Tories: pride before a fall

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plus
Greenwatch and book reviews

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Editorial Policy
The editorial policy of CHARTIST is to promote debate among people active in radical politics about the contemporary relevance of democratic socialism across the spectrum of politics, economics, science, philosophy, art, interpersonal relations – in short, the whole realm of social life.
Our concern is with both democracy and socialism. The history of the last century has made it abundantly clear that the mass of the population of the advanced capitalist countries will have no interest in any form of socialism which is not thoroughly democratic in its principles, its practices, its morality and its ideals.
Yet the consequences of this deep attachment to democracy – one of the greatest advances of our epoch – are seldom reflected in the discussion and debates amongst active socialists.
CHARTIST is not a party publication. It brings together people who are interested in socialism, some of whom are active in the Labour Party and the trade union movement. It is concerned to deepen and extend a dialogue with all other socialists and with activists from other movements involved in the struggle to find democratic alternatives to the oppression, exploitation and injustices of capitalism and class society.

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Chartist 2017 Open meeting and Annual General Meeting
Saturday 8th July
11.00-4.45

University of Westminster
M212 (Marylebone block - 2nd floor)
35 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5LS
Baker Street underground opposite Madame Tussauds

Morning session - 11.00 - 1.30 Labour - what next

Don Flynn (Chartist EB & former Director Migrant Rights Network)
Puru Miah (Momentum national committee)
Mary Southcott (Chartist EB) Chair
Karen Buck MP (tbc)
Ann Pettifor (Prime Economics)

Afternoon session 2.00-3.30
Brexit - where do we go from here?

Julie Ward MEP
John Palmer (ex European editor The Guardian)

Followed by AGM 3.45

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Robin Murray – green transitional socialist
John Palmer on a red-green pioneer

Robin Murray, who died last month, was a very knowledgeable Marxist economist who was able to explain how to achieve a radically different society in a way that was convincing to people who were engaged in the struggle against the American war in Vietnam in the 1960s. We were part of a generation inspired by the broad New Left movements after the Suez/Hungarian crisis in 1956. We went our separate ways but I always found Robin’s clear head analysis of socio-economic change compelling.

Having taught Marxist economics at the Open University, Robin Murray was one of the first to identify with the transition from the Fordist model of national capitalism – symbolised by large-scale mass production – to an essentially spatially focused system exploiting new information technologies. He bitterly opposed all varia-
tions of neo-liberal, ultra-free market ideologies with the mas-
ively greater inequalities and injustice they necessarily gener-
at. But he recognised that the structural changes in capitalism required new strategic answers to the old questions.

I worked closely with Robin when Ken Livingstone’s GLC took a series of innovative economic projects around human-centred plants and industries facing mass redundancies, inserted 40 per cent of the popular vote, its highest share ever, into the UK election, the Mayoral election to create projects. Little wonder Thatcher promptly closed all the GLC’s closures of 12 seats.

Robin’s subsequent work with governments and regional authorities in developing econom-
ic tools for the revitalisation of waste won international praise. He wrote about the immense possibilities of this approach in his book Zero Waste published by the Greenpeace Environmental Trust. He also helped pioneer the influential radical new Twin Trading strategy to empower farmer cooper-
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Robin never obsessed about a purely national focus for a social-
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He embodied the new paradigm that Murray’s insight and vision about the potential for a new kind of socialism at a time when popular support for challenging a sclerotic and dying neoliberal capitalist system is greater than ever.

The General Election on 8th June 2017 will be seen as a seismic moment in British history. The result will be a clear rejec-
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Long way to run

What a few weeks it has been. The election changes everything, and just as seismic has been the fallout from the horrific Grenfell inferno. This has all a long way to run yet and writing on the weekend of the marvellous general election was one of the great get-together events in memory of Jo Cox, everything must have an element of uncertainty. I began with hope. Up here in the North there are some great opportunities opening up, with a re-energised Labour Party and talk of progressive alliances alluring, but continuing tribalism - and one issue that might stand out. There is much of the ground that UKIP took from it. In the way it is scams and smacks of the Influence of Alan Simpson. But how innovative might rethinking local energy companies be? We will see.

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Paul Salveson says why not go for devo-max?

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Siding with the future

Labour must back EU energy targets says Dave Toke

In order to make plausible both its claims to being the country’s intertural market and to achieve green energy targets Labour must come out with a clear statement to support EU energy targets. That means two things: first adopting EU renewable energy targets for there to be any point about the UK’s commitment to those targets, and secondly that greenhouse gas emissions should be reduced by 40 per cent of 1990 levels by 2030. Labour’s election manifesto was strongly in support of the UK in the run-up to the European Parliament elections in June, it would be a pitty if it now has to beclarified. It said, in summary, ‘We will transform our energy systems, investing in new technology and progressing with the right kind of nuclear technology. The SNP did so well in 2015. It was one of the consequences of the EU referendum. It was a consequence of the Scottish National Party. Labour must come out with a clear statement to support EU energy targets. That means two things: first adopting EU renewable energy targets for there to be any point about the UK’s commitment to those targets, and secondly that greenhouse gas emissions should be reduced by 40 per cent of 1990 levels by 2030. Labour’s election manifesto was strongly in support of the UK in the run-up to the European Parliament elections in June, it would be a pitty if it now has to beclarified. It said, in summary, ‘We will transform our energy systems, investing in new technology and progressing with the right kind of nuclear technology. The SNP did so well in 2015. It was one of the consequences of the EU referendum. It was a consequence of the Scottish National Party.

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abour did not win the general election of June 2017. A badly wounded Conservative Party, by a clearly dismayed and embarrassed prime minister, has had a day of the life that would have gotten the first chance to talk to the Queen about the formation of a new government.

Theaevia May, will not enjoy this ‘victory’ one iota. Her cocky self-assurance, spelt out so cynically in the Conservative manifesto, was that the mass of people across the UK were so demoralised by austerity, and so divided by the politics of blaming-the-poor/immigrants, that they could be persuaded to vote for policies that were patently contrary to their interests.

The victory that Jeremy Corbyn has won from this engagement has proven in the most dramatic terms that the tide is turning and that social forces are being assembled that have not been seen before in the fight against the poverty and hardship that has been foisted upon them for the last seven years.

Revolt of the young

This emergence of a new, popular, bloc has the revolt of the young at its heart. This is the turn of a generation of people being offered little more than the promise of ‘freedom’ to ‘Uber’-type jobs, a life-time of inadequate accommodation in the exploitative private rented sector, and the burden of tens-of-thous-
dands of pounds of debt, who hope their higher education could improve their chances. But this has not been the intergenerational warfare that some academics and newspaper columnists have tried to big up. In backing Corbyn’s young citizens have a chance to make history.

They did not begrudge older citizens their pension, they did not want free health care, they did not want a new government.

They were fighting for their place in the country, for the respect and recognition that is due to a generation of people who have built this country.

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The tide is turning

Don Flynn sees the conditions for Labour’s advance into government being forged

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn on the brink of achieving one of the biggest political upsets in history

We think that should include a commitment, not just to assure the UK of nationalists already here that their rights in the UK will be respected, but straightforward support for the continuation of the right of free movement of people as it has developed over recent decades. The message that need to get across couldn’t be clearer: migrants are not responsible for any of the problems experienced by UK natives, and the right to work connected to work is the right of all frontiers people has worked in favour of the empowering of working class people across histo-

Mantra of support

The mantra of support for the single market needs a more criti-
cal dimension. This is a market designed to reap more rewards for interests which are already winners and to hold those of the weaker economies in check. We need be more sceptical of the sump-

gle market which is structured by the euro and policed by the often brutal ‘troika’ of the European Central Bank, European Commission and the IMF.

Labour’s commentary on the Brexit process should set out the need to maintain the free move-

ment of people in agreement with EU, but also push for an end to the restrictions which currently exist for any countries participating in the single market, either as full members or as those connected through the EEA and association agree-
mation arrangements. The positive message of Brexit is that it opens up the possibility of an active role for the democratic state in the running of the economy, and Labour should press for concess-
ions in that direction.

Keen interest in what Labour has achieved these past few weeks extends a long way beyond the population of these shores. Corbyn and his closest allies in the leadership of the party should start thinking about ways of win-
ning support amongst fellow socialists across the world. This means looking at how to work with those groups and the progressive move-
ment in general right the way across the globe.

We can now be confident that Labour would be in a position to govern Britain sometime in the near future. The progressive social movements it has fostered will provide the basis for this. But they will require a programme of radical, democratic reforms, to be delivered in a fit for the 21st century. Our chance of success in the medium and long term will be that this cannot be advanced as a project to be completed in just one country. Labour is in a good position to inspire and encourage others, including working amongst the communities and nations of the world and in the international socialist movement.

What next for a Progressive Alliance?

Mary Southcott looks at the practice and the promise

Labour 2017 was supposed to be a Brexit election, with UKIP skewing the result by not standing candi-
dates against Tory Brexiteers. It turned out to be the Remainers’ revenge, to a large extent, regular-
lly by young voters and in London.

The New European produced a wonderful map which indicated where they had been planning to impose on the British society.

And then there is Brexit. Corbyn was criticised by some for a failure to make it a point of principle to oppose the triggering of Article 50. But the election outcome suggests that he has been playing a much canner game. One of the most important outcomes of the campaign of the past few weeks is the sign that Labour has been able to win a large segment of working class voters who backed Brexit.

The refusal to make a fetish of UKIP out of Parliamentary procedures, particularly in circumstances where the rituals of that arcane palace have closed down all prospects of a win, has meant that Corbyn has been able to stand tall in the eyes of all those who despaired at the idea that the EU can be made to work in their interests, but who are savvy enough to know that a really bad Brexit poses even greater dangers than remaining within its neo-lib-

eral embrace.

Corbyn’s team will have every opportunity to score big hits.

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More floundering on the part of the Conservative and UKIP vote, which Labour is constitutionally barred from doing. LCER Vice Chair, Clive Lewis, was a leading candidate was pro PR. Their view is that their candidate would make no difference. Their list was more optimistic where the candidates was pro PR.

Emails to supporters to ask their candidate to let us know
Chris Williamson

**Revolution!**

Chris Williamson says Corbyn is reaching consensus

**Printer ad**

**Beyond the boundary**

Puru Miah reflects on Momentum’s role in the #GE2017 Campaign

The government is weak and Labour is united. I believe that the Labour government has proven to be a success and the country is on the brink of departing from neoliberalism. Despite my unwavering support for Labour’s leader even I struggled to imagine writing these four statements during my first week back in Westminster. But they’re true. In my first PLP meeting I was surprised and pleased to see Jeremy greeted with a standing ovation. I was even more shocked to hear reports that Yvette Cooper and Chiukka Umunah were asking to be considered for positions on the front bench. A week is a long time in politics, but the past six seem to have solidified a revolution in Labour. Only two years ago most Labour MPs failed to vote against welfare reforms, now it seems Corbyn’s brand of anti-austerity politics has achieved some consensus. Why? Corbyn is probably right because it is working.

A turning point in the campaign was the launch of Labour’s manifesto. Without doubt, this manifesto is the best since the SNP in Scotland; the rise and fall of UKIP; and the election of Jeremy Corbyn to the leadership of the Labour Party. Political observers find themselves with one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage. The general election result re-emphasises that the way we do politics is no longer working and something must be done to make things work for the people.

Momentum was established in October 2015 just after the first election of Corbyn as Labour Leader, two years later it has been credited in assisting the Labour party in a successful General Election campaign. When Theresa May called the snap election in April, Momentum was working hard to harness the winds of the ‘New Politics’. In a hitherto unattainable political wisdom inside and outside Labour, the party now finds itself at the cusp of electoral victory.

**Key assumption**

The key assumption in the approach to campaigning by Momentum in the 2017 General Election is the shift in society towards the personal and the desire for that personal to be recognised. This act of self recognition, this ability to claim our place in the world whether acknowledged or not, is the essence of this approach. Politics is everybody’s business, to live is to be among humans (inter homines esse), to be a human being is to be endowed with the quality to be politicised. It is a more individualised form of politics, which sees all change stemming from the individual rather than the collective action. This shift towards individualised politics is propelled by a technological disruption that has transformed the traditional space of politics. In place of established forms of organising around party, workplace or institutions we have a proliferation of online communities based around individual preference and needs. Momentum in the General Election aimed to place itself in this untapped space, acting as a conductor by trying to give it a physical expression, recognising the anger fuelled by frustration with the language, conventions and machinations of formal machine politics. Online tools were developed like https://my Vote.easternmarginal.com/, a phone canvassing app and the election day pledge, augmented by a peer to peer text messaging service.

Momentum also channelled the energy from anger, by acknowledging that people’s desire was not simply to change the world, but to change the ways in which change comes about. The activists’ workshops on doorstep skills sessions, led by Bernie Sanders campaigners was part of this approach. The training sessions aimed to transform the traditional Labour Party data harvesting activity of Voter ID to mini political conversations that impact on voters’ frameworks of understanding and perceptions. With thousands of new members Momentum sought to target the Tory held marginals, not just the ‘damage limitation’ approach of many regional Labour organisers restricting activity to Labour marginals. Hundreds of party members were encouraged to campaign in Tory seats.

**Radically changed**

The General Election campaign run by Momentum pushed political campaigning beyond the boundary set by conventional political wisdom. The campaign rejected the hegemony of acceptability politics, and created its own subject of a ‘grassroots political campaign’. Above all it radically changed the perception of politics in the UK, from being the preserve of a privileged few to that of politics for the socially excluded masses. The moral victory of the campaign created contradictions that lead everybody to question the so called common sense assumptions that underpinned the economic and political arrangements in society. Momentum has helped establish the view that real politics is not limited to the ‘Clubhouse of Westminster’. The campaign established definitively that the centre of gravity in our politics has shifted from the political class at the centre, to out there in new subjects, in the lives and struggles of ordinary people.

**Puru Miah is a member of Tower Hamlets Labour Party and Momentum National Committee**
The end of nationalistic hegemony

Gerry Hassan on the Corbyn effect and premature announcements of Labour’s death

Scottish politics entered a new era as a result of the UK election. This is the end of the seemingly all-conquering SNP and the shift from a dominant one party politics to a much more fragmented nationalistic multi-party culture.

The election has changed things in Scotland as it did across the UK. But here an incoherent SNP campaign lacking clear strategy undermined Nationalist ascendancy. While, unlike the rest of the UK, the Tories in Scotland under Ruth Davidson fought a spirited and focused campaign filled with urgency and spirit. Meanwhile, Scottish Labour departed from the national script finding it difficult to fight a coherent contest with a unified message, only in the last stages for their popularity to rise as a result of the Corbyn surge.

SNP bandwagon

Moreover, all of this fits into a much bigger picture. The SNP bandwagon that has presented itself as carrying all before it has stalled - and partly reversed. A party which had a whisker under half the vote two years ago (49.97%) was reduced to 47.85% and from 56 seats to 35 seats - a loss of 21 – weakening them drastically, but leaving them still by far the largest party.

Dugdale has tried to identify a Labour constitutional position – federalism, a People’s Convention, a New Act of Union – all of which sounds unconvincing and with memories of Gordon Brown’s latter day pronouncements. All of these show Labour chasing the SNP tail.

operation between Labour, Lib Dem and SNP voters to defeat the Tories. This reached a high in the 1997 general election when all three non-Tory parties made gains from the Tories, reducing them to no Westminster seats in Scotland. The SNP was effectively a ‘popular front of the mind’. This has dramatically changed. The politics of Scottish post-indyref has transformed the nature of politics. No longer are the Tories the pariah party of old. Instead, these pro-union parties were in the recent election the beneficiaries of tactical voting. In general elections, anti-SNP tactical voting - which maximised SNP losses. This has come as a shock to many – with Tories in places where Labour affiliations used to be, Labour to Tories, and Tories and Labour to Lib Dems. John Nicolson, who won East Dunbartonshire from the Lib Dem in 2015 and lost it back to her in 2017, actually publicly complained about the invisibility of the Tory campaign in his constituency. He believed, rightly or wrongly, that this contributed to his defeat. There was naivety in this and also surprise at how quickly ‘Peak SNP’ has evaporated.

Clear winners

The clear winners – not in popular vote or seats – but reshaping debate and forcing their opponents to change tack – have been the Scottish Tories. They fought an abrasive, aggressive, populist campaign against the SNP’s alleged obsession with independence and Nicola Sturgeon’s plans for a second vote as a result of the 2014 referendum. This resulted in a 55.3% vote for the SNP in the 2017 election.

Post-election the UK media and commentary has scrambled to adapt to her diminished status, full of praise for Ruth Davidson, Scottish Tory leader. An element of this is about the state of the Scottish Tories and the shift from a奶粉 and dynamos were about anti-Tory Scotland – and in the 1980s and 1990s was informed by growing tactical voting and popular confidence.

What has produced Labour’s relative turnaround from seemingly being out cold only one year ago? Already the battle is on for Labour to recognise its ownership of the party’s modest success – with Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale claiming that the recovery was about her actions. First of all, the other side - the Lib Dems, the Tories and SNP – saw Labour as an insurrectionist force against them, and for all their talk of the SNP’s success they thought they were never going to remain permanently insulated from its effects. That means that from Labour’s future can only be with breaking with the party’s past – meaning its establishment, inside or, creonyist past – and becoming an insulationist force against the system, closed Scotland and the fact that deviation has not delivered for most of the country. The SNP were encircled in a twin pillars. They couldn’t claim they weren’t in favour of independence or another referendum, and they haven’t been able to adjust to being incumbent and admitting and explaining failures.

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All over the place

Labour were all over the place at times on independence. Corbyn suggested in the campaign that he would ‘open discussions’ with the SNP about a second referendum, which drew the fury of Dugdale. But she herself has previous form – declaring publicly around the Brexit vote that she could see circumstances in which she supported independence, and allow Labour politicians the right to do so. She tries to deny or blank mention of such comments now.

Dugdale has tried to identify a Labour constitutional position – federalism, a People’s Convention, a New Act of Union – all of which sounds unconvincing and with memories of Gordon Brown’s latter day pronouncements. All of these show Labour chasing the SNP tail. Scottish politics are changing dramatically. There is no point in Labour or other parties trying to focus more on the constitution than the SNP. Labour need to identify ground which is about the economic and social injustices of Scotland, and the scandal that after nearly twenty years of the Scottish Parliament, people don’t feel any more empowered or their lives transformed.

Devolution has not delivered

In short, the SNP’s dominance of Scotland was never going to be a permanent one. The country and impatience in the air. This is an age of disruption and the SNP were the only party to remain permanently insulated from its effects. That means that Labour’s future can only be with breaking with the party’s past – meaning its establishment, inside or, creonyist past – and becoming an insulationist force against the system, closed Scotland and the fact that deviation has not delivered for most of the country. 

Scottish politics like the UK has some turbulent years ahead of it: Brexit, the independence issue, and 2021 Scottish Parliament elections. The era of neo-liberalism and Blairism without ever calling it Blairism has ended in Scotland, as it has across the UK. This challenge to the SNP’s centrism and caution and an opportunity for more radical voices, pro- and anti-independence.

Port in the polls happened relatively late on – in the last week and a bit – and was so late that it caught the SNP off guard. The SNP were encircled in a classic pincer operation. The Tories attacked them again and again on independence. While Labour’s campaign themes of education and health reminded people of the SNP’s patchy record in government. The SNP didn’t know how to respond to these twin pillars. They couldn’t claim they weren’t in favour of independence or another referendum, and they haven’t been able to adjust to being incumbent and admitting and explaining failures.

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Labour were all over the place at times on independence. Corbyn suggested in the campaign that he would ‘open discussions’ with the SNP about a second referendum, which drew the fury of Dugdale. But she herself has previous form – declaring publicly around the Brexit vote that she could see circumstances in which she supported independence, and allow Labour politicians the right to do so. She tries to deny or blank mention of such comments now.

Dugdale has tried to identify a Labour constitutional position – federalism, a People’s Convention, a New Act of Union – all of which sounds unconvincing and with memories of Gordon Brown’s latter day pronouncements. All of these show Labour chasing the SNP tail. Scottish politics are changing dramatically. There is no point in Labour or other parties trying to focus more on the constitution than the SNP. Labour need to identify ground which is about the economic and social injustices of Scotland, and the scandal that after nearly twenty years of the Scottish Parliament, people don’t feel any more empowered or their lives transformed.

Scottish politics like the UK has some turbulent years ahead of it: Brexit, the independence issue, and 2021 Scottish Parliament elections. The era of neo-liberalism and Blairism without ever calling it Blairism has ended in Scotland, as it has across the UK. This challenge to the SNP’s centrism and caution and an opportunity for more radical voices, pro- and anti-independence.

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Gerry Hassan is the author of Scotland the Bold, co-editor of A Nation Changed the SNP and Scotland after Ten Years and is writing a book on Labour and Britishness.
**Good Friday Agreement threatened**

Kevin Meagher pulls the Tories’ utter desperation to remain in government

There is nothing wrong with the latest party in Parliament seeking to form a government with the support of a minority. For that matter, there is nothing inherently wrong with that arrangement including one of the smaller Northern Irish parties.

The nationalist SDLP took the lead in this - the Conservative Party has no sympathy for the Ulster Unionist Party has antecedents with the Tories going back decades. Indeed, Labour, too, would have sought to cut a deal with the Democratic Unionists if the result of the 2010 election had been a bit closer.

But things are different now. Northern Ireland’s devolved settlement faces a genuine crisis in a way it didn’t in 2010. It boils down to this: how can the Government act as honest brokers in restoring power-sharing in Northern Ireland when they are reliant on one side for their very existence in government?

Peace process ‘under stress’

It was a point made most tellingly - of all people - by former Conservative Prime Minister, Sir John Major, who took the remarkable step of chiding his successor-but-five for even contemplating a deal with the DUP, warning it would damage the prospects of restoring power-sharing, but actually put the peace process ‘under stress.’ This followed a similar warning by Jonathan Powell, Tony Blair’s chief of staff and the man who did most of the negotiating to deliver the Good Friday Agreement.

Both men are right. A deadline of June 29 has been set by the Northern Ireland Secretary, James Brokenshire, for the parties to agree to the re-establishment of power-sharing, a situation made more difficult when one side is in cahoots with the referee. The ‘optics’ as they say in American politics, are dreadful.

At the time of writing, it isn’t clear whether a deal on restoring power-sharing is possible, nor, in fact, whether a deal where the DUP supports Theresa May will actually come off. Some Conservative MPs are worried that a deal with the hard-right-wing DUP would ‘retoxify’ their party.

To compound matters, there is a strong likelihood that DUP leader, Arlene Foster, will face excoriating criticism from the independent inquiry examining the Renewable Heat Incentive scandal (the botched energy subsidy) shown to be intrinsically linked with inadequate cost controls, which has provoked a £500 million liability for the Northern Ireland Executive and was responsible for crashing the executive back in January. She may well be on borrowed time as it is.

**Political self-preservation**

Whatever happens, the Tories have shown that the careful management of the Northern Ireland political process is not their top priority. Political self-preservation outweighs just about everything.

Even if the assembly is restored further problems are in the pipeline. Dealing with what is euphemistically referred to as the ‘legacy of the past’ will present a fresh crisis as early as this summer.

Investigations into unsolved troubles-era killings may well see charges brought against former British soldiers. For the Government, this is toxic. Ministers are desperate to avoid images of old soldiers in handcuffs, charged with crimes from half a lifetime ago. Yet investigating those troubles will inevitably alight on killings carried out by State forces. Politicians might want to avoid the past but Lady Justice, being blind, cannot.

Fudge

The failure to deal with the past and fudge the whole issue of a truth and reparation process is symptomatic of how utterly disowned the Tories are when it comes to managing the situation in Northern Ireland. We could now plausibly see the assembly restored, only to crash again when it comes to dealing with the troubles’ legacy or when the RHI inquiry reports.

2017 is going to be a rollercoaster for Northern Ireland.

**From bizarre to bonanza**

Peter Rowlands says despite downs and ups Welsh Labour needs a rethink on Corbyn

After the amazing election results across the UK it may be considered premature to focus on one part of it, but detail is always valuable, particularly in the one region apart from London which is largely rural county councils, although there were elections for Metropolitan Mayors in most of the large conurbations.

These elections now seem a long time ago, and occurred when polls were still predicting a 15 point gap between the Labour and Tory percentage vote.

Labour lost 167 seats in Wales, although this was a smaller proportion than in England or in Scotland. However, about 30 of these losses were to Plaid Cymru, about 40 were to candidates from dissident Labour groupings, many even from Labour councillors, whose election ended Labour not only does not enjoy a clear majority in Ceredigion, the Lib-Dems lost their last MP, bringing to an end their continuous representation since the mid 19th century, with their vote well down.

The foregoing is a sketch of the two elections in Wales, but it would be wrong to conclude without mentioning the bizarre approach the election took in Labour in Wales, by promoting Welsh Labour and a Welsh Manifesto, with no reference to Corbyn or the UK wide campaign, in effect, and very confusingly, implying that the election was a ‘Wales vote’.

Fortunately this didn’t appear to have much effect, but the effective disowning of the UK wide campaign, clearly responsible for the results in Wales as elsewhere, is something that the left in Wales must challenge.
The Call of the Open Seas

BREXIT

John Grahl ponders the dilemmas of a disastrous general election result for Tory Brexit negotiators

The romance of the open seas – leading conservatives and trade experts had anticipated the emergence of a global economy. Michel Barnier tries to put a brave face on a ludicrous state of affairs. The romance of the open seas remains just a dream. When one makes the present-day ambition to restore Britain’s individual role in world trade? It depends on the estimates of EU trade and the highest obtainable price. The romance of the open seas, covering the story up to 1962 when PM Macmillan’s volte-face led to the UK’s first application to join the world.”

The problem of the Irish border seems intractable. If the issue is not settled, it will seriously impair Britain’s freedom of manoeuvre. It is inspired Theresa May’s threat to “change our economic model” in the event of a breakdown in negotiations. For the sake of the political status of UK residents, the May administration nurtured some hope of using the first issue as a bargaining chip – this was always a squalid tactic with no hope of success and both the new political situation and pressure from British expats in the EU who were held hostage by it have virtually killed the question. Note that the EU position paper would give the European Court of Justice jurisdiction in enforcing the rights established for EU citizens in Britain. If this is accepted Theresa May will have the humiliation of continuing subordination to the Brussels courts. Note also that rights for residents will be established at the date of departure – March 2019. Any EU citizen who wants resident rights in the UK will have two years to come and claim them – hardly a triumph for those most concerned with reducing immigration.

The financial settlement looks likely to be another sticking point. Note for export expressed many reservations but centred on the issue of immigration. It seems that a demand for sovereign British control of entry would rule out membership of the Single Market and thus compromise the sales of Britain’s service sector, including the financial sector, to the EU. One ominous aspect of the EU negotiating position is that it rules out any agreements for particular economic sectors so that an access agreement for the provision of financial services would seem to be ruled out. Since the election one can observe an increasing assertion of the importance of the Single Market with a less emphasis on being a lone voice in immigration controls. Since the British economy simply won’t work without extensive use of migrant labour the UKP mobilized masses are bound to be heard. The only remaining question is whether the UKP takes the form of EU-imposed immigration flows or approximating the same flows as permitted by a ‘no border’ or ‘sez-faire’ solution.

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Y ears of austerity and cuts have changed the nature of politics. The election result was heavily influenced by a growing outrage at the impact of cuts to local services which threatens the edge of viability. The NCG and teaching unions ran a hugely successful campaign on schools. In Bradford the run up to the election Carlton was Primary School and Ickley Grammar School both sent letters home to parents outlining plans to cut the school week in direct response to the Tory cuts. New Leighley MP John Grogan got an 8% swing and a majority of 249. The manifesto was for the first time in my life a platform that connected with people’s experiences of degraded and reduced services and demoralised public servants. Parents used their anger at the ballot box. Cuts have marked a retreat into the bone of local government. While it’s grim, it must be noted we have already succeeded in breaking older electoral ties and a great many who previously voted Labour and have been fragments. We will have to try to make a system that can safeguard and support people who are leading more insecure lives based upon new models of practice with fewer staff ratios. These are huge challenges on government of the 1920’s and 1930’s except in places like Kensington a borough that has built massive cash reserves. Most councils are into the bone of viability. The separation of the management of the stock from the running of the stock. The fire is rightly raising the concern of the fire service. This demonstrates firstly that Government has focused sufficiently on the need to provide good quality, safe and secure homes for low income families. Cuts to the Government have not been led by the tenants in low and middle rise blocks in other boroughs does not appear to be primary. It is about upgrading the facilities and securing the structure of the block. Maximise asset values

Maximise asset values

What is very obvious is that for several decades no government has focused sufficiently on the need to provide good quality, safe and secure homes for low income families. In the roll out of the bedroom tax, a common practice has been to cut the service charge and walk away. These huge challenges on government of the 1920’s and 1930’s has led to the complete failure of Government at all levels.

Residents who have lost their homes, possessions and in many cases their relatives and friends are justified in their anger and desire for justice and redress. It is unlikely that we will see any of the parties involved admitting responsibility for the disaster. The case for demolition on the ground of negligence in terms of a corporate manslaughter charge will always be subject to legal disputes for many months and possibly years. The fire is rightly raising the concern of the fire service. This demonstrates firstly that Government has focused sufficiently on the need to provide good quality, safe and secure homes for low income families. Cuts to the Government have not been led by the tenants in low and middle rise blocks in other boroughs does not appear to be primary. It is about upgrading the facilities and securing the structure of the block. Maximise asset values

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New high rise

However, in recent years, success-ful housing schemes in London, Saff-ough, have encouraged the develop-ment of new high rise residential blocks, primarily for the homeless ownership market, though in London this is the small, investment market rather than mainstream.

The current Mayor of London, Nadia Khan, like his predecessors has been currently considering reviewing the cladding regulations. The fire is raising the concern of the fire service. This demonstrates firstly that Government has focused sufficiently on the need to provide good quality, safe and secure homes for low income families. Cuts to the Government have not been led by the tenants in low and middle rise blocks in other boroughs does not appear to be primary. It is about upgrading the facilities and securing the structure of the block. Maximise asset values

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Misreading the Runes
Paul Reynolds on Corbyn v lies, damned lies and mass media bias

At the beginning of July 2016, the School of Economics Media and Communication Department published a report analysing the coverage of Jeremy Corbyn from his election as Leader of the Opposition in September through to November 2015. They found 50% of coverage misrepresented Corbyn. Its conclusions made damaging reading. Corbyn was represented through a process of ‘categorisation that went well beyond the normal limits of fair debate and disagreement in a democracy. Corbyn was often denied his own voice... systemic, created with care and risked in both the broadsheet and tabloid press in a way that no other political leader is or has been. The British press has repeatedly held Corbyn with terrorism and positioned him as a friend of the enemies of the UK. The result has been a failure to give the newspaper reading public the information it needs to form their own judgements about the election and the main opposition.’

At the end of August 2016, Justin Schlosberg, the Chair of the Media Reform Coalition, sought to build on the case for media bias against Jeremy Corbyn. How was it coming? The mainstream media were not explicit in attacking Corbyn because media editors were more nuanced, with biased journalists, biased editors and editors reporting as they saw it; there was no consistency in the contemporary context because of the diversification and explosion of media. The evidence was not set in stone, not because Corbyn’s support was diffused, but because the media bias was subjective, bias in unavoidable because Corbyn shuns the mainstream media.

Which position holds water? Should the public trust the media or the冕 Cash for Crisis?

After all, Corbyn appears to have led a relatively successful election campaign and Labour have improved their position. So is reporting more equal? ‘The weight of evidence clearly supports bias. It was not a matter because Corbyn’s supporters, who had a clear message, were at a disadvantage in the attempt to unseat him as leader in July 2016. More recently, the Loughborough Centre for Communication and Media monitored election coverage and found that Corbyn had disproportionately criticized of their policies, manifesto and leadership. A BBC Trust report found its own political editor Laura Kuenssberg had breached impartiality and accuracy guidelines by reading Corbyn’s general rejection of ‘shout to kill’ strategies for policing with the peculiarity of armed responses to Paris style terrorist attack. Kuenssberg was also criticized for an interview with Corbyn in which she repeatedly questioned him in a hostile and prejudicial way about Trident and its alternatives. On the Stop the War coalition website with a breakdown of the way Corbyn’s answers and arguments were ignored for acritical and nuanced treatment of Trident was an issue the BBC was not prepared to acknowledge. The main techniques that had been used to control press coverage of this election outside of direct attacks and negative characterizations were to marginalize and discount the agenda and prevent the press from covering it. However much Labour had better machinery might be improved, the small but important bias that people had not been pcenounced the press. Then an initial lack of agreement and perception of the press had been lessened. Corbyn has said that a Labour Government would enact press independence. There is little evidence of substantive change in response from research studies. The IFS claimed that the government would invest £48.6 billion in the economy. This included abolition of corporation tax cuts by claiming the money was already sitting on a cash mountain. The corollary being that low wages and the exclusionary consequences of this will somehow lead to higher living wage would reduce jobs. The corollary being low wages and the exclusionary consequences of this somehow good for the economy.

Labour’s indcet hits home
From Sikka the Institute of Fiscal Studies criticises of Labour’s costed manifesto

Labour would have won the election as its leader had not been united behind its policies. Instead, in the nineteen months before the election the party had become divided into divisions, coups and plots which diverged from the real task of defeating the Tories. With widening inequalities, social divisions, weak economic growth, flat wages, lack of investment in public services and Brexit, the Tories were eminently beatable, but the party was repeatedly associated Corbyn him as a friend of the enemies of the UK. The result has been a failure to give the newspaper media bias against Jeremy because the media is more implicit in attacking Corbyn because the media is more explicit in attacking Corbyn because the media is more explicit in attacking the next election. The IFS insisted on seeing things through the neoliberal lens and claimed that a higher living wage would reduce jobs. The corollary being low wages and the exclusionary consequences of this somehow good for the economy.

The IFS insisted on seeing things through the neoliberal and claimed that a higher living wage would reduce jobs. The corollary being low wages and the exclusionary consequences of this somehow good for the economy.

The IFS objected to a reversal of corporation tax cuts by claiming that the tax cuts would lead to public sector investment. It totally ignored the issues of the back tax that would cost a billion pounds a year already sitting on a cash mountain. At the end of 2016 the share of GDP going to employees in the form of wages and salaries shrunk to around 59.5 per cent. In 2016 the share of GDP going to employees in the form of wages and salaries shrunk to around 59.5 per cent. In 2017 it had declined to the current level of 59.2 per cent. The IFS has not explained how lower corporation tax rates translate to lower wages. The IFS did not look at other economies such as France, Germany, Canada and many Scandinavian countries and their higher corporation tax rates and higher wages, certainly higher than the UK. How did they study the trend? Those countries generate tax revenues from their social infrastructure, which is funded by the redistribution of income and an increase in tax and social services. Higher wages increase a people’s purchasing power and stimulate the economy, but such macroeconomic details were missing from the IFS analysis.

The IFS claimed that the UK corporation tax rate was 20% per cent, which was said would somehow lead to higher consumer prices and low wages. The IFS did not specify its assumptions but seemed to assume that there is a perfectly mini-mum/wage of £10 an hour to ensure that taxpayers do not continue to subsidize low wages. In a way that may be highly profitable for some businesses. It promised to continue to raise the state pension by retaining the triple lock but also promised to increase the state pension by an additional 10% of its increase. It guaranteed to increase the state pension by an additional 10% of its increase. Inflation, average earning, £10 an hour. The confident Labour leadership was able to provide robust responses to critics, especially to the organisations masquerading as non-political institutions, by anticipating their attacks. The outcomes of the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) provide an interesting example and are pointers to things to come during the
T he May election of centrist Emmanuel Macron as French President with 66.1% of the vote is another victory for the far-right leader Marine Le Pen, at 33.9% was greeted across the world with a sigh of relief. That the new head of state began his victory speech to the sounds of the anthem of the European Union was a rebuke to the nationalistic cries. Commentators suggested that the leader of En Marche!’ represented a ‘poulicum of the centre’ that could stand up to the anti-Europe upsurge that has fed the continent’s xenophobic right and Brexit. That his ‘new France’ would free up the spirit of ‘Entreprise’ and modernise a country stifled by regulation and riddled with social division.

Reduced to a rump

At 6.36% of the ballots in the first round, the SFIO candidate Benoit Hamon’s score was a historic low for his party. Not since 1936, when Jean Moulin died, did the SFIO (Section Française de l’Internationale Ouvrière), obtain 5.07% share of the electorate, in the second round, over two million people in the ‘primary’ that chose Hamon, and the pledges of all candidates to respect the result, leading right-wing socialists, including his allies of Modem (i.e. 51 seats in Parliament, 340 with his centrist LREM, at least on a case-by-case basis. There are many voices on the French left calling for a new syn- thesis between radical aspiration and practical reform. But for the moment those joining Macron in the hope that watering down social democracy is a point that resembles the failings of the Third Way under Tony Blair and that ‘enlightened’ socialism can be fitted into a framework of the Socialists is the belief that making the body politic the common property of the ‘people’, which has replaced the party of the working class as the motor of the fight against the ‘oligarchies’. From the ‘multitude’, a mass of protests, a movement that federates the People into a political force can be constructed.

The basis for long-term political refoundation has yet to be found

From the Spanish radical party, an online petition links with the much smaller Nuit Debout movement in France last year. Leading figures also evoke the radical democracy of Chantal Gueguen (‘Unbowed France’, FI) are satisfied with winning 17 seats, while the warring brothers of the Communist Party (PC) secured 10. Even combined, these results have reached a record high of 5.4%. The rise of the Citizens, or ‘caste’. The latter involves a practical reform. But for the moment those joining Macron in the hope that watering down social democracy is a point that resembles the failings of the Third Way under Tony Blair and that ‘enlightened’ socialism can be fitted into a framework of the Socialists is the belief that making the body politic the common property of the ‘people’, which has replaced the party of the working class as the motor of the fight against the ‘oligarchies’. From the ‘multitude’, a mass of protests, a movement that federates the People into a political force can be constructed.

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FRANCE

French Social Democracy: dead?

Andrew Coates surveys the rise of Macron and the collapse of the Socialist Party.


dismal round of the legislative election

Pierre Bocquillon asks what’s next for the left?

Pierre Bocquillon lectures at the University of East Anglia

Chartist 2017 Open meeting and Annual General Meeting

Saturday 8th July 11.00-4.45

University of Westminster

M212 (Marylebone block - 2nd floor)

35 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5LS

Baker Street underground opposite Madame Tussauds

Keynote speakers:

Don Flynn Puru Miah Mary Southcott Ann Pettifor Julie Ward MEP John Palmer

July/August CHARTIST 23
John Strachey was the most prolific British advocate of Marxist theory in the 1930s. From an upper middle class family, after Oxford University he became a journalist at the ILP, moving on to the Monthly Review, moving on after the general strike to become editor of the Mineworkers Union journal The Miner. He was close to Aneurin Bevan and in 1925 which promoted Mosley’s economic policies – this was before Mosley left the ILP to form the New Party and subsequently the British Union of Fascists. Strachey was however Mosley’s parliamentary secretary when the latter was a member of the 1929-1931 government and contributed to both the Mosley manifesto and the volume A National Policy which in his absence became the New Party’s founding statement. Though never a member of the Communist Party, Strachey published a series of works advocating a Marxist position in effect identical to the position of the British Communist Party which also idealised the Soviet Union’s political and economic structure including the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’. The Coming Struggle for Power (1932), The Menace of Fascism (1933), The Nature of Capitalist Crisis (1935) and John Strachey: The Theory and Practice of Socialism (1936) were all produced in 1936. He wrote for the Communist Party’s Daily Worker and in 1936, together with Victor Gollancz and Harold Laski, he helped found the Left Book Club and its journal LeftNews. Strachey then sought to integrate orthodox Marxist theory and Keynesian interventionist economic theory into a leftist social democracy. He disputed himself from the Communist Party to the extent of contributing to Gollan’s Retreat of the Left in 1941. Strachey was elected as Labour MP for Dundee in the 1945 general election and served as a number of Government posts including Minister for Food and Secretary of State for War. In 1963, Strachey published Contemporary Capitalism, he argued that socialism could be progressed within a reformed capitalist system, in effect a rebuttal of his pre-war arguments. This was followed by The End of Empire, in 1959, On the Prevention of War 1962 and The Challenge of Democracy in 1963. In the early 1960s, Strachey was shadow Commonwealth minister. He died in 1963 just before Labour returned to Government.

“During the transition stage between capitalism and socialism there is no possibility of an all-inclusive democracy. For, during this stage, classes will still exist. And there can be no democracy between classes: there can be no democrac- cy between those who own and those who do not own the means of produc- tion. During this stage, if socialism is to be built up, the working class must dominate the community just as completely as does the capitalist class in a capitalist soci- ety. Communists and socialists propose that the workers should destroy one dictatorship, that of the capitalists, and replace it with another, their own. But a workers’ dictatorship will establish democracy by far from defeating the population while destroying democracy for the small capitalist class alone. For it will be the communist, and not the small capitalist class alone over which the new dictatorship will be exercised. Moreover the capitalist class has not the same ownership of the means of production taken from it, will be gradually absorbed by the working class, which will become co-extensive with society itself. Then, and not till then, will the establishment of true all-inclusive democracy become possible (the extraordinary historical importance of the new Soviet Constitution is that it shows that the Soviet Union is now reaching this point). Thus what the spokesman of capitalism calls from the Communist Party to the extent of contributing to Gollan’s Retreat of the Left in 1941. Strachey was elected as Labour MP for Dundee in the 1945 general election and served as a number of Government posts including Minister for Food and Secretary of State for War. In 1963, Strachey published Contemporary Capitalism, he argued that socialism could be progressed within a reformed capitalist system, in effect a rebuttal of his pre-war arguments. This was followed by The End of Empire, in 1959, On the Prevention of War 1962 and The Challenge of Democracy in 1963. In the early 1960s, Strachey was shadow Commonwealth minister. He died in 1963 just before Labour returned to Government.

David Cesarani was a colo- nus in the world of Holocaust history, whose life’s work was to challenge superficial interpretations and the instrumentalisation of the Holocaust. Tragically, he died suddenly, much too young, before publication of Final Solution: The Fate of the Jews in Germany 1939–1945. He had aiming to fill “the yawning gulf between popular understanding of this history and current schol- arship on the subject” – scholarship that includes a growing mass of investigation into the archives that have become acces- sible in eastern Europe in the last three decades.

Two arguments underpin his analysis. The first is that, although antisemitism was cen- tral to Nazi ideology, it was not the driving force in determining Hitler’s actions, nor the wave on which he rode to power. What shaped and motivated him, along with many of his generation, was a drive to war – to an existential struggle, following the humiliat- ing surrender of 1918, which he saw as a betrayal perpetrated by the Jews. The second is that, far from being a well-oiled machine operating according to a carefully thought-out strategy, the path the Nazis took, militarily and in terms of the relentless extermination of the Jews, was com- plex.

Written in a powerful narra- tive voice, this book is both a both a harrowing and compelling and an unbearable read. Contemporary testimony, ranging from reports by top diplo- mats to personal accounts of peo- ple’s daily lives, vividly conveys the impact of the rising level of persecution on the lives and fates of individuals, communities, and the wider society. American Consul Raymond Geist reported back to his government on the “emigration psychosis” afflicting German Jews during 1938 and 1939 as the Nazis ramped up, was doing foreign govern- ments to turn a blind eye. Even when people could escape, there was nowhere for them to go. Cesarani writes brilliantly and simply. He is unfailingly in fac- ing the horror but equally unfail- ingly in challenging the uses, abuses and oversimplifi- cation of these events. As Auschwitz has come, in education and popular cul- ture, to symbolise the entire Nazi project, what gets lost is the complex, contradictory and chaotic truth. For example, if we can even conceive of making such comparisons, Treblinka was, in terms of the death rate, even worse than Auschwitz. The last extermination camp to be con- structed, the true purpose of the buildings was disguise. As peo- ple came off the trains the undressed, handed over their clothes and valuables, were shaved and led straight into gas chambers. The work this entails was done quickly and efficiently – many of whom collapsed or were killed in the process. But the camp’s capacity was too small for the huge numbers of Jews and the procedure was “so chaotic and the security so lax that dozens of Jews managed to escape.” Cesarani’s great achievement is not only to enable us to see, hear, smell and feel the events them- selves, but to give us a way in to imagining the shock and confu- sion of those who were caught up in them – whether as victims, onlookers or perpetrators – and to analyse the range of responses to them. His death is a huge loss but this book is his precious legacy.
Dave Lister on Russia's revolts

October 1917

Le Carré and the real Mandel, David Mandel, Leon Trotsky, Rosa Luxembourg, Lenin (Resistance Books, £14.99)

In the Preface, it is claimed that this book is intended to be "a critical examination of the achievements of the Russian Revolution." It is certainly an interesting read and includes valuable information based on recent research. But in my view only the two Mandels’ pieces get anywhere near a critical approach, and otherwise we are subjected to eulogistic acclaim. This is particularly true of the contribution by François Vercaemst of the Belgian section of the 4th International. His crude piece includes statements such as “the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries attempted to curtail the pressure of the masses through the politics of class collaboration.” Also, despite most bibliography, there is no recognition of the important contribution to the issues discussed of two contributors, Champetier, Tony Polan and Ian Bullock.

One hundred years after the events about which this book is written, we are still quite uncritical about why the Bolsheviks won. There are many reasons why they were able to win that would benefit from a proper evaluation. In this book, David Mandel discusses why the Bolsheviks won. Advocates of determinist history may not like this but we see here the power of an individual to shape history. Without the Bolsheviks there would not have been a successful transfer of state power. Arguably also, without Lenin the Bolsheviks would not have been in a position to organise this.

David Mandel’s piece on “Economic power and party commitment” provides details from serious research. He points out that the Bolsheviks never supported the Petrograd soviets. Lenin, Mandel says, was not a worker. Mandel explains that his support was more for a variety of pragmatic rather than ideological reasons. He also notes some sources feared that they might be locked out, as had happened in the past and that he take action to prevent this. Incidentally it is interesting to observe in the cover photograph a photograph depicting the Petrograd Soviet, that all the vast number of delegates are men.

October 1917 workers in power

After the second revolution there was the anomalous situation that factories under workers’ control remained in private hands. By March 1918 the Supreme Soviet had come to the conclusion that this situation needed to change and a slow process of nationalisation ensued. It appears that the Petrograd workers’ council tended to recognise that they could not continue as autonomous units but had to go under some form of central direction. Regional commissioners were then appointed to control enterprises, with their decisions binding on the factory committees, but workers were allowed to form an administration based on the experience of the administration manager. David Mandel suggests that this led to a “meritocratic” and exogenous of the civil war and the state take over the Bolsheviks towards the concept of one man management. Ernest Mandel argues that the Bolsheviks were still an elitist group of professional revolutionaries. So, counter-claims that they were nothing more than a mass party in which there was open debate and disagreement was accepted. This may well be true. Mandel also argues that the Provisional Government had failed to deliver on anything: peace, land for the peasants, the 8 hour day, or deal with the growing economic dislocation. Also that the real choice was between soviet power and bloody reaction. This may also be true. General Kornilov would probably have seized power in the summer of 1917 without the actions of the Bolsheviks and the Petrograd proletariat. The point is also made that in the civil war that followed the revolution more of an anarcho-syndicalist conception. It was a gradual process. That’s why the two revolutions, whereby workers came to want to have a say in the management of their enterprises. Mandel explains that the factory managers were a variety of pragmatic rather than ideological reasons.

To his credit Mandel is prepared to acknowledge that mistakes were made in the post-revolutionary period, citing in particular the disagreements between the soviets of workers and peasants. After the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, the soviets of workers and peasants. After the signing of the Brest- Litovsk Treaty, the soviets of workers and peasants. After the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, the soviets of workers and peasants. After the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, the soviets of workers and peasants. After the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, the soviets of workers and peasants.
Duncan Bowie on the housing crisis in London

This book is well worth reading to appreciate the impact of the housing crisis in London and the reasons for it. It combines detailed case studies with some of the innovations of the crisis and research from a range of academics and lobby groups as well as from investors. As someone familiar with most of the developments in Southwark, I'm pleased to report that Minton presents a fair overview, which is more readable than most academic outputs.

Minton starts by focusing on the extent to which new development in central London is now targeted at the international investment market, viewed through a tour of luxury developments and attendance at market events. She then reviews the post-war approach to planning, and the recent increase in London’s housing crisis.

Over the past few years, Minton has been documenting and housing enshrined in the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act and the 1949 Housing Act. In his writing, Minton then seeks to explain how housing provision has become financially constrained (which basically means both housing development and the housing market as driven by the needs of investors rather than the needs of future residents – be they prospective owners or tenants).

The description chapter – how developers and London boroughs have redeveloped estates to increase their asset value, often displacing the pre-existing residents – revisits the well-known narrative of the redevelopment of the Heygate and Aylesbury estates in Southwark. A chapter on ‘Brick to Benefits’ tells the story of the Focus E15 ‘single mothers’ in Newham and Walham Forest, the placement of homeless families in Welwyn Garden City and Westminster Council rehousing strategy. A chapter on ‘Generation Rent’ looks at the housing market as driven by the needs of investors rather than the needs of future residents – be they prospective owners or tenants.

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**Universal Income and Working Time**

**Marina Prentoulis on opportunities missed in an Athens art show**

A group of young Austrian politician was thinking of giving a debate outside Benaki Museum, one of the main democratic venues in Athens. One of the exhibition that has taken over the streets and popular domination of the general public from Athens from April 6th to July 16th.

It seems the whole European art scene from artists, art trade and the public have descended by the thousands on Athens for the 14th iteration of Documenta the ‘100 day exhibition’ as it is called. This year’s organization is attempting some new thing: for the first time it is hosted outside its birthplaces, Kassel, Germany (where it will return in July for another three months) aiming to open up a space that will mediate the divisions between North and South Europe after the financial crisis. Greece, the weaker link of the Eurozone, the country under memoranda agreements for the past seven years and Germany, the de facto ruthless supervisor of the Greek government and a questionable, if not undesirable, leader of the European neoliberal project, have a lot of bad blood between them to deal with.

The title of Documenta14, “Learning from Athens”, is an attempt, according to the organizers, to wound the European colonialization or ‘neo-colonialization’ if we think how the position of Sub-Saharan African countries has shaped the last ten years) within the framework of the European neoliberal project, have a lot of bad blood between them to deal with.

**Roma Luxemburg**

**one day, they will proclaim**

"to your horror" it will end with pictures of burning casualties and human beings,**(I will not say dead)**

"I am, I shall be!"

**Conort Realists and How We Can Get There**

**Nigel Watt on a little known country**

**GUINEA: MASKS, MUSIC AND MYTHS**

B regman, a young German historian, is interested in more equitable societies and has chosen to demonstrate the validity of a number of initially unlikely propositions. For example, a proposal for international development to cease major projects, usually super-financed by four by fours and substitute simple payments. This has the benefit of avoiding distortions to local markets and dumping.

His major proposal however is a guaranteed universal income. This was tested in a Swiss referendum as recently as 2016. Paying street sweepers a modest income tends to re-integrate them into society and avoids massive welfare infrastructures. The basic thesis is that over time society has become massively better resource whereas concepts of poor and rich are relative. Western economies are welfare states, we can afford to be generous but the political implications may stretch the economy and education would be very different should the wealth be pulled upon immigrants. Both the UK and the USA have benefited enormously from the tax skills of refugees, perhaps the Manhattan Project finished an example?

Politics can be used to maintain the status quo but also to introduce ideas which initially seem leftist but become the norm, an example could be the abolition of slavery or the aim to offer universal healthcare. Bregman draws our attention to the Overton window which ‘out a series of degrees of acceptability: unthinkable, radical, acceptable, popular, policy, sensible. Successful practitioners include President Trump and Foreign Secretary Johnson. This is not a call to arms, it is a call for agitation.
The Labour Party fought the best campaign and a Labour Government is now within our grasp. However, we must do more to engage marginalised voters for the next General Election.

Labour defied expectations, making gains across the country - in every region of England and in Scotland and Wales. Jeremy Corbyn led from the front, but at the very heart of our localised grassroots campaign were Labour activists, organisers and hard-working candidates. Our message was clear - we will build a Britain that works for the many, not the few, and put an end to Tory austerity and continued cuts to public services. We put forward a detailed, costed manifesto with popular policies reflecting the views of the majority and it’s clear that the electorate warmed to our message.

In comparison, the Tories ran a negative campaign, full of smears and slurs. Theresa May called an election in order to strengthen her hand in the Brexit negotiations but her party lost seats and failed to reach a majority. She failed to defend her record on NHS failure, cuts to schools, and axing 20,000 police officers, while giving tax breaks to the biggest corporations and the richest individuals.

During the election young people rejected the idea that they are apathetic to British politics. More than two million 18-34 year-olds registered to vote in the weeks between Theresa May calling the election and the registration deadline. Youth turnout increased significantly, rising from 43% to 58% since the 2015 General Election. We also witnessed a huge swing toward Labour with 63% of voters aged between 18 and 29 voting for Labour compared with 36% in 2015.

The assumption that young people are all left wing is misguided. Young people face a wide range of concerns that do not necessarily fall on the left or right of the political spectrum. However, the Labour campaign resonated with young voters by making politics relevant to their everyday lives and offering hope for a decent future. Theresa May on the other hand neglected young people, assumed they were too lazy to vote, and presented nothing in her manifesto.

Indeed, our pledge to scrap tuition fees and bring back the education maintenance allowance, proved to be popular, particularly for students. Constituencies with large student populations, such as Newcastle East, Newcastle Central, Manchester Withington, Manchester Central, Cambridge and Canterbury were among the top 22 constituencies that saw the highest increase in overall turnout.

Our vision of building a society where every person is enabled to get on in life, regardless of race, faith or ethnicity also resonated with the Black and minority ethnic electorate. Bristol University academic Paula Surridge found that diversity, not young people, was more important in driving higher turnout in constituencies. According to analysis by the Muslim Council of Britain, BME and Muslim communities moved away from the Conservative party in large numbers and voted for the Labour Party.

Although we lost the election, the opportunity to form a Labour Government is now within our grasp. If a general election is called within the next two years, a swing of just 1.63% to Corbyn’s party would deliver the 34 gains we need to make Labour the largest party in the Commons. Our manifesto gives us a focus and a policy platform to build a progressive society. We must now consolidate gains and build on this message, continue to reach out to marginalised groups, and inspire people from all ages and backgrounds to join the Labour movement.

Chartist reviews Athens exhibition - see page 31

Marina Prentoulis says art has a big role to play in the European project

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