the hope that it’s all just a bad dream. But it isn’t, she’s gone; leaving a grieving family, friends and colleagues – and a terrible sense of loss and bewilderment in the communities around Batley and Spen where she grew up and represented so well. She was a ‘true Yorkshire lass’ who was loved by her constituents.

She was no ordinary MP. Despite her relative youth, she was a seasoned campaigner, having worked for national charities like Oxfam. She brought huge

experience to her job as MP, being elected for her ‘home patch’ of Batley and Spen as recently as 2015. In the short time between being elected and her murder, she achieved some remarkable things. Her international work focused on Syria. She intervened in parliamentary debates on the tragedy, bringing a distinct, humanitarian perspective to the conflict. Behind the scenes she played an energetic role in trying to bring about a resolution to the conflict and forced the Government to take a more enlightened approach towards refugees and their re-settlement in the UK.

Equally important, her work as a constituency MP was outstanding. Batley and Spen has some very deprived communities and is ethnically diverse. The suspicions that some local people had about a ‘Cambridge-educated MP’ were quickly dispelled when she proved her warmth, engagement and understanding of her people. Truly, she was returning to her working class roots in the area.

I got to know her through her work with the local community group, Friends of Batley Station.

She backed this campaign to bring the station back to its former glory with enthusiasm and energy. Only two weeks before her murder she supported the community gala at the station, marking the completion of the station’s refurbishment. It was great fun – and Jo really brought a sense of fun and excitement to her activities.

She was a member and great advocate of the Hannah Mitchell Foundation, the campaign for democratic devolution in the North. She was the only MP in this parliament to actually pay her subs to be a member! Working with her on these issues revealed a politician who wasn’t prepared to toe anybody’s ‘line’ and was totally committed to working in alliance with politicians from beyond Labour. This happened with Syria and many other issues. She was critical of the Corbyn leadership but wouldn’t ever support backroom conspiracies by the right to undermine him. If she had critical comments to make, she did so openly. She was a woman of real principle and we are all much diminished without her.

PAUL SALVESON