

CHARTIST

For democratic socialism

#288 September/October 2017

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Labour back from the edge

Manuel Cortes

John Palmer

Julie Ward MEP

Brexit follies

Frances O'Grady

Ending pay cap

Don Flynn

Migration myths

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Tyranny in Turkey

Kate Bell

Gig Economy

Ian Bullock

Russian Revolution

plus

Book & Film reviews



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CHARTIST

For democratic socialism

Editorial Policy

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

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

CHARTIST is not a party publication. It brings together people who are interested in socialism, some of whom are active in the Labour Party and the trade union movement. It is concerned to deepen and extend a dialogue with all other socialists and with activists from other movements involved in the struggle to find democratic alternatives to the oppression, exploitation and injustices of capitalism and class society.

Editorial Board

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

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Brexit the end of progressive politics?**

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1.00pm-3.00pm

Komedia Studio, Brighton

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Marina Prentoulis (Senior lecturer at University of East Anglia & Chartist EB)

Sarandra Bogujevci (a war refugee and newly elected left member of the Kosovo parliament)

Jozef Weidenholzer (Austrian Social Democrat MEP, President of Progressive Alliance of Socialist & Democrats in European Parliament)

Mike Davis (editor, Chartist) chair.

CHARTIST
FOR DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM



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Cover by Martin Rowson

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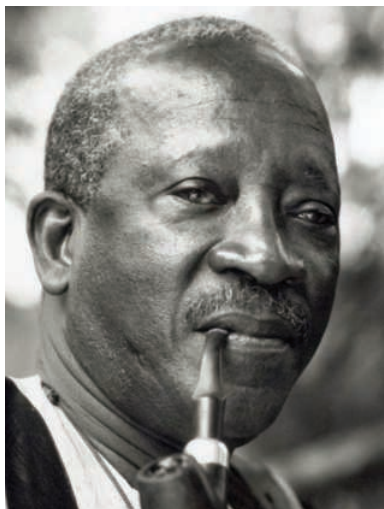
Ousmane Sembene

Nigel Watt on a great African socialist and film maker

What provoked me to write this note was the arrival of a review copy of the book, *Learning from the curse: Sembène's Xala* by Richard Fardon and Senga la Rouge. The book recounts and comments in detail on the book and the film of *Xala*, both by Ousmane Sembène. *Xala* means a curse and the curse is laid against a wealthy, pompous businessman, making him impotent when he arrogantly marries a third wife. The book is interesting to read when you have just seen the film. (It's on youtube.)

My reason for drawing your attention to Ousmane Sembène, if you are not already aware of him, is that, first as a novelist and then as Africa's first and still greatest film maker he spread a socialist message to the public in a very effective way. Being from the original 'four communes' of Senegal he was a French citizen and was called up in the war, later working as a docker in

Marseilles for ten years. His first novels, *Le Docker Noir* and *God's Bits of Wood* (about a strike on the railway) highlighted workers'



conditions – or lack of them.

Back in Senegal he was awarded a scholarship to the Gorky film institute. His first (and Africa's first) feature film, *Black Girl*,

described dramatically the maltreatment of an African servant in France. "*Xala*" was his fourth feature film. My favourite among his films is *Camp de Thiaroye* which depicts the event after the war when the demobbed African soldiers revolt when their pay is cut. The French army attacks and slaughters most of them. For this film he had to find Algerian funding and for many years it was banned in France. His ninth and last film, *Moolaadé*, which condemns female circumcision was shot when he was 82. He died in 2007.

He was a forceful critic of every kind of injustice and of the élites who enrich themselves at the people's expense. He has inspired many African writers and film makers even if the élites are still there.

A tour of several African countries, with talks and screenings including the biopic *Sembène* directed by Samba Gadjigo, is taking place this year.

New organisation founded for Jewish Labour Party members

On August Aug 5th, a new organisation, Jewish Voice for Labour, announced its foundation as a network for progressive Labour Jews united in opposing all forms of racism.

"Our mission is to contribute to making the Labour Party an open, democratic and inclusive party, encouraging all ethnic groups and cultures to join and participate freely," the group said in its founding statement. "We stand for rights and justice for Jewish people everywhere, and against wrongs and injustice to Palestinians and other oppressed people anywhere."

Unlike the (Labour-affiliated) Jewish Labour Movement, JVL does not make commitment to the State of Israel a condition of membership. Also unlike the JLM, full members of the JVL must be Labour Party members who identify themselves as Jewish.

JVL chair Jenny Manson, a long-standing member of Finchley and Golders Green

Labour Party, said the new organisation has a valuable role to play in strengthening the party in its opposition to all forms of racism including antisemitism. It rejects attempts to extend the scope of the term 'antisemitism' beyond its meaning of bigotry towards Jews, particularly when such accusations are directed at activities in solidarity with Palestinians such as Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel.

Manson said JVL will provide a much-needed forum for Jews who want to celebrate and debate the long and proud history of Jewish involvement in socialist and trade-union activism and in antiracist, antifascist and anti-colonial struggles.

"We invite everyone of Jewish heritage in the Labour Party to join us in continuing these great traditions," said Manson.

The impetus for founding JVL came from discussions among Labour Party Jews who signed a submission to the Chakrabarti Inquiry last year.



JVL will hold a public launch on September 25 in Brighton, during the 2017 Labour Party conference.

**For more information contact
jewishvoiceforlabour@gmail.com
http://www.jewishvoiceforlabour.org.uk/**

**Naomi Wimborne-Idrissi,
(07759 024659)
Chingford CLP**

Braking Brexit & preparing for power

Labour continues to ride high in the polls following the post election bounce. While Theresa May announces in Japan that she will lead the Tories into the next election, her fulsome assertion belies the fragility of her position. The Tories have no obvious successor for leader and are desperate to cling to power through their shabby deal with the DUP. But events may force their hand.

The storm clouds over the Brexit negotiations are beginning to gather. Parroting the mantra of 'flexible and imaginative' and 'constructive ambiguity' against an 'intransigent' Europe won't hold for long. The nationalist drum banging will grow more desperate. But the EU side holds all the cards.

While the Brexiters refuse to get into substantive trade talks before understanding the divorce bill or acknowledging the rights of EU nationals, it is British workers, their jobs, security, working conditions and the wider economic prosperity of the country which will be the real victims.

The Tories got us into the mess with Cameron's capitulation to the right-wing. In true Cameron fashion, their perfect delivery of 'referendum rhetoric' concealed a spectacular lack of substance on Britain's future outside the EU.

We are producing a special supplement for Labour Party conference with a major focus on Brexit as the dominant political issue of our generation. We welcome Jeremy Corbyn and Keir Starmer's strengthening of Labour's position on Brexit, with a commitment to remain in the single market and customs union during a transitional period after April 2019.

Peter Kenyon highlights the 'Starmer declaration' seeing it as an important step forward enabling Labour to champion both worker's interests and a pro-European policy. TUC and Labour conferences will be the big test for Jeremy Corbyn's political skills to expose the fact Brexit was sold on a false prospectus and remove from the table the nonsense of 'no deal better than a bad deal'. **Manuel Cortes**, leader of the TSSA transport union, argues forcefully that it is now time for Labour to push for a general election fought on the basis of remain and build bridges with our European allies. **John Palmer** makes a strong case for a wholesale rejection of any deal which does not guarantee the jobs, rights and living conditions of British workers or maintain existing European wide environmental and social protections. **Catherine West** MP echoes this view explaining her position as an MP is the most strongly Remain constituency in Britain. **Julie Ward** MEP makes a similar case, saying the 'Leave' position is far from settled.

The re-election of Angela Merkel as forecast by **Ed Turner** in his piece on the impending German elections is likely to strengthen the EU united front on Tory Brexit games.

TUC leader **Frances O'Grady** highlights the iniquities of the continuing Tory pay cap on public sector workers with the longest sustained suppres-

sion of wages for a century. Nurses, teachers, police and firefighters, none of whom are responsible for the economic crash of 2008, are still being made to bear the brunt of austerity pay. **Kate Bell** interrogates the Taylor Report on the 'gig economy' finding it falls well short of the sort of proposals needed to protect the precariat living on zero hours contracts, casual and self-employed work. Courier **Guy McClenahan** reports on a historic win for these workers at the Supreme Court.

Professor Stephen Hawking delivered his bombshell against the government in his Royal Society of Medicine talk. Condemning Jeremy Hunt's policy driven reality of NHS under-funding and moves towards US-style insurance system, he made the sharpest yet call for an end to the Tory erosion of a national institution. **Jean Smith** further exposes how cost-saving and restructuring are demoralising nurses and fuelling a crisis of recruitment and care.

Tax is a critical issue for Labour. **Duncan Bowie** says bite the tax bullet, particularly on land. He argues for greater clarity and detail on redistributive tax plans for the next manifesto. **Don Flynn** makes a strong case for free movement of people stressing that immigration is inevitable in the modern world and brings big mutual economic and cultural benefits for nations and communities. The Tories fixation on immigration has seen a rising revolt in their own ranks over counting students in immigration figures. **Trevor Fisher** is more sanguine about prospects for shifting public opinion in a progressive direction. **Bill Jordan** argues that commitment to a Basic Income for all would overcome the risks of exploitation and division.

In this centenary year of the Russian Revolution, **Ian Bullock** looks at the reaction of contemporary British socialists to the Bolshevik seizure of power and makes a critical assessment of the democratic and export value of the Soviet model.

Greater democracy and member-led decision making is vital in our own party. Conference should again become the place where members have their say and shape policy. **Puru Miah** and **Mike Davis** highlight the role of Momentum in organising and energising the thousands of new members who have worked with the leadership to move the party forward. Conference should endorse proposals to reduce the threshold for leadership elections to strengthen the process of democratisation.

The Labour Party stands on the cusp of potential power with Jeremy Corbyn and an invigorated leadership team. The Tories have lost their majority and have a wounded leader. If Labour can harness the energy and ideas of its 600,000, especially new, members we can put this government and its damaging austerity policies into the dustbin of history.

**Greater
democracy and
member-led
decision making is
vital in our own
party**

GREENWATCH

I dream the car electric

Dave Toke explains how peak demand for electricity is likely to fall with the rapid adoption of electric cars

Just as in 2005 the UK was rushed into an ill-judged nuclear programme by scare-stories of imminent power black-outs, we are now being herded into a panic mode by lop-sided projections of future energy demand out of fear of electric vehicles.

EVs are the future of motorised road transportation of course, and I'm sure it will happen quite quickly. The Government's target of new vehicles being electric from 2040 onwards is little more than a statement of market realities. But if you work out the figures based on past trends you find out that after re-working the National Grid's recent projections peak demand is actually likely to FALL, not increase.

There is always a supply-side bias in energy projections, and the numbers that are pouring out of the newspapers are the latest manifestation of this phenomenon.

One factor which almost everybody seems to have missed is that electricity demand has fallen since 2005 by around 12 per cent (in 2006 the Government talked about dramatic increases in demand). If you carry this forward to the future then this rate of decline would be more than the increase associated with the expansion in the number of EVs that was assumed by the National Grid in their most recent report. Given the fact that they identified opportunities for load shifting, in particular through 'time of use' charging that would reduce peak demand by up to 4.5 GW, that adds up altogether to a substantial FALL in the amount of peak generating capacity required in 2030.

In fact EVs supplied with electricity by sources such as wind, solar or marine energy are extremely efficient. First, the EVs themselves are, in terms of energy used to move a given distance, much more energy efficient than conventional motor vehicles - and this difference is likely to increase as EVs mature as a technology. They have about a threefold advantage in energy efficiency. If the electricity is generated by these renewable energy sources



Electric cars less of an energy drain

then very little will be wasted (mainly grid losses) before the power is used in the vehicle. In fact the extra electricity needed to power the NG's projected expansion in EVs will be easily covered by the expansion in

EVs are the future of motorised road transportation

renewable energy if we assume recent trends continue.

Using the National Grid's assumption that around nine million road vehicles, constituting around one quarter of Britain's road transport fleet, will be EVs by 2030 then some 108 TWh of petrol/diesel consumption will be replaced by around 40 TWh of electricity. Renewable energy production has increased by over 40 TWh between 2012 and 2016. Renewable energy now makes up over 25 per cent of annual UK electricity consumption.

There have been some ridiculously exaggerated numbers printed in one leading newspaper (I won't dignify them by mentioning their name) about the numbers of wind turbines needed to cover the extra production for

EVs. In fact there are now around 7600 wind turbines in the UK. Given increasing sizes of offshore wind turbines (soon to be 10 MW each) and also increasing levels of efficiency for the newest models (with capacity factors approaching 50 per cent) then no more than 1000 new wind turbines would be needed to generate the demand for all of the EVs in operation by 2030.

Of course we need to do more than that. We need to boost renewable energy by much more, and there's plenty of increasingly cheap resources of offshore wind and solar pv to do that. EVs present a great opportunity to fit in with variable flows of renewable electricity since the charging of the vehicles can be charged to fit in with the availability of the power.

Also we need more than a transition to EVs to effectively tackle environmental problems of roads. EVs will reduce pollution, of NOx emissions, PAH and particulates, but they won't reduce them by as much as switching to using more bicycles and electric trains and buses. We need to curb the increase in car use in order to help plan out urban areas more effectively. **C**

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

His next book, to be published by Routledge will be entitled *Low Carbon Politics*

Siding with the future

Stuart MacLeod
on rail
funding
disparities

The Government's recent announcement that rail electrification is being dropped on a number of routes in Wales, the Midlands and North – while almost in the same breath giving approval to the £30bn London CrossRail 2 scheme – has sparked outrage in 'the provinces'. What has really stuck in many people's gullets has been the combination of ditching much-needed schemes that would have relatively quick results through faster journeys and more capacity, whilst continuing to plough huge sums into CrossRail and that titanic vanity project HS2, the benefits of which – particularly to the North – are questionable.

People outside the small world of transport are beginning to wake up to how badly treated the North, and others parts of the UK, are in comparison to London. Public spending in the past 10 years was on average £282 per head in the North, compared with the national average of £345 per head, and £680 per head in London. A petition organised by IPPR North and 38 Degrees calling for more investment in the North's transport infrastructure has so far got over 35,000 signatures.

It says a lot about the lack of any sort of democratic voice for the North of England, with its population of over 15m, that it has been left to a small think-tank – IPPR North – to champion the cause of investment in the region. While Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have their own devolved governments to argue their case, the North has a highly-fragmented mish-mash of elected mayors in some conurbations, co-existing uneasily with the poorly-funded local authorities in their own areas. While some (including IPPR North) have argued for a 'Council of the North' involving all the Northern authorities, the reality is that many people would see it as an unaccountable talking shop with little or no power. The obvious solution of a Northern Parliament with at least similar powers to the other devolved administrations, isn't on anyone's agenda – yet. The current outrage over the abandonment of rail modernisation schemes in the North while London's CrossRail 2 gets the green light and the increasingly unpopular HS2 goes ahead, might be the spark that starts a Northern revolt. Why is it taking so long?

It's different north of the border. The Scottish Government has direct responsibility for 'domestic' rail services, delivered by Dutch-owned Abellio, trading as 'ScotRail'. The franchise started in April 2015 and has had a difficult time, with relatively poor reliability and a challenging first year which saw the MD depart for pastures south of the border.

The SNP Transport Minister Hamza Yousaf has suggested that the Government is looking at a return to public ownership for ScotRail when the franchise comes up for renewal. He was recently reported as saying "We have narrowed down the possible vehicles that could potentially take forward a public sector bid. Transport Scotland are now working on gathering further evidence and I will narrow down the options further once that exercise is complete. The Scottish Government is committed to creating a level playing field for rail franchising in the future."

However, there are a number of problems with using this current playing field. To mount a serious bid for a rail franchise is an expensive business, costing upwards of £10m per bidder. That is a very big risk to take if you don't win, and other private bidders would almost certainly shout 'foul'.

Currently, franchising – enshrined in the 1993 Railways Act – is the only show in town. The Act is reinforced by EU legislation on tendering of rail passenger services. Clearly, if we are outside the EU that would not apply, particularly if Labour – committed to public ownership of rail

– is in power and willing to repeal the UK legislation as an early priority.

The possibility of using Scotland as a model for a new form of public enterprise is exciting. Whilst the Scottish Government could opt for the 'Calmac' model of an arms-length government-owned ScotRail, there is potential for looking at co-operative structures which could give both workers and users direct control of ScotRail and could operate within a strategic framework laid down by the Scottish Government. At the same time, re-integration of operations and infrastructure (currently the responsibility of Network Rail) would be essential to really achieve a transformation of Scotland's railways. That means transferring responsibility of Scottish rail infrastructure from UK government-owned Network Rail to the Scottish Government. It could work but would need real co-operation between the SNP and Labour, and a Labour prime minister at no.10. **C**

Paul Salveson is on holiday. His blog is at <http://www.paulsalveson.org.uk>



HS2- benefits to the North are questionable

PAY FREEZE

End the public sector pay cap

Frances O'Grady on why the pay freeze is bad for workers and the economy

Nurses working full-time in our NHS shouldn't need to rely on foodbanks to feed their families. But we know that a growing number of them do.

That dedicated public servants are facing such hardship is an indictment of today's Britain, and of a government that has been holding down public sector pay for the last seven years.

Our research shows that public sector workers' real wages in 2017 are down thousands of pounds a year compared to 2010.

Prison officers, paramedics and NHS dieticians are all down over £3,800 a year. Firefighters have lost nearly £2,900 and teachers are down about £2,500. The losses stretch across the public sector and have serious implications for working people, and for our economy.

The public has turned against the government's unreasonable 1% pay cap. According to our polling, more than three-quarters of voters—including 68% of Tories—support giving public servants a pay rise, even if it means tax increases.

It's time for the government to admit that it got it wrong.

Not just the frontline

This year, terrible events have shown how brave and dedicated the people in our public services are, from the police who responded to terrorist attacks in London and Manchester, to the firefighters who risked their lives in Grenfell Tower, to the doctors, nurses and paramedics who cared for survivors.

The government is rightly under pressure to give these workers a long-overdue pay rise. But we must make sure that the change isn't restricted to frontline staff.

The public sector is a team. If a police officer cracks a case, he relies on the forensic work of backroom staff. If a doctor saves a life, it's because she can rely on a well-administered and fully stocked hospital.

In recent months, I've spoken to the medical clerks, ambulance call operators, teaching assistants

and administrators who keep our public services running. They care about their work and want to make a difference, but too many of them are struggling to pay the bills.

This inevitably translates into problems with staff morale, recruitment and retention. Working people can only take so much. If we don't offer reasonable wages and conditions to our public servants, they'll be forced to look elsewhere for work.

That's why all our public servants, whether they work on the frontline or in the backroom, need a fair pay rise.

Can we afford it?

Already, Tory ministers are having doubts about the pay restriction; Boris Johnson, Michael Gove, Jeremy Hunt and Justine Greening have all spoken out against it. But the chancellor, Philip Hammond, has dug his heels in, insisting that we can't afford to pay our public servants

real wages in 2017 are down thousands of pounds a year

a fair wage.

This is nonsense. The IFS has found that increasing the pay of public servants in line with inflation would cost £4.1bn a year. That sounds like a lot, but is actually equivalent to just 1% of departmental spending. If we factor in the opportunities created by increasing pay, the cost falls even further.

Whatever Hammond says, the reality is that the public sector pay cap is fiscally irresponsible. This pay squeeze—the longest since Victorian times—is dragging down growth. It's reducing consumer spending power, particularly outside of London, and contributing to a debt bubble of wor-



Smiles of protest—Frances O'Grady joins Unison workers against pay cap

rying proportions.

So increased spending on public sector salaries shouldn't be seen as pouring money into a black hole. Rather, it's a modest investment that, by increasing the spending power of five million public servants, will promote growth right across the economy.

So the question isn't 'can we afford to raise public sector pay?' but rather 'can we afford not to?'

A clear mandate

The government has a clear mandate for a public sector pay rise, and ultimately, it's up to them to figure out how best to pay for it.

But what we're clear on is that the costs can't fall on other areas of the public service, such as local councils, the NHS or schools. These services are already under immense pressure, and can't take anymore.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to public sector pay. The sensible approach is to ditch the artificial and inadequate 1% cap and let different public sector industries negotiate their own wage increases. This would involve appointing genuinely independent pay review bodies.

And at the end of the day, this change won't break the bank. Because public servants aren't asking for a windfall, they're simply asking for pay justice.

If the government wants to offset another living standards crisis, they had better listen. **C**

Frances O'Grady
is General
Secretary of the
TUC

Changing the way we view tax

Duncan Bowie on options for Labour to bite the tax bullet

Tax policy has always been a difficult issue for the Labour Party. Any proposal to increase taxes is perceived as an electoral risk. However if a Labour government is to increase spending on key public services, whether this is the NHS, or welfare benefits, or education or housing, additional revenue has to be raised. For any Labour election manifesto to commit itself to no increases in taxation and to working within an inherited budget (as was the case in 1997) is to restrict a Labour government's ability to deliver even moderate improvements in public services. The core problem is that tax is almost universally unpopular. Tax is widely perceived as the state taking money from individuals and restricting individual freedom and therefore bad. Tax is no longer seen as a contribution by those who are better off to the cost of the provision of services to allow those who are less well off to have a reasonable quality of life. There is now widespread opposition to the use of the country's wealth through the pooling of resources to support collective provision and a return to the Victorian concept that the poor should be supported by the voluntary philanthropy of the rich whose altruism is made possible by their liberation from the burden of taxation. The Labour Party needs to re-examine the positive purposes of taxation. The Labour General Election manifesto promised a review of taxation policy (with a passing reference to consideration of some form of land value tax), but as yet we have neither seen any outline of proposals or even a review process. In fact there has been little serious work on tax reform on the left since the Fabian Society's tax commission report in 2000, despite arguments put forward by progressive lobbies such as the Tax Justice Movement. We need to recognise the extent to which differences in individual and household wealth (not just income) impact on the life chances of individuals. Most wealth is now held in the form of residential property so an individual's chance of buying a home is increasingly dependent on the wealth of their parents or grandparents. The younger generation who do not have ready access to family wealth are being burdened with debt, whether a student loan or a mortgage which takes up more than half of their income.

Our starting point should be a review of the purposes of taxation. These include:

a) Raising revenue for Government; b) Redistribution c) Incentive to influence personal and household behaviour in the public interest, and d) to maximise public benefit from wealth appreciation (and limit the extent of private gain). In introducing or reviewing a specific tax, we need to understand its purpose. It is essential to assess potential impact on households and the wider economy as well as its contribution toward specific objectives. Few taxes

meet all four criteria – they may meet one or more, but have negative impact on other objectives. There is a clear case for a more progressive income tax. We do however need to give much greater attention to taxes on wealth, especially in terms of wealth held in property and land. We also need a tax system which actually leads to a much more effective operation of the housing market and a more effective use of residential property, rather than a tax regime which supports investment. A focus on taxing residential wealth appreciation to raise revenue for Government which can then be used to fund services and also contribute directly and indirectly to a redistributive objective leads to consideration of a range of options: a) Annual residential wealth tax. b) Reintroduce schedule A – tax on imputed rental value of owner-occupied dwellings. c) Revaluation of residential values for council tax purposes, with introduction of higher rates for new higher value bands. d) Capital gains tax on all residential dwellings on disposal (to replace stamp duty) with

discounts for downsizers (an alternative is to make stamp duty liability of seller not purchaser). e) Tax on inheritance of residential property (after death) or gifts (before death). Turning to the specific issue of ensuring a more effective use of developable land residential property, we have a further range of options: a) Tax on undeveloped land which is suitable for development. b) Tax on land with residential planning consent but with no substantive start on site. c) Tax on developments which do not optimise development capacity (in effect a tax on low density developments/very large homes). d) Penal tax on vacant units. e) Penal tax on second homes (through higher council tax rate). f)

Council tax related to size of home (not just historic value). g) Council tax related to effective occupation – i.e. higher tax for dwellings not occupied to normal occupation standard. We also need a more effective mechanism for capturing long-term value appreciation from private development. The current systems of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and planning gain (S106) focus on short term gains. Alternatives could include a) tax on land sale price relative to existing use value; b) tax on completions/disposal, or c) public sector equity stake on all new private development, with pay back based on share of sale and resale values in perpetuity. The latter is the most effective option, although it could be argued that municipalisation of all development land through compulsory purchase at the pre-existing use value, would be even more effective. Public ownership of land and development will always be more effective than allowing private ownership and then trying to tax it – but that is perhaps another debate. **C**



ENVIRONMENT

Listening to London

Leonie Cooper on a breath of fresh air from London's mayor

The Labour Mayor of London chose the Woodberry Wetlands in Hackney as the place to launch his new, draft Environment Strategy - and what a comprehensive document it is. It's been a long time in development - but now it's here, it has proved to be well worth the wait. The full document is more than 400 pages long, and contains both detailed modelling and long-term goals.

What a difference from the last Tory Mayor! His main contribution to developing environmental strategies was to get rid of many of the excellent staff from City Hall between 2008-2016. Since last year, Sadiq has appointed some key replacements - and the new Environment Strategy is testament to a lot of hard work and detailed thought.

Public awareness of Sadiq's determination to clean up London's toxic air is high, but the draft Strategy displays equal determination to tackle the wide range of major environmental issues that face London as it moves into the future and grows. The plan sets out to make more than half of London green, to mitigate London's climate change contribution by moving to low-carbon and renewable forms of energy, as well as reducing energy use, reducing waste and encouraging recycling, reducing the impact of noise and future-proofing the city in terms of drinking water, flooding and heat. All these areas are covered in the new Strategy.

But the new Strategy does not stand alone - it sits alongside a Sustainable Urban Drainage Action Plan (launched in December 2016), a Solar Action Plan and a Fuel Poverty Action Plan. This would have been unthinkable under a Tory Mayor - uninterested in the housing problems of ordinary Londoners, willing to hike TfL fares over eight years and equally uninterested in the health consequences for Londoners unable to heat their homes properly.

It's an exciting moment for London. It's been many years since Ken Livingstone launched



Leonie Cooper and Sadiq Khan launch action on air pollution

the last biodiversity plan and we've never had a plan to tackle fuel poverty. We now know so much more about the impacts of our actions on the planet and each other - but sadly, nothing was done during the period under the last Mayor. So there's no time to be lost in terms of some of the major infrastructure projects London will need to undertake - a new reservoir and upgrading the Thames barrier being just two of them.

The most exciting aspect of the plan is that Sadiq has also proved himself more than willing to listen to ideas from others - the Environment Committee launched a report on dealing with plastic bottles in February, another on domestic energy and fuel poverty, and a further report on parks and open spaces. I also launched a report as an individual Assembly Member on biodiversity and how it can be maintained as London develops and grows. Many of the recommendations from all of these reports have found their way into the draft Strategy - and further contributions are welcome, to ensure this is the best plan for London. The Mayor wants to hear what everyone who has a stake in the draft Strategy. The consultation is now open until mid-November. **C**

To view the Environment Strategy document and to have your say go to www.london.gov.uk/environment-strategy

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Getting away with murder

Jean Smith & Michael Edwardson explain how the Tories have Florence Nightingale spinning in her grave.

Florence Nightingale, founder pioneer of nursing stated, 'the first requirement in a hospital that it should do the sick no harm'. Current poor staffing levels and stressed nurses are very harmful to patients. The NHS was born on July 5, 1948 the climax of a hugely ambitious plan to bring good healthcare to all. Until recently it was rated the best in the world. To the Tories this appears immaterial. Privateer lobbyists, many from the broken US system, whisper that both expensive educated nurses and properly sick patients are an unaffordable drain on resources. They are looking forward to a privatised system in which the shareholder is king, and such 'drains' must be minimised by law. From the very beginning the Tories were planning how to dismantle our NHS.

The Tory approach

Nurses on wards and in the community, save lives. After what seems like a coordinated attack on the profession, record numbers of nurses are leaving. There are currently over 40,000 unfilled nursing posts in England. Over 90% of the larger NHS hospital trusts in England are not staffed to safe levels according to analysis by the Royal College of Nursing, and increasingly Trusts are using unregistered support staff to fill the gaps left by qualified nurses, encouraging 'nursing on the cheap'. Low numbers of cheap nurses are a good for a privatised shareholder focused system and small state.

To reduce the numbers of nurses and costs the Tory way requires change to nurses' terms and conditions for the worse and to overwork and overstretch them. In addition a draconian pay freeze is imposed alongside charging students to work for the NHS. Finally they hand over work properly the preserve of nurses to cheaper unqualified volunteers or staff.

The introduction of Project 2000 facilitated moving nurse education into a university setting. It was not as good as it



Tories pushing nurses to breaking point

sounded. Nurses began increasingly to take on additional roles and as a result work nurses work is being undertaken by health-care assistants with the danger that, as assistants have limited training in their role, things will

From the very beginning the Tories were planning how to dismantle our NHS.

be missed, resulting in a poorer service and possible harm to patients.

Hislop et al cited in the *Journal of Advanced Nursing* how nurses under the Project 2000 curriculum struggled with relating aspects of their course to their clinical practice. In a thought provoking article in the *Independent* Patterson states 'Reforms in the 1990s were supposed to make nursing better. Instead there's a widely shared sense that this was when today's compassion deficit began'.

Make training unaffordable to many while still pretending you are handling the crisis is another Tory line. Bursaries enabled a wide cross section of people, of different backgrounds, experience and age to train. There is ample evidence that applications have gone down from an already low point. After the Brexit vote we can no longer assume we can fill the gaps by recruiting trained nurses from Europe or beyond. The crisis can only get worse. If the public begin to cotton on,

Tories make meaningless announcements:

Health Education England has said it will immediately make available funding for 1,500 extra clinical placements – almost a 5% increase – after the Department of Health announced a £16.4m funding boost. However, universities will need to reach agreements with local trusts to provide the clinical placements for any extra students. Trusts will also need to be able to provide appropriate mentoring and training for

Record numbers of nurses are leaving

students. According to an anonymous source there are no extra placements, because so many nurse mentors have left. (17 August, 2017 *Nursing Times* News Desk) Trusts can't physically offer any more placement places - money is irrelevant.

Freeze or reduce pay, depower staff and use austerity as an excuse for a pay freeze is the Tory way. Non-clinicians make many decisions including early discharge, leading to horror stories alarming the public. Nurses were patient advocates, but now, while they are arguably more accountable, they are not as effective. Nursing duties are handed down to the untrained. Senior clinical nurses should be in a leading role with appropriate administrative support. There is ample evidence from other countries that the empowerment of nurses is a successful model.

Finally, in the name of localism, Trusts are being given powers to change nurse's terms and conditions. Staff now have unequal rights, pension entitlements and increments from their colleagues, even though they have been nursing for as long and are employed to do the same or an equivalent job. As a result, staff are leaving NHS jobs and the nurse bank, and going to work in agencies at more expense to the hospitals and the NHS.

To fight for our nurses is to fight for our lives. **C**

Michael Edwardson & Jean Smith are members of the Socialist Health Association

MIGRATION

Keep on moving

Don Flynn on why migration is necessary and unstoppable

The ways in which physical space is organised to support the activities of any given society has long been the concern of geography. Despite its obvious political implications, outside the realms of town and city planning, the questions the academic discipline poses have seldom influenced the mainstream thinking of the left.

This has begun to change with the advent of globalisation and particularly the reconfiguration of the spaces in which people attempt to organise their lives. There has scarcely been a more dramatic example of this than the spaces at the edges of nation states that we call borders.

For much of the period since the late 1980s it has been assumed that globalisation would entail highly porous borders, facilitating the vast volume of commerce and trade in goods and services, and also opening up more opportunities for the movement of people. The increase in the numbers of people living outside the countries of their citizenships – up from around 100 million in 1980 to 244 million in 2015 – has been seen as a part of this globalising trend, and viewed by many as the best illustration of why it has proven so painful to many people. The desire to reverse these trends, and ‘retake control of our borders’, is probably the main driving force of the right wing populist moods that have been sweeping across the world in recent times.

A steady stream of books have attempted to conceptualise the issues of borders and the movements of people from the standpoint of progressive, leftist and liberal politics. The result has been more cacophony than clarity. Arguments from this side of the political divide have been as likely to splinter into aggressively anti-migration versus pro-migration standpoints as has been happening across the rest of society. Anti-immigrant leftists bemoan the supposed erosion of social trust and the damage done to labour markets and the welfare state: the pro-side big up the themes of internationalism and

the obligation of demonstrating solidarity with all toilers across the planet.

Reece Jones’s recently published *Violent Borders: Refugees and the Right to Move* comes down strongly on the side of the latter. In a couple of early chapters he shows just how much violence is unleashed on people who move by strict border control regimes. The IOM puts the number of deaths at the borders of Europe in the period since 2004 at 23,700. Human rights groups in the US estimate that more than 11,000 people have died from dehydration in their attempts to cross the border with Mexico since 1994. In other regions of the world – from the Bangladesh-India border through to the seas around Australia–the

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death tolls are similarly mounting.

Casualty rates on this scale invite speculation about the existence of a war taking place between states which presume that the immobility of their citizens is the proper way for societies to subsist, and others whose way of life is nomadic. Jones develops his position from a viewpoint which looks at the long migratory history of humanity and argues that this does little to sustain the idea of clearly-defined and rigid borders marking out a state of normalcy. Borders of this sort came into existence as a consequence of the development of states, with the Westphalian system of demarcated territories and the presumption of sovereignty over all internal matters evolving in Europe on the conclusion of the

Thirty Years War in the seventeenth century. Improvements in the technologies of map-making and mechanisms of social control helped to make these bordered, administered spaces the dominant mode of political organisation over the following years.

There are many fascinating insights into the processes of state-building in his account but they tend to work in the direction of seeing borders as a way of cementing people into conditions of inertia. This hardly seems to be the case. The rise of the bordered state has had many consequences for human society with the most important being the impetus that it gives to the development of the sort of modern market-based economies which hugely increase the rate in which the factors of production – capital, goods and labour – are moved across space. The Atlantic slave trade is just one example of the way in which the economic forces sustained by the emerging states used their capacity for savagery, not to prevent people from moving, but on the contrary, to enforce it against their will.

Jones acknowledges this but seems to see the experience of the slave trade, and also the voluntary migrations of Europeans to the lands of the New World, as historical episodes which have run their course. He acknowledges the fact that even today borders are not totally sealed against all aspects of human mobility and that modern immigration controls function as much to facilitate the movement of ‘the rich’ as they do to hold the poor in check. It would be more accurate to think of what are called the managed migrations of today as attempts on the part of states to organise labour markets which allow forms of labour that are considered scarce to move to areas which could make most productive use of it. A portion of this is provided by highly-educated and skilled people. Their use to capital is reflected in their relatively high earnings. But in other cases what is in short supply is the raw muscle power needed for industries like agriculture and construction, where wage levels



Migrant workers challenging borders- shape of a fortress Europe to come?

are much more modest.

The point here is that we really need to understand modern immigration controls as a part of the repertoire of state power that is concerned with the construction of a working class that will serve the needs of capital in whatever form it is currently taking. Because capitalism is a system marked by the level of competition that exists between its component parts there is vast scope for disputes about what type of immigration is 'really' needed. Politicians fishing for support from the various camps will invariably be found to speak up for closed borders or relatively open borders, depending on what coincides with the interests of their clients. The pendulum swings of the immigration debate are much more marked by the way these debates play out than is suggested by the arguments which see state control as an imperative that runs in only one direction.

What does this mean for a genuinely progressive politics of immigration? One thing is that it ought to draw much closer attention to the balance of class forces that are arrayed in the policy scuffles over open and closed borders. The recent interest of the left in defence of the rights of EU citizens in the UK which are threatened by the Brexit process

is a welcome sign that is already happening. A short while back this level of engagement with the issue didn't exist, with many on this side of the spectrum taking the view that Spanish, French, Portuguese and Greek migrants were amongst the privileged groups who had achieved benefits at the expense of Africans, Asians and Latin Americans. The loss of the protection that had come from the EU treaty rights to free movement have shaken up the complacency that existed on that issue and opened up a new range of outlooks on how the right to migrate might be fought for.

The neoliberal experiment with the free movement of labour is being seriously modified in the European laboratory. Yet even its most recalcitrant critic – the UK state authorities – have come to accept that movement across its borders will continue to be a formality for the vast majority of holders of an EU passport after Brexit has been accomplished. But other borders will rise up to play the role of regulating and shaping the features of the human beings who are permitted to enter the British workforce. Rights will no longer pivot on the simple fact of citizenship, rather being made conditional on factors like the skill level of the individual and the level of demand being registered by employers for the

use of her labour power. The assurance that you are not at risk of discrimination on the basis of your nationality or ethnicity will be reserved for the upper echelons of skilled professionals. But for the farmhands brought in for seasonal work, or construction workers on fixed term contracts, the very fact of your nationality will be one of the reasons why rights are being withheld from you. Romanians in the fields of lettuce and other fresh veg, Poles on the building sites, and Italians and Spanish making our lattes and cappuccinos: what currently exists as an informal arrangement capable of being eroded over time will become instead a rigid system of rules and conditions imposed by threat of deportation for anyone stepping out of line.

What this means is that the borders which Jones has drawn our attention to, where people are dying in their efforts to cross, are just one of the places where the rule of immigration control makes itself felt. They have their place in the evolution of the nation state, but shouldn't be allowed to displace what should be our principal concern about the role that these controls play in the totality of their operation – as another means to create a working class which has lost the power to resist the exploitation of capital. **C**

Don Flynn is the Founder and former Director at Migrants' Rights Network

GIG ECONOMY

Zero hours fudge

Kate Bell finds the Taylor Review dodges the big changes needed to end exploitation in the gig economy

The Taylor review into modern employment practices is finally here, along with a real sense of anti-climax.

While the report makes some important recommendations, it has dodged the big changes working people need to end exploitation and insecurity.

Zero action on zero-hours

For a start, there are no real plans to crack down on zero-hours contracts. Taylor says banning these types of contracts would be bad for 'flexibility'.

But only last month, a study found that people on zero-hours contracts are more likely to suffer physical and mental ill-health.

That makes sense. If you don't know how much work you will have from one day to the next, this is bound to impact on your health and mental wellbeing.

The half-measures proposed in the Taylor Review simply don't go far enough. A 'right to request' guaranteed hours from an exploitative boss is no right at all for many workers. It gives them as much power as *Oliver Twist*.

Polling carried out by the TUC after the election shows that 71% of voters support an all-out ban on zero-hours contracts – including a majority of Conservative supporters.

Getting rid of them shouldn't be a controversial move. No-one should be treated like disposable labour.

Where are the unions?

Any serious attempt to crack down on precarious work needs to have trade unionism at its heart. And that means getting more unions into workplaces.

However, there is little mention of unions, and less action to help them – a point Robert Peston raised with Matthew Taylor at the review's lavish Westminster launch.

Every day unions expose the worst excesses of the gig economy – just look at what we have done at Uber, Deliveroo and Sports Direct.

But right now, unions don't



Theresa May speaks at the Taylor review launch event- a missed opportunity?

have enough access to insecure workplaces. While it's good that Taylor talks about workers having a 'voice' at work, he should have recognized that the best way to deliver that is through a trade union.

Muddying the waters

Taylor's recommendation to rename 'worker' status as 'dependent contractor' will further muddy – already murky – legal waters.

It's also important that any changes do not unpick key court wins secured by unions which confirm gig workers are entitled to employment rights including the minimum wage, holiday and rest breaks.

There's also a real worry on what the review says about changing how the minimum wage is calculated for some in this group. Moving to 'piece rates', whereby the employer tells you how much work you should be doing per hour, rather than simply paying you when you're at work, risks letting platform companies off the hook. What happens if an Uber or Deliveroo driver gets stuck in traffic? Will they get paid less for not completing their set quota of jobs?

He did get some things right

It's not all bad news. At the moment, a loophole in the law (known as 'the Swedish derogation') lets employers get away

with paying staff who work through an agency far less than those on regular contracts. Even when they're doing the exact same work.

The Taylor review rightly says clearly that should end now. This is likely to upset business – who are already out there lobbying against this. But policymakers must hold their nerve and give agency workers the fair pay they deserve.

Another important call this review makes is for everyone to be entitled to sick pay from the first day of their job, no matter how much they earn.

Nearly half a million workers in insecure work currently miss out on sick pay because their pay is too low. They shouldn't be punished when they are too ill to work.

So what now?

Of course, the real responsibility to tackle insecure work lies with the government. We'll be pushing them to move swiftly to implement the nuggets of good news that are in there – like better pay for those working for agencies, and for those who fall sick – and to think carefully before making moves on employment status, or weakening minimum wage protections.

Crucially we'll be continuing to push for our Great Jobs agenda – so that everyone has access to the decent work they deserve. **C**

Kate Bell is head of economics at the TUC

No barrier for justice

Guy McClenahan on a tribunal victory for 'gig economy' workers

A highly available and flexible workforce has, traditionally, been a barrier to achieving the speed of service that today's consumer requires at an acceptable price. 'Traditionally structured' businesses such as supermarkets haemorrhage money to compete with new-age, so-called 'gig economy', companies such as Amazon Fresh, UberEats, and - Guy's Food Delivery Inc., a business I started as an entrepreneur last year.

A ridiculous concept of course, but that is how Deliveroo continue to refer to my work, as a courier for the company in Brighton. Despite wearing their uniform (although there is no compulsion to do so), and weaving through traffic at the company's behest to a restaurant and customer of their choosing, I work as a self-employed independent contractor, which means I'm straight out of luck if I need any sick pay to cover an injury sustained at this dangerous job, or to be paid the minimum wage. The IWGB pursues a combined strategy of not only campaigning through collective and industrial action, but also litigation through employment tribunal - the only recourse to this exploitation and maltreatment. Nowhere else gives the Deliveroo riders, and workers in the 'gig economy', a voice at the table that at their company is so harshly silenced. And so the

recent removal of fees by the supreme court is a huge step forward for workers whose experience of the tribunal service began with it being explicitly denied to them in the infamous 'Clause 2.3' of the original Deliveroo contract, reading:

"You further warrant that neither you nor anyone acting on your behalf will present any claim in the employment tribunal or any civil court in which it is contended that you are either an employee or a worker."

Defended by Deliveroo and their 'legal experts' until the tide was turned by rider action and a swift climbdown was executed, this clause exemplifies the crass attitude of these 'gig economy' companies and indeed the anti-union feeling currently residing in our society and government. With the removal of this clause, albeit unenforceable, and the removal of tribunal fees, there is now no barrier for litigation against the "simply unreal" employment practices of those such as Deliveroo. Where once before many unions would refuse to take a case, however legitimate, to tribunal without a better than 50% chance of success, there is now no barrier for justice for those suffering at the hands of these vile employment practices.

Although the employment tribunals can be a useful mechanism for keeping employers in check, at the IWGB we see that many of

our cases against courier companies have, in the opinion of the judges handling them, relatively simple outcomes. Our belief that couriers under independent contractors are in fact 'Limb B' Workers (a subcategory of self-employed) has been proven with four companies now - eCourier, Excel, AddisonLee and CitySprint; our sister branch of United Private Hire Drives (UPHD) won their case against Uber last year.

It is simply unworkable that the current lack of enforcement of existing law should go on - how can we even consider reforming the law surrounding the sector, as the (albeit flaky) Taylor report does when companies routinely flout not only law but the tribunal judgments themselves, with no fear of any penalty? Classed as self-employed Workers, couriers and gig-economy workers alike gain basic rights such as the minimum wage and sick pay, with minimal or no change to company working practices required (a tribunal judgment simply states that the employment status represents current process). It is imperative that these companies who arrogantly disregard the law are held to account not only by the unions but by government itself. So join us on 27 September, when we march to Uber's appeal of the UPHD's victory, in a show of strength for all precarious and outsourced workers. **c**

Guy McClenahan is the Vice-Chair of the Couriers & Logistics Branch of the Independent Workers Union, and a rider for Deliveroo in Brighton



Deliveroo couriers calling for the living wage outside Deliveroo offices in central London

SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa at the Crossroads

Bob Newland on awards and reviews at the SA Communist Party Congress

A group of Cuban Doctors, The family of Ahmed Timol and the 'London Recruits' were all presented with a 'Special Recognition Award' at the 14th National Congress of the South African Communist Party (SACP) held in Johannesburg in July.

Two hundred Cuban Doctors volunteered to go to Africa to combat the recent Ebola epidemic.

Ahmed Timol was thrown out a tenth floor window in the security police building in 1972. An apartheid regime inquest found that he committed suicide. His family have successfully campaigned for a new inquest. Talking to his family I discovered that one of the things he was accused of was setting off the leaflet bombs for which the 'London Recruits' had been responsible.

The London Recruits were young white people recruited in the late 1960s and early 70s to assist the ANC with underground activity. They carried out a campaign of leafleting in cities across South Africa while the ANC rebuilt its organisation following the Rivonia trial. Some went on to assist fighters returning to South Africa across hostile borders, others set up safe houses or smuggled tons of weapons into the country to aid the fight against apartheid.

I was honoured to be one of the 'London Recruits' and attended along with Ken Keable, the author of our book and Ian Beddowes to receive the award. It was a fascinating experience.

South Africa is at a crossroads and the SACP is at the heart of the debates regarding the future of President Zuma, high level corruption and 'State Capture'. COSATU, the major trade union grouping, has already called for the removal of Zuma and is supporting Cyril Ramaphosa to replace him.

Debates centred around the future role of the SACP within the triple alliance of ANC, COSATU and SACP, a proposal that the SACP should stand candidates independent of the ANC



Bob Newland (from left) Blade Nzimande, Ian Beddowes, Ken Keable & Ronnie Kasrils (the recruiter)

in future elections and the campaigning role of the party on behalf of the working class and the poor. With 40% unemployment and 70% youth unemployment the issue of the poor was key.

Underpinning all the discussion was the failure to overcome the economic legacy of apartheid with particular focus on jobs, housing and education.

Zuma in an attempt to present himself as a left winger, has recently come up with the idea of 'white monopoly capitalism'. This concept was challenged by speaker after speaker as wrong and racially divisive. The General Secretary, Blade Nzimande, in words echoed in Cyril Ramaphosa's address to Congress, said that to replace white monopoly capitalists with black monopoly capitalists would not change the conditions of the overwhelming majority of the working class and the poor.

Ramaphosa condemned corruption and State Capture and appealed to the SACP to remain in the triple alliance. He urged them to continue to provide the leadership and ideological clarity which had been demonstrated in their contribution to the Freedom Charter, adopted by the Congress of the People in SOWETO in 1955, and through the years of illegality and armed struggle after the Sharpeville massacre in 1960.

Debate was challenging in the plenary sessions and the commissions which separately discussed key issues. The leadership were self critical regarding the demobilisation of the Party in recent years and signalled the need for

discussion on leadership succession.

Party membership has doubled and redoubled in the last ten years reaching around 285,000.

Delegates and Central Committee members alike stressed that the Party had become submerged in the ANC, losing its identity as a result. There was general agreement on the final decisions of the week, including the Party standing its own candidates in future elections as part of the road map for change.

It was agreed to remain in the ANC for the present while seeking to build a left alliance involving the SACP, COSATU, SANCO and others.

Throughout the week discussion in Congress sessions and outside returned to who would replace Zuma and become the ANC candidate for South African President. The front runners are a former wife of Zuma, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, who it is believed would continue the high level of corruption and patronage and Cyril Ramaphosa, ANC Deputy President, who is committed to fight corruption and State Capture.

Ramaphosa is viewed as untainted by corruption although as a Rand billionaire he has benefited considerably from the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) programme. He is however damaged by his role as a director of Lonmin at the time of the Marikana massacre. He was cleared of any wrongdoing by the subsequent public inquiry which called for charges of murder and manslaughter to be brought against senior police officers. **C**

Bob Newland is a member of Tower Hamlets Labour Party and a member of ACTSA NEC. London Recruits, the Secret War Against Apartheid is published by Merlin Books £15.99.

Whither Turkey?

Mary Southcott argues that while we are right to scrutinise Trump we should also be looking at Turkey's President and his role in the Middle East

Before I first went to Cyprus, nothing had prepared me for the influence of the Ottoman Empire in today's world, what it inherited from the multiculturalism of the Byzantine Empire, itself the continuation of the Roman and Alexander the Great's Empires. I did not know my grandfather fought in Gallipoli. My first contact with anyone from Turkey was Greek Orthodox priests from Istanbul who as a seven-year-old I tried to convince were Turkish.

AJP Taylor's English History 1914 – 1945 was my introduction to the idea that World War 1 was the War of Ottoman Succession. Modern Turkey was founded by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne with the exchange of population of Greek and Turkish speaking people, more correctly Christians and Moslems. Mustafa Kemal, Ataturk, born in Salonika, said "a Turk is a Turk" meaning equality in a secular state underpinned by the military. People used to want someone to deal with the military. Now Erdogan has his own deep state, Turkey is no nearer being a democracy.

There seems to be a Turkish yearning for an overlapping and separate Pan Turanism, Neo-Ottomanism and Islamicism, with Turkish text books de-emphasising Ataturk, increasing faith teaching by Imams and the 200 metres race being won for Turkey by a man from Azerbaijan. WWI, the Armenian question, the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the Balfour declaration remain issues. The upheaval created minorities where previously everyone was a minority. It left Kurds in Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Iran. Recent Turkish policy in Syria was first to support ISIS and then to join in NATO's policy of bombing ISIS, as cover for bombing Kurds. The attempt to stop a Kurdish strip being formed by Syrian Kurds on the other side of the Turkish-Syrian border meant Turkey was supporting Turkmen fighting both Assad and ISIS whereas the US was supporting the Peshmergas, Iraqi Kurds.

At the same time in July that



Turkish Kurds protest against state killings

Turkey was withdrawing its verbal support for a Cyprus settlement in Crans-Montana, the European Parliament was calling on the Commission and EU nation states to suspend accession talks with Turkey. Turkey was said to be going to implement the Guterres security framework after 57 years of being a Guarantor, relinquish its right of unilateral intervention, drop the Treaty of Guarantee for assur-

Some believe that Erdogan wants to be a Sultan and Turkey itself to be a Caliphate, and helped IS initially in arms and oil sales

ances where all Cypriots would feel secure and reduce its troops from day one with gradual withdrawal down to the numbers in the 1960 Treaty of Alliance. The Parliament was voicing its objection to the constitutional reform package the Turks voted for in its referendum on 16 April. Erdogan's threat to bring back capital punishment didn't help. The EU still offers the best democratic way out of both the Kurdish and Cyprus issues.

On 15 July, Turkey celebrated the first anniversary of the unsuccessful coup against President Erdogan who will by the 2019 elections become an executive president with all the power with none of the brakes on

power in the US constitution. No one can predict the Trump administration but it seems unlikely they will extradite Fethullah Gulen as the person Erdogan insists was responsible for the coup, although they worked together closely in the first five years of the AK Party rule.

No one is allowed to challenge this retreat from secular to Islamic without being sacked, arrested or imprisoned. The media, judges, academics, Amnesty International, politicians, including the People's Democratic Party and generals are all in need of the rule of law. The CHP, the Republican People's Party, voted for the lifting of parliamentary immunity and then organised a march from Ankara to Istanbul and a huge rally when its own people were arrested.

So where is Turkey going? Its 'Model of Islamic Democracy' was sold to Egypt and Tunisia, where their Sharia Law by stealth was seen through and toppled. The Sunni Islam agenda excludes other Moslems such as Alevis or Shias. Turkey has invested heavily in Sunni Islamic Somalia. It has supported Palestinians. It has bases in Qatar which invests in Turkey. It has troops in Iraq, Syria and in Cyprus. It has been paid by the EU to accommodate refugees who would otherwise come to EU states.

Some believe that Erdogan wants to be a Sultan and Turkey itself to be a Caliphate, and helped IS initially in arms and oil sales. However, Turkey's and US interests are diverging which affects NATO's position in the region and relationships between Turkey and Greece, a member of the EU. The impression of strength in the AKP party majority is fragile and based on a PR system with a 10 per cent threshold designed to exclude Kurdish representation. Turkey is really three countries in one, Kurdish, central Islamic and the European and Mediterranean coast. The Iraqi Kurds have an independence referendum in October. Turkey needs to stay on our radar. **C**

Mary Southcott is a member of Chartist EB and secretary of Friends of Cyprus

GERMANY

Social Democrats' dream in tatters?

Angela Merkel looks set to comfortably see off the challenge from the SPD in forthcoming elections reports **Ed Turner**

It all started so well for the SPD. In late January, the German SPD in a surprising yet seamless move saw Martin Schulz, former President of the European Parliament, take over as the party's candidate for the chancellorship, with Sigmar Gabriel, the party's leader up to that point, handing over the leadership to Schulz and taking over as the country's Foreign Minister instead. For a while, Social Democrats and perhaps even some of the country were engulfed by "Schulzmania". Schulz was elected party leader unanimously in the secret ballot at the party's conference, the SPD edged ahead of Angela Merkel's CDU in the opinion polls, and Schulz even found himself preferred to Merkel as a possible chancellor. Schulz had not ruled out a Red-Red-Green coalition (with the Left Party as well as the Greens), and such a combination appeared to have a real chance of winning power in the federal election on 24th September.

Just seven months later, Schulz's dream appears to be in tatters – the CDU has a lead of around 15 points in the polls going into the election campaign, Merkel leads as the country's choice of chancellor by some 30%, and there is every chance that the SPD will find itself replaced as Merkel's coalition partner by the economically liberal FDP.

It is striking that this turnaround in the respective fortunes of the major parties is not attributable to a single event or crisis. Instead, some five things have happened. First, Angela Merkel appears to have been able to reassert her authority (an authority often enjoyed by chancellors and partly derived from an 'incumbency bonus'). This suffered some damage during the refugee crisis of 2015, partly because of substantive public concern at the issue, but also because it gave rise to severe internal pressure from CDU hardliners and particularly the conservative Bavarian allies of the CDU, the CSU. They were anxious about the impact upon



Merkel - polls suggest victory over challenger Shultz

the party's standing and the rise of a right-wing alternative to the CDU, the Alternative for Germany (AfD). This challenging position has now been reversed: there has been no repeat of the crisis on the scale of 2015, and the CSU piped down its criticism of Merkel when it looked like Schulz posed a major threat. The AfD, although it appears very likely to win representation in the federal parliament at this year's election, is plateauing in its support and rather preoccupied with internal quarrels. Importantly, Merkel's popularity extends beyond her party's boundaries: for instance, she is preferred as chancellor over Schulz by Green voters according to a recent poll (by a margin of 47% to 45%), while 25% of SPD voters, 27% of Left Party voters, and 42% of AfD voters also favour her as chancellor.

Secondly, the SPD had three hideous results in state elections. The first, in the Saarland in March, a popular CDU incumbent was re-elected – the first sign that the Schulz effect might not be as helpful to the SPD as it had first appeared. More damaging were the defeats of SPD incumbents in Schleswig-Holstein and particularly Schulz's home state of North-Rhine Westphalia in May, where SPD/Green coalitions were replaced, respectively, by a CDU/FDP/Green coalition and a CDU/FDP coalition. In each case, there were some local factors (notably rather uninspiring SPD election campaigns) that played into these results, but the clear impression is that momentum is now with the CDU.

Thirdly, the SPD has found itself hampered by the lack of viable coalition options. In North-Rhine Westphalia, as the

polls seemed to be turning against it, the SPD was forced to rule out a coalition with the Left Party.

There are two broader trends, too – first, that in a country whose economy is doing extremely well, it should not be a surprise that the government of the day is popular and looks likely to be re-elected. The SPD makes the point, quite rightly, that not all sections of society share in the country's security and prosperity, but enough still do for the CDU to be rather popular. Moreover, Merkel has yet again shown that little stardust lands on her minor coalition partner – the SPD has had some policy successes (such as introducing a national minimum wage, forcing the CDU to accept gay marriage, and introducing tighter rent regulation) but gets little credit for any part in Germany's success. Merkel has proven extremely effective at not offering any flank upon which she can be attacked. While Schulz hops from issue to issue, trying and failing to gain electoral traction, Merkel is quite content to ignore him and retain her lead in the polls.

Paradoxically, if the next few months play out as we might expect, it may help the SPD in the longer term. It has tested to destruction the theory that political success can come with being Merkel's junior coalition partner, and leaving that role would give it the ability to develop a far sharper political profile. Indeed, there is a degree of interest in whether the Labour Party's recent realignment might hold lessons for it in the future, and even with the backdrop of Brexit, political dialogue between parties of the centre-left might prove mutually beneficial. **C**

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Poll shows anti-immigration sentiment rising

Trevor Fisher
sees shades of the Weimar republic in Brexit Britain

Back in 2009 I suggested that Britain was ripe to become the new Weimar Republic. The collapse of New Labour under Brown and the rise of nationalism was reinforcing the hold of the right. Brown's pathetic British Jobs for British Workers slogan was a sign the leadership knew they had a problem. It was laid bare during the 2010 election when Brown was met by a working class woman whose views he privately found objectionable - and called her a bigot behind her back. Sadly he had left his lapel mike on and the world knew what he said. He lost the election.

The coalition which followed undermined the Liberal Democrats, and Stuart Hall's Great Moving Right show took on a new impetus when the Leave campaign, aided by the rise of the UKIP vote, forced Cameron against his will to promise a Referendum on the EU. Consistently outsmarted by the Leave campaign, and undermined by Labour's weak effort, the Referendum was narrowly lost. But some take comfort from the narrow defeat and think that a second Referendum can be won. It would have to be a Third Referendum - there have been two already - and as such a basic issue as the 1975 Referendum victory has been forgotten, it is not surprising Leave is winning. In this context it is ominous that the latest polls indicate that the Remain campaign and human rights both face a rising tide of reaction. The key finding, leaked to the press and Leave websites, is set out below. The full results will be released in the Autumn, with this result showing not a divided nation, but a convergence of Leave and Remain voters on the big issue of immigration, defined on the Right's terms as EU free movement - which the smarter Leavers know is a hostage to fortune they can exploit.

While these results show a convergence of views around lower levels of immigration, the most startling finding is that more Remainers want full control and NO EU immigration than do Leavers. If this is substantiated by the full report, the chances of reversing current trends without a major new approach to campaigning are remote.

Question	2016 Voted Leave	2016 voted Remain
No control similar EU level to now	35%	48%
Some control similar EU level to now	45%	52%
Some control lower level of EU immigration	49%	50%
Full control similar EU level to now	52%	55%
Full control lower level	51%	57%
Full control ad no EU immigration	46%	58%

Anti free movement poll (Source: Labour Futures website)

The Independent separately reported that 29% of Remainers would expel all EU immigrants. That, if correctly reported, means that the campaign for the rights of EU citizens to stay has backfired. The current methods of defending immigration against the isolationists have failed and no results from pressure group activities can be successful. The public - in tens of millions - have to be convinced immigration is in their interests. This is the challenge.

While Chartist is too small to make that challenge, it can certainly start the debate. Even a small initiative can make a big contribution by bringing on debate on how Remain can reverse what is clearly a disastrous failure to take public opinion in a progressive direction. **C**

Printer ad

BASIC INCOME

Basic Income – from protest to policy

Bill Jordan says the time has come for a new system of income distribution

Since the financial crash, anger and protest have been widespread, but have lacked coherent political demands. The share of national income going to capital has been rising; that going to wages and salaries falling. Globalisation and technological change are beginning to hit the services sector, and will cause new waves of redundancies. Employment is increasingly fragmented and precarious. It is time for a mass movement for a new system of income distribution.

The idea of an Unconditional Basic Income – a sum paid regularly to each man, woman and child, irrespective of their work or family roles – has been around since the end of the First World War. There have been two social movements to demand its implementation; one, the Green Shirts, in the 1930s, and a second, the Claimants' Union, in the 1970s. Now is the moment for a third movement, to convert protest into policy.

Our present income maintenance system has enabled the polarisation of the labour market. People in relatively secure and well-rewarded occupations – in professional, managerial, technical and entrepreneurial work – have prospered. But means-tested benefits, originally called Family Income Supplements, then Tax Credits, soon to be Universal Credit, have allowed insecure, low-paid, often part-time employment and self-employment to expand. Guy Standing calls these workers 'The Precariat', and describes them as the 'new dangerous class' – a phenomenon I predicted during my involvement with the Claimants' Unions over 40 years ago.

Means-testing creates conflicts of interest between those with careers, property, shares and occupational pensions, and those whose level of income is fixed by the benefits authorities. Members of the Precariat become enmeshed in an extremely complex system with high administrative costs, often involving long delays in payments. The withdrawal of benefits as their earnings rise creates 'poverty traps', so they have few incentives to improve their family's income.



Unemployed - Basic Income would transform lives

And to counter this structural feature of the system, the authorities rely more and more on tests, such as the notorious 'ability to work' tests applied to people with disabilities; on sanctions, to cut payments to those who refuse exploitative jobs; and on schemes of what is in effect forced labour – 'workfare', or 'welfare-to-work' – to make claimants train or work under threat of losing benefits.

So members of the Precariat do not qualify for the kind of citizenship that is supposed to characterise a liberal democratic society; they are not free and equal members of the community, contributing voluntarily to the common good. They are caught within a system of state power; and this has ironically itself become something of a 'policy trap' for governments. David Cameron wanted to raise the lowest earnings by creating the 'National Living Wage', but to cut tax credits at the same time; this was certainly part of his downfall.

But in my view the worst thing about the divided society is that it creates the conditions for a rise in political authoritarianism. Just as in the 1930s, demagogic politicians are given scope to mobilise their electorates against poor people and minorities. In a political climate in which both traditional parties – Christian Democrats/Conservatives and Social Democrats/Labour – are perceived to be irrelevant, we have seen the rise of Donald Trump, Geert Wilders and Marine Le Pen. They advocate increasingly coercive policies.

Furthermore, Trump's belliger-

ent foreign policy stance threatens world peace, creating links between authoritarian politics, nationalism and war-mongering. His denial of climate change puts the global environment at risk. Movements to protest against these dangerous developments can link with campaigns against poverty, inequality and pollution, with the Basic Income proposal at their heart.

The Basic Income would be a right of citizens, paid automatically to each individual. Present systems involve high administrative costs, but still fail to reach many of the poor families they target. Being unconditional, it would eliminate the coercive and demeaning rules surrounding benefits – work tests and cohabitation rules, for example. And by removing poverty traps it would greatly improve incentives to participate fully in society.

This would enable all kinds of activities, both in markets and through voluntary co-operation. It would encourage new kinds of creativity in the arts and cultural pursuits, but also projects for ecological conservation. Some more onerous or unpleasant work would have to be better paid, but this in itself would be a step towards greater social justice. Other activities, with a stronger emotional and relational element, might become less commercialised. It would give genuine equality to women, allowing parental activities to be shared as well as enabling women's careers in employment to flourish.

Until recently, these arguments failed to convince the leadership of the Labour Party or the major trade unions. Their criticism of the proposal always focussed on the danger that it would undercut the commitment to full employment and fair wages. But now the TUC has voted in favour of a motion supporting Basic Income, because of the complexity, stigma and punitive sanctions in the current benefits system, and both Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell have expressed interest in it.

Finally, the most widespread public response to the idea – that people would withdraw from work if they got 'something for nothing' – has been rebutted by actual

pilot schemes. Developing states with windfall discoveries of great mineral wealth have used state revenues from this to distribute sums to all their citizens (strictly speaking, 'social dividends'). In the first of these, Alaska, this was done by Republican administrations, whose governors included Sarah Palin.

In 1997, the Cherokee Native American nation decided to distribute a share of the profits from a very successful casino to all the members of their tribe, including children. This was a different kind of windfall, but the outcomes were striking.

Other pilot schemes were then set up under the auspices of the International Labour Office in Namibia, and of UNICEF in Madhya Pradesh, India. Mongolia also initiated a scheme of its own, and even Iran distributed some of its oil wealth in this way when it abolished its food and energy subsidies.

Not all of these initiatives were properly researched, but the main finding from the pilots was that women entered the labour market and became active in their com-

munities in greater numbers and for longer hours; and that children stayed at school for more years to gain qualifications. The Cherokee scheme saw great gains in children's educational attainments and a dramatic fall in juvenile crime, as well as improvements in the relationships between their parents.

Unfortunately, pilots being undertaken in Finland and the Netherlands are not true Basic Income schemes. But it is hoped that those proposed for parts of Scotland, and under consideration in Wales, will adopt the essential features of the proposal.

In the long run, however, neither academic studies nor pilot schemes are likely to overcome resistance to a radical policy of this kind without a popular movement in its support. This is especially the case in England, where dominant financial and industrial interest groups have shown little interest in it.

Historically, the ideal mobilisation for radical change consists of a core of organised groups and a mass of unpredictable protesters

who create anxiety among the establishment. If Basic Income is to be realised, therefore, the next step should be for the Labour leadership and the TUC to mount a more active campaign, and for large numbers of citizens to be willing to come out to demonstrate in its favour.

It is of the nature of protest movements like that of summer, 2011, that they are spontaneous and unpredictable. Supporters of Basic Income would have to sustain their campaign over a longer time, and gradually broaden their appeal. The Green Shirts were quite narrow in their appeal to a mainly middle-class membership, and the Claimants' Unions were self-consciously a movement for outsiders.

To be successful in a new campaign for Basic Income, a mass movement would have to tap into discontent with current work and wages, and mobilise a rejection of authoritarianism. It would indeed be the best response to that trend in political life. For this reason alone, it would be well worth trying. **C**

Bill Jordan was a leading activist in the Claimants Union

Free movement & migrant worker struggles

Don Flynn highlights some recent pamphlets produced by groupings and campaigns concerned with the future of immigration policy.

Amongst the publications is *Free Movement and Beyond: Agenda setting for Brexit Britain*. The role that free movement has come to play as a strategy deployed by sections of the working class to protect its standards of life against the intrigues of European capital is considered by left thinkers and activists. Amongst the contributors to the essays, Andrew Burgin makes a good start in sketching out free movement from a specifically working class perspective. Luke Cooper adds more detail in a key essay that considers the form that nationalism is taking across the world and the threats that it holds to both settled citizens and people moving as migrants alike. Zoe Cooper argues that the promotion of working class interests means that we should be working towards a more mobile world, rather than one which abandons hundreds of thousands to the dangers and squalor of blocked migration routes.

Free Movement and Beyond has a sense of urgency and newness in its essays that suggests that experienced campaigners are rapidly bringing themselves up to speed on what the immigration debate is coming to mean for their work. It can be read as representative of the ideas that are now percolating around the left and which have inspired such recent developments as the launch of the Labour Campaign for Free Movement (<https://www.labourfreemovement.org>). Their conclusion that the fights that have to be won are as much about what takes place within the destination countries as they are about what goes on at its border are its most valuable insight. It is one that needs to be built on. But what do struggles for the rights

of migrant workers actually look like? A glimpse of these is provided in *The Strangers Among Us: Tales from a Global Migrant Worker*. Available in the UK from Labour Start (www.labourstart.org), this is a collection of ten accounts of migrant workers struggles drawn from the United States, India, Singapore, Israel, and other countries.

The accounts provided show that community organising amongst migrants takes place as a fundamental survival strategy. When it is done most successfully it not only contributes to the capacity of migrants to challenge all-too-common exploitation, but also to overcome isolation and loneliness. The model encountered in these pages brings faith communities alongside trade unions in ongoing work to deepen and strengthen solidarity.

Even more than that, for campaigns to achieve their greatest success the migrant community organisation has to move in a strategic way towards bridge-building with other activist groups, fighting on such issues as poverty in rural areas, the despoliation of local environments, or the degrading of the quality of food in mass-produced supply chains. In the US, the work of the Farm Labor Organising Committee embraces these issues and binds them into a form of progress politics that grows directly out of the struggles of workers.

These currents of self-organisation are also present in the UK and show the tenacity of migrant communities. Their readiness to push back barriers is shown in scores of campaigns across the country. The challenge is on working out the ways in which bridges might be built with the other progressive social movements, including, crucially, the trade unions and the Labour Party. **C**

RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Democratic faultlines in Soviets

Ian Bullock looks at responses of the British Left to the 1917 Russian revolution

Hanging over my stairs – it's going to drop on me one day – is a framed poster advertising a 'Mass Meeting' at the Salvation Army's Congress Hall, here in Brighton, on 17 May 1917 to 'Celebrate Russian Freedom.' The main speaker was Sylvia Pankhurst. According to the local press she and other speakers upset many readers by their talk of 'our German comrades.'

Even worse in hostile eyes, her defence of the unofficial strikes then taking place elsewhere in Britain horrified some readers of the Brighton Gazette and Brighton Herald. They believed the workers' action would mean fewer guns being produced and lead to greater casualties among British troops. Pankhurst would have none of this. Fewer guns meant fewer men killed. 'It does not matter to me what kind of men they are; they are all members of the human family; they are our brothers.' Great stuff, but hardly a surprise that in the 34th month of what was already called The Great War readers' letters attacked the 'Anti-Patriotic Meeting.'

The poster was given to me by an old friend – sadly no longer with us – at the time in the early '90s when I was working on editing Sylvia Pankhurst. From Artist to Anti-Fascist with Richard Pankhurst. What the reports of the Brighton meeting – said to be attended by 1,600 people – and of others up and down the country, including an earlier one at the Albert Hall, remind us about is just how far the Revolution in Russia and attitudes towards it were intricately linked to the war.

Right up to August 1914 unstoppable progress seemed to be leading towards the Socialist Commonwealth. Yes, there were frequent international crises, but they always seemed to be resolved without recourse to violence in the end. The SPD, by far the most successful socialist party in the world, had become the largest group in the German Reichstag in 1912.

Two years later the SPD – or most of it – had seemed to melt away and fall in behind what its



Petrograd Soviet - democracy soon disappeared

opponents called 'Prussian militarism.' Easy optimism was suddenly replaced by the nightmare of mechanised war. Britain found itself uneasily allied to the most reactionary and authoritarian of the great powers – Tsarist Russia – a real problem for 'pro-war' socialists and more grist to the mill for their 'anti-war' adversaries in the deeply divided British movement. No wonder early 1917 events in Russia

The enthusiasm for workers' councils/soviets was hardly surprising. The previous decade had seen the rise of notions of workers' control, industrial democracy, syndicalism and guild socialism

seemed like a redeeming shaft of light in the darkness.

Both supporters and opponents of the war were heartened by the Russian Revolution. The former hoped that the exit of such an embarrassing ally as the Tsar, a more efficient and determined government, and a revival of Russian morale now that there was something worth fighting for, would greatly improve the chances of an Allied victory. The latter hoped it was the beginning of the end of the conflict – which partly accounts for the rapid growth of support later in the year of the almost unknown

Bolsheviks with their unequivocal demand for peace.

The most significant response here to the Russian Revolution was the Leeds Convention on 3rd June. Its centenary was marked early this year by a meeting supported by Leeds Trades Council and a number of other organisations. Philip Snowden, future Chancellor of the Exchequer in MacDonald's Labour minority governments, later described the Leeds meeting as 'the most democratically constituted Labour Convention ever held in this country.' What is remarkable about this is that the quotation comes from Snowden's memoirs written after his retirement from the post-1931 Conservative-dominated 'National' government.

Snowden insisted that the most radical of the four resolutions passed at Leeds – known as the 'soviet resolution' – was not intended as a blueprint for the establishment of a 'Communist State'. He pointed out, quite correctly, that the Bolsheviks only came to power five months later – a very long time in both wars and revolutions. But the resolution certainly did call for the setting up of local workers' and soldiers' councils – like those that had now re-emerged in revolutionary Russia. These British councils were to work for peace and the 'political and economic emancipation of international labour' while resisting 'every encroachment upon civil liberty' and giving 'spe-

cial attention' to the position of women in industry.

The enthusiasm for workers' councils/soviets was hardly surprising. The previous decade had seen the rise of notions of workers' control, industrial democracy, syndicalism and guild socialism. But contrary to the hopes of enthusiasts like Pankhurst nothing really came of the 'soviet resolution', at least not in the shape of the setting up of the councils it called for. At this stage the Russian soviets were not particularly associated with the Bolsheviks. Lenin had called for power to be transferred exclusively to them on his return to Russia but few people in Britain would have had the slightest inkling of this.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks were hardly known to most people on the Left at this time. Even the British Socialist Party's paper *The Call* - later to become *The*

early in January the establishment of the Bolshevik dictatorship and the suppression of rival parties was already well underway. The Assembly's meeting was forcibly ended almost immediately. Civil war was already raging in some parts of the old Russian empire. Now 'Whites'

The love affair with 'soviet democracy' went on for a very long time

could claim, however unconvincingly in many cases, to be fighting to restore or reconstitute the democratically elected Constituent Assembly.

How did all this go down with the British Left? The reaction to the Bolshevik coup varied but is probably best summarised as wary and confused. Many, even Snowden, were reluctant to criticise Lenin and co because they

delusion - apart from the better known example of the Webbs' - is Pat Sloan's book *Soviet Democracy* published by Gollancz as a Left Book Club offering as late as 1937 when Stalin's murderous regime was at its height. Sloan did not deny that dictatorship existed in the Soviet Union - but, he claimed, it co-existed together with real grass roots democracy. And, he insisted, while 'the democracy was enjoyed by the vast majority of the population' the dictatorship was only 'over a small minority.' A sort of a-political democracy was, he claimed, flourishing in schools, trade unions and soviets as well as a myriad of other social institutions. So, suppression of any view that contradicted the regime in any way, could, in Sloan's view, co-exist with uninhibited democratic debate at the grass roots. It seems quite possible that he actually believed this.

The love affair with 'soviet democracy' went on for a very long time, and has left its mark on the British Left. Its influence still has some pulling power even in the 21st century. After it disaffiliated from Labour the ILP took up the idea of workers' councils in the 1930s. Among the opponents of the policy was one of the most impressive MPs of the 20th century Fred Jowett who - back in 1919 when the 'Left Wing' of the ILP was trying to get the party to affiliate to the Comintern - had pointed out that, among other factors, the indirect nature of the soviet 'system of delegation' meant that electors lost touch with the elected even more than was the case with Parliament.

To reject 'soviet democracy' as a panacea does not entail a total vindication of representative, parliamentary democracy - especially in the form it exists in contemporary Britain. Jowett certainly did not believe so. All political systems have their merits and disadvantages - just like all voting systems. To expect otherwise is utopian in the worse sense. Even in its pure form - as sincerely advocated by the likes of Sylvia Pankhurst - 'soviets' relied on delegate democracy which - especially when applied to the state as distinct from a political party, trade union, or social club - has its own distinctive difficulties and drawbacks. These are issues we should explore. **C**



Lenin speaking in Red Square

Communist - which gave much coverage to the trials of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg throughout 1916 first mentioned the Bolsheviks only quite late in 1917. The Spartacists were much more prominent in the British Left's press than the Bolsheviks before this time. Ironically enough, one of the few exceptions to this was *Justice* the paper of the 'pro-war' - and fiercely anti-Bolshevik - Hyndman and the 'Old Guard of the SDF' which mentioned Lenin as early as April.

Even after their seizure of power in - by the calendar used in Britain - November 1917 Lenin's group still insisted - though with growing doubts from Lenin himself - that it was committed to the election of the Constituent Assembly. The elections went ahead and the Bolsheviks lost out - securing less than a quarter of the votes cast. By the time the Assembly met

seemed to be the best bet to bring an end to the war. When the Assembly was suppressed there was more confusion. Pankhurst initially gave three possible alternative explanations in her *Workers' Dreadnought* before reaching the conclusion that it represented the replacement of discredited 'bourgeois parliamentarism' with a much more genuine form of democracy. *The Socialist*, paper of the De Leonist Socialist Labour Party saw it as more or less carrying out their own programme of replacing the 'Political State' with the 'Industrial State' - which given the existence of both peasants' and soldiers' soviets was a bit of a stretch.

As elsewhere, many on the British Left took an optimistic view of the - apparent - emergence of soviet power, ignoring or playing down the growing evidence that the soviets had become a smoke-screen for the Bolshevik dictatorship. This lasted for decades. For me, the ultimate in

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OUR HISTORY

OUR HISTORY - 74

George Lansbury Why Pacifists should be Socialists (1937)

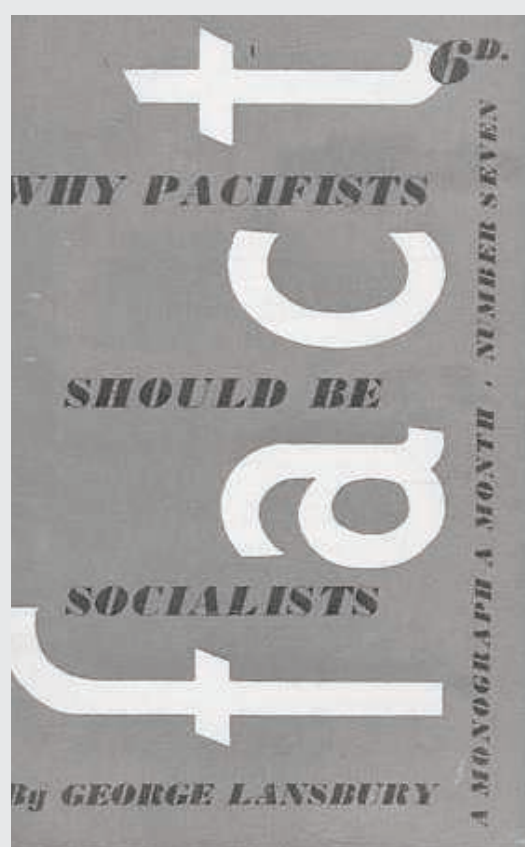
Lansbury was leader of the Labour Party between 1932 and 1935. Born in Suffolk, he lived most of his life in the East End of London. After a failed attempt to emigrate to Australia, on returning to England he was active in the London Liberal Party before joining the Social Democratic Federation, becoming its political secretary in 1897. He was elected a member of the Poplar Board of Guardians in 1892 and was also elected to Poplar Council. He established two farm colonies in Essex for the unemployed of East London and led the opposition to the application of the 1905 Poor Law Act. In 1913 he became editor of the Labour Party's newspaper, the Daily Herald. He became Mayor of Poplar in 1922 and successfully led a campaign for rate equalisation to help the poorer boroughs.

Lansbury was elected MP for Bow and Bromley in 1910, though resigned to fight a by-election, unsuccessfully, in support of women's suffrage in 1912. He did not return to parliament until 1922, but retained the Bow and Bromley seat till his death in May 1940. He did not serve in the 1924 Labour Government but was First Commissioner of Works in the 1929-31 Government. He became party leader as the most senior Labour MP who survived the 1931 debacle. He resigned the leadership after the 1935 party conference at which he was criticised by Ernest Bevin for his pacifism, to be succeeded by his deputy, Clem Attlee. Lansbury published his autobiography in 1928. There is an excellent biography by John Shepherd, published in 2002, as well as shorter biographies by Raymond Postgate (1951), Jonathan Schneer (1990) and Bob Holman (also 1990). "We are living in what is described by newspapers and everyone else as dangerous times, Fear, that great enemy of mankind, stalks abroad. The hearts of thinking people are full of dread as to what will or may happen tomorrow.... Everybody agrees war is abominable. War is one of the most terrible curses from which mankind suffers. War produces plague, pestilence and famine, but fear of war itself creates mental and moral consequences which are impossible to tabulate. ... In every sphere of life it is the principle of life and conduct which counts." "I am a pacifist and

Socialist because the principles embodied in the life and teaching of the founder of Christianity appeal to me as those which form the standard of life and conduct which, if followed by even one nation, would ultimately save the world from war and give peace and security at home and abroad. There can never be any compromise with truth. We live in a society which is at war all the days of all the years. The results of this daily warfare are seen all around us. It can be seen in the stricken valleys of South Wales and in the senseless extravagance of Mayfair. If you allow a small minority to live in luxury and so arrange things that the maintenance of that luxury is directly dependent on

the poverty of that majority, as we have done in the capitalist world, then undeniably the riches of the few are responsible for the poverty of the many. How on earth can we honestly say that we want peace abroad when we will not even make this effort to so organise things that there is peace and goodwill amongst ourselves at home? ... Peace, which must be based on co-operation, is a state of mind as well as a state of affairs, and if that is true, it is impossible to expect men and women to co-operate as nations when as individuals the system forces them to fight each other for their daily bread. The law of the jungle is universal competition." "My contention is that no Socialist who accepts international Socialism can go to war any more than can a person who accepts the Sermon on the Mount as the law of life. A Socialist or a Christian must acknowledge that all wars are civil wars - wars between brothers. There has never been a war which ended any dispute without the slaughter of brother by brother. All nations must accept as sacred the right of each other to determine how they

are governed. I want a pre-war conference before all of value we possess in young manhood is slaughtered." "In this struggle against war, you who are young are standing as we elder ones have tried to do for peace against war. Love against hatred, co-operation against competition. Throw down your arms. We have thrown ours away never to take them up again. We have renounced imperialism, cast away all thoughts of domination and fear and are now determined to live with all the world as friends and partners in a true commonwealth of peoples, working and sharing life and all life has to give with one another."



The death of the American metaphor

Patrick Mulcahy

on a pervasive threat

BUSHWICK
Carry Murnion & Jonathan Milott
(available on Netflix)

From this side of the Atlantic, the concept of a complete societal breakdown in the United States as depicted in the Netflix-released film *Bushwick*, written by Nick Damici and Graham Reznick and directed by Cary Murnion and Jonathan Milott, looked like a work of fantasy. After the events of Saturday 12 August, 2017 during which a white supremacist used his vehicle as a weapon, killing an unarmed anti-racist protester, Heather Heyer in Charlottesville, Virginia, I am not so sure. The spectacle of mass white-on-white violence in the fight against Confederate 'white supremacy' values is not so far-fetched. Who can believe in an America where the President conflates anti-racists with the alt-left and dismisses them as violent? Who can believe that Senate and Congress, the legislative arms of one of the most powerful countries in the world, is helpless in the face of hate speech propagated by its Head of State? President Trump wants to pollute the ozone layer surrounding the Earth with reopened coal mines in a warped vision of American greatness and silence any debate with 140 characters. Heck, what will it even take for Twitter to suspend his account?

It is enormously tempting – nay, an act of social responsibility – to use this small space to address the shortcomings of democracy when electorates are presented with binary choices: Clinton or Trump; 'Remain' or 'Leave'? Alas, this is a film review. You will want to know that *Bushwick* isn't a polemic, rather an exhilarating visual tour-de-force – give or take the odd ropery effects shot – starring Brittany Snow as a student, Lucy, who steps off the subway in

the Bushwick district in Brooklyn, New York, to see her boyfriend killed and herself forced to run for cover as entire streets erupt into pitched warfare. Texas has invaded Brooklyn to consolidate its secession from the United States. The US military has organised a mass evacuation and with the aid of Stupe (Dave Bautista), an ex-marine, Lucy attempts to gather up remaining members of her family and get them to the rendezvous point.

The action is staged through a

vivors to the rendezvous. Are they committed to violence and fighting for themselves alone or interested in a larger objective and what can Lucy and Stupe give them as collateral?

The result is more of an old-fashioned exploitation film than anything else, where even Hasidic Jews are shown using firearms – an image that shows just how much order has broken down. Yet *Bushwick* is significant, not just because it spells the end of the found-footage genre, but because it signifies the end of a metaphor in American movies. For years, filmmakers have resorted to zombies, aliens or the supernatural to discuss threats to American values. The makers of *Bushwick* offer no such fictional distraction. Instead, they point the finger. It is them: the American far right, racists, Klansmen without hoods, whipping up paranoia, using the rhetoric of social action to turn neighbours against one another.

The real question to be asked by popular cinema is: when are we going to get serious about what America is losing, its decency and moral compass? Star Wars and the Marvel Cinematic Universe really don't speak to a freedoms-based ideology at war with itself. To do this is to understand that the world isn't about binary choices and deliverance of one goal at the expense of many others. It isn't about viewing movies on tablets and discussing it

through anonymous chat for either, which is the culture that streaming services like Netflix cultivate. The collective experience of cinema, how the immersive group viewing promotes shared understanding and values, is its greatest strength. Amongst all art forms, we need filmmakers and cinema to come together to combat the pervasive threat that despoils 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.



series of long takes that achieve a thrilling immediacy. The action takes place in the daylight, where the threat is in plain sight but can attack at any moment. Windows can shatter, gangs attack without provocation. Survivors hide in a church.

There is no debating the secessionists – the filmmakers aren't interested in what they want. The only debate occurs when Stupe seeks the help of an African American gang to get sur-

BOOK REVIEWS

The greatest crime

Mike Heiser on
Jews in
Germany

THE HOLOCAUST: A NEW HISTORY
Laurence Rees
(Penguin Viking, £14.99)

The mass extermination of the Jews of Europe started in 1941, but Laurence Rees says it is necessary to understand the murderous ideology behind it by looking at Mein Kampf, where Hitler said that Jews were to blame for the misfortunes of Germany and were behind Bolshevism, Wall Street and the humiliation of the Versailles treaty after the First World War. Once the Nazis were in power, from 1933, they moved to imprison their opponents, such as socialists, communists and trade unionists in concentration camps, of which the largest was Dachau, near Munich. At this stage the Nazi policy for Jews was not to imprison them, but to deny them their rights, to incite violence against Jewish property and boycotts against Jewish shops. These actions were to encourage them to emigrate.

A wide range of Jewish and labour movement groups, particularly in the United States, promoted an international boycott of Germany. In this context the notorious Haavara agreement was signed between the German government and the main Zionist organisation in Germany, which allowed some tens of thousands of German Jews to emigrate to Palestine, in return for buying German agricultural equipment for use in the Palestinian Jewish economy. However Rees is at pains to point out that this did not mean that Hitler was any sort of a Zionist; indeed in Mein Kampf he had written against a putative Jewish state as a 'central organisation for their international swindle'.

As the 1930s wore on the situation of Jews in Germany became more serious. The Nuremberg Laws of 1935 prohibited relationships between Jews and non-Jews and Jewish businesses and synagogues were attacked in the nationwide pogrom known as 'Kristallnacht' in 1938. After the

invasion of Poland, Jews started to be confined to ghettos within the main Polish towns and cities. They were in insanitary conditions and many died as a consequence of malnourishment and diseases. However it was only after the launch of Operation Barbarossa against the Soviet Union in July 1941 that mass extermination began. Initially this was through groups known as 'Einsatzgruppen', supported by the 'Order Police' and the Waffen SS. Typically they marched the Jews out of town, took them to a large sandy pit, stole their valuables, ordered them to undress, shot them and buried their bodies. It is reckoned that over a million Jews were killed in this way in 1941.

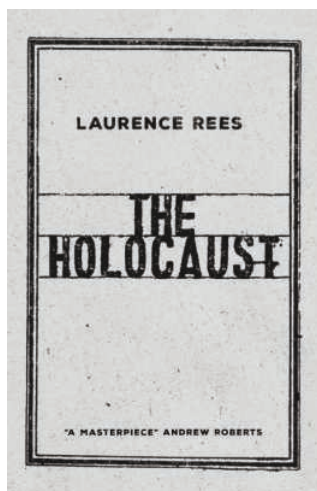
The first murder by the use of poison gas was in the 1930s against Germans with disabilities. Some of the same figures involved were later responsible for the extermination camps to which Jews were deported; notably Auschwitz, Belzec, Treblinka and Sobibor. The latter two were built as extermination camps and crematoria and carried out most of their work in 1942 and 1943 where they were responsible for most of the 2.7 million deaths. Auschwitz was built as a concentration and forced labour camp but became the symbol of the Holocaust and was responsible for the largest number of deaths, most of them in the gas chambers of Birkenau which carried on working after other gas chambers had been destroyed.

Over a million Jews were deported to Auschwitz from all over Europe and the vast majority perished there as did tens of thousands of Roma and Sinti people at Auschwitz, as well as political prisoners. Despite the brutality and subterfuge of the Nazis, there were revolts in the camps of Sobibor and Treblinka. Rees also briefly tells the story of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in April 1943 where Jews were able to resist the German army for over a month.

Rees, who is a television documentary maker as well as a historian, calls the work a 'new history'. He does not unearth any new facts. His main original source is those who lived through the events; Jews, Germans, Poles and many others including, for exam-

ple, the late Marek Edelman, the second in command of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. In common with the majority of modern historians Rees does not think it is enough to show the intent of Hitler. The path to the extermination camps had many steps. He downplays the Wannsee conference of January 1942 which did talk about mass deportation of the Jewish population of Germany and the occupied lands, but did not in itself give the go-ahead to the mass extermination through the use of poison gas, although that did happen some months later. Inevitably in a book as wide ranging as this there are omissions. I would have liked to see more treatment of Jewish life in the Ghettos and of the Jewish resistance. But the book is a sober and readable account, lucidly told, of what Rees describes as the greatest crime in history, only 25% of the seats and dissolved it, claiming that it was a relic of bourgeois democracy. In the piece by Lenin, he argues that soviet democracy is the highest form of democracy, adding that he sees no reason why bourgeois elements should have a say in the country's future. Maybe a coalition of the progressive parties could have ruled Russia and prevented all the evils of Stalinism. Maybe such a government would have been overthrown by the forces of reaction. But it is worth noting Ian Bullock's point on this that much of the Left internationally wanted to emulate the soviet system, but this proved in reality to be even less representative than parliamentary democracy, with all its faults.

Elements of the vanguardist Left in Britain still look to the soviet system as the way forward. Many of us on the democratic left are happier to stick with parliamentary democracy, but hopefully a more equitable version of it than we have at present. As for socialism, the prospects for it in the shorter term do not look good. We are left with a few regimes around the world that claim to be socialist, although Tony Cliff may be spinning in his grave with the thought that there might be a case for classifying China as 'state capitalist' these days. In the end the ten days that shook the world may be more of an exciting story than a blueprint for the future.



Petrograd 1917

**Duncan
Bowie** on
revolutionary
narratives

CAUGHT IN THE REVOLUTION
Helen Rappaport (Hutchinson, £7.49)
LENIN ON THE TRAIN
Catherine Merridale (Penguin, £9.99)

In this centenary year, it is difficult to choose between the plethora of books published on the Russian revolutions. I stress revolutions, because the February revolution is often forgotten and most of the new books focus on October. Rappaport's book is an exception.

Rappaport has published a number of books on Russian history including a study of Lenin's pre-revolutionary political activity – *Conspirator*. This new book is based on the memoirs, diaries and other works by Europeans and Americans who were in Petrograd – diplomats, businessmen, nurses, governesses, journalists and other revolutionary voyeurs.

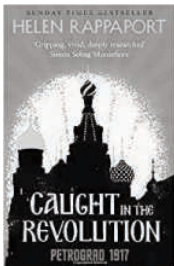
The range is impressive and about 100 different witnesses are quoted – Rappaport helpfully provides short biographies of most of them. Some are familiar, the British ambassador George Buchanan and his daughter, Meriel, who also wrote a memoir, the French ambassador Maurice Paleologue, John Reed and Louise Bryant, Arthur Ransome (of *Swallows and Amazons* fame), Somerset Maugham, suffragettes Emmeline Pankhurst and Jessie

Kenney, General Knox (advisor to the Tsarist and white armies). Others are less so – the nurses Elsie Bowerman, Dorothy Cotton, Lilian Grant, Ethel Moir, Dorothy Seymout and Edith Hagan or Phil Jordan the American ambassador's valet, cook and chauffeur, or the French actress Paulette Pax.

Rappaport has basically interwoven accounts from all these sources into a chronological narrative from the November 1916 through to January 1918. Rappaport started with the Leeds University Russian archive but also 20 other archive sources in the UK and US. This research is impressive, and the narrative she has constructed makes for an excellent read. Merridale's book focuses on Lenin's journey from Switzerland to the Finland station in the famous 'sealed train' in April 1917. While the narrative is well written, the story has been told before, notably in Michael Pearson's 1975 *The Sealed Train*. In fact, only two chapters in Merridale's book relate to the actual train journey, which only took just over a week – via Lapland, as the book tries to use the journey as the pivot for a narrative of the revolutionary year. This in effect means that she is heavily dependent on well known sources for both the pre journey months (in Switzerland

and in Petrograd) and for Lenin's activities in Petrograd (and in hiding in Finland) between May and October).

For her Petrograd chapters, she uses many of the better known sources used by Rappaport, so as I read the book second, I found myself reading much of the same material for the second time in a week, which was frustrating. For the pre-journey activities of Lenin in Switzerland, Merridale was largely dependent on Alfred Senn's 1971 study of the Russian Revolution in Switzerland. She also makes use of Zeman and Scharlau's biography of Alexander Helpland (Parvus) and Michael Futrell's 1963 study *The Northern Underground*, both of which are worth reading. Nevertheless, Merridale's study is a sound introduction to Lenin in 1917, though inevitably places Lenin (who was of course in exile for the early months of the year) at the centre of the story, when he was actually relatively marginal until after July. The book does have a useful guide to further reading, which is appropriate given the author's dependency on these sources and relatively limited original research other than actually travelling on Lenin's route, which I suppose is more than some authors would do.



Tribute to a forgotten heroine?

ALICE IN WESTMINSTER
Rachel Reeves (I.B. Tauris £20)

This is a rather odd book. It is a biography of Alice Bacon, who was a right wing member of the Labour Party NEC in the 1950s and 1960s; and a junior Minister at the Home Office and then at Education in the Wilson governments. Although Reeves's name is on the cover, inside the book it is recorded that the book was written with Richard Carr, a lecturer at Anglia Ruskin University. In my view this is bad practice. If a book is co-authored, both authors should be on the cover and the marketing material, but the publisher clearly judged that Reeves was the marketable author. Reeves has written this book, which is more tribute than critical biography, because its subject was both

female and an MP for Leeds, as is the main author. Reeves clearly sees a link between herself and her subject both in terms of experience and politics. It is interesting to note that a former shadow cabinet member, who refused to serve with Corbyn, has time to write a biography, to a large extent, despite remaining an MP, having opted out of current political debates – no doubt a form of therapy if not retreat. Though it should also be noted that she has also had three children since becoming an MP in 2010. The biography is marketed as 'the first biography of a forgotten Labour heroine'. Reeves tends to overstate Bacon's importance – she never rose higher in the political hierarchy than Minister of State. Her main role was as a supporter of Gaitskell, also a Leeds MP, on the NEC, which

may explain why Wilson never promoted her to cabinet rank. Bacon was a teacher and active in both the teacher's union and in the Labour Teachers Association (now the Socialist Education Association) as well as in the League of Youth before being elected to parliament in 1945, remaining an MP until 1970, when she was 'promoted' to the House of Lords (where all the pomp and ceremony made her uncomfortable). The book is nevertheless worth reading for two reasons – firstly it shows how committed Bacon was to comprehensive education, despite being on the right of the party and being a close ally and personal friend of the Winchester educated Gaitskell. This perhaps shows

CONTINUED ON P 27 >>

**Duncan
Bowie**
on a
progressive
right wing
MP

BOOK REVIEWS

Mubarak resistance and revolution

Jon Taylor on
an a
radical
story

**THE EGYPTIANS****Jack Shenker (Penguin Books, £10.99)**

This is a work of great passion; it is also a book of wide reading, substantial research and shrewd writing. Shenker draws on economic, political, social and cultural aspects of Egyptian life to show how the forces arraigned on all sides seek to outwit each other day by day. It is historically informed and makes compelling reading. It is also a book of joy and of sadness tinged with hope.

Jack Shenker was formerly Egypt correspondent for the Guardian; his investigation into migrant deaths in the Mediterranean won the prestigious One World media top award. In this, his first book, Shenker brings to bear all the skills he has honed in the service of the Guardian. He brings the events of the Egyptian uprising to life in a way few writers could. He shows us the circumstances that led up to the uprising directly from the long decades of repression of the Egyptian people.

Like all good journalists, Shenker is out on the street amongst the people, experiencing their joy at the possibilities and their despair as these are slowly closed down. Drawing on his, often hastily scribbled, notes written as events unfolded on the streets around him, Shenker reflects the extraordinary dynam-

ic of those days and months. This was a 'leaderful' and definitely not a leaderless uprising – these were the days of 'making-do' because 'Make-do is all you have when you try to make and do something new against the forces of old'. This is the Arab Spring.

The book falls into three parts. The first, Mubarak Country, sets out the political situation in Egypt in the years leading to the uprising. Shenker includes many sections on the role of women in this history. He describes in detail how one of the earliest feminists, Dora Shafik, emerges as a campaigner for women's rights, succeeding in getting the franchise extended to women in 1956. This section includes a fascinating description of the way in which the state sought to incorporate and neutralise emerging feminism. This was all part of Egyptian patriarchy and of Mubarak's surrender to the money men.

The second section, Resistance Country, deals with the years leading up to the uprising, but opening in Shenker style with an operation by British troops in 1882. This typifies Shenker's style in moving between the historical events of the distant and the more recent past. We see groups of

workers, unionised and non-unionised, taking increasingly militant action. We see too how

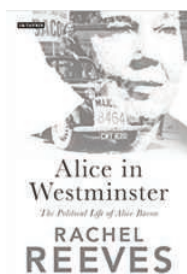
the state increasingly used military repression and the feudal power of the landlords as a tool of the grand neo-liberal political programme Egypt was being encouraged by the world banks and the G8 to introduce and in which the army was fully complicit.

The final section, Revolution Country, takes us up to the uprising or revolution as Shenker prefers to call it. Here we see how Shenker, on one occasion, caught in the works of the largest ceramic plant in the country, is hauled up before the owner's wife. 'It was Egypt's political economy – the specific type of capitalism which dominated the country prior to the revolution, and the way in which it was entwined with the structure of the Egyptian state – that gave rise to the social explosion of 25 January 2011.'

Tahrir Square meant freedom for the millions who rose up against the all-powerful state. If that freedom was later curtailed, after many experiments, it was because the Egyptian people grew tired and allowed the Army to restore order. But for how long? The gap between rich and poor grows ever wider; Al-Sisi's regime is as repressive as ever. Protestors are murdered, journalists are imprisoned and minorities harassed. The money men continue to rule.

>>CONTINUED FROM P 26

how far backward the Labour Party has moved on this issue over the last 50 years. Secondly, as a Minister of State at the Home Office under Roy Jenkins, Bacon was a loyal supporter of Jenkins's progressive reforms on homosexuality, abortion, race and drugs. The book provides a detailed narrative of both the legislation and the debates on these issues and Bacon's role within them – perhaps a surprising one given her background. Much of this section is sourced from an unpublished 2000 PhD thesis by Andrew Holden, but this is acknowledged and it is useful to have the narrative in published form. Now Reeves has finished her tribute, perhaps she will return to active politics and the shadow cabinet and possibly avoid speaking for the libertarian right think tank, Policy Exchange! in April 1917. While



the narrative is well written, the story has been told before, notably in Michael Pearson's 1975 *The Sealed Train*. In fact, only two chapters in Merridale's book relate to the actual train journey, which only took just over a week – via Lapland, as the book tries to use the journey as the pivot for a narrative of the revolutionary year. This in effect means that she is heavily dependent on well known sources for both the pre journey months (in Switzerland and in Petrograd) and for Lenin's activities in Petrograd (and in hiding in Finland) between May and October).

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Challenging the neoliberal economy

**James
Grayson**
on
Coops

COOPERATIVES CONFRONT CAPITALISM

Peter Ranis (Zed Books, £18.99)

This book provides useful statistics about quantity and contributes to debates around the ownership of capital assets. It includes case studies in the US, Latin America and Europe. Many of the co-operatives in Argentina came about through workers occupying factories as a response to, 'planned bankruptcies,' by owners. The other exemplar economy, Cuba accepted co-operatives as part of the loosening of state control yet problems remain about bureaucratic approaches to approval. A distortion of the Cuban economy relates

to remittances from abroad.

Ranis hopes to offer pointers for use within the American economy which is not renowned for the size or influence of its co-operative sector. He is enthusiastic about the potential for the use of the notion of 'eminent domain' and cites various legal decisions.

His notion of the history of co-operatives cites Robert Owen in New Lanarkshire but is mainly concerned with Marxist analyses. As the author is an American academic, it is surprising that many of the groups of early European settlers in the USA, who adopted co-operative approaches, receive no consideration.



Towards Equality and Democracy

**Hassan
Hoque** on
Neoliberalism

ALTERNATIVES TO NEOLIBERALISM: TOWARDS EQUALITY AND DEMOCRACY

Ed. Bryn Jones & Mike O'Donnell

(Policy Press, £60)

Type 'neoliberalism is' into Google today and the suggestions "dead", "good" and "bad" exemplify a key observation the editors make in the opening chapters of this book. That neoliberalism is unnamed yet all pervasive in our world today.

The emerging consensus across the political spectrum on the causes of the 2008 financial crisis, the uncertainties of a Trump presidency and our own uncertainties with the spectre of Brexit make this a very timely book. If like me, you often wonder what ideas and beliefs are driving our current political, economic and social policies; to what end; with what consequences; and what can be done to change the ideas and policies to achieve different consequences? Then this is definitely a book to read and talk about.

The introduction by editors Bryn Jones & Mike O'Donnell provides an excellent well referenced conceptual and historical overview of neoliberalism with specific references to the United Kingdom (our neoliberalism breakthrough was the 1976 IMF loan to the Callaghan government requiring swingeing public sector cuts). Conceptually neoliberalism is a reliance on the market as a mechanism to address not only the economic sphere but also

social and political issues. While Michael Sandel's 2012 best seller (What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets) argued for a serious public debate about what values we want our politics to build, this book goes beyond critique and resistance to a set of alternative perspectives and constructive policies.

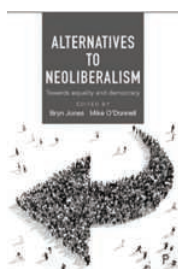
The book explores these alternative perspectives and policies in three distinct parts, each benefiting from an editor's introduction and content from multiple contributors.

Part one explores alternative paradigms and perspectives. Jeremy Gilbert's contribution provides an excellent critical overview of current oppositional paradigms to neoliberalism: moral, ecological (think environmental campaigns & Naomi Klein), democratic (the 'democratic deficit' crowd), radical (think post capitalism & Paul Mason) and cybernetic (think Jeremy Corbyn 2015-17 & Obama 2009). My main discussion point to take away from Gilbert's piece was his concluding proposition for 21st century socialism to imagine a new class alliance bringing together workers, professionals, and entrepreneurs and creating a distributed democratic decision making process in the public sector.

Part Two looks at the current state of some key global institutions working within a neoliberal paradigm. The IMF (its neoliberal

inspired prescriptions & challenges to them), the European Union (its transition from social democratic norms to neoliberalism, the resulting consequences and what the future holds for the EU). The section also looks at campaigns for corporate social responsibility and the challenges to a growing demand for corporate accountability. The final part weaves the whole discussion by emphasising the key role social democracy needs to play in rebalancing our political direction. The chapter discuss who some of these social democratic forces are and key positions we need to adopt to rebalance our politics.

Fundamentally this book is a detailed exploration of the language and logic in politics today and how that can be changed. From a historical view; Plato envisioned politics as an art, Aquinas as part of a Christian cosmology, Hegel emphasised the progression of the state, Hobbes utilised the newly discovered metaphors of science, for Marx it was determined by class, and in our time political vision is fundamentally coloured by economic models. The authors decisively argue that human agency has been negated within politics today; not by Plato's philosophers, religious fatalism, scientific determinism, nor by a specific class but by the dominance of large unaccountable markets. Ironically, neoliberalism is in need of serious competition.



BOOK REVIEWS

Stalinism exposed

Mike Davis
on the
birth of the
new left

1956 JOHN SAVILLE, EDWARD THOMPSON AND THE REASONER
Ed. Paul Fflewes & John McIlroy
(Merlin, £16.99)

1956 saw the biggest shock waves to hit Communist Parties since the 1939 Stalin-Hitler pact, when the Soviet Union suddenly reversed its anti-fascist stance. The combination of Khrushchev's secret speech to the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU denouncing the cult of Stalin, followed by the Soviet invasion to crush the democratic Hungarian uprising, produced an outcry amongst British communists and others.

Leading dissenters were E P Thompson and John Saville who faced a bureaucratic 'business as usual' response from new General Secretary John Gollan, ex-Gen Sec Harry Pollitt (the main casualty of Stalin's fall from grace) and others.

Blocked from expressing critical comment in party outlets they decided to produce a discussion journal of their own, *The Reasoner*. Its three issues, reproduced in this collection, are the highpoint of the book. Sandwiched between some forensic essays by the editors and a

selection of articles and statements from party leaders and committees, the journal covered fundamental questions of the nature of socialism, party organisation and democratic centralism and democracy. Expulsions, resignations and the formation of what became the 'new left' followed. Party membership between June 1956 and February 1958 fell by almost a third (10,000). A handful joined Trotskyist groups but the main thrust was towards developing a more humanist Marxist politics.

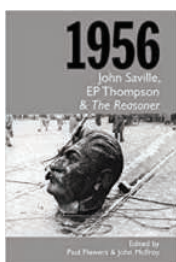
During the period of *The Reasoner* support from party intellectuals grew with John Berger, James Meek, Doris Lessing, Hyman Levy and many others joining the dissenters. The core argument became: 'the party was neither autonomous nor democratic, neither critical nor creative'.

1956 was a seminal year and the essays by Fflewes and McIlroy do a good job in assessing the growth of Stalinist politics in the CP and explaining how the hopes of thousands who had joined were dashed by a slavish adherence to the Soviet line and the claim that the USSR and newly joined East European

satellites were socialist.

Thompson's 'Through the smoke of Budapest' is a fine illustration of his incendiary style. Saville's critique of the theory of 'social fascism', which Communist parties adopted in 1929 to indict Labour and social democratic parties, is equally incisive. The two essays rounding off the collection cover Saville's experience of the CPGB from 1934 onwards and Thompson's attempts to grapple with Stalinism and the nature of Soviet society from the 1950s into the 1980s. Both Saville and Thompson initially remained rather starry-eyed about aspects of the CP arguing in the successor *New Reasoner* (1959) that the 'communist tradition', particularly the popular front phase in the later 1930s was a locus for socialist humanism. 'Minimal evidence, a great deal of assertion and not a little nostalgia' comment the editors.

The editors are somewhat sceptical of the politics of the new left, leaning towards more of a Trotskyist viewpoint. Whatever the failings of either outlook this book provides innumerable insights into why a modern democratic socialist politics was and remains sorely needed.



Whatever happened to the teacher?

Stephen Ball
on
teacher
travails

THE EDUCATION DEBATE
Stephen J Ball (Policy Press £11.99)

Somewhere in the constant process of education reform in England over the past 30 years the teacher has been changed, re-invented. The creative improvisation of daily life in the classroom that was the stuff of teaching until the 1980s is now a matter of technique and expertise driven by the demands of examination and assessment and the whims of the Secretary of State. This reform process has meant the reconstitution of teachers from an obstacle to reform – 'Teachers too often seem afraid of change and thereby resist it' (*The Learning Age: A renaissance for a new Britain* DfEE, 1998) – to an instrument of reform – as 'new professionals'.

The making of the 'new professional' has also involved establishing a relationship between pay and performance; the devolu-

tion of contract negotiations to the institutional level; the deregulation of the work of teaching to allow 'non-teaching' staff to undertake classroom activities and Free schools to employ unqualified teachers. The practice and the meaning of teaching (and learning) are both profoundly changed within the new management emphases on performance, quality and excellence and the market imperatives of competition between schools and parental choice. Through the disciplines of management methods and sensibilities schools are rendered as part of the larger ideological narrative of the enterprise culture. Educational institutions and teachers are now being expected to become 'agile' - self-managing and responsive to market opportunities and above all flexible – that is to be business-like and like a business.

Increasingly the training of teachers is now based in schools.

By 2016 School Direct accounted for 50% of all training places. The 2016 White Paper Education Excellence Everywhere signalled the intention to take further the shift away from university based teacher education and to abolish QTS.

Changes in employment, promotion and pay has placed teachers and teachers' work at the heart of a regime of performance management, teachers are now units of labour to be distributed and managed. Inside classrooms teachers are caught between the imperatives of prescription and the disciplines of performance. Passion, invention, spontaneity and commitment are displaced by malleability and a focus on outputs and measurement to produce the 'best' results. Not all teachers have succumbed to the necessities of reform but the teacher as a social figure is now an emaciated caricature more Gradgrind than Mr or Mrs Chips.



Georgia's forgotten revolution

**Duncan
Bowie on a
Marxist
Social
Democratic
Government**

The Experiment
Eric Lee (Zed, £10.99)



This is an important book. It is the first study in English of the Menshevik government in Georgia between 1918 and 1921 – that is Georgia in the Caucasus, not Georgia in the US. The Georgian experience and the Bolshevik suppression became a major contention in the debates between the Second International and the Third International in the early and mid 1920's, but is now largely forgotten (though not in Georgia) because so little has been written about it other than in Georgian. The American academic Stephen Jones in 1984 wrote a 600 page PhD on the early years of Georgian socialism, but the book he published in 2005 *Socialism in Georgian Colors* (reviewed at the time in *Chartist*) ends at 1917 – the promised second part taking the story to 1921, has never appeared, though the full thesis is available in a digitised version from the British library – curiously Lee does not use this as a source.

The Georgian experiment has received some attention with the re-establishment of Georgian independence following the break-up of the USSR in 1990, with Jones both editing a series of essays comparing the two struggles as well as writing a detailed study of Georgian independence since 1991.

In 1920, a deputation from the socialist international visited Georgia at the invitation of the Menshevik government. This included the Belgian socialist Emil Vandervelde, the International's secretary Camille Huysmans, the British socialists James Ramsay Macdonald, Ethel Snowden and Tom Shaw, a group of French socialists and trade unionists. Ramsay Macdonald wrote a short travelogue on his return. Ethel Snowden wrote an extensive report on both the journey, her companions and on the Georgian government in her book *A Political Pilgrim in Europe* which is an informed and entertaining read. Vandervelde published articles supporting Georgian independence and the Second international passed reso-

lutions attacking the Bolshevik takeover. The strongest defence of the Georgian social democrats was from the German Karl Kautsky. He published in German and English a detailed study of Georgia – *A Social-Democratic Peasant Republic*. The study infuriated Lenin, who already regarded Kautsky as a 'renegade' for his earlier critique of the Bolshevik government as a 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat'. Lee's book sets out the achievements of the Menshevik government. Their greatest achievement was their land reform with land ownership transferred from the nobility to the peasantry. Unlike other parts of the former Russian empire, the Georgian peasantry generally supported the Mensheviks rather than the Socialist Revolutionaries. The Georgian Bolsheviks led by Pilipe Makharadze (the Georgian Jughashvili/Stalin staying in Moscow) had little support though he tried to incite the urban workers against the Government). There was equality (including in terms of voting rights) between men and women. There were other strong contrasts with the Bolshevik regime. There was no president; the Georgian Menshevik leader, Noe Zhordania was prime minister. The constituent assembly (chaired by the former chair of the Petrograd soviet, Karlo Chkheidze), was multi-party with representation of other political parties, including the Bolsheviks, and of ethnic minorities (some of whom were allowed significant autonomy in their regions). The right to organise and to strike was written into the constitution. The co-operative movement flourished.

The Georgians supported federation with the other Caucasian republics – Armenia, Azerbaijan and the short-lived North Caucasus mountaineers republic, but the Transcaucasian federal government dissolved after a few months, under national rivalries and international pressures. The Menshevik republic struggled to avoid being drawn into the Russian civil war. At times, parts of Georgia were occupied by the Turks, the Germans and the British, the latter wanted Georgia to support the White Russians led by Denikin in fighting the

Bolsheviks.

The Georgians wanted to stay neutral. The Bolsheviks invaded Azerbaijan (which had been occupied by the British, who had also withdrawn, first from Tiflis and then Batumi), then Armenia, and then in February 1921, Georgia. Georgia was abandoned by the international powers, despite desperate attempts by the Georgian diplomats (led by Irakli Tsereteli who had been Minister of the Interior in the Russian provisional government) to win support first at the Paris Peace Conference and then at the newly founded League of Nations.

There were two final ironies. Georgia was officially recognised by Britain and the other European powers just as the Bolshevik invasion began. On the same day Tiflis fell to the Bolsheviks, the Georgian constituent assembly, which had taken refuge in Batumi on the Black Sea coast, finally voted through the country's new social democratic constitution which had been in draft form for nearly three years.

The Georgian government, led by Zhordania, escaped from Italy on an Italian warship, fleeing first to Paris, where the Government in exile published pamphlets (mainly in Georgian and French) defending their record and lobbying the Second International, which was led by the members of the previous year's visit. Many of the Menshevik leaders ended their lives in the US.

In 1924, a Menshevik supported rebellion was crushed by the Bolshevik government, after which the Menshevik experiment faded into history. In despair, Chkheidze committed suicide. Zhordania's memoirs were published in Georgian and in 1990 and subsequently in French. The Menshevik Woytinsky, exiled in the US, in 1961 published his memoirs, *Story Passage*, though his detailed 1921 study *Le Democratie Georgienne*, was only published in French. Tsereteli lived until 1959, still working on his memoirs. Hopefully both Zhordania's and Tsereteli's memoirs will one day be translated into English as will Woytinsky's study and Stephen Jones will finally get round to publishing the second part of his PhD.

WESTMINSTER VIEW



Brexit – economic suicide

Catherine West
argues
no deal is
the worst
possible
outcome

The Conservative government's Brexit negotiation so far has produced a string of concessions and red lines infected with virulent rhetoric.

It is clear this strategy is not working.

There is no shortage of daily warnings. The former Governor of the Bank of England Lord Mervyn King has said the government has wasted a year and should be "further along the road to making a credible fallback position".

The former head of the European Commission and the former Italian Prime Minister said Britain will be committing economic suicide unless it is prepared to compromise to reach a comprehensive Brexit deal.

The former chief mandarin at the Foreign Office until 2015 Sir Simon Fraser has put it even more bluntly, saying "differences" inside the Cabinet mean the UK has been "absent" from formal negotiations. "The negotiations have only just begun, I don't think they have begun particularly promisingly, frankly, on the British side," he said.

Against this backdrop, we are led by a Prime Minister who continues to state that "no deal is better than a bad deal" when no deal is, in fact, the worst possible deal.

As a strong remain campaigner representing Hornsey & Wood Green, the constituency with the highest Remain vote in the country, I believe the EU provides a huge range of benefits: for workers and business; in defence and foreign policy; from energy to education. It is for these reasons that I voted not to trigger Article 50 and why I backed an amendment in the Queen's Speech to keep membership of the Single Market on the table.

This is because Labour is an internationalist party through and -



Jeremy Corbyn and Keir Starmer blocking Tory Brexit

through. We are committed to being an open, fair and tolerant nation where everybody has the chance to succeed. We value the EU nationals who have built their lives here and added to our society, and we value our European neighbours and allies with whom we want to retain close links.

Take the stark comparison with the Conservative Party now. The Cabinet row over free movement is but one argument being had. In recent weeks there have been equally hostile battles over the UK's divorce bill, and the rights of EU citizens in the UK.

Further on, the border in Northern Ireland has scarcely been mentioned as of yet, and despite a deluge of warnings from industry groups, we know discussions on trade have not even started yet.

Labour's task is to unite and challenge this at all times, putting forward our programme that would see Brexit negotiations in which people, workers, jobs and the environment are put first, a vision where our economic, educational and security collaborations are protected.

Equally challenging, is the need to focus our attention at home. Naturally, with a seismic event such as Brexit, all eyes are on Brexit Secretary David Davis and the EU's chief negotiator Michel Barnier.

Yet right now we have an education system under extreme stress, a National Health Service close to breaking point, and a police force lacking the resources to protect us.

At the same time we are witnessing a rise in; inflation, consumer debt, and homelessness while wages and house building remain stagnant. People are struggling and more children are falling into poverty.

Internationally, our government has refused to take more than a few hundred lone refugee children, reneging on its own commitment and leaving them vulnerable to human traffickers.

This situation is unacceptable. That is why Labour has an incredibly popular and ambitious programme to challenge these ills and put fairness back into the heart of how we make policy decisions.

What concerns Labour MPs is the government will use Brexit, either as a cover for their domestic failures or to push through changes without proper parliamentary scrutiny. If nothing else, their unambitious Queen's Speech suggests the Conservatives have run out of ideas.

In either case, it is the job of Labour MPs, councillors, members and supporters, to unite and challenge the current course.

At such a pivotal time in global politics, we must get our negotiations right with the EU without it distracting us from fighting disastrous domestic policy decisions that will haunt us for years to come. **C**

Catherine West is Labour MP for Hornsey & Wood Green and International Trade Select Committee Member

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