

CHARTIST

For democratic socialism

#295 November/December 2018

£2

EU IN & OUT?

**John Palmer, Julie Ward,
Claude Moraes & Alena
Ivanova**

Brexit follies

Bryn Jones

Labour conference

Paul Nowak

New Economy

Patrick Vernon

Racism

Alice Arkwright

Abortion rights

plus

Book & Film reviews



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Editorial Policy

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

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

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

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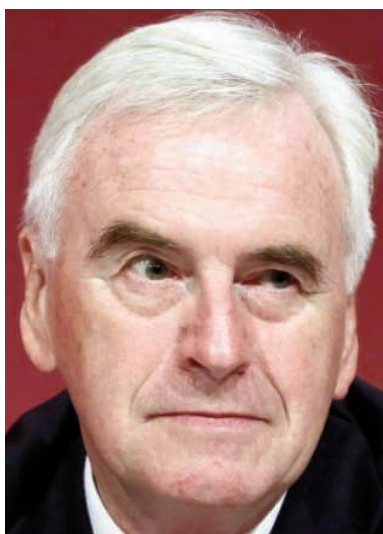
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OUR HISTORY

OUR HISTORY - 81

AIMS AND TASKS OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM (1951)



This is the founding document of the reconstituted Socialist International. The document was adopted by the first post-war congress held in Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany between 30 June and 3 July 1951. The Congress chair was Morgan Phillips who was general secretary of the British Labour Party. Phillips' memoirs of his time in both roles was published recently by Spokesman and reviewed in Chartist. It was drafted by Denis Healey, who was at that time International Secretary of the British Labour Party. Healey had been an active member of the Communist Party while a student at Oxford University in the late 1930's. He served during the Second World War, rising to the rank of major and acting as beachmaster for the landings at Anzio in central Italy. In his Labour Party role, Healey had responsibility for liaison with European socialist parties exiled in London and for supporting socialist parties in Eastern Europe which was falling increasingly under Soviet domination.

Healey became an anti-communist and vigorous advocate of democratic socialism. In 1947 he published a pamphlet for the Labour Party attacking communism – *Cards on the Table*. In 1951, Healey edited a book – *The Curtain Falls*, which told the story of the elimination of the socialist parties in Eastern Europe. The book included a foreword by Aneurin Bevan and contributions from socialists in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Entering parliament in 1952, Healey became Minister of Defence in Wilson's 1964 Government, Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1974-79 and deputy leader of the Labour Party 1980-1983, having defeated Tony Benn. Healey was a leading advocate of NATO, nuclear defence and a joint Anglo-American foreign policy. Healey received a life peerage in 1992, and died in 2017 at the age of 98.

The Aims and Tasks statement includes an extensive Preamble and sections on Political Democracy, Economic Democracy, Social Democracy and Cultural Progress and International Democracy. The full statement is published as an appendix in the third volume of Julius Braunthal's *History of the International: World Socialism 1943-1968* (Gollanz 1980)

"POLITICAL DEMOCRACY

1. Socialists strive to build a new society in freedom and by democratic means

2. Without freedom there can be no Socialism. Socialism can be achieved only through democracy. Democracy can be fully realized only through Socialism.

3. Democracy is government of the people, by the people, for the people.

It must secure:

a) The right of every human being to a private life, protected from arbitrary invasion by the state;

b) Political liberties, like freedom of thought, expression, education, organization and religion;

c) The representation of the people through free elections, under universal, equal and secret franchise;

e) The equality before the law of all citizens, whatever their birth, sex, language, creed and colour;

f) Right to cultural autonomy for groups with their own language;

g) An independent judiciary system; everyone must have the right to a public trial before an impartial tribunal by due process of law.

4. Socialists have always fought for the rights of man. The Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man which has been adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations must be made effective in every country.

5. Democracy requires the right of more than one party to exist and the right of opposition. But democracy has the right and duty to protect itself against those who exploit its opportunities only to destroy it. The defence of political democracy is a vital interest of the people. Its preservation is a condition of realizing economic and social democracy.

6. Policies based on the protection of capitalist interests cannot develop the strength and unity needed to defend democracy from totalitarian attack. Democracy can only be defended with the active help of the workers, whose fate depends on its survival.

7. Socialists express their solidarity with all peoples suffering under dictatorship, whether Fascist or Communist, in their efforts to win freedom.

8. Every dictatorship, wherever it may be, is a danger to the freedom of all nations and thereby to the peace of the world. Wherever there is unrestrained exploitation of forced labour, whether under private profit or under political dictatorship, there is a danger to the living and moral standards of all the peoples."

LETTER

Capitulation mistaken

My published article on Nikolai Bukharin (Chartist 294) states that 'it is widely believed that Bukharin capitulated to Stalin in the final show trial'. A key point was cut in editing, that this belief is mistaken. Though Arthur Koestler's influential novel *Darkness at Noon* centres on an old Bolshevik modelled on Bukharin, who submits, Bukharin's biographer Cohen described how he turned his defence into a trial of the regime in the name of the Bolshevik revolution, using cryptic 'Aesopian' language (a technique used to evade censorship from Tsarist times).

Nigel Doggett
Sussex

Left against Brexit and austerity

Wages stagnant for the longest period since the Napoleonic wars, a flatlining economy, low productivity growth and stagnant investment. Cap this with collapsing local council services in the face of eight years of spending cuts with a stubbornly high deficit we can see why Theresa May announces an end to austerity. The policies have failed. People want a new direction.

But of course the government doesn't mean end austerity now, but much later. Chancellor Hammond's budget makes that clear. The spending squeeze continues with schools, social services, policing, under fives provision, public housing, and regions taking the brunt. The £20b for health is spread over several years and fails to compensate for increasing need and elderly social care. The NHS remains at break-point.

Moreover, the problems created by Tory austerity look set to get a lot worse with Brexit and the chaotic negotiations of the government, which after two and half years have failed to even secure a withdrawal agreement, let alone a future economic relationship.

Following in the wake of Labour's upbeat Liverpool conference shadow chancellor John McDonnell has proposed an anti-austerity investment-led budget to deal with the grievances of Brexit supporting voters and the left behind across the UK. Labour conference adopted a policy on Brexit that keeps the Remain option on the table and reasserts that unless the six tests for jobs, rights, the environment and the same benefits as a member state are secured the PLP must vote down any government proposal.

McDonnell pledged to boost welfare spending, scrap the iniquitous Universal Credit (see **Paula Peters** critique), reboot public services and establish a regional growth fund.

Paul Nowak of the TUC emphasises the need for a national economic plan that prioritises investment in our broken public services, an end to the precarious economy of zero hours and agency working with respect for trade union rights, family friendly hours and appropriate levels of pay. **Bryn Jones** reports on Labour conference highlighting McDonnell's pledge to ensure greater democratic control by workers through a share scheme and board representation. Whilst a work in progress this is the necessary direction of travel to complement nationalisation plans. **Ann Black** fills out the internal democracy advances and compromises.

Meanwhile the menacing storm clouds of Brexit hang over any economic recovery programme. In a keynote feature **John Palmer** lays out the case for continuing to frame our political economy in a European framework. There is no national road to nirvana, the battle against neoliberalism has to be waged on a supranational platform which means remain and reform must animate a Labour alternative. Whether we are talking about ending corporate tax evasion, boosting trade and investment,

research and development, combating climate change or secure employment and decent pay the road leads through Europe.

Claude Moraes MEP shows how this is the case for security and crime fighting while Julie Ward MEP highlights the socio-cultural importance of the European Union—the most successful peace project since the Second World War. With Trump vowing to ditch the long-standing nuclear treaty with Russia while ripping up the Iran deal and banging the trade war drum the world looks a much more dangerous place.

In this context it is vital Labour has a clear defence policy. **Paul Dixon** puts current plans under the spotlight finding a new pragmatism from the Corbyn camp in the tradition of Michael Foot and Neil Kinnock—previous unilateralists on nuclear weapons. Looking beyond the Trident renewal question Dixon warms to Labour's anti-war stance while warning about excessive defence spending commitments (2% of GDP in last Manifesto).

Elsewhere in Europe extreme-right populist and fascist currents are emerging to underline the critical importance of standing up against racism, for refugees, migrants and

European free movement as **Alena Ivanova** argues. **Patrick Vernon**

finds the Tories hostile environment manifest in the appalling treatment of the Windrush generation, amongst others, is still not resolved. **Richard Kuper** of Jewish Voice for Labour provides a painstaking review of Labour's approach to tackling antisemitism and shines a way through the limitations of the IHRA definition and examples. He shows a path to strengthening our fight against all forms of racism while standing up for Palestinian rights against Israeli government oppression.

The government desperately clings on while making little or no progress on the withdrawal agreement, largely because of the Irish border issue, with May hostage to both to the DUP and her hard Brexiters. Brexit mean Brexit is more likely to be the Schrodinger's cat Brexit—neither in nor out—as John Palmer puts it, with ever-extending timelines for transition/implementation.

Meanwhile Labour must prepare for the most desirable course—a general election. May could topple any day. Labour has a clearer position on Brexit following conference. Labour's parliamentary ranks must unite behind Starmer's six tests and reject any deal or no deal that comes up short. The count-down to EU exit on 29th March 2019 continues relentlessly. Our manifesto must include an option to Reform and Remain whilst keeping a people's vote on the table. Our anti-austerity stance, cast in an internationalist European perspective, has the potential to win over both disenchanted leave voters and the vast majority of pro-EU voters. Let us keep our eye on the prize.

**The
government
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agreement**

Scotland and the long game

Paul Salveson on Brexit conundrums and future scenarios

It's always interesting to get a different perspective on politics when north of the border. A recent family trip coincided with the SNP's annual conference in Glasgow, preceded by a 100,000 strong pro-independence march in Edinburgh, which hardly got a mention in the London media. The SNP leadership is playing a clever game in managing demands for another 'indy' referendum, trying not to discourage the party's grassroots which is pushing for an early poll, whilst recognising that there isn't – yet – anything like a comfortable majority for a 'yes' vote. That could all change following Brexit.

A perceptive article in The Herald suggested that the SNP leadership, whilst being strongly anti-Brexit and in favour of a 'People's Vote', actually stands to benefit from the UK leaving the EU. The argument goes that Scotland will become further disadvantaged by being part of an independent UK – a variant of the traditional Marxist 'immiseration theory' (the poorer the workers get under capitalism, the more likely they are to rise in revolt). That theory was always a bit dodgy and wasn't born out by experience, in most cases. But the SNP leadership may be onto something in this particular case. It's one of the ironies of Brexit that the places likely to do OK, economically, are the areas that voted 'remain' – in particular, London. Scotland will suffer, which as we all know voted strongly to remain. But many parts of pro-Leave England, particularly the North, are likely to fare badly in a post-Brexit Britain (see various reports by IPPR North and others).

So where's this leading? Well, it's looking increasingly likely that we will leave the EU and a last-minute deal will be done, based on The Chequers plan, with some modifications to appease the Tories' right-wing. It's hard to see May going for a second referendum on any basis. Her hand could be forced if the DUP withdraws its support but I can't see them being that daft (and don't underestimate that Ulster canniness). It's always desirable to keep options open and a collapse of the

current administration leading to a General Election, as Labour is hoping, might just happen. But it's unlikely.

So what happens then? A likely scenario is that we leave the EU with a deal that nobody really likes and which leaves many parts of the UK, including Scotland, Wales and the North of England, worse off. It's hard to imagine the Tories going for an early General Election with May in charge, but entirely possible that they get a new leader and then go for a snap election next year, which they would stand a good chance of winning. Labour remains far less popular than they need to be, outside the big cities. They haven't made the dramatic comeback in Scotland which they'd been hoping for and their performance even in traditional Labour areas isn't brilliant.

That isn't to say Labour isn't in with a chance, and some on the left are hoping that Brexit will open up opportunities to reach the sunny uplands of 'socialism in one country'. Certainly, not being bound by EU directives would make rail nationalisation easier and potentially avoid compulsory competitive tendering (aka 'race to the bottom') for public service provision. But beyond that, there is little fresh thinking being done within Labour's ranks about what a progressive strategy for a post-Brexit Britain might look like. There are exceptions. Blue Labour's Jonathan Rutherford wrote an interesting piece for New Statesman this summer which I have a lot of sympathy with (see <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/staggers/2017/09/labour-must-choose-between-two-fundamentally-different-understandings>). He argues for a 'progressive' populism with a strong emphasis on cultural identity. This is something the SNP has been very good at, Labour much less so. It doesn't do culture, nor 'identity' unless it is of the modern identity politics kind, which doesn't leave much room for many of its traditional white working class supporters. Rutherford supports 'English patriotism' draped in a red-ish flag. I don't. English nationalism, still more an English parliament, would be inimical to the interests



SNP leader at independence demo

of the North.

Labour has toyed with a new, progressive regionalism but it hasn't got much traction in leadership thinking, which is very London-centric (or even North London-centric, as Jo Cox once reminded me). The Hannah Mitchell Foundation, albeit a cross-party group, tried hard to influence Labour thinking but had only limited success; it should perhaps be revived as an explicitly Labour pressure group.

At the same time, Labour does not – and never will – have all the answers. The next few years will see the emergence of centre-left regionalist parties which will steal some of Labour's progressive clothes (as the SNP has done in Scotland, and Plaid in Wales). Labour has had an easy ride in the North, which has resulted in many former Labour voters either not voting or supporting the right.

That should change. Already, the Yorkshire Party has won a few council seats, similarly in the North-east the regionalist party there has picked up respectable votes in local elections. I suspect a Lancashire Party would do well if it positioned itself so that it picked up votes from across the spectrum.

Obviously, having a fair voting system would help small, emerging parties. But we don't have that, and we never will get it under a Tory Government. There's a teeny-weeny chance it might happen under Labour, but pulling it away from its traditional centralist and sectarian instincts won't be easy. Good luck to those who are trying. **C**

Paul's website is
paulsalveson.org.uk

Labour's Green energy revolution

Dave Toke says Labour's green energy plans are the surest sign yet that they are heading for Government

Labour's low cost and practical proposals for expansion of onshore and offshore wind, solar power, energy conservation and increases in renewable heat are the surest sign yet that they are the competent choice for Government. Their proposals need some elaboration in places and some work on detail, but seem to be in a different dimension compared to the Tory Government that seems increasingly certain to be heading for self-destruction on the anvil of Brexit.

Rebecca Long-Bailey is aiming for 85 per cent of electricity to come from low carbon power by 2030. This is an easily achievable target, and will be done at low cost if simultaneously Labour cancels the disaster-in-waiting project at Wylfa, and some way can be found to avoid Hinkley C being built.

There's already enough offshore wind in the planning pipeline to ensure well over 50 per cent of electricity coming from renewables by 2025.

Labour's plans for boosting offshore wind, onshore wind and solar pv will meet its 85 per cent of low carbon power by 2030, and, in doing so, also accommodate a substantial increase in transport and heating demand provided through electricity.

The Government could revivify the buildings insulation programme, reinstating the programme started by the last Labour Government but short-circuited by the useless and self-defeating so-called 'Green deal'.

Of course the Government will need to engender some much smarter thinking and regulation than is happening at present to integrate the coming expansion of electric cars. But this requires imagination rather than cost increases.

Although some see the target of providing over 40 per cent of heat demand from renewables as being problematic, we could go at least a long way towards this target in a way that rests heavily on Labour's ideological strength in promoting municipal green socialism. Waiting in the wings is the developing technology in the form



Rebecca Long-Bailey going green

of industrial heat pumps. This, like a lot of other green technologies is one that is declining in cost.

A Labour Government could empower local authorities to start up local green energy companies who would have a focus on developing community heating networks to be supplied with heating by industrial heat pumps. This technology, already being demonstrated in Denmark, operates by using electricity to turn energy in the air, ground or water into heat. The heat can be stored in hot water tanks so that it can be delivered when needed.

In short, there's still some loose ends in Labour's green energy proposals but the outline is good and getting to look more and more plausible in terms of practical measures.

Stealing Green Party clothes

Reading through the Labour Party green pledges you'd be forgiven that there's a sort of transmission belt of ideas promoted by the Green Party and flowing into the Labour Party. This has left many Greens smarting, and they tend to react with a mixture of disbelief and pointing out that Labour still backs the extension of Heathrow Airport. However, looking at other policies one

Dave Toke's latest book is *Low Carbon Politics*, Routledge (2018)

would definitely be forgiven for coming to the conclusion that Labour are getting most of their policy ideas from the Greens. Take the example of the 4 day week, promoted recently by John McDonnell. Of course this idea featured prominently in the 2017 Green Party Manifesto. But hang on, Labour hasn't yet swallowed the idea of a Guaranteed Basic Income, also a long-held policy favoured by the Greens. Yet hang on again.....McDonnell apparently is talking about introducing a 'pilot scheme' for this very same idea.

Labour has even picked up on Green Party themes of opposing prospects of a US trade deal since it will lead to us accepting US regulations allowing beef made with GM hormones, chlorinated chicken and regulations that allow maggots and hair in food products. Of course there are some Corbynite policies that haven't been nicked from the Greens surely? Rail renationalisation, maybe? Well, not even that. The Greens have been promoting this for several years now! But then the Green Party still wants to scrap Trident, something that Labour doesn't. Ironically, this was Corbyn's preferred policy before he started copying the Greens big time. **C**

LABOUR CONFERENCE

Democratisation Odyssey continues

Bryn Jones gives two cheers for McDonnell's democracy plans, warns of Brexit implications but finds fudges on Labour internal democracy at Conference

Labour's new commitment to sweeping democratisation cropped up in several parts of the September Conference. Echoing Nye Bevan's 1952 call, John McDonnell said that 'Democracy is at the heart of our socialism – and extending it should always be our goal.' McDonnell went on to outline Labour's aims for democratic institutions in business and the economy. Another form of democratisation was alluded to later, in the much-publicised motion on Labour's approach to a Brexit agreement. The Party will now, apparently, consider a People's Vote (aka a referendum) if it cannot force a general election on the present government. These different dimensions of democratic participation were thrown into sharper relief by the failure or withdrawal of various constituency-generated motions for greater internal Party democracy. A review of this year's conference provides an opportunity to assess the direction and progress of democratisation, which has become a hallmark of the Corbyn project.

McDonnell's speech was much publicised for its proposal to set up Inclusive Ownership Funds. In these a company's shares will be owned and 'managed collectively' to give workers shareholders' rights in the direction of their company. McDonnell estimated dividend payments from the funds could give workers 'up to £500 a year' and 11 million workers would each have 'a greater say, and a greater stake, in the rewards of their labour.' However, some commentators have observed that in the event of a successful takeover the workers' shareholdings would either have to be sold for potentially huge buy-out gains for each worker, or be ring-fenced from the deal so the workers' holding could carry over to the newly merged firm. How would workers' and the public's best interests be decided in these cases?

However, the main problem

with this formula is that in many big firms shareholdings don't convey much actual power over the executive directors. As the scandal of executives' multi-million bonuses has shown, these top managers regularly and persistently evade or manipulate shareholder concerns. The previously announced plans to appoint workers' representatives to a third of the seats on company boards could reduce some of this managerial arrogance. But research has shown that 'external' directors can often be outmanoeuvred by inner circles of executives operating through operational committees, informal decisions and opaque and restricted communication of vital information. Moreover, the experience of worker representation in other countries, such as Germany, shows that a narrow perception of what they perceive to be in workers' interests can lead union/worker directors to back other directors' policies without taking into account the wider public interest of the environment, communities or consumers.

Labour should also remember the watering down and stalling of the 1970s Bullock Commission proposals. This episode showed that huge vested interests could neuter any real say for workers' representatives. So much could depend on the detail of any legislation. The powers of shareholder ownership are often a legal fiction. So Labour might well need to bring in further reforms to corporate governance. Variations on the Swedish system of legal rights of directors to appoint executive managers (as outlined in my book *Corporate Power and Social Responsibility?*) could usefully re-inforce the proposed powers of 'worker directors' and include wider civil-society interests.

Of course Brexit could complicate these ambitious, but commendable, plans in several ways. The European Works Councils scheme, to which the UK finally signed up in 1997, requires managers to inform and consult with

representatives on significant decisions at European level affecting employment or working conditions. For pan-EU countries such Councils could provide a valuable and reciprocal channel between worker directors and union representatives on the EWCs. Needless to say this mutual support would probably be lost if Brexit agreements didn't cover such social regulations. Contrary to some 'Lexit' and neoliberal claims about 'taking back control', Brexit might diminish the prospects for corporate governance reform in other ways. Disruption of trading and logistical links between and within companies could distract both cooperating businesses and Labour ministers. Emergency measures to keep the economy afloat to pay for the rest of Labour's programme could be seen as legitimate grounds for delaying any risk-inducing programmes of reforms 'at the top'. All of these factors will depend on the nature of the post-Brexit relationship which will, in turn, depend on how the decision is made: in Parliament(?); in an election(?); or in the much-touted Peoples Vote? Labour's apparently ambivalent stance on a second referendum is actually quite astute.

Retaining a 'public vote' as just one 'option' makes sense when the different political dimensions are taken into account. For one thing, if the government did submit to pressure for another referendum the Opposition are unlikely to have much say in the actual wording. Mrs May would be more likely to bend to the pressure of Tory Brexiteers. In which case the wording would be loaded in favour of the Cabinet's preferred option. At best this would be a Brexit-lite. At worst it could be closer to the Hard Brexit criteria of Rees Mogg et al. In the best of all Remainer worlds, a 'no' vote against a hard deal might leave some form of continuing membership back in play, but it would probably be won by another narrow margin. Labour could then be

Bryn Jones is co-editor, with Mike O'Donnell, of *Alternatives to Neoliberalism-Towards Equality and Democracy* and member of Bath CLP

punished by electoral defections from embittered Leave supporters in elections. As has become abundantly clear referenda are blunt instruments for obtaining a democratic mandate. Referendum results are open to conflicting interpretations by both voters and political leaders. Would Labour really be furthering its new found commitment to democracy by backing a referendum that could be stage-managed and manipulated? This would be even more true if the result further exacerbated the political-cultural rift across British society: losing Labour voters to hard-Brexit Tories; or even to a revived UKIP or worse.

Of course, as many in the Party have argued for years, democratisation should begin at home. Labour remains saddled with procedures and rules that are only loosely democratic.

Conference motions on leadership elections and the selection of candidates to stand as MPs represent attempts to remedy this state of affairs. These constituted a little progress. Conference preferred the NEC proposal for Party leadership candidates to need 10% of MPs and MEPs plus either 5% of CLPs, or 5% of members in three affiliates (trade unions). But, as a consequence, a CLP motion to make nominations depend on 15% of MPs/MEPs and CLPs therefore fell. Similarly, motions to abolish trigger ballots for re-selection of MPs as candidates (that is 'open selection') also fell (see Ann Black).

These Byzantine manoeuvres apart, many delegates seemed to think the Party's biggest democratic deficit is the disproportionate strength of trade union delegations, as 'affiliates', when ballots took place. When the results

of the ballots for 'priority motions' was announced the union favourites gained more overall votes than those prioritised by the more diverse CLP vote. Voting as a bloc the union delegations secured all four of their most favoured topics (Brexit, Economy, Government Contracts and In-work poverty) giving negligible or zero votes to highly regarded CLP motions on Climate Change and Local Government Funding. When the results of the ballot for the Conference Arrangements Committee were announced there was audible booing. All five of those elected were union nominations. None of the CLP and other affiliates' candidates were elected. The prospects for social democratisation are promising. Party democracy remains a work in progress. **C**

Democracy – threat, opportunity, or damp squib?

Ann Black reports on compromises and conflict on party democracy

This year's conference went well, with popular announcements on childcare, workers' rights and renationalisation and a composite on Brexit which satisfied almost everyone at the time.

For insiders the focus was on the Great Democracy Review. Debate started badly when delegates complained about receiving 35 close-typed pages of text just hours before kick-off, including last-minute NEC proposals on reselecting MPs and electing the leader which would pre-empt more radical amendments scheduled for later. As a consequence 91% of CLP delegates rejected the agenda set out by the conference arrangements committee, and business only proceeded because 98% of the unions outvoted them.

Momentum had collected 50,000 signatures supporting universal open selections and a lower threshold for leadership nominations, but compromises brokered between key stakeholders fell far short of their demands. On MPs, an open selection would only be triggered if at least one-third of party branches or one-third of affiliate branches called for one.

For the leadership, candidates would now require 10% of MPs/MEPs plus either 5% of CLPs or three affiliates, including two trade unions and representing at least 5% of affiliated membership. Both are relatively sane: open selections in every seat could not be completed until 2023, and CLPs now have real power in determining which candidates get onto the ballot.

Although Momentum changed tack halfway through and urged delegates to support the compromises, two-thirds of CLP delegates still voted against the NEC, but union votes ensured that both were carried. While Tony Blair always dismissed the unions as 'producer interests', seeing constituency representatives as the authentic voice of the people, the unions now provide a modicum of stability in turbulent times.

Less attention was given to a raft of other changes. Some are good: removing the 'contemporary' requirement for conference motions, and adding a disabled members' representative to the NEC. Others less so: filling NEC vacancies through by-elections, rather than promoting the runner-up, will leave CLP places

empty for months or cost between £70,000 and £300,000 to fill them. A high price to ensure that the bloc with 60% of the vote retains 100% of the seats.

At constituency level equalities officers now have voting status on the executive committee (EC) and job-sharing will be allowed for most positions. A shift in management from the EC to the general meeting has led some to ask if the EC can even book rooms without asking the GM first, but hopefully the rules will be applied flexibly and sensibly.

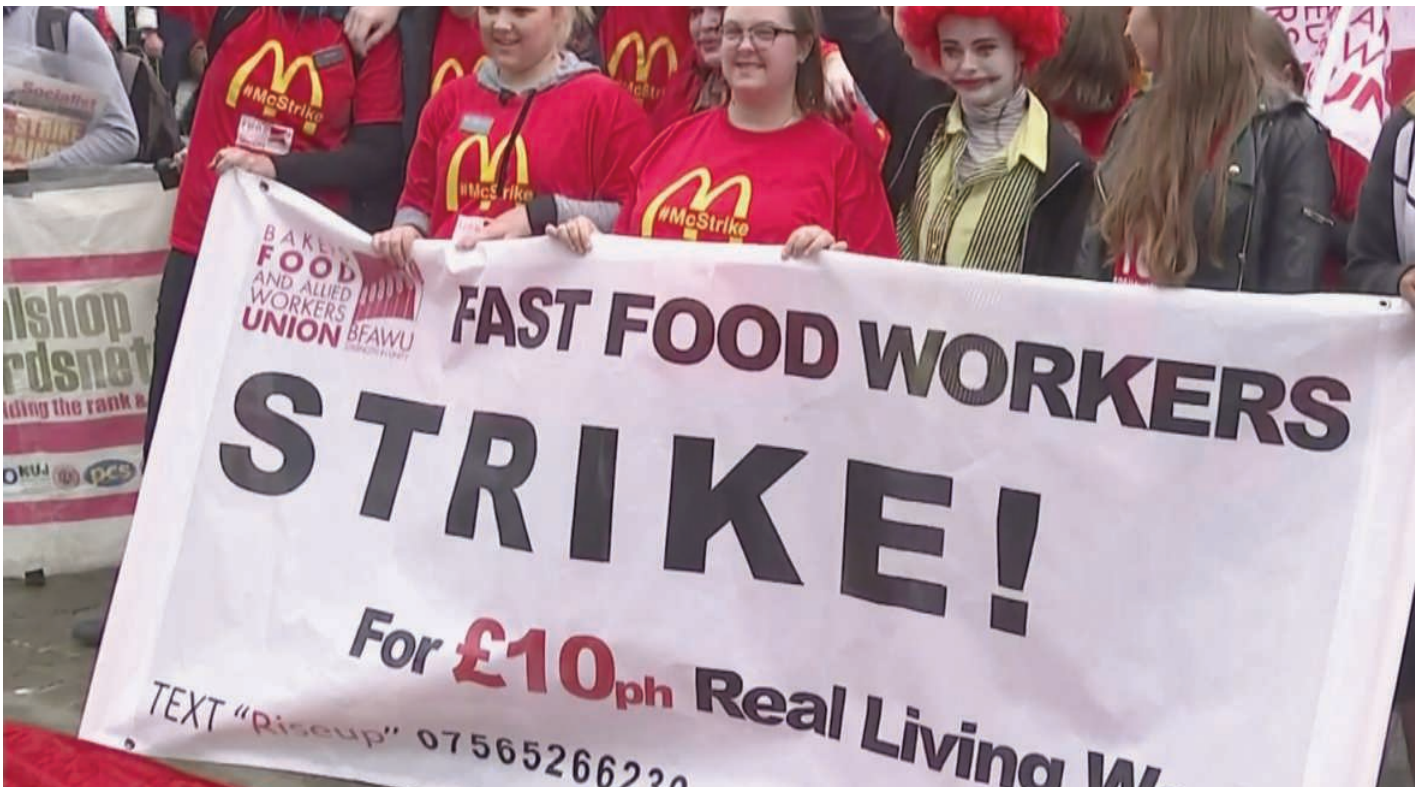
However 90% of the review is still to be implemented, including a replacement for the National Policy Forum, changes to local government structures, and interlocking networks of regional and national committees and conferences for women, BAME, LGBT, disabled and young members. This year the relatively simply process of filling the new National Constitutional Committee places took five drafts and many hours, which does not bode well for the technical challenges of putting the rest into rule. The NEC and party staff will have time for little else. **C**

Ann Black
member of Oxford
CLP and ex-NEC

NEW ECONOMY

Investment first to avoid economic crash

Paul Nowak on the challenges facing Labour and the unions with a new economic recovery plan



McDonald's workers take strike action

In its 150th year, the TUC faces some immediate and pressing challenges. Britain has yet to secure the terms of its withdrawal from the European Union and the outcome of the Government's negotiations with the EU 27 will undoubtedly have profound implications for the future of the UK, its economy and labour market. Anything but continued membership of the Single Market and Customs Union is likely to leave the country in a worse position. Brexit-driven uncertainty has led leading employers to echo union concerns about the impact of a Brexit deal that disrupts trade, and the implications for UK supply chains in key sectors such as automotive and aerospace. The TUC has spent the last 18 months pressing for a Brexit deal that secures jobs, employment rights and social protections, and the Good Friday agreement in Northern Ireland.

But it is clear that Brexit is not the only challenge facing the UK

economy. As the TUC's 2018 Budget submission pointed out, since the financial crash the UK economy has had its poorest decade for growth in the post-war era. Productivity lags 16% behind the G7 average; insecure work is endemic – with one in nine workers now employed in some form of insecure employment; and investment levels are low, with the UK ranking 34th out of 36 OECD countries for capital investment.

With an economy still reliant on consumer spending, but seeing continuing and prolonged squeezes on wage growth and living standards, there has been an alarming increase in private debt. Unsecured borrowing has hit its second highest level since 2009. Devastating cuts have crippled public services, while slowing the economy. Our economic growth continues to be over-reliant on financial services, helping fuel huge inequalities between regions and nations, towns and cities.

These fundamental economic problems suggest that any Brexit

deal has to be accompanied by a national recovery plan to bring more good jobs to communities across the country.

That means investing in our public services, and social and physical infrastructure, and winding back eight years of austerity. Providing real terms funding increases across the public sector would help rebuild public services and address the significant cuts to resources since 2010. In the medium term, UK spending on public services per capita should be raised in line with our comparators in Europe, like France and Germany.

Just as important as funding for public services, is how this funding is spent and services are delivered. The collapse of Carillion at the beginning of 2018, the failure of Stagecoach and Virgin's franchise to run the East Coast mainline rail service, and the early termination of 21 contracts to run probation services held by eight private firms this summer, have rightly raised

questions about the role of private firms delivering public services in the UK. With the public mood beginning to reflect long-standing TUC calls for an increased role for public ownership there is scope to think again about how best to deliver public services in a way that delivers benefits for taxpayers and service users alike.

The TUC is also pressing the government to lay the ground for an investment-first economy with a meaningful industrial strategy, engaging unions, at its heart. Raising public investment to the OECD average of 3.5% of GDP and establishing a National Investment Bank with a remit to target communities where good quality and well-paid jobs are most needed, would be an important first step.

Finally, the TUC has also called on government to establish a new tri-partite future of work commission to help manage and shape the coming digital revolution which will have profound implications for workplaces up and down the country. Managing this transition, shaping education and social security systems to support it, engaging workers, and opening up a discussion about how the benefits of new technology are fairly shared, are essential if the UK economy is going to realise and fairly share a potential digital dividend worth £200bn a year.

The government's National Retraining Partnership involving the Department for Education, the CBI and TUC is a good first step, but it's not enough. Government needs to raise both the scale of its ambition and investment to ensure increasing digitalisation doesn't simply reinforce existing inequalities.

Underpinning this national recovery plan, the TUC is calling for a new deal for working people – with a focus on driving up the quality of working life. While employment levels are high, for far too many people – particularly young workers – work is increasingly pressured, insecure, low paid and unrewarding.

Over the last decade workers have borne the cost of labour market deregulation. Key employment rights have been weakened and the ability of unions to organise and represent working people has been undermined, including through the Trade Union Act. Enforcement agencies remain under-resourced making it harder for many to

claim their workplace rights.

Across the economy we have seen the biggest squeeze on wages since the Napoleonic Wars. In part this downward pressure on wages has been driven by the pay freezes and pay caps – in fact, real terms pay cuts – imposed on public sector workers between 2010-2018.

This has resulted in the pay packets of public sector workers being cut by an average £2,552 (in real terms, that is once inflation has been taken into account) over the course of the last decade. Funding meaningful pay increases in the public sector, boosting the minimum wage to £10 an hour in the short-term, extending the coverage of the real-living wage, and supporting union efforts to extend collective bargaining would all help give Britain the pay-rise it needs and deserves.

But a new deal for working people will also need new individual and collective employment rights – raising workplace standards and redressing the fundamental imbalance of power in many British workplaces. That the current framework of employment law is struggling to keep pace with modern employment practices was explicitly recognised by the Prime Minister when she commissioned Matthew Taylor to look at this issue in October 2016. But while the Taylor review brought forward some useful recommendations – including calling for equal rights for agency workers and making it easier for employees to enforce employment tribunal awards – it fell far short of the root and branch reforms needed to make Britain's workplaces fairer.

Alongside a ban on zero-hour contracts, equal rights for agency workers, and a reversal in the burden of proof in employment cases so workers are presumed to have rights unless their employer can show they are genuinely self-employed, the TUC is pressing for a range of measures designed to help workers enforce their rights.

For example, the TUC believes there should be a system of joint and several liability throughout supply chains for basic employment standards. This would mean that organisations who seek to transfer their obligations to other parties, can still be found liable for any breaches of the core employment rights of the people who do work for them.

Of course, the most effective way of driving up employment

standards, helping workers enforce their employment rights, and reducing wage inequality is to support the growth of unions and collective bargaining. Repealing the Trade Union Act 2016, restoring ACAS's duty to promote collective bargaining, and giving trade unions the right to access workplaces to tell people about the benefits of joining a trade union would all help drive up employment standards. And this support for unions should could sit alongside other measures to improve worker voice at every level, including at a sectoral level and in Britain's boardrooms.

Securing a decent Brexit deal, reshaping the UK economy, and delivering a new deal for workers, will all require a trade union movement capable of influencing employers, politicians and policy-makers.



Paul Nowak is deputy General Secretary of the TUC

Revitalising trade unionism would be greatly helped by a supportive government and a new positive legislative environment. Labour's 2017 manifesto for a fair deal at work, would represent that significant political shift. But it will also require unions to step up their efforts to reach out to the next generation of members and activists, and in particular to reach younger workers – less than 1 in 12 workers aged under 24 carry a union card.

Some recent developments provide some light at the end of the organising tunnel. The first is the small-scale, but surprising and welcome, upsurge in union activity amongst young workers in the private service sector. Throughout 2017 and 2018 groups of predominately younger workers have taken action against employers including TGI Fridays, McDonalds, Wetherspoons and Uber.

Backed by smart social media campaigning and union legal strategies these campaigns have propelled trade unionism into the public eye and forced a response from both government and employers. Alongside Unite and BALPA's recent success in securing recognition at the previously staunchly anti-union Ryanair suggests that unions can be confident of breaking new ground in the private service sector and amongst younger workers.

Reshaping Britain's economy requires a strong, thriving trade union movement. That would be good for workers, good for business, good for our economy and society as a whole. **C**

UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Scrap Universal Credit

Paula Peters gives some of the reasons why

In recent months, Universal Credit has come under increasing scrutiny and criticism from the Archbishop of Canterbury, The National Audit Office, Labour MPs and many grass roots activists and campaigns highlighting the horrors of the policy that is Universal Credit.

It's pushing claimants further into poverty, and personal stories show Universal Credit is causing horrendous harm and distress.

In areas where Universal Credit has been rolled out like Newcastle for instance, the use of food banks has risen 90%. The DWP say that Universal Credit makes work pay, but when the DWP claw back 37p from every £1 you earn, and with payment delays of up to 13 weeks in some areas, claimants are left with little choice but to apply for an advance payment to pay the rent or face eviction. 40% of that advance payment the claimant has to start paying back immediately. The government is turning into a loan shark and employing debt collection agencies to claw that debt back.

With the ever-increasing rise of zero hours contracts and the gig economy, people are trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty. The nightmare that is the claimant commitment, the hoops the Job Centre force the claimant to go through, have seen sanctions rocket.

With Universal Credit an online application, one third of 13 million disabled people have no access to a computer and do not know how to use one, and with the closure of libraries, how do claimants access the benefits system? Simply put, they can't.

This heinous policy will hit you if you are in or out of work. If you are in work and need Housing Benefit to top up your rent, you will be hit. If you have child or working tax credits, you will be hit. Eight million households will be impacted.

If you are on legacy benefits right now and report a change of circumstances, for example, you move home, you move out of area, or your health condition worsens, the DWP will move you on to Universal Credit. I have been contacted by people who wanted to



Ian Duncan Smith- father of Universal Credit

move but couldn't because they were too afraid of Universal Credit and the horrors it brings and felt unable to cope with it. It is stopping social mobility.

Disabled people will be particularly hit hard when migrated over to Universal Credit from 2019 and reassessed with a Work Capability Assessment. If you are moved from the support group to Work-Related Activity group you will lose £40 a week plunging you further into poverty. Under this policy Severe Disablement Payments do not exist, meaning the loss of vital money disabled people need to live on.

Then we have the injustice that is the awful policy called the rape clause that is now part of the child tax credit and the two-child limit rule, but allowed women to claim if a child was born without their consent.

Esther McVey said it gave women the opportunity to talk about their situation to people who were not their health worker. What, a work coach or Job Centre advisor? Talking to people with no training who could traumatise the woman even further? Where is the outraged reaction we need to see to this?

The heart of Universal Credit is punitive punishment with the safety net being ripped away.

Financial insecurity comes first with the end game being the abolition of the welfare state itself. It is an ideological policy designed to ramp up distress and harm and stop you claiming at all.

We see now the co productive working of the DWP/NHS with mental health claimants top of the DWP target list for forced cognitive behavioural therapy in Job Centres. This is coercion and bullying.

If you don't take the treatment you will be sanctioned. It is all part of the claimant commitment and the hoops you have to go through. Look for work 35 hours a week and take a job where you have to travel 90 minutes each way is the message.

Unite, CWU, RMT and the TUC have called for Universal Credit to be stopped and scrapped, but at the recent Labour Party Conference the position – pause and fix - remains the same. You can't fix a system built to fail. We need everyone to ramp the pressure on Labour to change its policy. We need you to join the campaign.

We need a social security system that supports in work and out of work claimants, with a safety net in place. That's a system we all need to talk about and make happen. **C**

Paula Peters is a member of Disabled People Against Cuts

British Black Lives Matter

Patrick Vernon on learning the lessons from the Windrush scandal as part of the history of Black struggle in Britain

In April 2018 I launched the Windrush Amnesty petition which over 180,000 people signed and caught media attention contributing to lobbying and campaigning by the migrant sector, grass roots organisations, politicians, faith leaders, trade unionists, celebrities, politicians and the general public. In the face of the hostile immigration environment it helped to get justice for the children of the Windrush Generation and others from the Commonwealth to be recognised as British.

Six months on although there is some progress with a Taskforce trying to fast track citizenship claims, a 'lessons learnt' review, two consultations on a Windrush compensation scheme, numerous apologies and admissions from the Prime Minister and other government ministers and the adoption of a national Windrush Day with funding. However the critical issue around the scandal, based on a government commitment to sort out this mess, is that ministers are planning to introduce a cap on all compensation claims and will not consider any interim or hardship fund. That is why I have launched a new petition that the victims of Windrush Scandal should have a fair and proper compensation scheme (<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/227821>).

One of the biggest ironies of the scandal is that the public have learned more about Empire Windrush and the Windrush Generation during April 2018 than in the previous 50 years. In 2018, as part of the 70th anniversary, we as nation have failed in creating a substantive recognition of the contribution of the Windrush Generation and other migrant communities who see themselves as British to British society.

The Windrush Scandal is another episode of Britain's history of racism. People forget the climate this comes in: in the 1940s, black people were banned from buying or renting houses, paid far less than their white co-workers and discriminated against and bullied in the workplace, as well as harassed by the police. We must remember Learie



British Black Lives matter

Constantine taking Imperial Hotel to court in Central London for discrimination during the height of WW2. This 'colour bar' was the catalyst for riots in Notting Hill and Nottingham in the 1950s.

In the 1960s, Paul Stephenson organised a boycott to force the Bristol bus company to stop discriminating against black people and Asquith Xavier took British Rail to court after being refused a job at Euston Station. That is why, since 1965, we have had a series of laws and government bodies tackling structural racism and discrimination due to the campaigning efforts of the Windrush generation.

By the 1970s, black men were regularly stopped and searched, despite not being suspected of any crime, simply because of their race under "sus" laws; the toxic legacy of this continues today. In the 1980s we had riots in Brixton, Tottenham, Bristol and Toxteth, where young black people rebelled against the police, discrimination and mass unemployment. The 1993 murder of Stephen Lawrence led to major changes in race relations law.

In June this year the government announced that Windrush Day will be a national day of public recognition of the Windrush

Generation and their descendants from June 2019. We must recognise this is a positive step even though many may see it as political cover or sop by Theresa May. What is disappointing is that the government did not consider the wider recognition of all migrants who have made Britain 'Great' especially after WW2, which makes Windrush Day potentially less inclusive.

Windrush Day exists in the current context of a hostile immigration environment and the rights of the children of the Windrush Generation have still not been fully resolved. For Windrush Day to be successful and valued we still need to campaign and change government policy on immigration and citizenship and celebrate all migration especially as we move towards Brexit.

It is very clear that in 2018 we are not in a post racial Britain with the Windrush Scandal, hate crime against migrants and LGBT+ community, over representation of Black people in the mental health system, and rising stop and search against Black people. It is even more critical that we advance and promote the importance of Black British history and its connection to world history both past and present. **C**



Patrick Vernon
OBE, Windrush
campaigner and
social
commentator

BREXIT

Mind the security gap

Claude Moraes says a bespoke interim agreement is urgently needed to avoid standstill

As the UK gets ready to leave the European Union, finding ways to safeguard cooperation with the EU on justice and home affairs has proven more difficult than expected. Over the years, British security has become increasingly dependent on successful integration with EU-wide policies. The UK currently has the advantage of being granted a 'special status' in the area of freedom, security and justice (AFSJ). However, with Brexit the UK's relationship is about to fundamentally change.

The EU's data-sharing tools are a central aspect of the UK's cooperation in policing and security, allowing for a wide range of information to be exchanged on a 'real-time' basis. This includes data on suspects wanted for arrest or questioning, stolen vehicles, missing people, criminal records, DNA and fingerprint data, and criminal offences and structures.

These tools are underpinned by a number of EU laws, so the UK would need new agreements with the EU to retain access to them

after the transition or implementation period. These new agreements must ensure that expertise and intelligence between the UK and the EU27 continues, as well as cooperation in policing and judicial matters. UK-EU collaboration must continue, particularly on policing and security matters to protect the benefits from key joint bodies such as Europol and the European Arrest Warrant. With Brexit the UK will also leave the legal framework for moving data between the two areas. The UK needs to act now to ensure data flows can continue uninterrupted.

The UK risks losing national security exemptions on data usage guaranteed by the EU's GDPR legislation, rights to retain bulk data and other powers granted to British security services. Agreeing an adequate data protection regime in the UK is fundamental to ensuring mutual trust, human rights and the exchange of personal data for law enforcement purposes. The problem is negotiations for a new 'Data Adequacy' agreement can

only begin when the UK has formally left the UK from April 2019. Even worse, securing Data Adequacy - a status granted by the European Commission to non-EEA countries - is a lengthy process that could take up to 18 months. What is needed is a bespoke interim agreement to avoid a temporary standstill in information exchanges, which would be mutually detrimental.

The European Parliament's Civil Liberties Justice and Home Affairs Committee, which I chair, has outlined a suggested level of priority that cooperation measures should be given in the future EU-UK relationship. Areas of cooperation that should be prioritised are continued cooperation in Europol and Eurojust, data exchange in ECRIS, SIS II and PNR.

With Brexit rapidly approaching, international cooperation should not be treated as an option but essential to the security of the UK. Getting it right soon means safeguarding the justice, security and freedoms for both EU and UK citizens.

Claude Moraes is a Labour MEP for London

Conference green light to stay put

Alena Ivanova says let's make our movement home for the 20th October marchers

This year's Labour conference saw a record number of CLP motions submitted on a single topic - over half of all motions submitted were on Brexit, and of those 80% were in favour of a public vote on the final deal under some form or other. Those of us in the main hall during Keir Starmer's speech cannot deny the palpable sense of collective relief that took over the room when he proclaimed Remain is not off the table in a referendum scenario.

What was achieved during this year's largest member gathering was therefore to reassure the predominantly Remain membership that it is OK for us to still think Brexit is a mistake and to want to fight the disaster that Brexit would spell for the poorest in our society.

However, the challenge

remains for us to prove that this isn't a shift too little too late. We can't go back to our constituencies reassured that the Labour team will chart the most prudent political course for all of us. Our job as activists is to convince the country Brexit is worth organising against and to use this moment of chaos in politics to win hearts and minds over to the ideas of socialism and internationalism. We, in other words, need to step up!

On behalf of Another Europe is Possible, I make a call to action. In the first instance, we need to keep up the pressure on our Labour MPs to follow agreed party policy and not submit to Theresa May's blackmailing attempts to lure them into proping up her government by supporting her deal. The 'statemanly' tendency within sections of our party needs to be suppressed via concentrated efforts of local mem-

bers and constituents.

Secondly, we need to learn the lessons of the 20th October demo - there is a mass of people gathering around the idea of stopping Brexit. While they may not be organised or politicised - we need to make the labour movement the obvious political home for these hundreds of thousands.

These are the people that could not only help us win a potential public vote, but are the people we need to also win a general election. Lastly, we need to put more efforts into organising migrants whose vote was taken away from them, and migrants who never had the benefits of the EU-backed freedom of movement. We need to make migrant voices central to our political campaign to counter not just the threat of Brexit, but the existential threat of the rising far right. **C**

Alena Ivanova is campaigns organiser for Another Europe is Possible.

For more information of AEIP activities visit

www.anothereurope.org

See also pamphlet The Left Against Brexit

Brexit – an abandonment of solidarity

The European Union is much more than a trading bloc says **Julie Ward**

We're leaving!" shout the Brexiteers whenever there's a slight whiff of Remain in the air. But when, and if, we do leave what exactly are we leaving, apart from taking leave of our senses? That, at least, becomes more and more apparent as the impasse regarding the Irish Border continues to defeat the amateurish UK negotiators at every step on this tortuous path into the unknown. Meanwhile, Barnier, the calm, assured, consummately professional, tough and fair negotiator, waits with extraordinary patience, reminding Theresa May that the clock is ticking and that a backstop means a backstop even if 'Brexit Means Brexit' means many different things to the Conservatives.

Our membership of the EU brings us many benefits, tangible and intangible. Since voting (narrowly) in 2016 to cut our historic ties with the world's most successful peace project, the British public have largely, to their growing dismay, discovered the smorgasbord of EU initiatives present in their daily lives. This menu of ever-increasing common goods should have been taught in school as part of a half-decent citizenship curriculum and then be subsequently revisited through innovative lifelong learning programmes, including learning at work.

From workers' rights to anti-discrimination legislation, from the red tape of health and safety legislation that limits accidents at work and stops us dying from faulty goods, toxic food or unregulated medicines, to the support of our creative and cultural industries and joint scientific research, the EU with its Single Market of 500 million people is an economic powerhouse like no other. It is already abundantly clear that we are going to be poorer outside the bloc.

However, the EU is so much more than simply a trading bloc. Government failure to value and articulate the rich social relationships that have grown up

between people and civil society organisations through programmes like Erasmus+, Europe for Citizens and Creative Europe is unforgivable. In every way we will be diminished outside of the union. Membership brings us together in many fora, not only in the European Parliament and at Council meetings, but also through joint parliamentary assemblies and the Committee of the Regions which brings local representatives from municipalities together several times a year to share ideas and collaborate on joint initiatives. And then there is the collective influence that 28 member states can bring to bear on the world stage, for example, supporting fragile states with capacity building thereby making

With a strong Labour party in the UK now is not the time for us to turn our backs on our neighbours.

the world safer for everyone, providing humanitarian and development aid, such as picking up the tab for crucial women's health programmes dropped as a result of Trump's Global Gag.

At a political level our membership of the EU brings us into daily contact with our comrades from sister parties and the wider Left. Many of us work across party lines in an anti-austerity caucus. Labour MEPs have therefore developed close working relationships with other progressives and we fight collectively for equal opportunities and social justice, better employment and environmental legislation, poverty eradication and social inclusion, investment in deprived areas, gender equality and binding measures to end violence against women and girls. Together we won the fight against TTIP and we closed the loophole in the Posted Workers Directive. We are fighting tax evasion and demanding transparency in supply chains. We banned Israeli goods



Keir Starmer

from illegal settlements and we denounce arms sales to Saudi Arabia. We are standing up for Freedom of Movement.

We continuously call for a humane response to the refugee and migrant crisis and call out those governments who refuse to share the burden. In countries such as Spain, Portugal and Sweden, progressive governments have welcomed refugees, and continue to counter the overt racism of the right and the polite xenophobia of the centre. We know that together we are stronger and can do so much more to reinvigorate the Left, building on the 'Social Pillar' that was adopted by the European Council in Gothenburg last year, that must now tilt the axis of the EU towards a union of people first and foremost.

With a strong Labour party in the UK now is not the time for us to turn our backs on our neighbours. At this moment in history we need to be standing shoulder to shoulder with our sister parties in the EU. Therefore, Brexit of any kind is an abandonment of solidarity with our comrades. We need to lead in Europe not merely watch from the sidelines, wringing our hands as the extreme right destroy the European project. It is our project too and the young people who joined us en masse know that their future is European. We must not let them down. **G**

Julie Ward is an MEP for the North West England region

LEFT AND BREXIT

Why debating Brexit is still vital for the left

John Palmer says a Schrodinger's Brexit, neither in nor out, is the likely outcome from the May government unless Labour forces a General Election while keeping a people's vote on the table



The debate about Britain and the EU is not new, but the proposal to sever the links that have bound Britain to most of rest of Europe for more than 40 years is vastly more radical than anything envisaged by the British state since the end of the Second World War. The context in Europe then is hardly recognisable today. So much has changed. We have had the great financial crisis. We have seen the undermining of many of the political structures and alliances that were forged during the Cold War. We have seen the rise of a hard right wing populism, above all the Trump Presidency and its imitators in Europe and globally.

This is not, as yet, an irreversible trend throughout Europe. It is not going unchallenged. But political reaction and economic protectionism is on the rise. The familiar international political and security architecture created in the post-war settlement is now subject to political rupture. The fragility of the global capitalist neo-liberal consensus based on unchallenged US power and the collapse of the Soviet Union is obvious. The fragmentation of that consensus represents in part a profound backlash against acute economic and social inequalities

exacerbated by the 2008/9 global financial crises. Dramatic decline of electoral support has punctured the arrogant complacency of the centrist political consensus linking centre-left Social Democracy and centre right Conservative and Christian Democrat parties across the EU.

There is – in some EU countries – a growth in support for more radical left socialist and Green parties as well as course for the Corbyn leadership of the UK Labour Party. But there are the stronger currents of support for hard right wing, and even some extreme right racist and authoritarian parties. Apart from Trump there is the rise of authoritarian regimes like Putin in Moscow, Orban in Budapest, and Erdogan in Istanbul who openly challenge existing democratic, civil liberties, racial and gender equalities standards. These trends give the Brexit debate a significance it could not have had 40 years ago.

A very early declaration in support of a United States of Europe was written in 1941 by left wing socialists and dissident Communists held captive in Mussolini's notorious Ventotene prison in 1941 and then circulated by Italian anti-fascist partisans. For socialists the EU has

become an indispensable terrain for radical, democratic, anti-capitalist economic, social and political transformation – for the class struggle itself.

The European Union is more than ever an essential arena in which the battle against monetarism, austerity, authoritarianism and bigotry has to be fought if it is ever to be won. The notion that Britain can win these battles on its own is risible. To doubt this is to fundamentally misunderstand the deep structural integration of the capitalist economies on this continent.

Quoting from Marxist thinkers can look like theological piety. But Marx did argue for the unification of Germany (even under Prussian militarism) because it provided an essential national framework in which capital was organising and in which workers urgently needed to organise. Leon Trotsky wrote after the First World War that the time was right for a united states of Europe, something he said even under the capitalist trusts would be “a massive step forward.”

It is impossible to conceive of a successful socialist strategy for sustainable growth and a reduction of gross inequality, implemented in isolation from those with whom we are so embedded



John Palmer is a writer and campaigner on European affairs and a member of Greenwich & Woolwich CLP. He was the Guardian's European editor from 1975 to 1996, and Political Director of the European Policy Centre from 1996-2006.

in shared economic structures. There is no independent British car industry left that could take the UK in a totally different direction: there is only a German, French, Italian and US car industry in Britain – a reality duplicated across many other sectors. Even those suffering from illusions about a socialism in one country must realise that confronting the Googles and Amazons (and all big time corporate tax cheats) means action at EU level (if not immediately at a global level) or no effective action at all.

To urge a solitary (actually an isolationist) path is also to grossly overestimate the coherence of the UK as a 'national' state structure. We are seeing incipient signs of the disintegration of this state. Since Brexit, Scottish independence is again very much back on the political agenda. In Northern Ireland, the bastion of the old imperial union, the hard-line unionists are very worried that they're losing the argument to those who say in a post Brexit situation we need gradual integration with the Republic. The British state is hollowing out.

Labour voters who supported Leave

When you consider who are the Labour voters who supported Leave, the answer is they have some common characteristics. They are children and grandchildren of people who have seen their communities and their industries fragment and decline. Whether you're talking about the North-eastern shipbuilding and steel industries, the coal mines, the Lancashire textile industries, it is two generations now since those industries were fatally undermined and disappeared. What has taken their place has shown the worst features of 'spiv capitalism' - call-centres and insecure forms of work, appallingly low wages and conditions. You have local authorities that can't sustain the commitments they have because of the loss of revenue and income and communities that are being rightly described as the 'left behind'.

Centrism in British politics has failed these people - both Tory and Labour governments have failed them and have failed them miserably.

This is connected to another important feature of our times, namely that centrism in general is imploding all over Europe, both on the centre-right and on the

centre-left. In each country in Europe the pattern is different but the common theme is that, even in some of the Nordic strongholds of Social Democracy, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, we are seeing the unbelievable erosion of the centre vote. This trend has produced the rise of the far right, and the rise of different types of challenging left wing parties, again, in different ways in different countries. But everywhere centrism is besieged and importantly it's also lost its intellectual vigour.

That's the context for the voters in the North and midlands who support Brexit. We have to give them an answer, we have to have an offer for them. Brexit offers them more of the same in conditions of greater isolation.

Labour's Brexit policy and 'Schrodinger's Brexit'

Some of the things Corbyn said during the referendum are a big break from his past views and were very positive. For example,

For socialists the EU has become an indispensable terrain for radical, democratic, anti-capitalist economic, social and political transformation

at the launch of Labour's remain campaign he said:

There is a strong socialist case for staying in the European Union...You cannot build a better world unless you engage with the world, build allies and deliver change. The EU, wars and all, has proved itself to be a crucial international framework to do that.

The six tests that Labour has set for judging May's eventual Brexit deal are a messy compromise between different wings in the PLP. But do all Labour MPs mean when they say that if the tests are not fully met they will vote against the bill? It is not easy to see May securing a Parliamentary majority for anything but a de-facto continuation of staying in the EU for years to come - but minus any democratic, law making or decision-taking powers. We are heading for what I have long been calling a 'Schrodinger's Brexit': one where

the UK is both IN and OUT of the EU at the same time (like Schrodinger's quantum physics cat - alive and dead at the same time).

The Tory hard right and DUP rightly suspect she will come back with a deal whereby the UK will remain in the single market and customs union for an indeterminate period ahead (maybe past even the last date for the next general election) following a legal Brexit next March) The UK will be subject to all the related EU regulation across the economy, the ECJ will have ultimate legal authority and payments into the EU budget will continue.

This will certainly look to most people, whether Remainers or Leavers, as though we're still in the EU. None of the much vaunted future global trade deals can come into force during this extended time in the Single Market and Customs Union. But we will have given up all our democratic and decision making rights in the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. When Rees Mogg says this is a "Vassal State" relationship he is right. But only if – and it's a big if – May can secure a Parliamentary majority.

The risk of May succeeding in getting her way does not come from the left of the Labour Party or from the SNP, Plaid Cymru or the one Green MP. The potential threat comes from 'moderate' Labour MPs who already hint – like Lisa Nandy - about a duty to support a very 'soft' Brexit to avoid a No Deal outcome.

May could, however, still fall at the last stages in the negotiations. She may not be able to guarantee no hard border in Northern Ireland without having to accept the Vassal State option way into the next decade. That might be too much for the hard right and she might be removed as Tory party leader. But the EU is determined to secure an indefinitely guaranteed open border for as long as there is no agreed post Brexit, Treaty of Economic Cooperation with the UK.

So May's strategy is to come back and say "Don't worry, a formal Brexit will begin now but a Real Brexit is going to take a little longer." The planned post Brexit 'transition' is currently set to last from 30 March next year to December 2020 during which nothing really changes. But the government has now signalled this may have to last to the end of December 2021. There is even

LEFT AND BREXIT

talk about extending it into 2022 (the year in which a new general election must be held).

Precedents suggest that negotiating such a massive new comprehensive free trade agreement usually takes around 5/6/7 years. May's problem is how to dress this in ways that won't lead to the complete collapse of the government, and a historic split in the Tory party. This has the potential to sunder the Tories in a similar way to the Corn Laws issue, which left the Tories unable to achieve a majority government for decades.

The threats of hard Brexit are mostly bluff. Is there a possibility of no deal? It is conceivable but British and EU Capital desperately want to avoid that. The recent closure of the motorway to Dover while the authorities look for sites to build giant carparks and avoid the disruption of cross Channel trade was propaganda. Like talk about no medicines, and planes not flying after a No Deal, it is designed to put pressure on the hard right not to vote down what May eventually puts to Parliament. A No Deal might happen by accident. But the final stages of the Brexit negotiations with are being choreographed very carefully to avoid that.

Labour is right to say to May that unless you produce a deal that meets the six tests we will vote it down. Corbyn can also say that Labour is in a much better position to negotiate a much more satisfactory relationship. Labour is far more supportive of EU proposed reforms on workers' rights, anti-discrimination measures and tougher environmental controls than any Tory government. The EU knows this too and would likely allow more time and offer more negotiating concessions to a British government led by Jeremy Corbyn to get an agreement leaving the UK in the EU.

Labour, however, needs to spell out its willingness to be more positive in any new negotiations if it wins an early general election. It is worth remembering the 're-negotiation' of Harold Wilson in 1974/5 after Labour rejected the Heath Tory government's EEC Accession Treaty. It is not unprecedented for Labour to go back and renegotiate with Europe. There is little in Labour's programme to provoke hostility from the EU. No EU opposition has been expressed to the proposed nationalisation of rail, energy and utilities, contrary to what Lexiteers have alleged.



Corbyn and Barnier

The rest of the EU wants the UK to remain – renegotiating a completely new relationship after the past 45 years, post-Brexit, would be a nightmare. If Corbyn wins an election and says to Brussels 'we would like urgent talks with you' he is likely to meet a weary but a positive response. You don't say 'No' to a newly elected government. The need for more time might require some extension of article 50.

Now is the time for the British Labour party to call for more collaboration with the European left and centre-left parties on a common programme of EU reform

There may soon not only be a new government in the UK. There will also be a new European Commission taking office next year and also a newly elected European Parliament. So any new negotiation will take time.

In terms of how Labour should approach a people's vote, I have some sympathy with John McDonnell in not wanting to risk everything on a referendum – if we got anything like the same result as in 2016 the right would be on a rampage. The question is what happens if Labour cannot force an election? In that event A Peoples' Referendum should remain on the table. There was a strong consensus on this issue at the party conference. The questions will be set by parliament not by government. It would make sense to have tripartite options: 'support the package', 'reject the package', or 'reopen

negotiations on membership.'

The problem with a referendum is that it can only be indirectly couched within a broader context of policies and arguments on inequality and social justice. I believe the best time for a referendum would be after a new Labour government had returned with its reform and remain package from Brussels. If that has to take place after March next year when we leave the EU, it should include an option to re-apply for membership on the terms negotiated with Brussels.

Meanwhile it will be crucial to work with progressive political forces elsewhere in Europe. Who might they be? Think of the Portuguese left coalition government, Podemos and its allies in Spain, France Insoumise (which has rejected any desire to leave the EU or even leave the Euro), the SDP left, Die Linke and the Greens in Germany, the very successful Green Left and its social democratic allies in the Netherlands and many social democratic and socialist parties from Greece and Italy to Sweden and Finland.

Now is the time for the British Labour party to call for more collaboration with the European left and centre-left parties on a common programme of EU reform and further democratisation. The Labour leadership could call a conference in London to debate the common threats we face and to prepare a common fighting platform to tackle the far right, corruption and climate change across Europe.

Labour should make it clear that following a Labour victory it will prioritise a Reform and Remain strategy for the UK. For now Labour should coordinate with the SNP, Greens and Plaid to ensure a progressive vote against the May deal. **C**

John Palmer was in conversation with Mike Davis

Antisemitism - where do we go from here?

Richard Kuper argues NEC and Labour conference decisions are a setback but must not inhibit solidarity with Palestinians and anti-racist action or civility in debate



JVL Rally at Labour conference

The Labour Party's adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism and the full accompanying text and examples was a clear setback. But there is still room for manoeuvre, and reason for hope.

The intellectual argument against the IHRA document is unassailable and has been made countless times, the decision to adopt all the examples was made not on its intrinsic merits but in a (misguided) belief that this was the best way to lance the boil of allegations of antisemitism.

Our job now is to ensure that the Party's disciplinary processes are fit for purpose and that sensible rules are drawn up for interpreting the rambling, discursive, ambiguous and non-legally binding set of statements that is the IHRA document.

It is vital that the relevant Chakrabarti recommendations about Party disciplinary procedures are implemented. The arbitrary and unpredictable processes that have dominated Labour's disciplinary system till recently must go. We need ones that

uphold the strongest principles of natural justice including a presumption of innocence, a restriction of the power of interim suspension, no presumption of guilt by association, and an end to subjecting members to trial by media. We also need a wide and creative range of graded sanctions such as warnings, a requirement for apologies and/or some other form of sensitive reparation, a public warning or reprimand, suspension for a period, and expulsion all on the agenda. Where ignorance is the root of the problem we need education not punishment.

Under Jenny Formby much progress has already been made, but there is still a way to go and we must remain vigilant.

The IHRA document

In interpreting and fleshing out how the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) document is applied we have some guidance:

In accepting the IHRA document the NEC also stated: "This does not in any way undermine the freedom of expression on Israel or the rights of

Palestinians. We re-invite organisations to engage in consultation on the Code of Conduct."

Something like Labour's Code of Conduct adopted by the NEC in July will have to be developed to guide everyone from branch officers to members of disciplinary tribunals as to what, precisely, is or is not to be deemed antisemitic misconduct. The IHRA illustrations don't do this; they are only examples of what might – and therefore might not – be antisemitic, with no clear criteria to help make any decision.

Here the declaration by Jewish Voice for Labour and Free Speech on Israel called **ANTISEMITIC MISCONDUCT**: What it is - and what it is not can help.

It offers clarification to the debate based on the fact that there is no disagreement about the fact that antisemitism as traditionally understood has no place in the Labour Party or the wider society. It understands antisemitism in the following way, avoiding the obscurities and ambiguities of the IHRA working definition:

Antisemitism is a form of



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He writes here in a personal capacity

ANTISEMITISM REVIEW

racism. It consists in prejudice, hostility or hatred towards Jews as Jews. It may take the form of denial of rights; direct, indirect or institutional discrimination; prejudiced-based behaviour; verbal or written statements; or violence. Such manifestations draw on stereotypes – characteristics which all Jews are presumed to share.

This approach is quite compatible with the 38-word IHRA definition but goes further, actually giving substance to our understanding, something we can work with. It doesn't mention Israel, because Israel as such has nothing to do with a definition of antisemitism.

Criticism of the government or of the state of Israel may be robust, over the top, or even plain wrong. None of that makes it antisemitic. It can be antisemitic – but only, as the approach outlined above makes abundantly clear, if it is antisemitic i.e. if it takes the form of "prejudice, hostility or hatred towards Jews as Jews".

This is where the Labour Party statement that acceptance of the IHRA document "does not in any way undermine the freedom of expression on Israel or the rights of Palestinians" comes in. It is clear that the IHRA document needs to be read in the light of this commitment, which is merely summarising the legal protection of free speech (Article 10 of the Human Rights Act) and of Palestinian rights, especially under international humanitarian law.

The IHRA document must be used against itself

Supporters of the IHRA, in selling the document, have made much of the two caveats contained within the document. The first is that, while "[m]anifestations [of antisemitism] might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity... criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic."

The second is that: "Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include [emphasis added], but are not limited to [followed by a list of 11 possible examples – 7 of which refer to Israel]"

The problem, in both cases, is that no clear criteria are offered for distinguishing which criti-

cisms of Israel might be problematic or why? The effect of this has undoubtedly been to create a presumption that criticism of Israel, unless shown otherwise, is likely to be antisemitic.

This presumption must be challenged head-on. It has been levelled at descriptions of Israel as an apartheid society (and the very existence of Israel Apartheid Week on campuses), at analyses of embedded racism in Israeli society, past and present, and at anyone calling for BDS (boycott, divestment, sanctions).

Yet none of these descriptions, analyses, or proposed actions on or about Israel are in themselves antisemitic. Such challenges are licensed by the common misreading of the IHRA examples, in which the caveats are ignored and phrases taken out of context and antisemitism misunderstood.

Let us take the IHRA document and call on those who use it to read it. Let us provide "the overall context" that justifies and renders legitimate the vast majority of critical statements made about Israel and its treatment of the Palestinians. And let us be clear that accepting that "criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic" does not mean that criticism of Israel for its exceptionalism is antisemitic.

Palestine and anti-racism

As part of moving on to the offensive we must renew our commitment to the struggle for Palestinian rights, buoyed up by the overwhelming support for Palestine at Conference and for a freeze on arms sales to Israel.

This support must include the right of Palestinians to describe their history and their dispossession in an appropriate language – which has to identify the Zionist movement and the Israeli state as the entities that deprived them of their rights, including that of self-determination.

The attempt to prevent any examination of the nature of the Israeli state or of the history of Zionism, has unwittingly refocused attention on Palestinian history and experience. This offers a launch-pad for constructive solidarity work within the party as well as for broadening out. International solidarity and antiracism must go hand in hand, with antisemitism being fought as part and parcel of the struggle against all racism. Recognising that each racism has its own specificities should not detract

from recognising that there are also overlaps and family resemblances between them and they need to be fought together.

Reconstructing political dialogue

Freedom of speech is the freedom to say what one thinks (within the framework of law which does not permit hate speech). Many things said will cause others to take offence – indeed there is no freedom of speech worth its salt that isn't likely to cause some offence to someone, somewhere. And while there is a right to free speech there is not a right not to be offended.

That said, the right to cause offence is not a duty to cause offence. Constantly tweaking the tail of those we disagree with may occasionally be fun, but it is not serious politics. It is also counter-productive, alienating many of those we should always be attempting to win over. The current febrile atmosphere in which passions are running high and trust is at a low ebb calls for a precision of language, and a care and compassion in speech.

How we approach the emotional minefields of antisemitism and of the Israel-Palestine question must also be part and parcel of a more general reconstruction of how we do politics and political dialogue. The toxic nature of these debates has been mirrored in those over Brexit or over immigration

Within the multicultural, multi-political world we have become today civility is necessary, but it doesn't simply mean being polite to each other. It means listening to each other's deepest hopes, fears and beliefs – and trying to understand their reality even where we believe them to be unfounded. Too much of what passes for political discussion is dogmatic posturing. Labour needs to foster political discussion and debate on difficult and disputed topics as a central concern, in a way that fosters a climate of enquiry and civility. One that allows that we, as well as those we disagree with, might learn something from the encounter. Surely everything we do is premised on the belief that people can change their minds.

For, if persuasion, and the development of a vision of a future worth living, is not our primary aim what are we doing in politics? **C**

You can be antisemitic so long as you love Israel

Israel has historically had disturbingly close relations with some unpleasant regimes: apartheid South Africa, Argentina under the military junta; Pinochet's Chile spring to mind. It has preferred to pursue realpolitik to confronting fascism or militarism. It has sold arms used in the Rwandan and Bosnian genocides, and to the junta in Guatemala. and, very recently, to the Burmese. Shocking as all this is, this willingness to work with unsavoury regimes is not attenuated even where these regimes and their leaders are clearly and visibly antisemitic.

Indeed, it is fair to say that if you show you love Israel, any antisemitism you may have expressed in the past, or indeed continue to express, can be washed away.

President Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines who, has compared himself to Hitler, was on a state visit to Israel in September. Haaretz, Israel's leading liberal daily in an editorial A Hitler Admirer at Yad Vashem, commented: "In exchange for a mess of pottage – abstaining or supporting Israel in a few UN votes – a controversial leader has won a warm embrace from Israel. In the process, he has also won public absolution for his anti-Semitic remarks."

This is not an aberration. Netanyahu and the Israeli governments' natural allies form an unsavoury grouping: Poland's Law and Justice Party, for instance; the Lega in Italy; the Austrian Freedom Party; the French National Front, Sweden's Democrats, and Hungary's Fidesz. Some have roots in post-war pro-Nazi circles which have denied the Holocaust or minimised its significance. They also share a visceral Islamophobia which has led to their antisemitism being downplayed, if not entirely overlooked.

Netanyahu's has praised the Visegrád Group - Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic – as well as with the right-wing regimes of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, with whom he works "to balance the EU's unfriendly stance on Israel". The strong ethno-nationalism of these regimes seems to be particularly attractive to him: antisemitic elements, statements, histories are simply ignored.

A particularly telling example is Hungarian leader Viktor Orbán who was on a recent state visit to Israel. He has form, from having called migrants "poison" and "Muslim invaders"; expressing adulation for Miklos Horthy, the war-time leader of Hungary where some 450,000 Hungarian Jews were sent to Nazi death camps; denying that Hungarians bore any responsibility for this murder of the Jews; and supporting "Christian values" which in Hungary is barely coded speech meaning "not Jewish".

Orbán's bête noire is George Soros, Hungarian-born philanthropist whose Open Society Foundations consistently promotes ideas of democracy, human rights, participatory capitalism and political liberalism. He was attacked in July, complete with antisemitic cartoons of a visibly Jewish stereotyped Soros pulling the puppet's strings.

This led to a howl of outrage from Israel's ambassador in Budapest and a call for the posters to be taken down. But within a day orders came from Netanyahu's office. In a new statement, the foreign ministry's spokesman refrained from criticizing Viktor Orbán and strongly denounced George Soros instead!



Netanyahu and Victor Orbán

And of course this didn't stop Netanyahu from welcoming Orbán to Israel in July this year as a "true friend of Israel".

In Poland, too: the Law and Justice party can't bear the idea that any Pole might be held responsible for complicity in Nazi crimes. After a bitter row, and with Israel's agreement, it is now a civil offence to "publicly and against the facts" accuse the Polish state or nation of being "responsible or complicit in" Nazi crimes. The arbiter of the acts is the Institute of National Remembrance, run by the very politicians controlling the country today! So the Israeli government is prepared to whitewash the facts of Jewish extermination in order to maintain its working relationship with the Polish regime.

Richard Kuper

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BRAZIL

Brazil turns right

Thomás Zicman de Barros says Bolsonaro's success is a disaster, but inexperience and a weak economy could unravel his popularity

The Brazilian 'Republican Front' was never constituted. The elites, showing their total disregard for civism, enthusiastically campaigned for Jair Bolsonaro since the first round. Entrepreneurs gave him what seems to be millions in illegal private campaign contributions to spread tons of fake news across digital social media. What remained from the traditional centre-right parties after their electoral annihilation preferred to abstain and allow the victory of the extreme-right instead of rallying with the centre-left to protect democracy. Counting their dead and thinking four years ahead, traditional politicians repeat the same mistakes from the past, implicitly or explicitly supporting the risky alternative in the belief that there will still be democratic elections for them to rise from the ashes by the end of Bolsonaro's term.

The idea that Bolsonaro's victory will lead us to a pure authoritarian rule cannot be ruled out, considering his curriculum. During his campaign, Bolsonaro praised torturers, police brutality, and affirmed that he could intervene in the Supreme Court. His vice-president talked about a "self-coup", and the candidate himself made some 'jokes' about shooting adversaries and said that, once elected, he would "put an end to all activism". Even before the second round, political violence spread across the country, with deaths and physical assaults against women, gays and left-wingers in general.

Brazil's weak checks-and-balances system is not reliable against an authoritarian drift. To a large extent, Bolsonaro's victory is a product of an institutional autophagy. Claiming to "fight corruption", sectors of the judiciary, in association with the mainstream media, started a sometimes extra-legal crusade to destroy the party system. In the midst of economic turmoil, and in a society marked by endemic violence, demoralization of traditional parties paved the way for an authoritarian 'outsider'. The infamous attempt against Bolsonaro's

life in early September helped to consolidate this image: unable and unwilling to participate in public debates, he became an empty symbol representing all grievances and resentments against the establishment. Our young democratic institutions entered in self-destruction mode, and now an anti-democratic discourse is gaining momentum.

Pure autocratic rule by Bolsonaro, however, is not the most likely scenario after his electoral triumph. Instead, it's more likely that he will 'simply' head a disastrous government. Of course, it will be a disaster for poor and black people, as well as for minorities. Illegal police execution squads that are already present in Brazilian slums will extend their actions, with the government closing its eyes or even openly supporting their atrocities.

But Bolsonaro's government will also probably be a managerial disaster. Bolsonaro's party, almost non-existent six months ago, elected around fifty congresspersons, ten percent of the parliament. They are newcomers, many former YouTube celebrities who never read a piece of law, who have absolutely no experience in the legislative process. Getting this experience takes time. Bolsonaro is ideologically more aligned with the average of the Congress than former left-wing presidents, and will probably enjoy a first semester of grace to approve measures such as loosening gun control, more severe penal laws and many neoliberal policies promised during his campaign. After a few months, however, he will need to start negotiating with politicians that really don't care about conservative ideology. They care about their personal and local interests. Brazil is an enormous country, with an enormous variety of demands trying to be heard in Brasília.

Bolsonaro has no experience in negotiating and compromising, neither do his fellow military friends who he wants to put in key governmental positions. Their explosive, narcissistic, corporatist and authoritarian character, combined with their lack of experience within public adminis-



Jair Bolsonaro-authoritarianism returns

tration will probably create internal frictions and jeopardize Bolsonaro's presidency. A better economic performance could save his term, but the current budgetary situation in Brazil leaves no room for stimulus policies, and the future of the global economy is not very promising for emerging markets.

Last but definitively not least, Bolsonaro must face a strong opposition from the left. It is a moment of popular resistance against both authoritarianism and neoliberalism. Currently, the left has three immediate challenges. First, it must remain united in its plurality. Second, it must deal with Lula's and the Worker's Party legacy, with its undeniable merits and mistakes. Third, it must have a positive agenda. It cannot simply try to avoid retrocession. It must extend its demands, putting the extreme-right and its anti-popular programme against the wall.

The Brazilian left has an advantage, in comparison with corporate democrats in the United States and other Third Way politicians in Europe: even with its defeat, the Brazilian left represents a popular project. Bolsonaro's extreme-right message does not resonate among disenfranchised sectors like the discourses of Trump, Le Pen or Brexiters do. According to many polls, even those who voted for Bolsonaro see him as the candidate of the rich, and that the left represents the poor. We must build on this correct perception, mobilizing civil society and social movements around a common project for the many, not the few. **C**

Thomás Zicman de Barros is a PhD Candidate, Sciences Po Paris

Labour balancing realism with idealism on defence

Paul Dixon sees a new pragmatism in Corbyn's approach

The key problem for a Corbyn-led Labour government is not so much what should be Labour's objectives but how can they be achieved?

Labour Idealists would argue that the party should stand on a radical manifesto and a Labour government should implement this from day one, advancing on all fronts.

The Labour leader stood as an Idealist, promising a 'Straight talking honest politics' but in office he has – some would say inevitably – developed a more strategic and tactical Realist approach.

Labour Realists would argue that the party leader needs to be a strategist and a tactician if he is going to achieve his party's goals against likely resistance from powerful interests. Rather than advancing across all fronts, the government would build credibility and support by focusing on policies that have popular support and then use this momentum to make progress in more difficult policy areas such as defence and foreign policy.

President Clinton's political agenda was partly derailed by a major battle with the armed forces over 'gays in the military' in 1993.

Defence policy has, historically, been a difficult policy area for the Labour party. There may be popular support for limiting Britain's overseas military operations and not risking the lives of military personnel. But defence is bound up with British national identity, pride in the military and a post-imperial culture.

The Left was shocked, for example, by the outpouring of patriotism at the time of the Falklands/Malvinas War in 1982.

Labour Realists point out that Margaret Thatcher, was a 'Realistic Idealist' who concealed her private views and publicly pursued moderate policies to maintain party unity and appeal to the electorate.

Jeremy Corbyn's ideals are fairly clear and indeed he was elected because of the consistency of his politics since the 1980s.

The Labour leader is a long-standing supporter of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, former Chair of the Stop the War Coalition and an opponent of Trident and the arms industry. The Labour leader is opposed to Britain's continuing involvement in Afghanistan, Iraq and support for Saudi Arabia in its war against Yemen. He has been critical of NATO's expansion and, therefore, has resisted the 'new Cold War' rhetoric against Russia.

The extent to which Corbyn's personal convictions will be reflected in the next Labour manifesto and, if elected, government policy is debateable. What is most remarkable about Jeremy Corbyn is that his idealism of the wilderness years has led to a much more pragmatic realist leader.

This realism is most apparent in the Labour leader's willingness to compromise and accept the party's conference decisions. The Labour party's current policy on Trident, for example, is to support its renewal. This policy may be tactically astute because it avoids a confrontation with a powerful military and 'defence' community, making it a difficult sell to public opinion.

A radical Labour government is likely to run into strong resistance from within and without the British state. The military, for example, is, next to the Monarchy – with which it has a close relationship – one of the most conservative institutions.

The military reacted strongly against the election of Jeremy Corbyn to the leadership of the Labour party in 2015. The Sunday Times reported that 'a senior serving general' was threatening mutiny against a Corbyn government that downgraded the military. This broke a constitutional convention that the military avoid political controversy. Memories were stirred of the 'Wilson Plots' against the Labour government in the seventies. These inspired Chris Mullin's novel *A Very British Coup*.

The 2017 Labour party manifesto on defence and foreign policy is a very cautious document.

The former head of the 'Royal United Services Institute', Michael Clarke, thought that in Labour's manifesto there was no great departure from existing policy.

Corbyn's long standing opposition to NATO, and its provocative eastward expansion, did not prevent NATO being endorsed in the Labour manifesto. Although scepticism of NATO and the UN, as the instruments of powerful states, is also expressed.

The Labour party also committed to spending 2% of GDP on defence. This pledge was not in Ed Miliband's manifesto in 2015 and marks a raising of the bar on defence spending. There are now calls from the 'defence community' and the US for raising this still further to 2.5-3%.

On the arms industry, the manifesto seeks both to secure its future and increase controls.

Requiring UN authority and a parliamentary vote on the use of force provide plausible, lawful and democratic means to end Britain's almost permanent state of war. There is no commitment in the manifesto to UN approval, but the Labour leader has since called for a 'War Powers Act' which would establish in legislation the growing convention that the Prime Minister should consult parliament.

There is a welcome emphasis on diplomacy and conflict management in the manifesto but there are also echoes of the cosmopolitan arguments that have encouraged war. 'Protecting civilians' in conflict, or 'human security', has been a major argument for the use of force. A 'UN Emergency Peace Service' could easily become a new legitimisation, alongside 'Right to Protect' (R2P) for the 'humanitarian interventions' that have been so disastrous since the end of the Cold War.

The contrast between Jeremy Corbyn's idealism and the pragmatism of Labour's 2017 manifesto is striking. Realists would endorse this pragmatism. Margaret Thatcher became more radical over time as she asserted control over her party, government and the state. **C**

Paul Dixon is Honorary Research Fellow at Birkbeck College, University of London and the author of *Warrior Nation: War, Militarisation and British Democracy*. See www.Forceswatch.net

YOUTH VIEW

Legal abortion is a human right

Alice Arkwright says its time for government action to decriminalise abortion

There has been a resurgence in the debate around access to abortion in 2018 with the UK mainstream media reporting on two globally historic moments. In May, Ireland voted in a public referendum to legalise abortion in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and in June, Argentina's lower house of Congress approved a bill to legalise abortion in the first 14 weeks of pregnancy. Although this was then voted down by the Senate, the bill mobilised hundreds of thousands of people in support of safe access to abortion.

These changes are a result of decades of feminist struggle and the International Safe Abortion Day, on the 28th September, marked an important time to celebrate these victories. It also highlighted the need to use the momentum from these votes to promote women's reproductive rights and access to safe abortions around the world. The Irish referendum result sparked immediate campaigning for Northern Ireland to legalise abortion, where currently it is only permitted when it can be demonstrated that the woman would suffer serious, long term or permanent damage to her health. The UK Supreme Court and a report by Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) have both stated that the situation in Northern Ireland contravenes human rights law, calling on Westminster to act. The current government, which remains propped up by the DUP, has shown little inclination to address the law in Northern Ireland despite political and public will for change. The campaign must remain on the public agenda to help ensure that human rights are not forgotten in the relationships and negotiations surrounding Brexit.

In the rest of the UK, an abortion can only be carried out no later than 24 weeks into a pregnancy and women must seek permission from two doctors, which is not required for any other routine medical procedure. Additionally, it is still considered a criminal act under certain conditions. A woman who ends her



Northern Ireland abortion-rights campaigners

own pregnancy without the permission of doctors can be sentenced to life in prison under legislation dating back to Victorian times, and women can face up to 12 years in prison for using abortion pills purchased online. Whilst these laws do not prevent the majority of women (outside Northern Ireland) from accessing abortions, they are having real consequences; a 23-year old was sentenced to prison in 2015 for using abortion medication bought online. The We Trust Women campaign, supported by numerous Royal Colleges and the British Medical Association, is calling for the complete decriminalisation of abortion, for abortion to come under the same rules and regulations that apply to other medical procedures and for women to be trusted to make their own decisions.

The restrictions placed on abortion raise interesting debates over the limitations on women's choices. Reasons for buying abortion pills online include the time taken travelling to services, which impacts on child care and work; lack of access to free NHS services, such as for those in the process of claiming asylum; privacy concerns regarding the stigma associated with the procedure; and being in controlling or abusive relationships with partners and family. Therefore, those in already vulnerable conditions are being driven to break the law.



Alice Arkwright is an MA student

Additionally, barriers to abortion are impacted by a variety of social factors, including geography, employment and migration, but also race and disability. Ethnic minorities are underrepresented in abortion figures in the UK and women with disabilities face distinct barriers to sexual and reproductive services. These intersecting influences do not seem to be considered in current legislation.

The process of decriminalisation would also remove time limits on abortions. A sensitive area of the debate, currently less than 0.1% of abortions in the UK take place after 24 weeks. Imposing time limitations increases the risks of women undergoing dangerous and illegal procedures, which can put their life in danger, and it has been shown in various contexts that legal and non-restricted access to abortion saves lives. Therefore, in enforcing time limitations, policies potentially harm individuals in the process of promoting the notion of life. It also brings us back to the core debate of choice; a woman's right to make informed decisions about her own body should arguably not have a cut-off point.

The current UK law on abortion as it stands is oppressive and archaic. Whilst decriminalisation would not fully ensure safe access for all, it would go some way in placing women's choice and rights at the centre of the debate, as well as increasing safe access to services. **C**

No Apology Needed

Patrick Mulcahy
on showing
genuine
concern for
workers'
rights

Watching contemporary American cinema is, for the most part, a depressing experience. 'America First', the mantra of President Donald J. Trump, is not something that can be easily packaged as entertainment for global audiences. Instead of American films reflecting a transcendent moral purpose, they end up like 'Mile 22', in which the majority of the heroes are killed and the one survivor has his arrogance popped. Hollywood films have always to some extent focussed on the value of working together towards the common good. Yet there is, perhaps uniquely in American history since the 1970s, profound disagreement about what that 'common good' might be. President Trump unapologetically sows distrust of the media; whether dismissing 'fake news' or any kind of criticism of his leadership. Because he does not represent an ideal, having humiliated his opponents with the tactics of a serial bully and appealing to base responses of misogyny and racism, the heroic narratives that Hollywood might put out in his name seem rather hollow.

The best American films of 2018 (*'Blackklansman'*, *'The Kindergarten Teacher'*, *'Can You Forgive Me?'*) have been pre-occupied with fakery. Chief among these is *'Sorry To Bother You'*, a broad satire of racist corporate America from 47 year-old rapper turned filmmaker, Raymond Lawrence 'Boots' Riley. Boots as he prefers to be known is also the author of *'Tell Homeland Security - We Are The Bomb'*, which attests to his unequivocal in-your-face sensibility. His film focuses on Cassius (Lakeith Stanfield) who gets a job as a telemarketer in spite of failing to convince the interviewer of his achievements. It is his attitude and hunger that the company wants, and ruthlessly exploits. Cassius scores more sales when he adopts a white voice (he is over-dubbed by David Cross). Whilst his colleagues plan industrial action, Cassius gets promoted, selling weapons of mass destruction and a form of institutionalised slavery, propagated by the company 'Worry Free'. Just when you think you have the film pegged, it steps up a gear in the second half by showing the development of a dehumanised work-



Lakeith Stanfield stars as Cassius Green, in *'Sorry to Bother You'*

force.

Riley takes his cue from Charlie Kaufman, Spike Jonze, Michel Gondry and others, making no attempt at naturalism. Cassius lives in a garage with his sign-twirling artist girlfriend, Detroit (Tessa Thompson) – the comedy reveal is the first of many pleasures. However, the film's social concerns are very real: Cassius needs to make rent and can barely afford to run his car. His first attempt at selling over the telephone is a 'coup du cinema' as Cassius' office slides down into the front room of the cold-callee who picks up the phone and promptly slams it back down. The brutality of the response is exacerbated by their proximity in the frame. It is only when Cassius' mirrors the sentiments of those whom he calls does he have some success.

Some of the humour doesn't work, for example the tortuously long number that Cassius has to type in when he accesses the 'Power Caller' elevator for the first time and the TV game show ('I Got the S-t Kicked out of Me') that consists of people being subjected to violence. However, it really scores on detail.

Satire isn't meant to be comfortable and the film tests the audience when Detroit invites

humiliation at her opening. Cassius himself becomes a YouTube sensation after a can of soda hits him in the head as he breaks through a picket line.

The satirical point comes through loud and clear: American workers are sleepwalking through the gig economy into a form of slavery, essentially owned by their employer. They literally surrender what is left of their humanity to make a buck.

Riley isn't especially taking aim at President Trump; he wrote the screenplay towards the end of Barack Obama's first term as President – it was published as a stand-alone text in Dave Eggers' 'McSweeney' magazine in 2014. Rather, he shows where worldwide capitalism is going, literally effacing the individual.

It is not the funniest film of 2018, but *'Sorry To Bother You'* is authentically troubling, asking us to reconsider our relationship to our employers and to entertainment. Some of its satire goes by the wayside but its genuine concern with workers' rights stays with you, making it the most political American film of the year.

'Sorry To Bother You' opens in UK cinemas on 7 December 2018

BOOK REVIEWS

Good housing

**Duncan
Bowie**
on housing
history

Municipal Dreams
The Rise and Fall of Council Housing
John Boughton
Verso £18.99

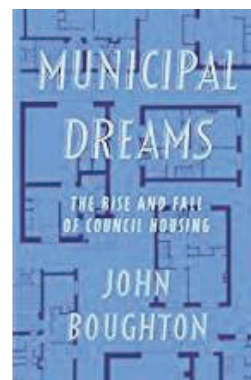
Council housing has been under attack for the last 40 years. Only now is the Government at last realising the positive role of council housing and that we desperately need more of it. Boughton is the author of the Municipal Dreams website, which myself and other housing campaigners have often looked to for inspiration: <https://municipaldreams.word-press.com/>

Boughton's book is not just a

rewrite of his blog but presents a chronological history of council housing from its origins in the later Victorian period to its decline in the Thatcherite and post Thatcherite years.

The most positive part of the book covers the period from 1945 to the 1960's. There is a good discussion of the changing form of council housing from the cottage estates of the 1920's to the Corbusian brutalism of the 1960's. The book ends with a review of the current prospects for council housing and with some examples of what councils can do despite all the financial and political constraints to contrast with the

more numerous examples of what councils have done wrong. Do buy the book. It will cheer you up.



Questions but no answers?

**Nigel
Doggett**
on
ecologism
and
unreconstructed
marxism

Creating an Ecological Society:
Toward a Revolutionary Transformation
Fred Magdoff and Chris Williams
Monthly Review Press £20

The multitude of environmental threats: climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution resource depletion, ocean, sea level rise and ocean acidification are characterised as 'wicked' problems – interconnected and resistant to single technical, economic or political solutions. Changes in lifestyle and consumption patterns are required but individual actions are insufficient. We require collective global action to avoid deadly consequences, notably the climate emergency presaged by this summer's heatwave.

This ambitious volume provides a multifaceted survey of the ecological crisis and good coverage of how we should learn from nature in future scientific and social developments. But in pressing the case against capitalism they labour the familiar point that human nature is predominantly co-operative rather than competitive (see Monbiot review - Chartist 290).

As associates of John Bellamy Foster, who provides useful background in the foreword, they present a mix of ecologism and unreconstructed Marxism. Accordingly, the text is dotted with quotations from Marx and Engels, presumably to provide legitimacy to true believers. They also stray outside their main subject into subjects such as imperialism, racism and inequality that supposedly all result from capital-

ism. (No reference is made to the Roman Empire or China buying up swathes of Africa for agriculture.) They also overuse ill-defined phrases such as 'the ruling class', 'capitalists and their functionaries...assistants and hangers on', and 'bosses or managers' will not be needed in our eco-socialist alternative.

Their American perspective and egregious examples from US free market capitalism ignore contra evidence from the more regulated mixed economies in Europe.

More problems arise in describing an eco-socialist society. They make some staggering claims but duck many hard questions, producing a recipe for an anarchist than a socialist utopia, run by social solidarity. Apparently once our moral, cultural and material differences and conflicts are out of the way people will co-operate and behave themselves so the courts, police and prisons will be abolished. Economic growth is built into capitalism but under socialism the economy "will stop growing" - people will presumably be too busy with their democratic duties to seek material rewards. And imagining that "nation states and borders will disappear" smacks more of (John) Lennon than (V I) Lenin.

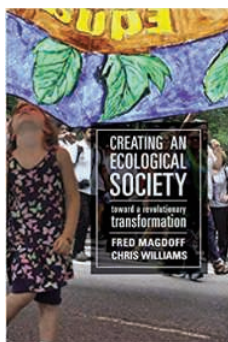
Furthermore, they assert "a huge proportion of the population currently work in jobs in wealthy countries...not needed in an ecologically-minded society", claiming that sales, retail, admin & office support and of course "bosses and managers" can all be culled. Any reference to Soviet

experience would cast doubt on this: the state planning agency Gosplan employed an ever increasing proportion of the workforce. Having worked in a nationalised industry, local government and a state school, with their necessary bureaucracies, I wonder if the authors have ever had a real job. They present automation and job rotation as a panacea to end 'mind-numbing repetitive work', leading to a Marxian idyll of enjoyable work and leisure. The adoption of elections at all levels with instant recall reminded me of Oscar Wilde's quip that "socialism takes too many evenings". It's sometimes OK to leave it to specialists, pay your bill and get on with your life, as in the old days of state-run utilities.

Near the end they attempt to cover the transition from here to there. Whilst highlighting the limits of electoralism and reformism so that mass action is needed, they advocate some sort of 'revolution', including workers taking over factories. Any scope for real reforms based on electoral success is downplayed: presumably they are unaware of the reforming 1906 and 1945 governments in Britain.

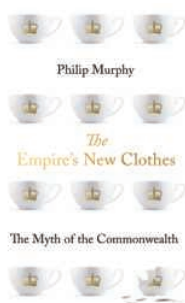
It is unclear given the hegemony of capitalists and elites how majority support for a revolution would be possible.

Activists and citizens need a route map to an eco-socialist future. There is an increasingly urgent dilemma for green democratic socialists: how to achieve transformative change with popular support? This book raises many questions but I am unconvinced it has the answers.



The Myth of the Commonwealth

**Duncan
Bowie**
on imperial
nostalgia



The Empire's New Clothes
Philip Murphy
Hurst £20

Murphy is Director of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies. He has previously published two academic studies of post-war Conservative politics and decolonisation. This work, published to coincide with the Commonwealth Heads of government summit in London in April is more of a polemic, and one which would have hardly made him popular at that jamboree. Murphy seeks to debunk the concept of the Commonwealth as a significant international organisation as promoted by Lord Howell, the former conservative minister who now chairs the Royal Commonwealth Society and recently published a book entitled *The Mother of all Networks: The Resurgent Role of the Commonwealth in the New World Order*, that is post-Brexit.

Murphy sees the Commonwealth as 'an irrelevant institution affected by imperial amnesia.' He notes that the Commonwealth includes mem-

bers who neither share values, such as the notion of representative democracy or language or even a shared colonial history, given members now include Mozambique and Rwanda, who have never been British colonies. Many Commonwealth members are republics and have their own heads of state, though the British Queen also has the rather curious title of Head of the Commonwealth, a role she has announced will now be passed on to the Prince of Wales.

In fact it was this announcement that was the main outcome of the recent summit, though this grand announcement at the Buckingham Palace reception was rather overshadowed by the embarrassing image of Theresa May having to apologise to the West Indian prime ministers over the Home Office treatment of 'the Windrush generation.' The Commonwealth secretary-general, Baroness Patricia Scotland, a former British Labour attorney general (who happens to have been born in Dominica in the West Indies, but came to England at the age of

two) was somewhat sidelined.

The Commonwealth and its multifarious associated organisations clearly presents an opportunity for the elites of different Commonwealth countries to travel, but Murphy's argument is that the Commonwealth has virtually no diplomatic impact on world affairs. He points to the key power of the Commonwealth being to expel a member for undemocratic behaviour, as was the case for South Africa and Zimbabwe and more briefly Fiji and the Gambia. Murphy's argument is that other non-democratic countries should also have been expelled, for example Pakistan and Sri Lanka. He considers that the final loss of credibility of the organisation came with the decision to hold the 2013 Heads of government meeting in Colombo.

This is a useful critique of an institution of which we know little. The Queen is known as being the greatest Commonwealth enthusiast. Whether Prince Charles will be able to keep the show on the road is perhaps more questionable.

Comparable with Tolstoy

**Duncan
Bowie**
on a
historical
classic

The House of Government
Yuri Slezkine
Princeton £29.95

This book at nearly 1,000 pages (1,100 if you include notes) appears intimidating, but for anyone with an interest in the Russian revolution or the Soviet Union under Stalin is essential reading.

It is monumental and magnificent. It is brilliantly written, and despite its weight, is difficult to put down. In order to fully absorb the author's work, I tended to read it in 50 page or so chunks, which is feasible as many of the chapters are short.

The House of Government is the residential block completed in 1931 for Soviet officials and is directly opposite the Kremlin in Moscow. Slezkine tells the stories of its residents – many famous but others less so.

He has pieced together a narrative based on the memoirs of hundreds of the residents, the vast majority of which have only been available in Russian and many sitting in archives rather than previously published.

Throughout the book, there are illustrations of the individuals,

and their families either at home or in their dachas or in the various holiday sanatoria to which the officials had privileged access.

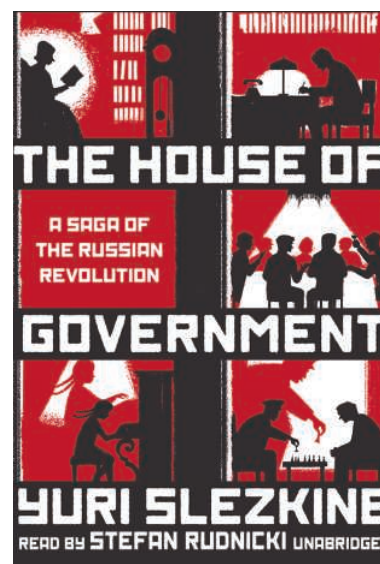
The narrative follows individuals from the pre-revolutionary period, through the revolution to the early utopian period of Soviet rule through to the Stalinist purges and the outbreak of the 'great patriotic war'.

The brilliance of the book is that these lives are not just intertwined but contextualised.

Slezkine's main thesis is that Bolshevism was like a utopian religious sect. An early chapter contextualises Bolshevism within the tradition of religious sectarianism from a wide range of traditions.

Later chapters include extensive reviews of soviet architecture and planning, soviet literature, the theatre and education.

This is the best book I have read on the Russian revolution and the development of the soviet state – and possibly the most impressive history book of the thousands I have read over the years. I could not recommend it more highly. A phenomenal achievement of research, interpretation and presentation.



BOOK REVIEWS

Successes and failures of democratic socialism

Dave Lister
on Labour history

The Labour Party in Historical Perspective
David Morgan ed.
Socialist History Society £6

This short book consists of a number of articles by socialist and communist historians, with some covering general themes and some local studies of the West Riding of Yorkshire, Liverpool and also Oxford, by our own Duncan Bowie.

There is interesting discussion of the emergence of the Independent Labour Party and then the Labour Representation Committee bearing in mind that the industrial working class was in existence for many years before these developments. Those workers who had the vote had predominantly voted Liberal with a substantial minority voting Tory. Why did this change take place?

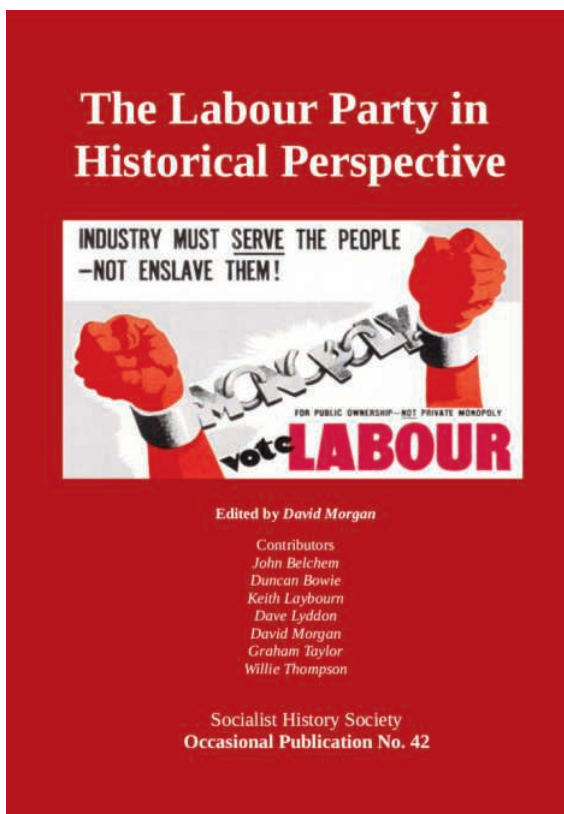
Links are made with growing industrial militancy and the unionisation of unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the 1880s and E.P. Thompson is quoted linking the formation of the ILP with a strike wave in the West Riding. Later Labour support for the 8 hour day and the 48 hour week cemented this relationship.

Other influences are also identified. Keir Hardie wrote that "Socialism is at bottom a question of ethics or morals". Ethical beliefs rather than Marxist ideology tended to inspire Labourites. A link is made to Jeremy Corbyn with the suggestion that his beliefs arise from his moral principles. In the West Riding there was a strong Non-Conformist and to a lesser extent Anglican tradition in the Labour Party. However, in Liverpool religious sectarianism and low union involvement by casual workers kept it as a Tory city with Labour only gaining control of Liverpool City Council for the first time in 1955.

Cultural influences are also identified particularly in the West Riding again. Labour churches were set up offering Sunday

morning lectures and meetings and there were leisure activities organised for example by the Clarion movement. So the reason for Labour Party involvement could be social as well as political.

Dave Lyddon develops some interesting ideas on Labour's approach to strikes. All wings of the Party supported trade union action and the right to strike for the first 90 years of the Party's existence. This position was slightly modified with the publication of Barbara Castle's White Paper 'In Place of Strife'.



However the real break came with Labour's 1992 election manifesto which promised that ballots before strike action and for union elections would be retained under a Labour Government. This approach continued under the Blair governments and only ended with the 2017 election manifesto although, as Lyddon points out, this only pledged to repeal the 2016 Trade Union Act, not the plethora of Tory anti-union legislation that had gone before.

David Morgan's article on Leonard Woolf and Foreign Policy also contains some thought pro-

voking points. Woolf was again an ethical socialist and wanted to see an ethical foreign policy. His ideas contributed to the establishment of the League of Nations and he was critical of imperialism and helped to shape Indian independence. However he was concerned that if the imperial powers withdrew completely elsewhere unscrupulous white men would exploit the former colonies (not an entirely fanciful fear!).

The point is made here and elsewhere that Labour between the wars support the maintenance of the British Empire and the Attlee Government only conceded independence to India. In addition its foreign policy was hardly left-wing with support for the Cold War and the Korean War, the development of atomic weapons and the establishment of American bases on British soil.

Finally I want to take issue with the article contributed by Willie Thompson which criticises the Labour Party for its support for parliamentary democracy. He argues that the British Parliament is a feudal institution whose members still have to swear allegiance to the Queen and that the problem with social democracy is that it operates within the constraints of capitalism rather than seeking to overthrow it. This approach ignores what

has happened when parliamentary democracy has been overthrown. In all cases it has been replaced by authoritarian and in some cases murderous regimes. Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party has shown the ability to win increasing support despite the media onslaught against it. Whilst we might expect the ruling class to attempt to resist some of the policies of a Corbyn Government, the many will need to stand firm against the few.

This booklet is well worth reading by anybody who has an interest in the Labour Party and its development. I recommend it.

Greek signposts for Corbyn

Mike Davis

on Syriza, Sanders and Corbyn

The Socialist Challenge Today
Leo Panitch & Sam Gindin
Merlin Press £9.99

How can we move from social democratic and communist practices to democratic socialism, from protest to political transformation?

In this short book the authors set out to explore the potential and limits of three recent insurgencies: Sanders' electoral challenge in the USA, the Syriza experience in Greece and Corbyn's leadership of the Labour Party in Britain.

They advocate the formation of new kinds of political parties to renew working class politics. At the heart of these new parties will be the development of strategic and practical capacities to democratically transform state structures to render them fit for realising collective democracy, social equality, sustainable ecology and human solidarity.

Their analysis of the leftist Syriza government asks two central questions: could the state be fundamentally transformed by remaining in the European Union and could the EU be changed from within. They cite the Cuba scenario where economic hardship would have been unbearable without support from the USSR, though the parallel of the EU and Greece seems to stretch the point. Wisely they have little time for the Left Platform argument on leaving the Eurozone arguing it did not admit to the need for import controls and thus depar-

ture from the EU.

They acknowledge Syriza's parallel anti-poverty programme but argue the government did not do enough to help develop the social solidarity networks in schools and communities. In agriculture where there was idle land there should have been more support for farming coops or Defence Ministry vehicles used for food distribution. However, they seem to accept that Syriza's route was the lesser evil to that of the splinter Left Platform.

Moving to the UK experience they track the rise of 'Corbynism' as a revolt against New Labour. Through the combination of the trade union awkward squad, and the unintended consequence of Miliband's effort to reduce union influence with the empowerment of 200,000 new members and 100,000 supporters, we find the key to Corbyn's ascendancy.

There is a brief canter through the rise of Momentum and the ideas of democratising national structures and transforming local parties into 'hubs of ongoing discussion, education and culture.' They advocate the development of 'socialist cadre' in the trade unions to sustain an ongoing allegiance to Corbyn's democratic socialist politics. At its heart the project requires political education to embed the change. The problem is we get little idea from the authors about the nature of this political education.

They warn of a rapid evaporation of Corbyn euphoria in the event of general election success

with the Syriza experience as backdrop.

The authors are luke warm about the economic alternatives contained in the 2017 election manifesto and the Alternative Models of Ownership report commissioned by John McDonnell... 'well short of representing a strategy for achieving a transition to socialism' whether in the form of the old Clause Four or taking over 'the commanding heights of the economy'. Again, they acknowledge the value of a new emphasis on democratic control through co-ops and worker's control though they are sceptical on how decentralised forms of common ownership can answer the question of integrating and coordinating enterprises, sectors and regions through democratic economic planning processes to avoid dysfunctional competitive market behaviour.

Absent from the core of Corbyn's programme they identify the need for discussion of public ownership of the whole financial system, a glaring silence on a high-tech internationally competitive industrial strategy and consideration of when to introduce capital controls.

The book raises some critical questions for Corbyn's Labour but avoids any rigorous discussion of the big question today: Brexit and the fight for a reformed European Union from which to develop a socialist policy against globalist capitalism or the realities of Britain alone. Nonetheless a useful digest of issues for further exploration.

Mike Davis
on a
bottom-up
view of the
tragedy of
the 1918
German
revolution

Pioneering people's history

A People's History of the German Revolution
William A Pelz
Pluto £16.99

Published posthumously this book is a revelation. Pelz uncovers a whole new world of views from below of the failed German revolution 1918-19.

Coming on the cusp of the Russian revolution the uprisings in Germany following defeat of the Axis powers were seen as a great hope for socialists worldwide. Here was an advanced capitalist country (unlike Russia) with a large industrial working class, radicalised by the ravages of war. A

sailor's mutiny sparked the revolutionary overthrow of the monarchy and inaugurated equal suffrage.

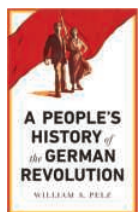
Hopes were dashed. The Social Democrat government, led by Ebert, Scheidemann and Noske feared the social movements of workers, women, soldiers and sailors. They feared the revolutionary ideas of workers control, nationalisation, council democracy and a planned economy and set about suppressing the revolts with the aid of the old imperial military and the brutal Freicorps.

Popular democratic revolts in Bavaria, Berlin, Hamburg and elsewhere were shortlived. Revolutionary leaders Rosa

Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were assassinated. Pelz portrays the revolution as a 'collapse' aided by bloody repression, ushering in the Weimar republic.

Pelz provides an angle from the bottom up with the voices of the common people, particularly working class women, venting their hopes and fears. He sees the marginalisation of women after the war as one of the outstanding reasons for the defeat of the revolution, though he acknowledges the causes were complex.

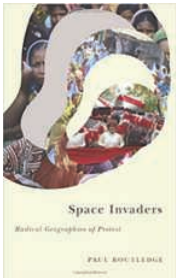
Pelz, a leftist Chicago professor, pioneered the 'People's History' project, so look out for other books in the Pluto series.



BOOK REVIEWS

Mapping out the terrain of resistance

Nigel Doggett
ON
strategies for the fight back



Space Invaders: Radical Geographies of Protest
Paul Routledge
Pluto Press £18.99

The social science of geography concerns itself with the way the world is structured into particular places and the ways in which they are connected with one another. It asks questions about the social and economic forces which have produced a city like Manchester, for example, and the relationship it has with its immediate hinterland, the rest of Britain, and just as crucially, the rest of the world.

Some of these places seem better fitted than others to channel protest against the world, and to act as platforms for radical change. The city of Paris shows up at frequent intervals as a space in which revolution is precipitated, with implications not just for France but also the rest of the world. London, on the other

hand, has places where social and economic forces are gathered by ruling classes and then sent out across the planet to build empires of one sort or another.

Routledge is interested in the conditions which facilitate movements of protest against a world order made up of the commodification of the creative energies of human beings to turn it into property and capital. This short book reads like a guide to the strategies that might be used by campaigners to turn the spaces and the networks in which they function into more effective means to fight back against the logic of markets and to bring about real change.

With chapter titles like 'Know Your Place', 'Stay Mobile', 'Extend Your Reach', and 'Feel Out of Place' he offers up scores of examples of protest movements across the world which have acquired traction because of the thought and consideration given

to the special components of their actions. They are a diverse group. The achievements of Global South peasant farmer resistance to the encroachment of the state and its mega-projects are jumbled together with protest against the types of speculative development which displaces working class communities in the old countries of capitalism, and the 'Rebel Clown Armies' which pit themselves against the representatives of global elites whenever they gather in the G8+ meetings across the world.

As a taster for the perspectives opened up by a radical geography perspective it does its job well enough. At a moment in time when leftist politics often seems like a one-dimensional fan club for the candidates on offer as leaders it gives us at least a hint of what additional capacities and layers of resistance will be needed if we are to seriously challenge capitalism.

State formation and decay

Nigel Watt
ON
political fragility

The Horn of Africa
Christopher Clapham
Hurst £17.99

The Horn of Africa is very different from all the other parts of Africa with their colonial borders. It comprises five countries: two centred on the large area of highlands and with quite large Christian populations – Ethiopia and Eritrea; and three on the coastal lowland which are peopled by Somali Muslims – Somalia, Somaliland and Djibouti.

Ethiopia is dominant in size and military muscle. The fact that it is the only bit of Africa that totally defeated imperial aggression and the only one with a historically written language tends to result in a certain, perhaps justified, arrogance. Up to the time of Haile Selassie's fall from power in 1974 (and apart from the five years under Mussolini) it was ruled as a fairly authoritarian empire. This centralism has continued, first under the socialist derg (1974-87) and since then by

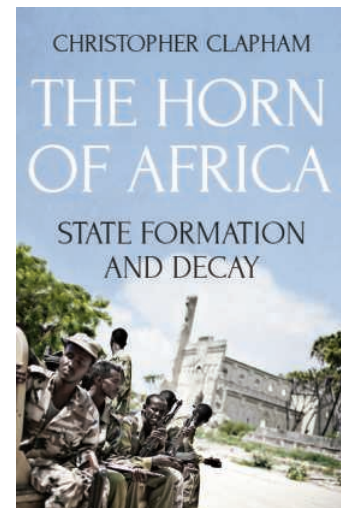
the theoretically more democratic rule of the late Meles Zenawi who came to power through a liberation struggle but was able to adapt and propel Ethiopia towards currently impressive levels of development despite the hostility of a major ethnic group, the Oromo.

By contrast Isayas Afewerki who led the bitter liberation struggle which led to Eritrea obtaining independence in 1991 failed to adapt and when the border dispute resulting in war with Ethiopia kept (and still keeps) the country mobilised militarily, with large numbers of forced conscripts trying to flee to Europe.

The Somalis have a totally different social structure, one culture but different clans. Since the fall of the dictator, Siyad Barre in 1991 there has been no effective government in Mogadishu, though the breakaway Somaliland, the former British colony, dominated by one clan, is well organised but not recognised by the African Union or anyone else. The former French Djibouti

serves as landlocked Ethiopia's port, connected by a new Chinese-built electric railway. It has the distinction of hosting both an American and a Chinese military base.

Clapham succeeds in describing the recent history and political realities of this interesting region in a balanced and not too academic a manner.



Franquismo

**Nigel
Doggett**
on
authoritarian
control

Franco: Anatomy of a dictator
Enrique Moradiellos
IB Tauris £20

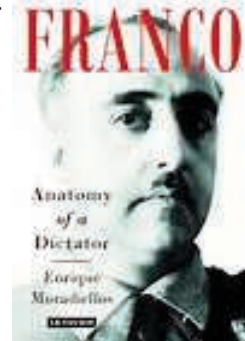
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A principled spy

**Buncan
Bowie**
on Donald
Maclean

A Spy named Orphan
Roland Philipps
Bodley Head £20

Donald Maclean is perhaps the most interesting member of the Cambridge spy ring and perhaps the least studied – Robert Cecil's 1988 'A Divided Life' being more of a memoir by a former friend than a full biography. Maclean grew up within establishment liberal circles – his father, also Donald Maclean was President of the Board of Education in the 1931 National Government, and had briefly been leader of the Liberal Party between 1918 and 1922 when Asquith had been out of parliament and when Maclean in effect led the independent Liberal opposition to the Lloyd George administration.

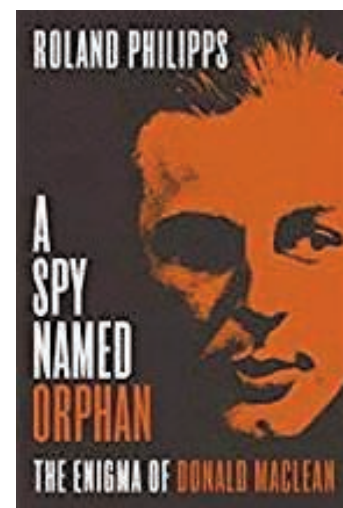
The younger Maclean was at school at Greshams with James Klugmann who later became the leading figure of the Cambridge University communist group in the late 1930's and was later the official Communist Party historian. Of the Cambridge spies,

Maclean appears to have been the most committed ideologically to supporting the Soviet Union, and he does appear to have believed that sharing British diplomatic secrets with the Soviets was in the interests of world peace.

Philipps' new study demonstrates how important much of this information was and the impact it had on global politics both during the Second World War and in the Cold War. Unlike some other espionage biographies, Philipps does not try to novelise the narrative or get carried away with the machismo of secrecy and adventure. The book is well researched. It also draws attention to the role of Maclean's successive handlers. Most interesting is the role of Kitty Harris, who was both his handler and lover in London and in Paris.

Harris is herself a fascinating individual – born in East London, married bigamously to the American communist Earl Browder, then courier and agent for the Comintern in China, Germany, Scandinavia and then

in Mexico, as well as in Britain and France. Her story and the detailed operations of Soviet espionage and couriers is narrated in a biography by a former Russian agent, Igor Damaskin, published in 2001, and for those with an interest in the subject, well worth a read.



YOUTH VIEW



Boundary changes weaken parliamentary democracy

Cat Smith calls on Theresa May to think again

Cat Smith is MP for Lancaster and Fleetwood & Shadow Minister for Voter Engagement and Youth Affairs

This September the Boundary Commissions submitted their final reports and recommendations for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries to the Government. The proposals cut the number of MPs from 650 to 600. England will lose 32 seats, Scotland 6, Wales 11 and Northern Ireland 1. The decision to reduce the number of seats was initially approved by Parliament in 2011. It was the brainchild of David Cameron.

No real explanation was given as to why the figure of 600 MPs was chosen – no evidence put forward relating to the workload of MPs or how a smaller House of Commons would impact on the scrutiny of Government. 600 it seems was chosen simply because it was a neat figure. Prior to the 2010 General Election Cameron had wanted the figure to be 585 but again this seems to be because it would represent a cut of 10% and 10 is a nice round number.

The initial justification for cutting the number of MPs was that it would cut the cost of politics. The fact that David Cameron awarded 242 life peerages during his time as Prime Minister, more per year than any other Prime Minister, and that his Government had the highest number of special advisors on record, would suggest this might not have been his true motivation.

In drawing up the new electoral boundaries the Boundary Commissions were instructed to use data from December 2015.

This was the month the Government made the transition to full individual electoral registration, against the



advice of the Electoral Commission who had advocated a much greater transition period from household registration. The result was a fall of 1.7 million people on the electoral register from those who were eligible to vote 2015 election on the December 2015 register. This December 2015 register also ignores the increase in registrations thanks to the EU referendum and 2017 General Election – there are currently 1.4m more names on the register than there were in December 2015.

Even those on the Conservative benches who previously supported the changes in 2011 cannot deny that the political context has changed significantly.

The Brexit process represents one of the greatest constitutional challenges our country has ever faced. The proposed reduction in the size of the House of Commons would weaken the role of Parliament exactly at a time when Parliament is meant to be taking back control.

MPs are likely to take on additional responsibilities currently exercised by MEPs. It is vital that Parliament is equipped to deal with the enormity of thousands of pieces of important legislation expected to come before it should Brexit go ahead. The size of the Civil Service is increasing in preparation for Brexit. Figures from the Office for National Statistics show that there are

14,000 more civil servants since the end of 2016, with Brexit the primary driver behind this rise according to the Institute for Government. With many legislative challenges lying ahead, it is vital that parliament is properly resourced.

Perhaps most tellingly, there are no plans to reduce the number of Ministers which means that the proportion of MPs holding government posts will increase should the number of MPs fall. This would strengthen the power of the executive, making it more difficult for backbenchers to challenge the government. We should be under no illusion. Parliament's ability to hold the Government to account would be reduced.

In a modern democracy it is of course right that we keep our constituency boundaries up to date and Labour accepts that a boundary review is needed ahead of the next General Election. We stand ready to work with all political parties to agree a timetable for a new review that benefits our democracy.

Sadly however a politically motivated review based on an arbitrary cut in the number of MPs, outdated and unsuitable electoral data and a weakening of Parliament only benefits the Conservative Party. If Theresa May is serious about protecting our democracy and strengthening Parliament she must think again. **C**

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