

CHARTIST

For democratic socialism

#298 May/June 2019

£2

Fighting for a European future

Peter Kenyon, Catherine

West MP

Labour & Brexit

Julie Ward

European elections

Paul Nowak

Tory work myths

Unmesh Desai

Fighting far right

Alice Arkwright

Knife crime

Glyn Ford & Patrick

Costello

Building Euro solidarity

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.

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the EB

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CHARTIST APPEAL

We live in uncertain and dangerous times. Politics in the UK is dominated by Brexit. Under this political storm we continue to endure austerity, insecurity and falling living standards. Internationally we are witnessing the rise of right-wing populists in the shape of Trump in the US, Bolsonaro in Brazil, Modi in India, Putin in Russia alongside other new right nationalists in Eastern Europe, Italy and elsewhere. Behind these ugly developments lurk the forces of fascism and xenophobia, complimented by the repressive dictatorships in China and much of the middle east. To cap it all is human-made global warming threatening the entire planet.

Our politics is driven by the need to revitalise socialism as a thoroughly democratic and internationalist current, with the backing behind it to make an effective challenge to globalised capitalism. Chartist aims to up its game, particularly on social media. As one of the longest-standing print magazines on the Labour Left, published for almost 50 years, we recognise we are in new times. New digital forms of communication are central to getting democratic socialist ideas out to a wider, especially younger readership.

Hence this appeal. We want to improve the look of the print version while developing the website and social media activity on Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and elsewhere. This costs money. For years Chartist

has operated with entirely voluntary labour. But now we need to outlay finance on developing our web presence. For that we need skilled people.

So we are appealing to readers to make a donation, big or small, to help revamp the print magazine and boost our social media profile.

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WESTMINSTER VIEW

Catherine West MP says put any deal to the people

EDITORIAL

Europe—Tory paralysis, Labour's opportunity

We live in surreal times. It is unprecedented for a government to be defeated on its keynote policy, delivering Brexit— not once but three times— and still remain in office. The prime minister refuses to go to the country in a general election. So we have the spectacle of LINO (leader in name only) with her European counterparts in the 27 other member states seeking a short and being granted a seven month extension of Article 50 until Halloween, October 31st.

Now the UK will participate in the European election on 23 May. Labour people and all pro EU parties should welcome this opportunity to hammer the Tories and show that there is a powerful pro-European view in the UK. This will be a kind of General Election or referendum by proxy. The far right pro-Brexit groups understand this and are organising hard. The Tories are on the back foot. Labour can and should make it clear we are a remain and transform party. The million plus demonstration in March for a people's vote, the six million plus who voted to revoke Article 50 are a huge active base to build on. Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales today back Remain. This is the majority Labour needs to inspire and get out to vote. A recent European Council on Foreign Relations poll found British people second only to Finland in pro-European sentiments.

Polls now show a majority back Remain. While **Catherine West MP** puts the case for a confirmatory referendum to enable the people to decide whether they accept or reject the terms of leaving the EU, she also questions the legitimacy of the 2016 referendum. The Leave campaigns broke electoral law and were financed by nefarious unknown sources. We know the campaign was based on lies. Whether it is misinformation to farming and fisheries workers, those in manufacturing, particularly car making, or the whoppers about a Brexit dividend millions for the NHS, the wheels are coming off that whole bus of untruths. Brexit is a right-wing nationalist project. It is stoking up racist sentiments and a no-deal exit, opposed by a majority of MPs, favoured by the far right, would intensify prejudice and divisions in our society.

Peter Kenyon cites the pro-Remain majority views in the party and most nations of the UK as reason enough for Jeremy Corbyn to come off the fence in the European election campaign, but fears otherwise. Labour signed up to the Party of European Socialists manifesto, parts of which we reprint. It is strong on a new green deal, strong on human rights and combating racism and fascism, strong on tax dodgers. We support going beyond, revising the Lisbon treaty to enable wealth shifts, empowering workers and securing an anti-austerity European recovery programme.

Julie Ward MEP in rehearsing the benefits of membership argues that the UK needs a voice and a vote in Europe enabling us to play a leading role for an alternative democratic socialist polity.

Patrick Costello and **Glyn Ford** argue Corbyn and team (unlike New Labour predecessors) have

been deepening our ties with sister socialist and social democratic parties in Europe. Solidarity is critical in combating global capital, the tax dodgers, the corporate polluters, and the far right fascist parties who want to turn the clock back to dark days of the 1930s. As **Unmesh Desai** points out in reporting on the launch of the anti-racist London United the national populists and anti-migrant xenophobes are also organising across the continent to realise a deeply conservative, ethno-centric vision of Europe.

Brexit will be the leitmotif of British politics for the next period. It is the front line of battles to combat racism, to build an economy that puts jobs, public services and workers rights first, and a world that puts protection of our planet from global warming at the forefront of an international agenda as Extinction Rebellion and Greta Thunberg have highlighted.

Paul Nowak chastises government ministers for warm words on employment and in its Good Work Plan while presiding over the growth of a huge precariat dependent on supplementary benefits and food banks with millions trapped on low pay and insecure conditions. It's the quality of jobs that counts. Lee Rushton highlights the scandal of growing homelessness on our city streets and the failure of government to tackle the problem.

Alice Arkwright similarly spotlights the way insecurity on our streets, with growing knife crime amongst young people is amplified by cuts to youth services, drastically reduced police numbers and rising social divisions.

These are symptoms of a sick society presided over by a broken Tory government. Labour has a great opportunity, first in local elections and then in the European to show it has a positive alternative.

In getting Labour campaign-ready and united with a capacity to reach out to new voters the Corbyn led party also needs to ensure that unsocial behaviour and tribal attitudes are marginalised in the party. **Tom Miller** and **Dave Lister** put complementary views on building an inclusive culture within the party. **Don Flynn** discusses the problem of antisemitism seeking to clarify ways to eradicate it in the party and wider society as part of education and action against all forms of racism while maintaining international solidarity with oppressed groups like the Palestinians.

Listening to and empowering members was the hallmark of Jeremy Corbyn's ascendancy. Whilst there are MPs in Leave voting areas the vast bulk of Labour's support comes from pro-European and pro-Remain voters (including Leave voting areas). The party membership, including Momentum, strongly supports Remain. The party has a big opportunity to inspire, enlist and mobilise hundreds of thousands of supporters in the Euro elections and beyond in pressing for a democratic, green economic recovery agenda allied to a confirmatory vote on Brexit. Let this be the hallmark of our campaigning work.

OUR HISTORY - 84

RALPH MILIBAND - PARLIAMENTARY SOCIALISM (1961)

Miliband was a Marxist sociologist and political scientist who contributed to the development of socialist theory within the 'new left' in the 1960's. A Polish Jew, he fled to England from Belgium in 1940. After studying at the LSE and wartime service, he taught in Chicago before returning to the LSE as a political science lecturer in 1949.

Joining the Labour Party in 1951, he collaborated with E P Thompson and John Saville, editors of the *New Reasoner* and later with the *New Left Review*. His first book, a historical critique of the Labour Party, *Parliamentary Socialism*, was published in 1961. He later published *The State in Capitalist Society* (1969), *Marxism and Politics* (1977), *Capitalist Democracy in Britain* (1982), *Class Power and State Power* (1983), *Divided Societies: Class Struggle in Contemporary Capitalism* (1989) and (posthumously) *Socialism for a Sceptical Age* (1994).

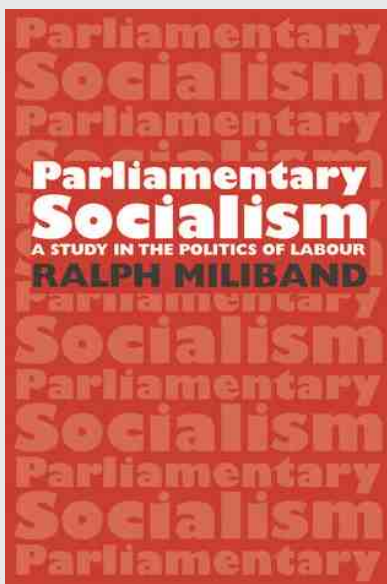
An activist as well as a theoretician, having left the Labour Party, he founded *Socialist Register* with John Saville in 1964 and from 1981 was an active participant in the Socialist Society, with Raymond Williams and *New Left Review* contributors such as Tariq Ali and Hilary Wainwright, on the concept that an education and research organisation could bring together Marxists within and outside the Labour Party. The Socialist Society sponsored a series of conferences in Chesterfield, in which Tony Benn featured prominently.

Miliband was also a signatory to Charter 88, which advocated constitutional and electoral reform. He died in 1994. A biography by Michael Newman: *Ralph Miliband and the Politics of the New Left* was published in 2002 by Merlin Press. The following extract is taken from the final chapter of *Parliamentary Socialism* – titled The Sickness of Labourism.

“One of the reasons why Labour leaders have always repudiated the class character of the Labour Party has been their fear that to admit the fact, and to act upon it, would antagonise ‘floating voters’. So, in many cases it no doubt has. But there is nothing to suggest that a multitude of men and women, who are not of the working classes, have in the past found the class character of the Labour Party a bar to their support for it, or that support for it would wane if its leaders were to adapt their policies to that fact.”

“The reverse is more likely to be true. For while Labour leaders have felt that the ‘affluent society’ required more urgently than ever that their party should appear ‘classless’, profound unease with that society has grown apace far outside trade union ranks. If trade union radicalism in recent years is a sign of this unease, the radicalism to be found in a new generation is surely another. While lamentations have been loud at the supposed political apathy of youth, a multitude of young men and women have found in the threat of nuclear war and a host of other issues a basis of commitment for transcending the orthodoxies of Labourism. It is only in comparison with the mythical thirties that the

fifties, or at least the late fifties, have been years of political disengagement. The comparison with the real thirties is not to the detriment of these past years. The real difference is that the fifties have often appeared to lack the political instrumentalities of radical change. And to this impression, a consolidating Labour Party, revisionist in practice if not in theory, has greatly contributed. If politics in the fifties have seemed a decreasingly meaningful activity, void of substance, heedless of principle, and rich in election auctioneering, the responsibility is not only that of the hidden or overt persuaders; it is also, and to a major degree, that of Labour's leaders.”



Printer ad

Northern Powerlessness

Paul Salveson on Tory vanity projects

One of George Osborne's more interesting policy interventions was 'The Northern Powerhouse'. For a while it seemed it might have some traction, through an unlikely alliance between a Tory chancellor and Labour city leader, Manchester's Richard Lease (with the powerful figure of chief executive Howard Bernstein behind him). After Osborne's departure from government, the Northern Powerhouse ran out of steam. A relatively unknown junior minister was appointed to take responsibility for the project, but it lacks traction.

However, in between editing the London Evening Standard, Osborne found time to set up a new body, the Northern Powerhouse Partnership, to try to breathe life back into his baby. This is a collection of the great and the good of Northern business, with about as little accountability as the North Korean government. It has its own agenda, which tends to be narrow and exclusive. It achieved temporary fame, or notoriety, for organising a conference which managed to have a speaker's panel that was almost entirely male (and needless to say white and middle class).

The board of the Northern Powerhouse Partnership represents corporate power which is mostly in, but not of, the North. In all honesty, major businesses which are truly Northern-based these days are hard to find. Yet there's no representation to the North's flourishing SME sector, let alone its vibrant voluntary sector. Local government is in there as the junior partner, with the inevitable Richard Leese as a member.

Rail has been a key area of interest to the Powerhouse Partnership. But no, not sorting out the mess that our local and regional services plunged into last year, nor rebuilding the North's rail manufacturing base. The priority is on vanity projects – and HS2 is the mother of all vanity projects. Chugging along behind, routed on the slow line, is 'HS3' sometimes referred to as 'Northern Powerhouse Rail'.



Osborne's white elephant

The idea is to link up the northern cities on an east-west axis, from the Humber (and York) across to Leeds, Manchester and Liverpool. This has a bit more to be said for it, though again it could be accused of being a politi-

The impact of HS2 on the North could actually be negative, with wealth sucked out of the region in a southerly direction.

cal vanity project. The route seems designed to please all the political leaders along the route rather than achieve an alignment that could realistically happen. So the city of Bradford, for decades a railway backwater, will get HS3. But at the expense of huge amounts of tunnelling which will make the project, in all likelihood unaffordable.

Meanwhile, the relatively new Woodhead Tunnel, offering a relatively easy route across the Pennines, lies disused apart from carrying some electric cables which could be re-routed. This isn't an argument for continuing Bradford's 'siding' status – the solution to Bradford's rail problems is 'Bradford Crossrail' which would connect the two existing termini (Forster Square and Interchange) and open up huge opportunities to improve the West Yorkshire local rail network. But that isn't any-

thing like as sexy as having your own high-speed trainset.

Meanwhile, the Powerhouse Partnership continues to lobby, in the face of growing evidence to the contrary, for the regeneration benefits of HS2 (see the recent New Economics Foundation report for Friends of the Earth <https://neweconomics.org/2019/03/a-rail-network-for-everyone>). Recently, NPP's director, Henri Murison, issued a statement saying that unless the Tories back HS2 they will lose several Northern seats. This is laughable. Most people in the North when asked will tell you that HS2 is something we can well do without and the priority should be the local rail network, at least as far as transport investment goes. The impact of HS2 on the North could actually be negative, with wealth sucked out of the region in a southerly direction. There may be some localised regeneration benefits around the termini at Manchester, Birmingham and Leeds, but nowhere else. In a further example of insanity, the proposed Birmingham terminus at Curzon Street will be situated a mile from where most trains actually call, at New Street. So much for connectivity.

So whether the Tories will or won't pull the plug on HS2 remains to be seen, but if they did, I can't see it costing them any votes. The fact they may well do it for the wrong reasons is neither here nor there. A more interesting question is Labour's attitude to HS2 and to the wider issue of Northern regeneration. Labour should have a clear policy to abandon HS2 and redirect the investment into a national programme of investment which benefits cities but also towns which have suffered economic decline. We shouldn't keep on fuelling the London boom by adding to existing north-south transport capacity. The NEF report (above) makes the case for re-balancing the UK by improving existing routes, re-opening some that were cut by Beeching, combined with new trains and electrification.

As for the Northern Powerhouse, if it is to have any credibility it needs to be democratised and reflect and support the creative energies that are developing in the North but find no place amongst the suits that make up the so-called 'Partnership'. **C**

Paul Salveson's website and blog is on www.paulsalveson.org.uk

Labour's nuclear power black hole

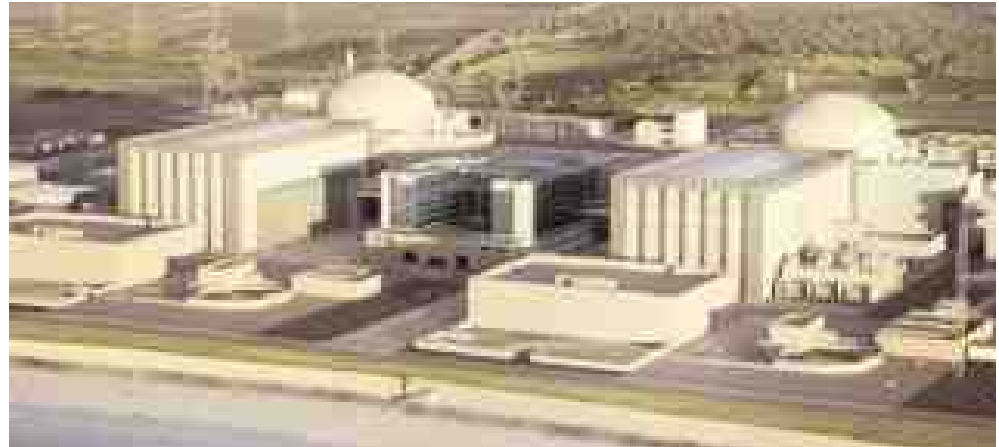
Renewables are safe and cheap – so why is Labour set to marginalise them? asks **Dave Toke**

Labour's energy spokesperson, Rebecca Long-Bailey, having previously pledged to put renewable energy on top of the energy agenda has now relegated it far below nuclear power. Her team have done this with a pledge to take partial state ownership of new nuclear power projects and of nuclear projects that have been abandoned. But giving state priority to these projects, far from keeping the lights on will actually ruin the chances of aspiring renewable energy generators and pour countless billions down a nuclear black hole.

The figures speak for themselves. Long-Bailey pledges to reverse what she calls the Government's 'cancellations' of new nuclear projects (Moorside, Oldbury, Wylfa) (factcheck; it was the developers who cancelled them despite being promised tens of billions of state aid). If these projects are brought on line (in addition to the existing Sizewell B and still-not-cancelled projects of Hinkley C and Sizewell C) then nuclear generation will climb to at least 35 per cent of current generation - and even that does not count the Chinese led project at Bradwell.

Meanwhile renewable energy generated 33% of UK electricity in 2018, a figure that, with the recently announced 'sector deal' for offshore wind, will increase to around 65% by 2030 even without any more onshore wind and solar pv which the Labour Party claims to support. It doesn't need a mathematical genius to work out that with 35% coming from nuclear power, there simply will not be any market space for any more renewable energy.

Yet renewable energy, as we have discussed is cheap, becoming cheaper, and needs little or no public subsidy - a big contrast with nuclear, which despite all the promised support, high consumer subsidies, public guarantees of loan funding (none of which is available for new renewable schemes) has failed so far to generate a single kWh. And it will not until at least 2026 even if EDF's schedules for Hinkley C construction prove (miraculously in the light of recent nuclear con-



Nuclear power station Hinkley

struction history) to be achievable.

Of course there's no electricity generation shortfall in the near term, and in the medium term there cannot be either, given the amount of renewable energy coming online. There's no capacity shortage either, and there certainly won't be in the medium term given the potential replacement of up to 30 per cent of our peak generating capacity by battery storage, or failing that, flexible gas generation. That's going to be much cheaper than nuclear power and much more certainly brought on line when we want it compared to nuclear. Batteries will be much cheaper than nuclear and right now gas engines and open cycle plant are twenty times cheaper than nuclear power to install.

Even if only some of the new nuclear power which Labour wants to back came online, new renewable energy would still be crowded out. This is because electricity contracts given to nuclear power give them 'dispatch priority' over renewable energy, causing windfarms and solar farms to be turned off to give priority to nuclear power. Indeed, this is already happening with our current levels of nuclear and renewables, with, ironically, renewable energy detractors blaming the problem (and the compensation paid to the windfarms) on the windfarms themselves. So not only in the future are we going to sink into an amazing public morass of handouts to fund these nuclear power stations, but in the

process, at best, we are going to be ordering the turning off of renewable energy and paying the operators compensation for this! This is crazy.

What Labour ought to be planning is to substitute renewable energy for fossil fuels used in transport and heating. Rather than throwing billions upon billions down nuclear black holes we need to give money to local authorities to build demonstration schemes for large scale heat pumps to serve new district heating systems, fund electric buses and a much quicker roll-out of fast charge points for electric vehicles, and also reorganise the regulatory system to favour demand side response, decentralised generation and battery storage. In recent years electricity consumption has been falling, partly because of energy efficiency measures. We need to expand this strategy as well as giving more long term power purchase agreements to wind power and solar power both onshore and offshore.

There's certainly no shortage of renewable energy options. The Scottish Government is holding a consultation about issuing new offshore wind leases, and there is a tremendous amount of onshore wind and solar pv being wasted. Then there are other renewable energy sources being developed, tidal of various sorts, and wave power. Instead of giving priority to these things Labour have come out with a daft policy that threatens to take us back to the dinosaur age by comparison. **C**

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

His latest book is *Low Carbon Politics*, Routledge (2018)

LABOUR & BREXIT

Hokey-Cokey Labour

Peter Kenyon reviews the ins and outs of the British Labour Party's EU policy making



The hokey-cokey doesn't feature in *Strictly Come Dancing* named by The Guinness Book of Records as the world's most successful reality TV format. That's a pity for Jeremy Corbyn, who has yet to appear. But by the time you read this you can rate his performance 1 to 10 regarding the European Parliamentary elections yourself.

In the preparations for the elections, due in the UK on Thursday 23 May, Corbyn along with the other leaders of the Party of European Socialists has already endorsed a common manifesto. At the time of going to press, drafting of the British Labour Party version was being decided by its National Executive Committee (NEC). A lively discussion is expected with a majority of voters in the four countries that currently make up the United Kingdom supporting 'Remain', along with a majority of party members and current Labour members of the European Parliament. They are decidedly IN. But in the LOTO (Leader Of The Opposition) office, the Parliamentary Labour Party and fringes of the party membership are those who are decidedly OUT. Astonishing, but true.

Word from the LOTO is no new policies are to be included and committing to a confirmatory referendum on a Brexit deal is to be avoided. That is extremely problematic for the majority.

Strictly (no pun intended) there shouldn't be any European Parliamentary elections on 23 May. British Prime Minister Theresa May promised that the UK would leave the EU at 2300 on 29 March. But here we are still members of the EU, at least until 30 October 2019, unless Parliament accepts her so-called deal, rejected three times so far albeit with declining majorities in the House of Commons against.

Framing a manifesto in those circumstances ought to be simple. The Conservatives' Brexit project has failed. Three years' negotiation and manoeuvring have demonstrated beyond doubt that the EU referendum should never have been called. The UK's place is in the European Union. Labour in the immediate aftermath of electoral defeat in 2015 under acting Leader Harriet Harman, fell into the Tory trap and waived the legislation through without due consideration. Corbyn compounded the error by treating the result on 24 June 2016 as a legitimate

democratic outcome.

Labour's challenge now is framing a manifesto to win over as many voters as possible. Unlike the UK's parliamentary first-past-the-post electoral system, every vote in a European Parliamentary election counts.

Having extended an opportunity to the public to decide (a delicious nail-biting feature of *Strictly*), the constitutionally strict cannot see any other way out of the current UK Parliamentary impasse than by offering the public another opportunity to decide.

That is Labour Party policy as decided at its 2018 Conference. If the aim is to maximise votes on 23 May, then a commitment to a public vote ought to be a no-brainer. If it isn't in the routine by the time you read this, you can be certain Labour will stumble when the ballots are counted.

Assuming sense prevailed when the NEC met to decide on 30 April, what else would feature? A key lesson from successive EU deliberations, since Margaret Thatcher was UK Prime Minister (1979-1990), is that the EU went soft on global finance and incorporation to the detriment of the many. That is the focus of the

Peter Kenyon is member of Chartist EB and ex Labour NEC



PES manifesto and freelance versions for the British electorate. An edited version of one, which I declare having a hand in shaping as clerk to the nascent Socialist Europe Policy Commission (SEPC), is set out below (see box).

This document was endorsed not just by the SEPC, but all Labour MEPs offering themselves for re-election and leading figures across the Socialists and Democrats group in the European Parliament, then submitted to the LOTO's office, which acknowledged receipt promptly – a remarkable event in itself.

This is a baseline requirement. Members of the SEPC know that the PES manifesto is not radical enough to tackle the underlying problems facing the majority of EU citizens. SEPC chair Ann Pettifor is calling for changes to tackle the persistent problem of German balance of payments' surpluses. Paul Mason in his latest piece in the New Statesman said: "[Labour] should publish a short, clear statement of what it would do – over and above what the PES manifesto says – to radically transform the EU from the inside. It should pledge to fight to revise

the Lisbon Treaty, insist on the removal of competition laws, state aid rules and labour market rules that favour big business at the expense of the poor, and which limit the ability of governments to take sovereign decisions about economic policy.

Those are some of the benchmarks with which to judge Labour's EP election manifesto. What everyone should know about the hokey-cokey is that it is best performed in a line with dancers linked shoulder to shoulder – otherwise there is a risk of falling over. **C**

Remain, Reform, Rebel

The Mission for Socialist Members of the European Parliament

What would the EU look like, had it unfolded according to the vision of its founders? What would it take to foster reconciliation and promote peace today? What would solidarity mean in a modern society and how could it reach across borders? What would a freedom of movement look like that represented genuine liberty? How do institutions build equality and represent the social good against the profit motive? What challenges can people meet who share these values? What challenges must we meet to honour these values? What role can the EU play in countering the dangers brought about by globalisation, including climate change, transnational organised crime, war and conflict, or extreme deprivation?

A Green New Deal for Europe

Climate change is the major and most pressing threat to peace, stability and security; it is a daunting foe, yet it ignites the best in us, unites us in a human family in defence of our planet, to which borders are not relevant and cooperation is everything. We can make Europe the first carbon free continent in the world.....The role of the EU in seeking and maintaining a just and rule-based international order cannot be understated, now more than ever: European support for keeping both the INF Treaty and the Iran nuclear deal, in the face of Donald Trump's attempt to destroy both, has been decisive. Our common trade policy should ensure shared prosperity through enforceable, binding rights for workers and to protect the environment, while ensuring effective rules for multinational investors - making fair trade and sustainability the foundation for our economic relations with the rest of the world not entrenching rights for multinationals.

A Free, Democratic, Humanitarian Europe

From the resurgence of far-right parties in Austria, Germany and Switzerland, to the authoritarian strong man politics of Hungary, Russia and the USA; from the doomed nativism of Brexit to the alt-right internet wormholes of an ever more connected world, Fascism is on the rise, both inside Europe and outside it. The mainstream right shows no appetite to resist it; traditional social democratic ideas are unequal to the questions the far-right sets out to answer.

The erosion of living standards will not end when freedom of movement ends; attempts to blame it on migration only strengthen the bad faith actors who seek to undermine confidence in progressive possibility. It has to be met by a vigorous trans-continental union movement..... In indulging right-wing extremism, European institutions have lost their humanitarian vocabulary and purpose, nowhere more visible than in the refugee crisis; without a duty to provide sanctuary and a pride in offering it, this continent has no moral purpose; and without that, well might its members wonder what kind of journey they're embarked on. Our responsibilities do not end at the borders of Europe. The EU has to remain the standard bearer for human rights, promoting social and economic development and the rule of law world-wide.....

A Europe for the Many not the Few

If anything has swerved the direction of the institutions of the EU, it has been the attempts of the past thirty years to replace its shared values with a shared economic policy, to serve the interests of globalised finance. Austerity has eroded social security and, with it, a broader sense of duty towards each citizen, that the young deserve employment, that the old deserve care and dignity, that all those working deserve fair and sufficient wages, and all those not working are still infinitely valuable, since the wealth of any place is in its people.....The collaborative fight for tax justice will bring to an end the evasion, avoidance and corporate competition that have thwarted the ambitions of public spending and sullied the sense of shared social responsibility..... As the solutions to tax justice can no longer be found in national isolationism, nor can those of a modern and generous state: rights and safety nets have to be won collectively across borders, and defended in solidarity: if for no other reason than that we will pay for disparities with our freedom of movement. The interests of the market can no longer take precedence over those of the citizens.



EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

Euro elections—building a progressive alliance

Julie Ward says Labour must not abandon its tradition of being internationalist - remaining in the EU should be our platform to victory

The majority of Labour party members are like me: Pro-Corbyn, anti-Brexit. We see the need for a radical left-wing anti-austerity agenda to ensure that we have an economy, health service and decent working conditions fit for the 21st Century, and that we are primed ready for the fourth industrial revolution.

If we fight on a positive and progressive pro-EU 'Remain and Reform' platform in the forthcoming European elections we have an opportunity to be the largest party within the Socialist and Democrat (S&D) grouping in the European Parliament. Indeed, we should be leading, not leaving. The EU is our biggest trading partner, our closest allies on peace and security and our nearest neighbours with whom we share a land border. Walking away will only make us weaker, poorer and less secure. If Labour doesn't put its full weight behind a decent election campaign we will be in danger of burning bridges when we should be building them.

The British Labour party must participate wholeheartedly in the European elections fighting for our place and voice inside the EU. In the 2017 general election our manifesto was widely acclaimed by our PES sister parties and by those in the European Left. Our rejuvenated membership base is the envy of ailing socialist and democrat parties. But we must not squander all that we have achieved over the past few years. We need to be proud of our vision and build upon it in a European context, acknowledging the legacy of four decades of Labour MEPs who served with commitment and passion in the European Parliament, standing up for workers rights, consumer rights, and human rights, paving the way for recent legislation to tackle tax evasion, and bring forward the 'work life balance' directive.

We are in a unique position to help change the balance of power in Europe enabling a larger and louder voice for socialism inside the European Parliament. Labour can and should win the European elections, especially given the Tory disarray in contrast to our powerful vision



Over a million demonstrating against Brexit in March

for the future. Doing well in the European elections would enable the formation of a large coalition of internationalist socialist comrades in the European Parliament. A Labour Party playing a leading role in the socialist group could reinvigorate and strengthen core EU values, challenge the failed neo-liberalism which has made the EU so unpopular, while building upon social and environmental justice across borders. We could be the kingmakers, helping to install the socialist candidate, Frans Timmermans, as President of the Commission. The young people of Europe would thank us for safeguarding their future and the forgotten-about communities would not feel abandoned.

We are uniquely placed to forge a broad progressive alliance centred around a European Green New Deal, and a Labour presence in the next European Parliament which would help bring together MEPs from different progressive groups. Already there exists an anti-austerity Left Caucus comprising S&D, Greens and European Left. The stage is now set for a huge dynamic shift and we need Labour to steer this ship.

We are in a politically historical moment, one of great turbulence with increasing populism on the rise in all corners of Europe. Eurosceptics and pro-Europeans on the left must put aside their differences and work

together to avoid the creation of a European Parliament dominated by the followers of Orban, Salvini, Wilders and Le Pen, who despite their nationalist rhetoric are already collaborating as an international force. Nigel Farage is funded by corporate interests in the United States and probably Russian oligarchs too. He is working with alt-right white nationalist Steve Bannon who has now set up an office in Brussels and is attempting to build a school for populism in Italy. It is therefore up to the left to tackle this scourge head on. Brexit enabled by the Labour Party would be a supreme act of abandonment of solidarity.

This issue is not simply about the European Union, as it stands. This is about a democratic Europe for the future. We are at a turning point that requires British initiative and engagement from the Left in order to take on the few whose now almost unlimited economic and political power is being exercised at the expense of the many - ultimately risking the survival of the planet. The world needs a united Europe, with an unashamed socialist and democratic leadership.

A strong, confident pro-European Labour campaign, electing more Labour MEPs, will help guide a new direction for Europe, stop the rise of populism and shape a better future for an entire continent. We inherit the past, but we must shape the future. **C**

Julie Ward is standing to be re-elected a Labour MEP for the North West

Work does not pay

Paul Nowak find the Tories Good Work plan is all warm words and sticking plasters

Amidst the continuing Brexit omnishambles, you might not have noticed that at the end of last year the government published its Good Work plan, which Business Secretary Greg Clark claimed was, 'a significant milestone...to deliver the largest upgrade in workers' rights in over a generation'. A few weeks later the Prime Minister invited trade unionists into Downing Street for the first time in over two years to discuss Brexit, and in particular to try and allay union fears about what the government's approach to Brexit would mean for employment rights now and into the future.

On the face of it, both of these developments would suggest the government has belatedly woken up to the fact that for far too many people work simply is not working. But scratch beneath the surface, and it's clear that the government is more interested in warm words than concrete action to make Britain's workplaces fairer.

Let's start with the Good Work plan. Many of the proposals announced by the government in December flow from Matthew Taylor's review of modern employment practices. This review was commissioned by the government over 2 ½ years ago, with Taylor reporting in July 2017. In all that time we've had plenty of rhetoric from government but precious little action. Indeed, many of the proposals announced by the government in December won't actually take effect until April 2020, more than 3 ½ years after the Prime Minister promised urgent action to help the 'just about managing'.

But the real issue with the Good Work plan isn't just that it has been so long coming to fruition, but that it is also a completely inadequate response to the huge challenges facing working people in Britain today.

The government likes to trumpet the fact that employment in the UK is at a record high. But it's clear this headline statistic masks a multitude of problems. One in nine UK workers now work in a precarious job, and in fact two-thirds of the new jobs created in the last decade fall into

this category. Low pay and insecure work have become the default in huge parts of sectors like hospitality and private social care. Workers are still worse off in real terms than they were before the financial crash more than a decade ago. For far too many people, work simply does not pay. Seven in ten of the children living in poverty in this country have at least one parent who works.

The problems in our labour market are not just restricted to those in the lowest paid employment. Casualisation has taken hold in universities and airlines as well as distribution centres. There is a continuing sense of a disconnect between Britain's boardroom elite and their workforces – with a recent Business Select Committee report describing top executive pay in the UK as 'eye watering and unjustified'.

In the face of all these challenges and more – including growing issues around stress and mental health at work – the Taylor review and the Good Work plan offer sticking plaster solutions. That's not to say that there aren't important and positive elements in both. For example, plans to close the so-called 'Swedish derogation' loophole that allows employers to exploit agency workers represent a major victory for trade unions after years of campaigning.

But overall, the reforms are a missed opportunity to shift the balance of power in insecure workplaces illustrated by the fact not one of the 51 proposals government agreed to take forward from the Taylor review, sets out what can be done to help workers enforce their rights through an independent trade union. Not one proposal mentions collective bargaining. All this despite the fact that study after study shows that workers in unionised workplaces benefit from higher pay, better pensions, safer working conditions, better access to family friendly working and a whole host of benefits.

This speaks directly as to why unions are so wary about the government's 'commitments' to protect employment rights following Brexit.

There are no binding guaran-



TGI Fridays workers protest against precarious work contracts

tees in the deal that UK workers' rights will fully keep pace with workers in Europe. Whatever the PM says today about new domestic laws on employment rights is meaningless – without a Brexit deal that binds future UK governments to maintain minimum European standards, future generations could find their rights disappear.

With the PM herself on a de facto fixed-term contract, and a host of hard-right Brexiteers looking to succeed her, it's perhaps not surprising that unions are not convinced that employment rights are safe in Conservative hands. This scepticism is reinforced by the lived experience of the last nine years of Conservative-led government. The doubling of qualifying periods for unfair dismissal; the introduction of employment tribunal fees which priced thousands of people out of workplace justice and the Trade Union Act, designed to deliberately weaken and undermine trade unions, is not a track record to inspire confidence.

We need a New Deal for working people in the UK. One built not just on individual rights at work, but the ability for workers to enforce their rights through strong, independent trade unions. That would be good for workers, but there is a growing recognition – even from surprising quarters like the OECD – that this would be good for business and UK PLC as well. **C**

Paul Nowak is assistant General Secretary TUC

HOMELESSNESS

Raise a roof for the homeless

As the number of people living and dying on our streets rises with empty houses reaching an all-time high, **Lee Rushton** reports on a Labour campaign to end the scandal

In Britain today, 320,000 people are homeless. Yet whilst those people sleep on the streets, 216,000 houses in England alone remain empty. Why? Because these houses aren't homes, they're capital.

In the 1980's, the first right-to-buy TV advert proudly claimed "You can decide whether to turn your home into a house". Since then, privatisation has been seeping into our homes, like damp.

The use of 'right' was well thought-out, giving the impression this was a scheme for all, a chance of stability that everyone deserves. But the offer wasn't valid. Housing instability didn't exist until efforts were turned to selling instead of creating social housing.

This was a crucial point of removing stability from those who needed it the most. Within 10 years, council house rents had risen by 55%. Gradually availability of social housing declined, power was passed to private landlords, and rents began to rise at an unprecedented rate.

Since 2010 private sector rents in England have gone up by three times as much as wages. In London rents have risen eight times the average wage increase. The result is more people, like Michael, on the streets of the fifth richest country on earth.

Wrapped in a sleeping bag, he tells us about his daily experience: "All I see is people's shoes, lots and lots of shoes going past me. I feel dehumanised every day. I feel invisible and I feel horrible.... I feel exhausted and cold a lot. I feel empty". Are we normalising homelessness in this country? With one in five people living in poverty, this isn't about individual action, we need radical political and systemic change.

Austerity has cut the budgets of local government and the vital services they provide. The focus is not on prevention but attempting, and failing, to deal with 'the problem' once people are sleeping on the streets. In London alone councils are paying private landlords £14m per year in an attempt to house those experiencing homelessness.

Labour Homelessness



Slapping fines on people experiencing homelessness is never the answer

Campaign have met and heard the stories of people on the streets across the country. In Manchester, we met Jess - pregnant, homeless, and with no access to homeless services. Within 10 minutes we met four more people experiencing rough sleeping. They described being 'harassed' by the police and being fined and taken to court under the Vagrancy Act.

Labour Homelessness Campaign are calling for an end to this draconian policy and the criminalisation of homeless people. The mistreatment of homeless people is everywhere. As Labour members, we need to tackle this within our own party, first by working where Labour are already in power to ensure shelter for all.

An inhumane 'move them along' mentality is growing. In Westminster, rough sleepers have been moved on from the little warmth they have found, as it is suggested they disturb MPs getting to work. Two policies are in effect to this end: the Vagrancy Act, and Public Service Protection Orders (PSPO's).

A study by the charity Crisis showed that 73% of rough sleepers experienced criminalisation in the last year. 6,518 people were found guilty under the, nearly 200-year-old, Vagrancy Act from 2014 to 2017 and punishments can range from a fine to up to six months imprisonment. There is little that

feels so blaringly idiotic as fining those who are homeless for being on the street.

Much like this outdated policy, PSPOs also allow councils to fine people. At least 60 councils have them in place. When Manchester City Council recently launched their PSPO consultation Andy Burnham claimed "it's not about criminalising people who are sleeping rough or people have got nowhere else to go." Yet it explicitly identifies "putting up tents, seeking charity and other behaviour associated with rough sleeping" as reason to be served a PSPO, behaviour that is inevitable for many experiencing homelessness.

Slapping fines on people experiencing homelessness is never the answer. Rather than driving people out of city centres with PSPOs, Labour local authorities should be defending the rights of rough sleepers to exist in public spaces like anyone else. As the Labour Homelessness Campaign, we advocate for an approach of care, not criminalisation.

Empty properties serve no value to society. We should be helping lives, not landlords. Homeless people need homes and the right to exist in public spaces. What is really damaging society after all – a tent for temporary accommodation, or 597 homeless people dying on our streets whilst houses stay empty? **C**

Lee Rushton is an activist with the Labour Homelessness Campaign, and volunteers with Streets Kitchen.

Building power: it's up to us

Having consolidated the leadership **Tom Miller** argues the Corbyn left must continue to build a member-led listening party, especially on Europe

It was no abstract Question for us. The circumstances of our lives made it a burning luminous mark of interrogation. Where was power, and which was the road to it?"

So wrote Aneurin Bevan in the semi-biographical introduction to his yet relevant magnum opus *In Place of Fear*. This single insight shaped Bevan's entire outlook in a way which speaks to an eternal truth, namely that politics is about the pursuit and exercise of power, and divining the process that brings us there.

Personalities in politics, be they commentators, activists or politicians, tend to fall into two camps with regard to power and the question of its attainment: seizers and builders.

The camps are tribes with counterpoised cultures, split by a silver river flowing with political power itself. They make their existence in a wide and open flood plain, not unlike some ancient American midwest. Life here is tough, shaped as it is by the ebbs and flows of political power, its changing meanders and bow lakes. On the river depends all life.

One camp is warlike. This is the camp of the Seizers. They are determined never to be threatened, by monopolising access to the river, by way of war, coercion or defences. Pugnacious, they make raids on the other camp, but pay the price by living in permanent fear of the other side.

On the other side of the river live the Builders. They dig channels so that the river may flow and irrigate their crops. They build and reproduce, knowing that if they continue to do so they will come to dominate the land. They know that one day, their ever-growing settlement will come to dominate what is now the camp of the power seizers, on the other side of the bank.

Where should the democratic socialists of 2019 stand?

Jeremy Corbyn's 2015 election victory was based on long term and deep principles that those of us on the left of the party had fought for decades, and through the years of New Labour. His offer



Aneurin Bevan - which road to power?

on policy was actually fairly light outside of the arena of counter-austerity, but the classic hallmarks of a party which was both democratic and tolerant marked a rupture from New Labour and a return to older values in the Labour movement, neatly summed up by the unfairly ridiculed slogan of 'kinder, gentler politics'. Here was a man who seized with giving power to the builders.

Corbyn has faced adversity in the form of a leadership challenge and a hostile press, which has certainly not helped, but it is indisputable that much of the Corbynite left is still shaped by a defensive and bunker-like mentality. How far we as members have been able to shape policy against the centre, especially in the area of policy on the EU, is disputable. Powered by the seizing mentality, powerful elements of the organised left still focus around political narrowness and total control, even when this does not work out well or denies a voice to many other members, including socialists.

Corbynism was produced by something which 'was not supposed to happen' – the left winning the leadership at the top of the pyramid before the bottom of it had been built. In other words, it has come to be because the left exploited an opportunity to seize power long before it had any interest in building it.

The left that we know now will

one day be something else, and again, a return to core values is becoming necessary if our long term beliefs are to be preserved. Europe serves as an example. At the last party conference, members built power. They built power effectively, and did so on the basis of pushing Labour towards a people's vote type platform, as favoured at the latest count by 86% of members. This was met by attempts to water down members wishes, in some activist circles to stigmatise pro-EU leftism, and by long step back from a policy that the leadership, wrongly in my view, sees as potentially dangerous rather than as an opportunity to build.

To see through the values proposed by Corbyn's run in 2015, if there is sufficient public opinion to build power, we members must hold our nerve and move from seizing to building the ideal of a Labour Party which is not afraid to consult and be member led. A party which is not afraid of diverse opinion in its ranks but sees it as a source of strength, is something which Corbyn supporters must stick to building in practice. Our members and unions should be in charge, and for that reason we could do nothing better than hold a special conference to decide on the biggest issue of the day.

"We have been the dreamers, we have been the sufferers, now we are the builders". **C**

**Tom Miller is a
Brent councillor
and Chair of
Open Labour**

FOR A NON-TOXIC LABOUR PARTY

Dave Lister argues for a more tolerant and civil party culture

Talking to people from across the country, it is clear that a toxic atmosphere has been created in some CLPs by a relatively small number of people. This is particularly true of some GCs but has even percolated down to some wards. This toxicity does not tend to be created by the large number of enthusiastic young and not so young people who have joined Momentum, but by a small number of sectarians buried in the disputes of the past. This can be extremely damaging for the party and for individuals.

Thus, in one North West London CLP both the Chair and the Secretary were hounded out of office by a stream of personal attacks and some intimidation. In my own CLP in the past some members stopped attending GC meetings because of the aggressive atmosphere created by just one individual. As Francis Beckett and Mark Seddon, who are largely pro-Corbyn wrote in their book 'Corbyn and the Strange Rebirth of Labour England', which I will be reviewing in the near future: "What the present authors wonder at is how in recent years a party with such noble aims managed to harbour

so many clearly quite malevolent and unpleasant people."

Of course, unacceptable behaviour is not confined to some members of the hard Left. There are plentiful examples of manoeuvrings by right-wingers and Blairites. The classic case is the old response to people wanting to join their local party that it was 'full'.

There are a number of ways of addressing the toxicity problem. Meetings need to be firmly chaired and personal and/or abusive attacks need to be stopped immediately. There needs to be a recognition that the concept of the Labour Party as a 'broad church' is valuable. We saw in the 1980s how bitter divisions in the party helped to keep the Tories in power for 18 years. There is a danger of party 'moderates' drifting out around Brexit and sectarianism and gravitating towards the centre grouping of MPs (Change UK) or the Lib Dems. On the other hand, it is worth dwelling on how most of the party was able to unite around the 2017 manifesto which was both left social democratic and much more radical than anything we have stood on since 1981.

Very careful thought needs to

be given to the selection process for MPs. A hard left sectarian Labour Party is not going to win a general election. There are some MPs who tried to thwart Corbyn from the outset who I would not want to re-select. However, where MPs, or for that matter local councillors, are hardworking, have the interests of their constituents at heart and have strong local support they should not be automatically removed because they do not declare themselves to be Jeremy Corbyn supporters.

We need a united but diverse Labour Party and we desperately need to see a Labour Government elected. If we can all accept the right of people to hold views different to our own, we are more likely to achieve this goal. Some people seem to believe that with greater concentration on winnable constituencies we can easily win next time. Experience however suggests that this is not a foregone conclusion by any means. The polls suggest that both of the main parties have lost support currently. Constant internal wrangling is very likely to erode Labour's support even further. Remember, unity is strength. **C**

**Dave Lister is a
Chartist EB
member**

Labour renewing the European left

Patrick Costello and **Glyn Ford** identify Labour's European allies and why it is vital to develop solidarity in the face of Brexit.

When - or even whether - the UK leaves the European Union (EU), Labour's links with sister parties and movements across Europe will be an essential element of its strategy to develop policies for the challenges of the next decades that the left will face across Europe. The nature of today's Labour Party as a coalition and amalgam of left and social democratic political tendencies puts it in a unique position to bring together parties across Europe whose political focus is more narrowly limited to one side of that divide. With unexpected European elections now looking likely in the UK, it is

an important moment to consider the positive role the Party, and Labour's MEPs can play at a crossroads for European politics.

First, the relationship with sister parties. This is the easy bit. The Party of European Socialists (PES) already includes non-EU members such as the Norwegian Labour Party as does its parallel political foundation and think-tank, the Federation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS). Post-Brexit, while UK Labour would inevitably have a smaller say in questions such as the selection of the PES candidate for President of the Commission and other key posts in the European institutions, it would continue to play a vital role

in developing socialist approaches to the common policy challenges such as migration, social policy, environmental regulation, the transition to a low carbon economy and foreign and security policy.

Labour's absence from the European Parliament (EP) and the Council of Ministers can be partly mitigated with an active role within both the PES and FEPS providing the party and movement with influence and leverage on the strategic direction of policy that will continue to have a major impact on the UK. (Currently within FEPS the British Labour Movement is represented by the Fabians and other progressive Think Tanks.

The Party like most of those on the Continent should establish its own Foundation).

One auspicious sign is that the current leadership has already transformed the Party's relationship. Neither Blair, nor Brown saw European solidarity as other than an impediment to the apolitical wheeling and dealing of inter-governmentalism. Unlike them, since becoming leader Jeremy Corbyn has been a regular fixture at PES leaders meetings and active in dialogue and debate setting a positive tone. This is in sharp contrast to past years when Labour paid lip service at best to PES membership, rarely investing in these alliances while putting every position of the European party through New Labour and Third Way filters that stripped them free of content.

In 2014, Labour told the PES that during the European Election campaign our/their candidate for Commission President Martin Schulz, the then leader of the Socialist Group in the EP, was not welcome in the UK. This made the mainland UK the only part of the EU where there was no campaigning by either Schulz or Juncker, the eventual winning candidate. He did make a campaigning visit to Belfast where the SDLP's writ runs rather than that of Labour. Compared to that, despite claims of euroscepticism amongst parts of the leadership more heard in Britain than abroad, Labour will have no difficulty in working constructively with the PES post-Brexit.

But Labour can go further. As the largest left party on the continent, we should show a level of ambition and leadership in helping shape policy and politics. The big lesson of the last few years for socialists in Europe has been that the most successful way to counter the electoral rise of the right, the far right and the populists is to build coalitions and alliances between PES parties and other parties of the left, whether the Portuguese Socialist government supported by Left Block and Communists in Parliament or the German regions governed by SPD and PDS coalitions. These governments have demonstrated success in government proving there are alternatives to austerity, challenging the orthodoxies of liberalism with growing successful economies.

Future electoral success for the left in Europe will depend more



Portuguese socialist leader working with Labour

and more on building these progressive fronts, as the current Spanish general election is demonstrating where the socialist PSOE will almost certainly need a deal with Podemos and the United Left to build the required majority to govern.

The PES candidate for President of the European Commission, Frans Timmermans, is openly talking about seeking a coalition of progressive forces in the new Parliament rather than the usual alliance with the centre right EPP. Here the Labour Party, and its components like Momentum, can play a special role as in many senses it is itself already a coalition of these same political tendencies. Labour could create a space for these parties across Europe, promoting the kind of dialogue between them that will be more and more necessary as the traditional right is pulled towards the policies and practices of the populists and xenophobes. There can be no enemies on the Left.

This will be no easy work. Replicating the Portuguese and German experience will be that much more difficult where previous Parties have been shattered by impossible choices, personalities and events. Putting together the Humpty Dumpty of what once was the Italian communist party or getting Tsipras' Syriza and Papandreou's PASOK in the same room will be a challenge. Labour is perhaps the only European party that could reach out to all of them. To do this polit-

Patrick Costello has worked in different European institutions for over two decades.

Glyn Ford was an MEP between 1984 and 2009.

They both contributed to (and Glyn edited) the collection of essays on a Labour approach to Europe, *Our Europe not Theirs*, Lawrence and Wishart updated edition (2016)

ical work would be an important demonstration of the Party's commitment to progressive socialist policies across Europe and it would finally draw a line under the ill-fated Blair-Aznar-Berlusconi Declaration of 2002 which did so much to destroy New Labour's influence within the European Party and paved the way for Blair to propose a Portuguese conservative, Jose Manuel Barroso, for Commission President.

But more important than rejecting the past it could start the process of promoting a new kind of left unity in Europe crucial to turning the tide against the right. Since 1999, the EPP has been the biggest group in the EP and, for most of that period, having the largest number of EU heads of state and government. Their successful strategy was to expand rightwards, bringing into their Christian Democrat core first the big conservative parties, the Spanish PP, Forza Italia and albeit briefly the British Conservative Party, then post-enlargement parties such as Viktor Orban's Fidesz in Hungary.

The strategy on the right is beginning to reach its limits but if the Left is to challenge this generational dominance that has done so much to alienate people from the EU and politics, it would do well to absorb the lessons, to fight like with like, reaching out leftwards to build the Europe of the future. Labour has a role to play, in or out of the EU. **C**

ANTISEMITISM

Fighting racism in all its forms

The charge of widespread antisemitism on the left of the Labour Party is damaging the necessary fight against racism in all its forms. **Don Flynn** explains how this is happening

The renewed charge of antisemitic racism, directed against Labour just as April poll showings put the party ahead in the public popularity stakes, has the feel of a doomsday weapon about it – intended to put an end to any strand of leftist activism that has placed distance between itself and Blairite acquiescence to the established mainstream.

Stripping away the obvious glorying in the opportunity to have a go at Labour in its new left-wing configuration, there are issues which certainly need to be addressed in this area. The huge increase in membership over the last few years – making the party by far the biggest in Europe – has opened up the problem of getting discipline and principle into its ranks. Broad-based social democratic parties have not been strong on the question of political education, with the presumption being that efforts to change the minds and behaviour of people smacks a bit too much of Leninism. The slap-dash, ‘big tent’ legacy the party has been left with has put it in a poor position to deal with some, possibly many, new members who, to put it kindly, are ‘work in progress’ when it comes to reliability on crucial issues like the battle against racism and antisemitism. Improving the party’s capacity to deliver on the political education members need is a critical task for Labour, as well as taking stern disciplinary action against those who show themselves to be resolute racists and antisemites.

The problem for democratic socialists in the party is that the right has made this chronic failing an opportunity to attack Corbyn and the group of senior MPs who form his staunchest supporters, making them the problem rather than the deeper problems of the racism and prejudice that are entrenched in the traditions of British culture. In its most recent attack on the party, the Sunday Times claimed that its analysis of postings on twenty ‘pro-Corbyn’ Facebook groups had “found routine attacks on Jewish people, including Holocaust denial.” Labour’s response is that none of



Diverse opinions on antisemitism protest

these groups have official status with the party. As such the way in which the group is administered and the comments allowed on their sites cannot be considered as representative of views held by senior party members or any significant current of opinion within its ranks.

Yet while these charges are batted backwards and forwards by critics and defenders of Jeremy Corbyn and his leadership it seems to be having little impact of the views held by the majority of voters. A Populus survey con-

In their attempts to argue the rights and wrongs the Corbyn leadership on the left have periodically wandered in quagmires

ducted in 2018 found that only 5% of respondents acknowledged the issue as a significant news story which had had an impact on the way they were thinking about political affairs. Amongst Jews levels of concern registered much more highly. Eighty-three per cent felt that antisemitic statements were insufficiently challenged by the party’s leaders, MPs or rank-and-file members.

Support for Labour was down to around 13% of Jewish voters, giving credibility to the argument put most vigorously by the Campaign Against Antisemitism, that the party was seen as being irredeemably hostile to Jews.

The catalyst for this negative assessment of the Labour Party is the criticism of the actions of the Israeli state towards the Palestinian people, made across decades by Jeremy Corbyn and others with whom he is considered politically close. In principle what has been said over the years differs very little from the condemnation of other states and the repressive policies they pursue which is common enough on the left. From this perspective Israel figures on a list of countries which, at various times, has included South Africa and Chile. Smaller scale research and action groups, operating with similar, broadly leftist perspectives have taken up the cause of victims of repression in numerous other countries, with numerous examples across Latin America, Africa, Asia, and including even the United States (Black Lives Matter) and the UK. The point here is that internationalist currents within the left – those operating with the concept of imperialism as a key part of their analysis of the contemporary world – have continuously engaged with the

duty of solidarity with all people contending in their daily lives with the unadorned realities of exploitation and oppression. The Palestine/Israel conflict is just one more example of the way in which imperialist interests are working out across the globe.

Supporters of the political ideology that sustains the actions of the Israeli state against the Palestinian people – Zionism – offer an alternative reading of history which centres on the claim that their cause should be exempted from the criticism normally meted out to repressive states on the grounds that it has its origins in the striving of a people who were (and are) themselves oppressed and in need of a space providing safety and the opportunity to exercise self-determination. Further, lined up against this assertion of Jewish rights are people who unquestionably merit the ascription of racist antisemites, seeking to deny the Jewish people not only a place in which they are secure, but even their basic right to existence.

In their attempts to argue the rights and wrongs of these issues the internationalist currents associated with the Corbyn leadership on the left have periodically wandered in quagmires that have provided some basis for the viewpoint put forward by Zionist critics to the effect that criticism of Israel is always at risk of becoming straightforward criticism of Jewish hopes and aspirations, and therefore becomes quintessentially antisemitic. The border between 'legitimate criticism' and anti-Jewism becomes a zone amenable to intensive policing, looking for the slips and elisions in the language used by critics of Israeli state actions which are held to be revealing of underlying antisemitism. When this level of scrutiny is underway, the concentration on the content of verbal utterances entirely displaces consideration of context, and rhetoric which belongs to the traditions of anti-imperialism and anti-racism are presented as aphorisms that equate to hardline antisemitism.

Jon Pullman's film on the way in which one leading anti-racist campaigner has been dealt with under this process shows how the system works out. The Political Lynching of Jackie Walker is a case study of the way in which discussion about the conflicts in Palestine/Israel has become subject to a degree of examination which, in the case of Jackie

Walker herself, led to widespread vilification and eventually expulsion from the Labour Party. Nor is it any defence, as Walker attempted to marshal to her aid, that the alleged mis-speaker is herself Jewish. Right wing, revisionist Zionism offers up the purported psychological phenomenon of the 'self-hating Jew' to account for the fact that a significant portion of their co-ethnics occupy positions which place them firmly on the side of critics of Israel. From this perspective Zionism is seen as being so intrinsically linked to Jewish identity that any departure from faithful support for the Israeli state can only be seen as repudiation of the fact of being a Jew.

The effect of setting up discussion in this way has been to lay minefields and tripwires across the terrain in order to keep participants well within the bounds of

If racism is to be taken on and defeated the underlying reasons for its pernicious existence have to be taken on and undermined

'acceptable' criticism, which inevitably falls far short of locating the dispute within the frame of a critique of colonialism and imperialism. In this the issue is sealed off from the themes which can be explored in other scrutiny of the actions of repressive regimes. The deadly work of the Saudi Arabian regime in pummelling the people of Yemen to the point of mass starvation can still legitimately be set out as a part of a wider scheme to secure the hegemony of the United States across the Middle East. Daring analysts of the Latin American scene can explain how Bolsonaro's election victory in Brazil has to be understood as a part of the rolling back of the advances made by the democratic left in recent decades, all under the direction of Washington's foreign policy gurus. Researchers into the policies pursued by Indian prime minister Narendra Modi are just about allowed to unpick the linkages between domestic repression and aspirations towards regional and global power, but criticism of Israel is expected to stay silent on the specificities which uniquely describe the state and which help

make plain its standing in the global rollcall of oppression.

Though the charge against Israel's critics in the Labour Party frequently links the terms 'racist' and 'antisemitic' there is in fact little interest on the part of those who pursue the charge to link it with other egregious examples of discrimination. If, as is clearly the case, antisemitism is on the rise, how does this relate to the shocking increase in other racisms, directed against people of colour, refugees and immigrants? Does the fact of this upsurge tell us anything about the character of a capitalist system that is adjusting to the failings of its globalised, neoliberal mode and its efforts to find a new basis for rule over the masses, akin to the 'divide-and-rule' tactics of previous times? If this is the case, what are the implications for strategies which appear to aim for a defence of the Jewish people which mark of the dangers they face by presenting antisemitism as a unique manifestation of racist prejudice that belongs peculiarly to the left?

Corbyn and other internationalists within the Labour Party and on the left in general have a different response. If racism is to be taken on and defeated the underlying reasons for its pernicious existence have to be taken on and undermined. Some of this undoubtedly relates to irrational prejudices that go back to the dawn of human history, with antisemitism having its deepest origins in the tensions that existed within the Romano-Hellene world at the time of the ascendancy of Christianity. But if this forms the long-duration cultural backdrop it is essential to face up to the fact that antisemitism has gained its current vitality from the immediate political and economic crisis of global capitalism, which is generating populist and nationalist responses to the problem of social control. From this perspective the need to mount a fight against racism in all its forms is the salient issue, with antisemitism featuring as one type alongside others in the morphology of prejudice; all with the same objective of undermining solidarity between society's underclasses. The constant attack on Corbyn and his supporters for his expressions of support for the Palestinian people is a prime example of how divide-and-rule works, with the outcome of sustaining the prop that racism provides to the capitalist system, rather than defeating it. **C**

Don Flynn is ex director of Migrant Rights Network and a Chartist EB member

UKRAINE

A servant of which people?

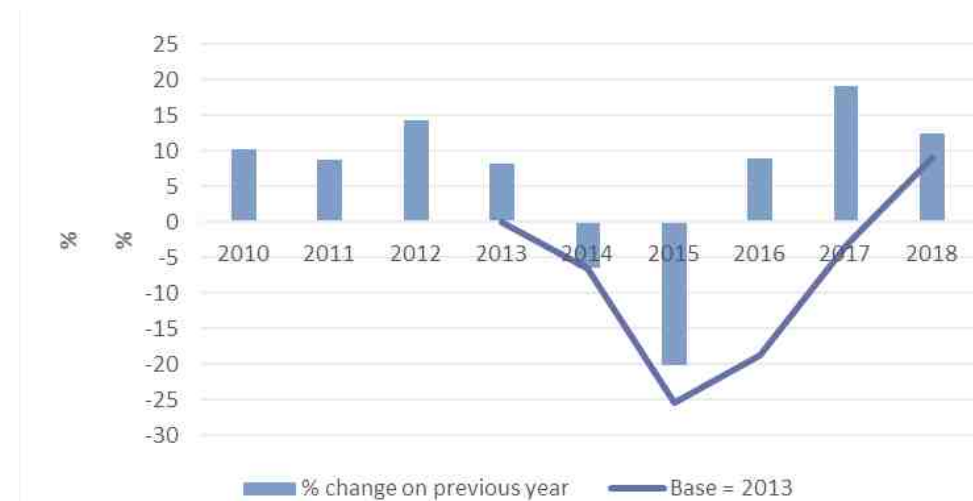
A comedy actor will be the next president of Ukraine, but he will have trouble following through on his anti-corruption promises reports **David Dalton**

In Ukraine's presidential election in April, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, a politically inexperienced comic actor, easily beat the country's incumbent leader with 73% of the vote. In the first round Zelenskiy had taken over 30% of the vote in a crowded field. His nearest rival, Petro Poroshenko, a veteran of the Ukrainian political scene, won just below 16% of the national vote.

Third placed Yuliya Tymoshenko, receiving 13.4% of support in the first round, complained about manipulation of the vote, although most credible observers reckoned the mechanics of the election itself were broadly free and fair. In the parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions not held by Russian-backed separatists, the "eastern" vote was split between Yuriy Boyko (with 11.6% of the national vote) and Oleksandr Vilkul (4.2%), both of the Opposition Bloc, the successor to the ruling party under the presidency of Viktor Yanukovich, Poroshenko's ill-fated predecessor. Had Boyko and Vilkul combined forces, one of them might have been facing Zelenskiy in Poroshenko's place. As in 2014, the far-right performed poorly, with its "unified" candidate, Ruslan Koshulynskiy, trailing in ninth place, with just 1.65% backing.

Zelenskiy and his campaign

Zelenskiy stars in hit satirical TV series *Servant of the People*, playing Vasyl Holoborodko, a straight-talking history teacher who is unexpectedly launched into the presidency after a video of him castigating official corruption goes viral. In the real election, Zelenskiy's poll ratings took off in January this year, following his appearance on a prime-time sketch show on New Year's Eve on the 1 + 1 TV channel, which is owned by Ihor Kolomoisky, one of Ukraine's leading oligarchs. Zelenskiy's popularity rests therefore not just on being seen as a "fresh face", or an honest political outsider along the lines of the TV character he plays, but also on his considerable media exposure. Alongside his use of unorthodox campaign methods, including live performances with his comedy troupe and an extensive social media presence, these factors



Ukraine real wage growth Source: Statistical Service of Ukraine

helped to boost the comedian's appeal among young voters and to bring on board some well-known Maidan activists.

The central tenet of Zelenskiy's campaign was the need to tackle pervasive, high-level corruption in public and economic life. However, during the campaign he did not show in detail how he intends to go about it and otherwise his political programme is sketchy. So far, then, he is something of an ideological blank screen onto which different social groups are able to project their hopes and values. This helps to explain the unusually high and even spread of the actor's support across regional, ethnic and linguistic divisions.

Poroshenko's record: the past 5 years

Poroshenko ran on a patriotic, 'nation-building' platform, under the slogan "Army! Language! Faith!", presenting himself as a reliable war-time leader. This failed to secure him remotely the level of backing he required, even among soldiers on the front line.

The result confirmed the overwhelming disappointment with Poroshenko's record in office. At first glance, this is at odds with the range of significant policy and institutional reforms undertaken since the Maidan protests of 2013-14. The Maidan was a popular revolt against the Yanukovich government, which was considered especially corrupt. It was triggered in late 2013 when Yanukovich, under

economic and political pressure from Russia, refused to sign the long-promised EU association agreement, disappointing expectations.

Foremost among Poroshenko's achievements is the survival of Ukraine as a sovereign state, with wholesale reform of the army and the defeat, despite large territorial loss, of Russia's expansionist "New

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The central tenet of Zelenskiy's campaign was the need to tackle pervasive, high-level corruption in public and economic life

Russia" project in south-eastern Ukraine. Over the same period, however, a series of high-profile corruption scandals beset the political elite, including Poroshenko personally. Most recently, the story broke that the son of a close associate of the president had been involved in smuggling spare parts from Russia which he then sold to the Ukrainian military at inflated prices.

Besides the president's failure to eradicate the most blatant kinds of high-level corruption, the persistence of low living standards is likely to have undermined Poroshenko's support. Amid war, recession and financial destabilisation, real wages

fell by a quarter in 2014-15 and only surpassed 2013 levels last year. Real disposable income is likely to have fallen more steeply still as the government cut social transfers, while raising domestic gas prices eightfold, under the auspices of the country's IMF macroeconomic stabilisation programme. Ukraine now vies with Moldova for bottom place among European countries in terms of income per head of population.

What Next?

German chancellor Angela Merkel invited Poroshenko to Berlin in mid-April, indicating a broad preference among Western politi-

cians for the status quo. He tried to portray Zelenskiy as a hypocrite, railing against the corrupt practices of the oligarchy—the informal institution behind the scenes of Ukrainian politics, which unites the very rich with successful political leaders and the state elite—while being in the pocket of one of its leading figures (that is, Kolomoisky).

Zelenskiy continued to focus on the issues where Poroshenko was most vulnerable, and which remain most resonant to Ukrainian voters—corruption and living standards. He now needs to offer some concrete details of his

policy platform—not least to reassure more national- and security-minded citizens that he will be no pushover in the conflict with Russia, and especially in any future negotiations with the Russian president, Vladimir Putin. Aside from the conflict with Russia, the other big question-mark hanging over the prospect of a Zelenskiy presidency must be that he appears to lack the qualities, expertise and resources necessary to successfully tackle the entrenched informal power structures that remain at the heart of Ukraine's political system. **C**

Will Korea denuclearise?

Carol Turner looks at what's at stake

After the breakdown of talks this February, the prospect of resumed US-DPRK nuclear dialogue has surfaced again. Both President Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un have suggested a third summit could take place before the end of 2019.

By the time of the second round of denuclearisation discussions in Hanoi, North Korea had already taken some first steps. But talks broke up with Trump insisting on complete denuclearisation before any US sanctions would be lifted.

Both Trump and Kim have recently indicated willingness to talk again, however. Speaking on the eve of his meeting with South Korean President Moon Jae-in, Trump said he was open to a third summit, telling the media 'various smaller deals' were possible.

Kim has also said he would participate in another round of talks before the end of this year if Trump is open to changing his stance on sanctions. In a speech to the DPRK People's Assembly, Kim said the US was mistaken to believe 'maximum pressure' would 'subdue' North Korea.

Denuclearisation talks resumed in 2018, after President Moon's initiative at the 2018 Winter Olympics. That April Kim announced he was suspending ballistic missile testing with immediate effect and dismantling an underground test site, later confirmed by US sources to have taken place.

North Korean nukes are not the only military threat in the

region though. South Korea is host to the third-largest number of US troops overseas, with 35,000 US military personnel stationed across 83 sites. US-led military exercises take place annually, amongst the biggest in the world. In 2017 an American anti-missile system based in South Korea became operational, Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD).

North Korea's good will gesture notwithstanding, US military drills on and around the Peninsula took place in autumn 2018 which Kim branded a provocation. Be it by mistake or design, nuclear confrontation remains a real possibility.

The elephant in the US-DPRK summit room is the different interpretations of what denuclearization actually means. For Trump this is getting rid of North Korean nuclear capacity; for Kim



Trump and Kim - deal or no deal?

— and many others in the region — it means denuclearisation of the entire Peninsula, including the removal of US nuclear paraphernalia, which would be best assured by establishing a nuclear weapons free zone. **C**

Carol Turner is Vice Chair of CND and author of *Corbyn and Trident: Labour's continuing controversy*

There will be a rare opportunity to view events from a Korean perspective at the beginning of May, when Francis Daehoon Lee tours the UK at the invitation of Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Lee is Research Professor of Peace Studies at SungKongHoe University, Seoul, and a founder People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy, a South Korean NGO which campaigns for public participation in government decision making, socio-economic reforms and peace on the Korean peninsula. Lee will be speaking at meetings in London, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Leeds. Visit www.cnduk.org for details.

Defeating the far right

Unmesh Desai explains how London United can mobilise nationally

London United (LU) was formally launched at the 2019 London Labour Conference. A motion in support, unanimously passed, was moved by the Chair of Unite London and Eastern and now Chair of the London Labour Party, Jim Kelly, on behalf of Unite. The motion was seconded by Barking Labour Party. This was a symbolic move. The concept of London United is about united action against the Far Right and hate politics by all sections of the labour movement. Further, this unity was so successfully demonstrated in Barking and Dagenham when it saw off the BNP just under a decade ago.

There were a number of reasons for the launch. Firstly, the alarm in some sections of the movement at global developments over the last year. A series of demonstrations in the name of 'Free Tommy Robinson' (Stephen Yaxley-Lennon), founder of the English Defence League, who had been imprisoned for contempt of court over a grooming case- were attracting thousands. Robinson, now advisor to UKIP leader, Gerrard Batten, himself was fast becoming a cult figure for the international far right movement. Groups like the so-called 'Democratic Football Lads Alliance' were providing the numbers for the street movement that fascism and the Far Right need in terms of a street presence with Robinson the equally-necessary 'charismatic' leader.

Secondly, various alt-right groups with a sophisticated social media presence and money from America to fund 'The Movement', a grouping to organise an assortment of right wing forces for the forthcoming European elections provided a backdrop to attempts to latch on to very genuine concerns over Brexit uncertainties.

Finally, we had the coming together in meetings of the 'populist' and 'respectable' right in the form of Steve Bannon and Boris Johnson. Johnson has made inflammatory remarks comparing Muslim women wearing burkas to letter boxes and Jacob Rees-Mogg has approvingly quoted the leader of the German far-right AfD, senior figures from which have called for refugees to be shot, indicative of a political terrain where far right

political discourse is now normalised. As David Lammy so eloquently riposted 'Our country's proudest moment was defeating the far right...Now we are supposed to sit back while xenophobic nationalists and isolationists do their best to tear Europe apart again.'

It is against this backdrop that we have also seen a worrying rise in hate crimes and witnessed terrible incidents like Christchurch. In London alone there are 60 hate crimes reported every day and we know that most cases go unreported. The Metropolitan police warn that the threat of far right extremism is their biggest concern now with 1/3 of referrals to the Prevent programme from people attracted to white supremacist ideology.

So in the context of these very worrying developments how do we go forward? How can the visionary call by New Zealand Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, for global action to root out racist right wing ideology be localised at all levels and the 'hostile environment' challenged in all parts of our public life? This is where LU, which has already attracted the support of major unions and the backing of Shadow Chancellor, John McDonnell, has a role to play.

We need to spread the message underpinning the rise of the ideology we oppose to the six million members of the trade unions alongside the mass membership of the Labour Party.

Counter-demonstrations last year were by comparison small and clearly the first task is get our own members mobilised. The political will is there as exemplified by McDonnell's calls for a new Anti Nazi League movement. Unions like the FBU and RMT have been instrumental in getting members to help steward anti-fascist mobilisations. Trade unionists marched in a fairly cohesive bloc on the recent International Day Of Action Against Racism. We need all unions to come together. Unions like Unite do some impressive educational work and this needs to be emulated everywhere. Hopefully the summer trade union conferences will further this process and the national Labour conference will add a national dimension.

At a party level, the resolution to conference calls upon London



Trade unions and Labour against racism and the far right

#Unions4Unity

The work of London United is supported by:



Unmesh Desai is a member of the Greater London Assembly

Labour through the Regional Board to join with the trade unions to form a joint trade union and party steering committee to coordinate the campaign and spread the same message via constituencies, develop a much-needed online presence, seek affiliations and most important of all change a still inward looking party culture to get our members out in mass mobilisations

Valuable work is being done in other aspects of public life. Groups like Show Racism The Red Card in the football world do great work and LU should seek to develop partnerships and not duplicate. Music and culture is another arena and whilst it may not be possible to replicate Rock Against Racism, so crucial in its time to the ANL's success, thought has to be given to reviving in the capital the Rise festival initiated by Livingstone and ditched by Johnson. I have asked Mayor Khan to consider funding and organising an annual London cultural event bringing our communities together.

There are many challenges and LU has its work cut out. Maximum unity in action is the way forward. But the first steps have been taken in developing a unified and cohesive labour movement campaign and challenge to the far right, mainstreamed in all aspects of our work. The message of No Pasaran, enshrined in the history of our movement, has got to be translated into action and passed on to future generations. **C**

Chartist heritage

Ian Bullock on the implications of Chartism

It does seem appropriate for a journal called *Chartist* to occasionally consider what might be the implications of its title. So what we can learn from the Chartist movement? There were of course 'physical force' Chartists – and not only in the Newport Rising of 1839 – but most Chartists, especially from the later 1840s, wished to pursue their goals non-violently, if loudly and vociferously.

The Chartist heritage can be seen as twofold: a commitment to politics and a commitment – eventually – to democracy. It's important to distinguish between these two. I don't need to rehearse the famous 'six points' here but had, by some miracle, all six of them been immediately implemented the result would not have been democracy. Clearly, there is much, much more to democracy than simply the right to vote. But it is rather crucial. There were advocates of universal suffrage in the movement and many women Chartists but the demand was for 'manhood suffrage' – votes for males of 21 or over.

Adult suffrage in Britain was achieved only in 1928 and even then some anomalies remained. So, to begin with, what the Chartists were committed to – with the exceptions already noted – was political action, that is trying to achieve their aims by political means in an environment where campaigning for radical change was possible, though never easy. There was no level playing field, but political activity did take place – with a struggle. No one, either among the Chartists or later suffrage campaigners, saw achieving their demands for the vote in isolation. Rather their assumption was that political equality was the key factor for securing every other kind of equality – a view I think we all accept.

The Chartists certainly have had a significant influence on every later socialist and radical political movement in Britain. None more so than the first organisation of the 'socialist revival' – the Social-Democratic Federation (SDF) which began as the Democratic Federation, itself



Chartists gather at Kennington common London 1838

a sort of Chartist revival. The early SDF did indeed contain a number of 'old Chartists'. The hyphen in Social-Democratic and Social-Democracy is vital. It stood for the symbiotic relationship between political and socio-economic advance. The first was an essential pre-condition of the second.

In his second volume of reminiscences published a couple of years before World War I, Henry Hyndman, the main founder of the SDF, refers to 'the modern Socialist, or renewed Chartist, movement, set on foot by the Democratic Federation in 1881'. The first plank of the DF programme was 'adult suffrage' – certainly an advance on the old 'six points' demand but clearly of the same heritage. Soon the SDF programme would begin with a whole series of 'immediate demands' for the 'democratisation of government machinery', proportional representation and the initiative (a feature of direct democracy where a set number of electors could initiate a referendum).

It wasn't only Hyndman who saw the SDF, and socialism generally, as descended from the Chartists. In 1903 for example – and not for the first or last time – the SDF paper *Justice* claimed

they were Chartism's 'legitimate heirs and successors'. Its Fabian adversaries, above all George Bernard Shaw, didn't dispute this – but saw it as something to be sneered at. In *Fabian Essays* of 1889 Shaw referred to the SDF as 'Chartism risen from the dead.' He was still going on in the same vein when the Social-Democrats had the audacity to oppose – on democratic grounds – what became the Education Act of 1902, which the Fabians had promoted in cahoots with Balfour's Tory government. Shaw dismissed such opposition as 'old-fashioned Chartist Radicalism.'

Well we know where Shaw – and some of the other Fabians, notably the Webbs – ended up. But let's not go there. Instead let us ask ourselves what are the implications of keeping faith with our Chartist forebears. Clearly we should always defend democracy however imperfect its form. It is as we all know now under attack from so many essentially right-wing directions. But we should also be looking for ways to deepen democracy, to make it more real, and assist it in pursuit of greater equality of every kind. We won't always agree about which way to do this, but that debate is itself part of the democratic process. **C**

Ian Bullock's latest book is *Under Siege: a history of the interwar independent Labour Party*

YOUTH VIEW

A Prevent style plan will not reduce serious violence

Alice Arkwright on the wrong way to tackle knife crime

Saddening stories of youth violence, specifically knife crime in London, have dominated headlines in the first few months of 2019. Since 2014 the numbers of children and teenagers killed as a result of blades has been rising, with 36 deaths in 2017, 37 in 2018 and 11 teenagers had died by 10th March this year, many of them in London.

This loss of life has led to increasing public debate and analysis as to the causes behind this rise. Reasons including the correlation between school expulsion and knife crime; reduced police numbers and funding; cuts to local authority children's services, education and social services; and the impact of country wide drug dealing operations have all been discussed. Whilst the reasons for any youth violence are complex, the vulnerability of teenagers effected by poverty, mental illness, abuse, toxic masculinity, austerity and special educational needs is clear.

The multitude of causes is matched by numerous, and some worrying, suggestions of how to solve the problem, from using stop and search tactics in schools to deploying the army and armed police patrols to inner-city neighbourhoods.

The latest suggestion from the government is that professionals across health, education, local government, social services, the police and the voluntary sector would be legally required to spot and report warning signs that a young person might engage in serious violence. Under the proposal A&E staff would have to report young people who present suspicious injuries and teachers would be required to report children displaying concerning behaviour. These professionals would be held accountable for the prevention of violence and any failure to do so.

The Home Office has said that the government would issue guidance, but it would be up to services to figure out how to comply with the new duties on top of their existing safeguarding responsibilities. Whilst a joined-up approach across multiple sectors and services to tackling violence amongst



Protesting against knife crime

young people is needed, this latest proposal sounds very similar to Prevent, which has been heavily criticised by political parties, human rights organisations, public sector workers and researchers.

Under the Prevent strategy, a range of public services have a legal duty to "have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". Teachers and educational institutions are required to report students they believe to be at risk of extremism – worryingly defined in Prevent strategy as "opposition to fundamental British values".

Concerns surrounding Prevent have been that the strategy encourages professionals to view others with suspicion, particularly Muslims and ethnic minorities. The majority of referrals under Prevent have been of Muslims and there is a risk of racial profiling and stereotyping occurring under these new proposals as there is no clear way of judging pre-criminality. The new proposals offer little guidance on what behaviours professionals should be looking out for and what kind of behaviour they would report.

The ineffectiveness of this method is also shown in that only a small proportion of Prevent referrals need further action and most are rejected, highlighting that the policy serves to label people as dangerous without actually helping at risk young people or further protecting society.

Liberty have also stressed concerns around data under Prevent

as there is little transparency on how the police retain personal data passed on from services or which other agencies it has shared it with. Increased data-sharing is a primary principle of these new proposals for youth violence, suggesting that the same issues could arise.

Prevent has also been criticised for limiting discussion in educational contexts as both teachers and students feel what they say is being policed. Not only does it stifle the debates that can occur in educational environments, but it can risk damaging relationships of openness and trust that should exist to support vulnerable students. Good education should allow young people to ask questions, listen to and understand others, participate in respectful discussion and explore issues that are affecting their lives. This is much harder to do under environments of suspicion and fear and the proposal risks further alienating those students at risk.

Public sector workers and unions have also expressed anger that teachers, nurses and doctors would be responsible for rising knife crime at a time where services, including specialist support services, are under funded and under resourced.

No one would deny the importance of ending youth violence, but any new proposal must take the lessons of Prevent on board and importantly respect young people's concerns, confidentiality and human rights. **C**



Alice Arkwright works for the TUC

An indictment of a culture

Zoe Mavroudi on *Leaving Neverland* and leaving behind our glittery illusions

I believe the two men interviewed in the documentary *Leaving Neverland*. By this I don't simply mean that I think allegations made by James Safechuck and Wade Robson that they were sexually molested by Michael Jackson as children are 'their' truth -as goes the careful wording- but that their accounts are the truth and director Dan Reed's new film is now part of the historical record.

The men allege they were promised life-time love and career opportunity by the singer as their middle-class families received material rewards: toys, jewellery, cash, trips, even a house. The indirect price for these gifts was devastation, depression, divorce and a suicide. This is a story of innocence and hope betrayed. When Safechuck met Jackson, after co-starring in his Pepsi commercial, the singer was "happy, at the peak of his success. And then he likes you." The boys were made to feel special or as Robson puts it, "anointed". What they were anointed for is alleged during four hours of on-camera confession in excruciating, graphic detail.

Critics of the film as a one-sided account misunderstand the nature of both documentary and child sexual abuse, a hidden, mostly unreported crime. A film about war victims matches testimony with documented carnage but this story is about the internalization of undocumented violence. Reed, a meticulous interviewer, films his subjects' struggle to contain their pain, intercutting archival footage of fun and dancing. Drone shots of landscapes -including Jackson's former, up-for-sale Neverland Ranch- suggest a looming presence. When pain eventually surfaces -tears, a shaky hand- we confront integrity and bravery up close. The boys' alleged grooming included instructions to guard the secret into adult life, a promise Robson kept by testifying in Jackson's defence at his 2005 sexual molestation trial. The film helps us understand his decision and subsequent coming-out in 2013. Documentaries aren't trials but narrative tools of history, which doesn't have a statute of limitations.



Reed skips the traditional flash-back to Jackson's early career. As a child-prodigy, he showed performative maturity and sensuality comparable to those of older stars. When his solo career sky-rocketed during the Reagan era, his overtly masculine stage persona and militaristic choreographies countered his image as a reclusive Peter Pan, who defended his unusual closeness to children for years. The merging of child with adult identity is a persistent theme in Reed's film. When Safechuck met Jackson, he told his idol: "we're the luckiest boys in the world." Elsewhere, an old video shows 5-year-old Robson perform Jackson's floor-humping dance move to a cheering crowd, his tiny pelvis thrusting in choreographed imitation of copulation. Hindsight about what would soon overtake his life is mixed with befuddlement: how could this get public approval? The answer can be traced in his mother's talk of being swept away by "the good life", dreams of showbiz success for her talented son and a mix of awe and pity for the "childlike"

mega-star.

The film's co-producer HBO is currently embroiled in a lawsuit filed by the Michael Jackson Estate and Reed has been wrongly accused of supposed inconsistencies in his reportage. But *Leaving Neverland* cannot be undone. Jackson's legacy will from now on be filtered through this film. (One wonders how the National Portrait Gallery's recent Jackson exhibition might have addressed it). Oprah Winfrey, who interviewed the star in 1993 inside his home-theatre but didn't seem troubled by the surrounding bedroom cubicles for his child guests, showcased the film in a TV special, saying its story "transcends" Jackson. Indeed. The film implies that all this happened under the watch of a gushing media.

Recalling his childhood experience, Robson says that at the time, "it didn't seem that strange". His words convey a confusion shared by too many culpable adults, making *Leaving Neverland* an indictment of an entire culture and its glittery illusions. **C**

FILM REVIEW

Below the Surface

Patrick Mulcahy
on a slow
burner about
have-nots

When it comes to the work of American writer-director S. Craig Zahler, I have arrived late to the party. Having seen his monumental third feature, *Dragged Across Concrete*, a film about American have-nots that has the pulpy depth of an Elmore Leonard novel, I am prepared to hand out flyers and put up the bunting. Set in the fictional city of Bulwark, it is a multi-character drama in the liberal tradition of John Sayles. Sayles privileged story structure, character and dry wit above flashy set pieces. In *Dragged Across Concrete*, Zahler does the same, but, with the artist cunning that Sayles lacked, he adds something extra: guts. Towards the end of the film – be advised it is a long one, almost 160 minutes, but I wouldn't change the pace – Zahler shows one man fishing through another man's intestines. Zahler's world view is anti-kitsch, the opposite of 'without shit', to paraphrase Czech author Milan Kundera. However, the violence isn't gratuitous. On the contrary, it is brutally functional, reflecting Zahler's critique of American society.

Zahler casts two right-wing stars, Mel Gibson and Vince Vaughn, who are renowned for speaking their minds, in Gibson's case in a career-destroying manner, and contains them. They play two cops – Gibson the veteran Brett, Vaughn his protégé, Anthony – who get the job done, if not exactly by the book. Brett subdues a suspect by putting his foot on his neck, but is filmed doing so. The opening set piece isn't full of pumped up violence, where the audience is sucked into the cops' seething righteousness – it is perfunctory.

Brett also persuades a naked woman to reveal the location of a stash of guns, but reneges on letting her go. He gives the speech about getting through his questions quickly so he and Anthony can catch the breakfast special at Bert's – a local diner, but not the best. Zahler is really interested in digestion, how we consume information, but he slows it right down. In one scene, Brett describes Anthony as taking 98 minutes to finish a sandwich. 'A red ant could have eaten it faster.'

How do you get an audience



'Dragged Across Concrete' is on release

hooked into anti-glamour? Zahler, playing a series of B movie tricks familiar from exploitation films of the 1970s and 1980s, gives us a sex scene, involving a newly released ex-convict, Henry (Tory Kittles). He returns home to find his mother (Vanessa Bell Calloway) prostituting herself – he threatens the customer with a baseball bat, but doesn't swing it – while his younger brother is in his room playing video games. His favourite is 'Shotgun Safari' which the siblings play together. Wildlife is a recurring motif: Brett also watches lion cub documentaries with his teenage daughter, Sara. Henry is not so good at the game because, as it turns out, he hasn't used a gun. 'I've never killed anyone,' he says.

Zahler entirely understands why right-wing populism has taken hold in the US. The left-wing response, also marked by outrage, isn't proportionate or forgiving. Zahler isn't interested in figureheads or symbols of polarised views, rather how behaviour manifests itself in shared spaces. As the daughter of two cops, Sara is assaulted by a passing cyclist who pelts her with soft drink. Brett worries about the long-term psychological damage done to her, the result of living in a poor neighbourhood on the wages he earns – his wife also has multiple sclerosis. Zahler puts loving relationships right at the centre of the movie – Brett's partner loves his girlfriend who is 'smarter than him by a yard

stick'. The ex-con loves his mother and brother. Two thirds of the way through the movie, Zahler introduces a young mother, Kelly (Jennifer Carpenter) who recently has given birth and is returning to work for the first time. That moment is wrenching. Her boss (Fred Melamed) is florid in his appreciation. He gives a workplace speech of the type that we are not used to hearing. It is – and we know it – the lull before the storm.

Zahler does not pretend that there is equivalence between cops and career criminals. The bad guys are remorseless. They state their intentions using a distorted voice played on an old fashioned tape recorder during a robbery and follow through brutally. Significantly, as the opening set piece proves, the cops have to lie to achieve results. It is a necessary tactic. This isn't to say that lying is presented as a virtue. At various points, Brett doesn't say what he has in mind – and his wife knows not to ask – so as to limit complicity.

Although the film is a slow burner, it is not without entertainment or a moral compass. Playing the percentages means that Brett doesn't always play safe. The film is about the unlikelihood of hope – or, if you prefer to quote former US President Barack Obama – its audacity. The final image is of a face looking at us, a redeemed face that tells us that the odds can be changed. 'Dragged Across Concrete' is a genuinely radical film.

Marx and Balzac

Andrew Coates
on
conceptual
Marx

A World to Win. The Life and Works of Karl Marx.

Sven-Eric Liedman. translated by Jeffrey N. Skinner. Verso £14.99.

I have attempted to explain not only who Marx was in his time" announces Sven-Eric Liedman, "but why he remains a vital source of inspiration today." This major biography, published in Swedish in 2015, aims to offer a "portrait of Marx unobscured by what happened after his death."

The book is, the Preface explains, a counterweight to Gareth Stedman Jones' *Karl Marx Greatness and Illusions*, which appeared after the present work's original publication. Jones, he asserts, tends to overshadow Marx's own writings through his detailed portraits of the inspiration of his thought, and the early socialist and workers' movement. Jones saw Marx's crowning achievement in the years when the International Working Men's Association, the First International, began to flourish, from 1864 to 1869.

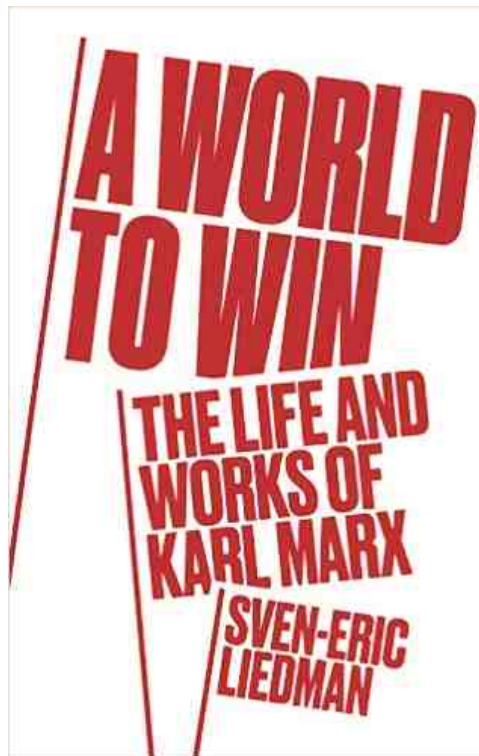
Stedman Jones is known for an interest in the way language forms class. He also stated that Marx was buoyed up by the belief that, "the process of a transition from the capitalist mode of production towards the society of associated producers had already begun." It was this that propelled him to reach out to the activists in trade unions and the co-operative movement, associations that could change the course of history. It is from these origins that 'Marxism' took political shape.

Liedman, by contrast, is inspired by the approach of the largely German New Marx Reading (neue Marx-Lektüre) of figures such as Hans Georg Backhaus. This aims to show Marx's ideas, not the Marxism that developed inside these movements. A large part of *A World to Win* is taken up with the conceptual analysis of Marx's categories, from the method announced in the 1859 Introduction to the *Grundrisse*, that work itself, and the 'unfinished Masterpiece' of *Capital*.

Marx nevertheless stood out as more politically active "than any other political thinker in the nineteenth century". He was "allied with the working class" acting for their liberation, the pivot of "the liberation of all humanity." Liedman's account of Marx's involvement in radical German 'young Hegelian pol-

itics' is largely philosophical. But he soon brings the issue of industrialisation, the Industrial Revolution to the fore. The account of the 1848 revolutions, above all in France, while lacking Jones' familiarity with the Gallic utopian socialism and communism, Christian social thinking, and early social democratic politics, portrays the bond between social and political revolution.

In the late 1860s Marx made a significant contribution to the International. While advancing his views on the 'abolition of the wages system', this involved 'compromis-



ing' with a variety of socialist, anarchist and trade union forces. Spreading the word of 'solidarity' between workers' struggles (the body's prime aim), to the 'duty of the working classes to conquer political power' allowed for leeway between opposing viewpoints. But the months of the Paris Commune in 1871 saw Marx convinced again that "bloody conflicts as part of social development that would be hard to avoid." Liedman is less informative than Stedman Jones on why many of the British trade unionists recoiled from the Commune. It was not just that they considered it 'rash' and 'hopeless'. Their lack of sympathy extended to its plans for federal self-government faced with what was already the foundation, under initial Orléanist (constitutional Monarchist) leadership, of the French Third Republic.

A World to Win gives substance to the ideas that Marx developed. This ranges from a discussion of Method, from the 1959 Introduction to the *Grundrisse*, the traps of the 'metaphors' of base and superstructure, the category of the 'totality', dialectics, form and content. There is a more accessible account of Marx's studies of technology, machinery, and the industrial revolution, its downside for the working classes, and, Liedman's forte, science. In this the book deploys with a welcome freshness greater textual resources than other recent biographies.

Was Marx, in this context, a pioneering thinker of globalisation? Liedman's claims about his 'prophetic' insights are not wholly convincing. Joseph Addison talked in the Essay on the Royal Exchange (1711) of merchants who "knit mankind together in mutual intercourse", and Ricardo, of free commerce creating a "universal society of nations". Marx highlighted the planet-wide development, and, while not thinking it through, did not regard colonisation as a straightforward boon. An observation that deserves underlining for critics of globalisation is Marx's view that, "free trade expedited the classless society".

A World to Win, as a biography must, traces out a life. Liedman gives Marx the benefit of some weighty doubts on his behaviour towards his servant, his personal feuds (notably with Bakunin), and the abusive, often racist, vocabulary of his correspondence with Engels, described as 'roguishly nonchalant'.

A World to Win often cites one of Marx's favourite authors, Honoré de Balzac. For Liedman one tale, *Melmoth Reconciled* (1835), is a "picture of capitalism" in which the capitalists "live their lives at the Stock Exchange in a pact with the Devil." After peeling away Marxism from Marx, he reveals Marx's picture of the 'mechanism and the scheme of the world'. Liedman has many pages on the thoughts of theorists who have attempted to do the same. Little of this is accessible to those not already familiar with the terrain. Despite the great strengths of the biography, many may come away feeling, like Balzac's *Cashier*, that such painstaking knowledge of the great thinker's ideas ends in their wish to turn the final pages drying up.

BOOK REVIEWS

Marx and more

**Duncan
Bowie**
on the First
International

**Arise ye Wretched of the Earth
The First International in Global
Perspective**
Brill £125
On-line open access:
<https://brill.com/view/title/33815>

This book follows on from previous volumes of essays on international socialist history sponsored by the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam. Don't be put off by the price as the book is available free on-line. This time the essays are all in English. The 23 essays and the introduction bring together recent international scholarship.

The first six specialist studies cover the organisation of and debates within the first international, including essays by Fabrice Bensimon (one of the editors, who is currently at UCL) on London precursors of the IWMA, an essay by Detlev Mares on the IWMA and British radical politics and an essay by Iorweth Prothero on the IWMA's role in industrial conflicts in Britain and France. The next eleven essays cover national studies.

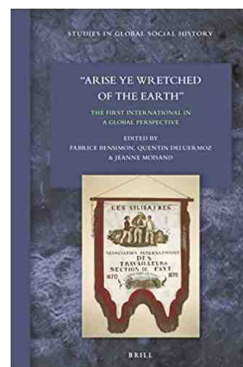
Anthony Taylor contrasts the IWMA in London and New York.

The 'global' range is impressive. Not only are there essays on France, Germany and Switzerland and Belgium, but there are studies of the First international in Poland, Russia, Italy, Spain, the Spanish empire, the US and Latin America. The final set of essays looks at the role of leaders and tendencies – Marx, Proudhon and Bakunin, but also the roles of the positivist Professor Beesly (by Greg Claeys), Carlo Cafiero and a group of feminists.

The authors are all specialists and many of the essays summarise PhDs or studies published in other languages. The volume also includes a chronology. For anyone interested in the history of international socialism, this is fascinating reading. For those who want to focus on the Marxist/anarchist divide, there is also a recent study from an anarchist perspective which at 600 pages, provides a detailed commentary on extensive primary sources: *The First Socialist Schism*, by Wolfgang Eckhart, translated from German and published by PM Press in California in 2016 at \$38.95.

For those who prefer a shorter comprehensive (and less partisan)

chronological study, I would recommend another lesser known study: Henryk Katz *The Emancipation of Labour*, published by Greenwood press in the US in 1992. This study adopts a pluralist approach, giving due attention to leaders of the First International other than Marx and Bakunin, including the London trade unionists who were practical working class politicians not middle class or aristocratic theoreticians and the Belgian socialists such as Cesar de Paepe and Eugene Hins, who were libertarian socialists and followers of neither Marx or Bakunin but independent thinkers and political activists.



Waiting for the Revolution

**Duncan
Bowie**
on
revolutionaries

The British Far Left from 1956
Edited by Evan Smith and Matthew Worley
Manchester UP £14.99

This set of essays is a follow up to the earlier volume *Against the Grain*. This volume includes fourteen short studies of aspects of the British left. I would question the use of 'far left' in the title given the Communist Party features heavily within the volume as does the Labour Party and the volume includes studies of the anti-apartheid movement and of CND, neither of which were far left dominated. There is also a study of civic politics and community activism in Sheffield in the 1980's, when council leader David Blunkett promoted 'socialism from the bottom up', which involved seeking to constrain the influence of ultra-left groups.

There are two chapters on left influence on trade unions – an essay on the role of the International Socialists in a Coventry car factory and one on

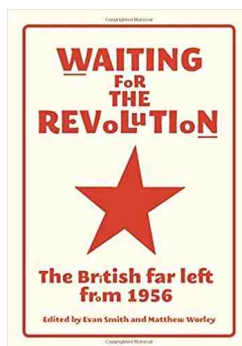
the role of the Communist Party in the National Union of Mineworkers, with a further essay on the support given by left groups in London to the 1984-5 miners' strike.

There are also essays on some under-researched areas - leftists within the Scottish nationalist movement (a somewhat theoretical piece focusing on Gordon Brown's Red 1975 paper for Scotland), the left within the Wales Labour Party and Plaid Cymru, and the links between the British radical left and Northern Ireland during the 'troubles',

which discusses the IMG's support for the IRA and the role of Ken Livingstone.

There are essays on student politics in the 1970's and 1980's, focusing on the roles of IS and the IMG and the politics of the National Union of Students and on the Angry Brigade, the latter concentrating on the prosecution and defence rather than on the political motivations of the bombers, who referred to themselves as libertarian communists 'who smoked a lot of dope and spent a lot of time having a good-time'.

The final three chapters deal with left 'sects': the Revolutionary Communist Party, Militant and one of the post-Communist Party dissolution 'Stalinist' continuity bodies – the Communist Party of Britain. Overall, a very informative set of studies and hopefully a paperback at £14.99 will be read more widely than the original £80 hardback edition. The earlier volume is also now available in paperback.



Czechoslovakia 1968-71

**Duncan
Bowie**
on reform
communism

Letters of Solidarity and friendship
Edited David Parker
On-line open access:
Bacquier books £14.99

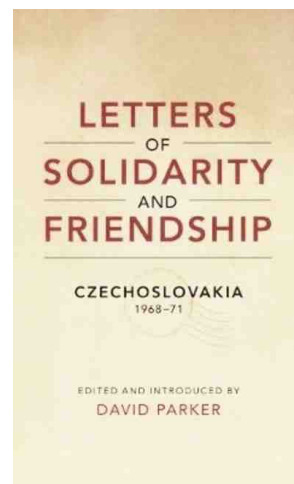
This book comprises a correspondence between David Parker's father, Leslie Parker and a Czech doctor, Paul Zalud between 1968 and 1971. Zalud was a reform communist who wrote about the Husak regime operating as a police state with the introduction of loyalty tests and the requirement to report all foreign contacts and to write political reports on colleagues. He had left the Communist Party in 1941 because he believed that their practice did not match the theory and he demurred from Leslie Parker's conviction that Czechoslovakia was at least on the right side of the revolution.

Zalud viewed the 'normalisa-

tion' process in Czechoslovakia as the introduction of a 'monstrous oriental despotism' and reflected on what he saw as the advantages of 'bourgeois democracy'. He argued that a social revolution did not in itself replace capitalism and exploitation and that democracy was central to the establishment of a socialist or communist state. He also stressed the centrality of ethics.

Leslie Parker however remained optimistic that communism in Czechoslovakia and other soviet states would become more democratic, welcoming moves towards liberalisation in Poland. It is interesting to note the high level of political discussion in the correspondence and also the development of a strong friendship between the correspondents. Czech dissidents were seeking reform communism rather than the replacement of communism

by capitalism. The book also points to the use of state power, especially control of television to ensure the political disengagement of the Czechoslovakian population. It could be argued that the use of force reflected the failure of political argument.



Numbers and confusions

**Sheila
Osmanovic**
on an eastern
perspective on
WWI

The Fall of the Ottomans
Eugene Rogan
Penguin £9.99

This book presents a military narrative of the First World War. Much space is devoted to number crunching heavy military weapons, rifles, ammunition, soldiers, ratios and dead. It does not concern itself much with the political backstage of the war nor dwell on the whole array of circumstance at each global front that made the war the 'Great War'. There is however a full examination of the McMahon-Hussein correspondence revealing some documents not previously published. Rogan's narrative endeavors to offer a measured and balanced view. The material used emphasizes the ambivalent craftsmanship of British diplomacy, with the secret dealings and doublespeak emerging in a far worse light than was previously known.

The book relies on an impressive collection of sources written in different languages, some of which are difficult to access. Rogan has made a great effort in delivering his objective: to portray the Great War from a different perspective and in an objective light. It is irrefutable that the

sources consulted are varied: manuscripts in English, Turkish and Arabic languages (though Arabic sources seem to be the translations and not the primary documents).

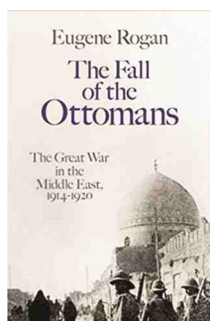
Nonetheless, it is difficult not to question the purpose of the chapter on the suffering of the Armenians in the context of the title and the objective of the book. The entire chapter seven is dedicated to the sufferings of the Armenians in the World War and the subsequent pogroms of thousands of local Armenians.

The bulk of the story is narrated through the memoirs of the Armenian Priest, Balakian, who managed to disguise himself and thus escape the horrors of the Armenian programs of 1916. Once safe in France, Balakian published memoirs and vouched to make the crimes known to the world. The chapter is effectively populated with the excerpts from the priest's memoirs that depict in great detail 'death marches' which the Armenian victims were forced to endure.

A puzzle of the book is the use of the terms Ottoman and Turkish interchangeably. Rogan says that the choice is purely cosmetic so that the tedious monotony of repetition of the

word 'Ottoman' is avoided. Whilst this may serve well as a stylistic feature, it undermines both his afore-mentioned promise as well as his conclusion that the Ottoman collapse resulted more from the dominant Turkish nationalism than from the military defeats they had suffered. The choice to use the terms Ottoman and Turkish in a blanket fashion in fact fails to present the Great War from a fresh perspective, since the majority of previous writings on the subject have adopted precisely that approach.

Had the importance of the nascent Turkish nationalism in the crumbling of the Ottoman state been more explicitly emphasized, the choice of treacherous truces made by the Ottoman Viziers would have been more easily understood. The book certainly sets out all the treaties made at the expense of the Ottoman state, and links it directly to the present-day turmoil devouring the modern Turkish state and a myriad of issues surrounding the current geopolitical climate of the former Ottoman lands. The Ottoman state may have been dissolved but the legacy continues to impact on the diplomacy in the current geopolitical upheaval.



BOOK REVIEWS

Freedom Fighters, Revolutionaries, Black Panthers

Duncan Bowie
on not so romantic revolutionaries

Algiers, Third World Capital
John Kelly
Elaine Mokhtefi
Verso £16.99

Elaine Klein was born in New York. After college in Georgia, and taking a course in Spanish translation, she got a job with the United World Federation, an organisation which campaigned for world government and was supported by luminaries such as Bertrand Russell and Albert Einstein. Losing her job following an internal organisational dispute, Klein travelled to Paris where she mixed with a group of left-wing intellectuals, including communists and Algerian workers, though she passes over the fact that the French Communist Party opposed Algerian independence.

She worked as a freelance French translator on the international conference circuit, taking her to newly independent Ghana as well as the newly independent former French West and Central African states. Returning to New York, she got a job working with the Algerian nationalist office which lobbied the UN, before moving in 1962 to Algiers to work with the newly independent government, the long war having ended in French withdrawal.

The Algerian government saw themselves as a centre for liberation movements and actually set up an office to support them, and as a translator, Klein acted as a liaison between the Government and some of these liberation movements. The ANC, SWAPO from South West Africa, FRELIMO from Mozambique, UNITA from Angola and ZANU-PF from Southern Rhodesia, all had delegations in Algiers, as did the Palestinian Al-Fatah. The Martinican psychiatrist and philosopher, Franz Fanon, was also based in Algiers and Klein became a friend of Fanon and his family. Klein was on the guest list for the receptions at the embassies of friendly countries such as North Vietnam, North Korea, China and the Soviet Union.

Algiers also became the head-

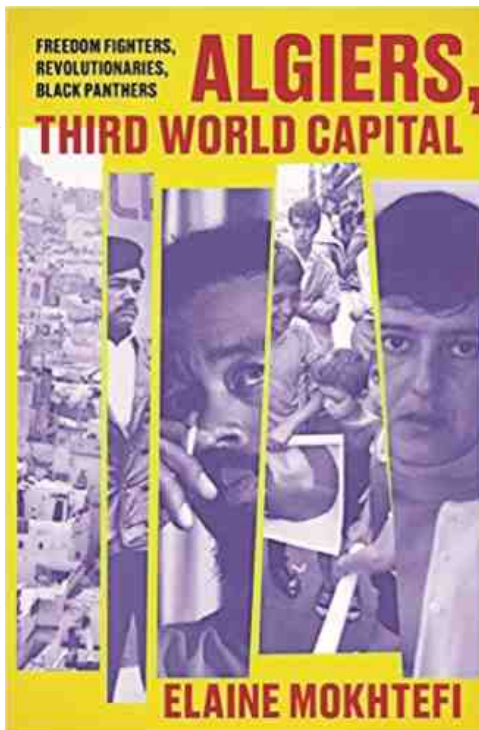
quarters for the American Black Panthers, with a delegation led by Eldridge Cleaver. Cleaver had fled from America after a shoot-out and to avoid a charge of murder, having previously been in prison for rape and attempted murder. He had first fled to Cuba, but the Cubans considered him as a liability and quickly moved him on. Cleaver was soon joined by other Black Panther exiles and escapees, including former hijackers, Byron Booth and

tion of Students for a Democratic Society who wanted to use violence to overthrow the American government and became a terrorist group) and with funding from an American hippy group, The Brotherhood of Eternal Love, who believed in a psychedelic revolution. Elaine Mokhtefi, as she had now become, refers to the Learys as 'aging hipsters – take away the LSD and they become ordinary'. The Learys soon fell out with Cleaver – they claimed Cleaver had held them hostage – but managed to escape to Switzerland.

Elaine Mokhtefi then travels to Paris to get assistance for the Black Panthers from the Trotskyist Michel Pablo. She travels to Tunis with Cleaver, with Cleaver travelling under a false British passport provided by Pablo. Cleaver and the Mokhtefis end up in Paris. As a result of a factional split within the Algerian leadership (Ben Bella, the second Algerian prime minister and friend of Castro and Nasser, also being exiled), they are forced into permanent exile and end up in New York, with Mokhtar Mokhtefi dying in 2015.

Elaine Mokhtefi turned to painting. The memoir includes an assessment of Cleaver which ends with a comment "I gradually lost interest in Eldridge, when I read that he was designing pants for men to mould around their sex organs" She however makes no reference to the fact that Eldridge Cleaver on returning to the US joined the Mormons and become a Conservative Republican! It is curious that Elaine Mokhtefi followed Cleaver for so long, as she was clearly aware of Cleaver's violent and macho behaviour. Perhaps the book should have been titled 'Revolutionary Gangsters'.

The book is a fascinating memoir and paints a vivid if somewhat unpleasant picture of the lives of a mixed group of 'revolutionary' exiles. It is tempting to have some sympathy for the Algerian nationalists recovering from a long war and seeking to build their country, in having to deal with such a volatile group.



Clinton Smith, and later by Stokely Carmichael and his wife Miriam Makeba. Klein acted as Cleaver's assistant and as fixer for the Black Panther group. At the same time, she fell in love with, and married an Algerian nationalist, Mokhtar Mokhtefi.

Much of the memoir describes the life in Algeria of the Black Panther group, who had a tendency to drive around in flash cars and to be prone to violence – Eldridge Cleaver appears to have killed Clinton Smith after he slept with Cleaver's wife. The picture given of the Panthers is not an attractive one. Cleaver was then joined by Timothy Leary, the promoter of LSD who had escaped from a US prison with the assistant of the radical group, the Weather Underground (a fac-

Fruitless arguments

Dot Lewis
on an insider
account of
ANC failures

Unmasked: Why the ANC failed to govern
Khulu Mbatha,
HMM Review Publishing Co

The ANC's failure in government since 1994 to "deliver long-lasting, meaningful and tangible results" is rooted in "organisational and ideological shortcomings" argues Mbatha. In 30 years of exile from 1960, the leadership was inevitably cut off from the masses back home while it concentrated on building international support and training military cadres. From 1987 negotiations with the apartheid regime (by Mandela in prison and the exiles in Lusaka) were similarly cut off. Crucially, in addition, no consideration was given to the outcome of the negotiations – the ANC did not focus on the management of changing its identity from a liberation movement to a political party in government (not a new idea, Mbatha draws on Lenin and Fanon to support his

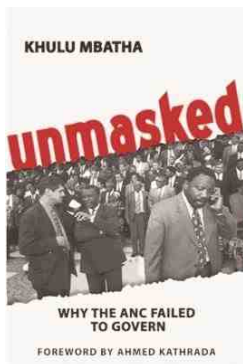
view, as well on Mandela's warnings of the danger). Unmasked goes on to suggest ways in which the ANC may save itself -and the country.

Mbatha has been a member of the ANC since 1976 when he left SA, through to his return in 1990 and as an adviser to President Ramaphosa today. He draws extensively on ANC conference papers, policy statements and reports produced in exile through to 2016. Critiques by ANC and other political commentators provide insight of past and ongoing disputes in the party.

In 2016 Mbatha was one of some 100 'stalwarts' - ANC 'veterans' who, in the wake of the ANC's poor showings in local elections, published *For the Sake of our Future*, suggesting changes in the ANC's Constitution to achieve accountability and a 'Consultative Conference' to restore the "culture, values and traditions" of the party.

Unmasked echoes this: a conference involving all sections of society is needed to create national unity; "deliberative democracy" must be developed so that decisions are based on "deliberations, not merely voting along party lines". How? Mbatha offers developing education: "...numerous experiments...have crippled the very sector that was expected to be the foundation for developing the society...".

Mbatha is hardly unique in identifying the economy as problematic as poverty and inequality intensify. Unmasked points out that since 1994 there have been frequent changes in government policies – none of them achieving anything. Fruitless arguments over whether the Freedom Charter was socialist or capitalist continue while the real problem lies in the lack of foresight – the ANC promised but never produced a single paper on the economy before 1994.



Enemies of apartheid

Nigel Watt
on a memoir
of struggle

Slumboy from the Golden City
Paul Joseph
Merlin £15.99

Paul Joseph, whose mother was a Catholic from Kerala, was born and grew up in poverty in Johannesburg as this book's title suggests. Exposure to racism led to his political awakening when he was still very young. He began to read and help distribute the newspaper, *New Age*, and as his commitment deepened he played a significant part in the struggle against apartheid as a member of the Communist party. He met Adelaide, his wife, at the Treason Trial. He joined MK, the armed wing of the ANC, and spent some time on Robben Island.

He was close to many of the leading members of the ANC including Joe Slovo and Ruth First; and Winnie and Nelson Mandela. He escaped from South Africa into Botswana and came to London in 1965 where he and Adelaide were good friends of Colin Legum, the great commentator on Africa for the *Observer* newspaper, and his wife Margaret.

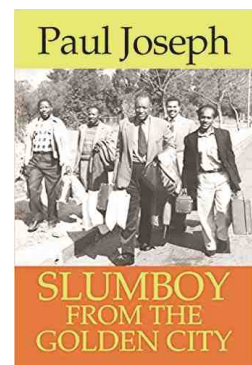
This book is a detailed, occa-

sionally too detailed, account of Paul's life but it has considerable value as an archive of the struggle against apartheid in the 1950's and 1960's. It gives a picture of the atmosphere of exile and describes the excitement of returning to a liberated though imperfect South Africa.

Reading this book made me reflect on the 'rainbow' nature of those involved in the struggle - the thousands of courageous Africans, but also a good number of Indians such as Paul and his brothers along with a smaller number of 'coloureds' and whites. Among the latter, Jews were prominent such as Joe and Ruth, and also Ronnie Kasrils whose excellent autobiography, *Armed and Dangerous*, I have just finished reading.

Much rarer were white Afrikaners. I was reminded this month of the only one I knew by the visit of a young American scholar researching the story of Marius Schoon who spent twelve years in prison for trying (and failing) to blow up a power cable. After his release he married Jeanette, another 'banned person', and they hopped into Botswana where IVS, of which I

was at the time General Secretary, employed them to manage our programme of development volunteers. During their time in Botswana there were constant threats that they, and other exiles, would be killed by South African agents. Finally, the British High Commission forced us to persuade them to agree to leave Botswana. The ANC directed them to go to Angola. Six months later a parcel arrived at Lubango University. Marius was away at the capital. The parcel exploded, killing Jeanette and their little daughter, Katryn. The notorious agent, Chris Williamson admitted sending the parcel but never apologised.



BOOK REVIEWS

**Keith
Bennett**
on North
Korea

Fifty Shades of Grey

Talking to North Korea: Ending the Nuclear Standoff
Glyn Ford
Pluto Press. £14.99.

North Korea is a nuclear-armed state that is often in the headlines. One minute US President Donald Trump stands at the rostrum of the United Nations General Assembly and makes an astonishing threat to 'completely destroy' the country. The next, he enjoys an unprecedented and apparently cordial summit with the North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Singapore. The Korean issue has on more than one occasion brought the world closer to a nuclear conflagration than at any time since the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962.

Yet, for the overwhelming majority of the Labour movement, not to mention the wider public, North Korea might aptly reinvolve the phrase, 'a far-off country of which we know little'. This despite the fact that some 1,000 British servicemen lost their lives in the last Korean War and that British forces still, with increasing frequency, take part in military exercises with the United States, South Korea and Japan, anticipating a future conflict.

Fortunately, there is a notable and honourable exception in Glyn Ford. A member of the European Parliament for some 25 years, he has visited North Korea some 50 times over a couple of decades, getting to know many of its senior leaders and travelling to remote parts of the country. He combines this unusual

access with excellent contacts in the capitals of all the countries with a stake in the Korean issue and has become the 'go to' person for European social democracy in engaging with the country. Now, following on from his 'North Korea on the Brink: Struggle For Survival' a decade ago, Pluto has published his new book. With astute analysis of the prospects following the Singapore summit last June, it is as up to date as any book can reasonably be expected to be in this fast-moving situation.

Ford is no apologist for the North Korean government – not only repeatedly making this clear, but also often accepting the western version of events. But by no means always. One of the greatest strengths of this book lies in his efforts to be dispassionate and to present what he believes to be correct. He is clearly on a mission to explain. In his view "the North's nuclear and missile programme is an entirely rational response to the situation in which it finds itself."

He explains this on a number of levels, noting, for example that

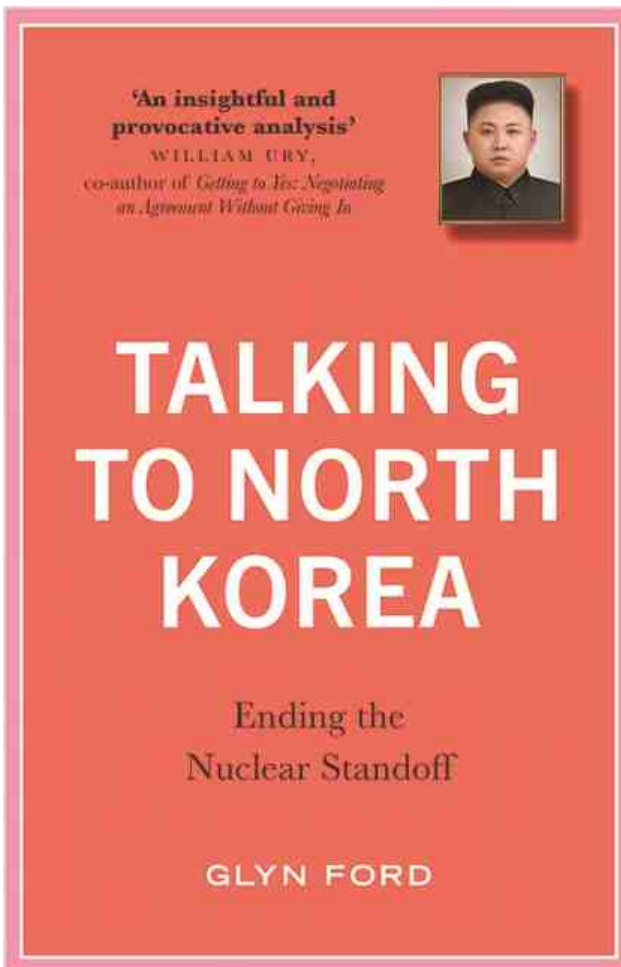
ar technology. For long-term economic gain, Pyongyang was willing to take short-term pain, with more and tougher sanctions."

There are other areas where this book may prove a revelation to those who have hitherto relied solely on the western media. For example, Ford's insistence that, unlike its East European counterparts, Korean communism has strong indigenous roots, that have enabled it to withstand both prolonged nuclear stand-offs as well as devastating famine. As was the case with Vietnam in the 1950s, he notes that, following the Second World War, the US was not prepared to see free elections in the whole of Korea, due to well-established fears that the left would win. He also reminds us of the massive destruction wrought by US bombing in the 1950-53 war, as well as the increasingly well-documented atrocities against civilians, and that in the post-war period, North Korea sustained some of the highest economic growth rates in the world.

Ford's focus is not solely on the nuclear issue. He gives a panorama of daily life in the country, ranging across education, health and crime and punishment. He explains the economic changes still underway, involving the emergence of a middle class and consumer society, especially in the capital, along with economic disparities, as have accompanied the development of China and Vietnam. For Ford, North Korea is neither black nor white, but rather fifty shades of grey. He is by no means sanguine about the

prospects of avoiding conflict, but is surely right in affirming that a peace process, however difficult this might prove, is the only non-catastrophic solution.

In seeking to pick his way through a forest of claims and counter claims, and to see all sides of a complex and emotive issue, Ford's book may not entirely please anyone. It does however have the potential to educate everyone. It is probably the best topical introduction to one of the most difficult issues in world politics.



North Korea's defence expenditure is just under 2% of the combined defence spending of the US, Japan and South Korea and falling and that South Korea's military expenditure alone is greater than the North's entire GDP. Besides reference to how the tragedies of Iraq, Libya and Syria are seen in the North's capital, Ford explains how the nuclear programme is aimed to free labour and resources for economic development, adding: "The goal was economic development, but the means were rocketry and nucle-

Mary Southcott on Labour women

Labour's forgotten history

The Women in the Room
Nan Sloane
IB Taurus £20

Lots of books by and about women appeared in 2018, the centennial of the partial vote for women. Nan Sloane's book, chronicling the women in the 'men's party' and its antecedents in the trade union and suffrage movements, is probably the most useful for Chartist readers. It names individual women who struggled to have their voices recorded, even if in the room, in the proto Labour Movement before and after the founding of the Labour Representation Committee in 1900 and subsequently through war and into government. Organisations and acronyms are spelt out along with a Timeline after a Foreword by Harriet Harman.

This contrasts with recent books where more famous women have been profiled such as *The Women Who Shaped Politics: Empowering stories of women who have shifted the political landscape*, Iain Dale and Jacqui Smith's two volume *The Honourable Ladies: Profiles of Women MPs and Women of Westminster*, in which Rachel Reeve points out that in 100 years only 491 women had been elected and it was only in 2016 that the total women elected to date reached the number of men elected in one election.

Sloane's book starts when electing all these women MPs would have seemed a success. She looks at women she could find in men's biographies, minutes and reports of meetings which often ignored or failed to report on the women in the room, who contributed to trade union work either together with men or separately in women's trade unions, who either became prominent in suffrage work, Millicent Fawcett, or when Labour eventually got into parliament, Margaret Bondfield. Often, they were married to famous men so we find Katherine Bruce Glasier, Ethel Snowden and Margaret MacDonald, with their born and later their husband's surnames.

This is an antidote to the 2018 celebrations which neglected the 40

per cent men who obtained the vote in 1918 whereas property-less women had to wait for 1928. The property qualification was the reason some working men opposed adult suffrage because it meant doubling the number of voting property owners. Some opposition to progressive factory acts came from women who needed longer hours to earn enough to feed their families. There was constant tension from some male trade unionists who wanted women in their own sphere, the home, not in the workforce undermining their wages.

There are many points in the book that Sloane does a "plus ça change?" relating these age-old struggles with ones on-going. When

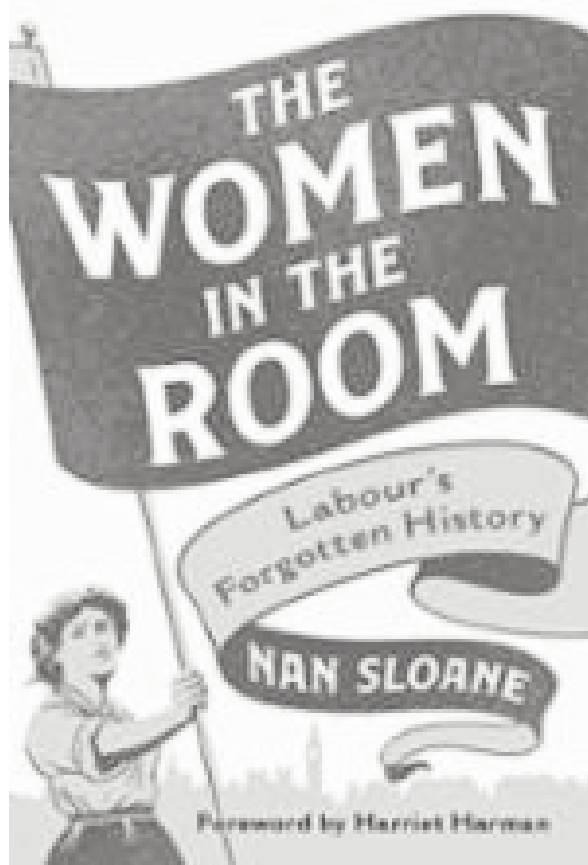
the contemporary narrative on electoral reform, often in the same circles, but she illustrates how Labour broke through in 1906 after a pact with the Liberals, to ensure Labour did not split their vote and got 60 men elected mostly from the trade union wing of Labour, not particularly interested in women's suffrage.

Since I researched our voting system after the Tolpuddle Martyrs and the Chartists, I know how much more Sloane must have ploughed through to write this book. I stand corrected in thinking that the Great Reform Act redefined voters as men. A few women were included on the register and if they were not challenged, voted. However, the main thrust of the 19th century for the Left was not women's but working men's votes.

There were debates on adult versus universal suffrage; individualism, often philanthropy, and collectivism; state intervention as do good-ery like the "nanny state"; and experiential knowledge versus academic research. Yet the arrival of "in the interest of Labour" MPs did mean Old Age Pensions and Free School Meals. Even the preceding Conservative government set up a Royal Commission because the Poor Law and Workhouses were not dealing with destitution. Women started to be elected onto their boards of governors and at local level, as recorded in Patricia Hollis' 1987 book *Ladies Elect: Women in Local Government 1865-1914*.

No Labour woman was elected in 1918, though two other women were – the Conservative Nancy Astor and the Sinn Féin Constance Markievicz. Three Labour MPs were elected in 1923- Margaret

Bondfield, Susan Lawrence and Dorothy Jewson. When Bondfield lost her seat in the 1924 election (she regained it in 1929 to become Minister of Labour), George Bernard Shaw wrote to her: "you are the best man of the lot ... they keep the safe seats for their now quite numerous imbeciles". Documentation of Labour women's activism was often lost but Sloane's work does much to remind us how many women were in the room, and helps us know more about our founding mothers.



I received a Mary Macarthur bursary to study the International Labour Organisation, I pointed out that COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) trade unionists were more gender balanced than the UK equivalents in the 1980s. I was turned on by most of the men in the room.

Events such as the Taff Vale judgment and the Matchgirls' strike are put in context. In fact, this is a crash course on the foundation of the Labour Party, with added women. Disappointingly, Sloane leaves out

VIEW FROM WESTMINSTER



Tory Brexit shambles is Labour's opportunity

Catherine West makes the case to put any deal back to the people

Catherine West is Labour MP for Hornsey & Wood Green

It's almost three years now since the UK narrowly voted to leave the EU. Three years of shambolic negotiations under this inept Tory Prime Minister that have left Parliament gridlocked, Government paralysed, businesses in limbo and jobs lost. The three million EU citizens who have made the UK their home and who have contributed so much to our country have been made to feel unwelcome and uncertain about what their future holds. Our international reputation has been trashed and in the latest Sky polling 90 per cent of people said the handling of negotiations is a 'national humiliation'.

I'm only surprised it wasn't 100 per cent.

There has to be a change of course, but this Government refuses to consider it despite Theresa May's deal being comprehensively defeated three times. That's why Parliament had to take over, and in the indicative votes, I backed proposals to revoke Article 50 if no deal is reached before exit day. Over six million people signed the petition calling for this, the biggest in Parliament's petition history. We cannot risk stumbling into a catastrophic 'no deal' that would devastate our economy and throw into complete uncertainty the lives of EU citizens living in the UK, yet even with the latest extension this will happen by default on 31 October unless Parliament acts.

I also supported proposals to give the public a final say on any deal that comes forward from this process. I do understand the concerns some of my colleagues have about a second vote. The referendum

campaign was so unpleasant and divisive, splitting communities and in many cases families. For areas that voted to leave or were divided 50:50 I know it isn't an easy decision



May with Juncker - a firm no to changing deal

to reopen that debate. But fear can't ever be a reason to press ahead with something that we know will be so damaging to our country and the communities we serve. Instead, we must challenge the prejudice and bigotry that Brexit unleashed and that saw a spike in hate crime after the first referendum. I'm appalled at far-right attempts to use this mess to whip up racism. Remainers and leavers alike must condemn this and, with the latest delay meaning the UK is now contesting European elections, we must use these to stand up for an inclusive vision and future for our country.

The spectacle of the Prime Minister travelling to Germany and France to beg for the assistance of European leaders, makes a farce of the idea this is about "taking back control". We must use the six-month extension we've been granted to hold a confirmatory public vote on any compromise agreement that wins Parliament's support and am pleased that Jeremy Corbyn and his negotiating team have made clear this is central to the ongoing talks.

Democracy didn't stop on 23 June 2016 and it's crucial that the public have the opportunity to vote based on where we are now, not the spin, lies and electoral fraud of the original referendum campaign.

We can officially say 'electoral fraud' now as it's no coincidence that Vote Leave used the occasion of the third meaningful vote to quietly drop their appeal against their record fine for breaking electoral law. It's staggering that Boris Johnson and Michael Gove are

trying to be the next Prime Minister despite overseeing this campaign that has now admitted illegality and the largest breach of campaign finance law in British history. Their actions during and since the campaign should be fully investigated.

Achieving a referendum will only be part of the battle. We then need to win it and that means working together as a Labour Party to build a progressive, internationalist case for a Europe that stands against austerity and anti-migrant policies and challenge a Tory Brexit that would be a disaster for workers' rights, environmental protections and consumer standards.

I've been speaking at packed public meetings of Labour for a Socialist Europe, Another Europe is Possible and Labour for a People's Vote in the past few months and believe there's a growing realisation on the left of the party that we can't rebuild prosperity at home if we allow Brexit to destroy our economy.

Any hope of a change of course on Brexit, and of a government that challenges the failed austerity that created the conditions which led to the Brexit vote in the first place, is only going to come about through the Labour Party. We must seize the mantle and set out a positive vision of a fairer Europe with a well-funded industrial strategy for each region, a programme of investment in genuinely affordable housing, high quality and accessible transport and a sense of hope for our young people. We did it after WWII when the EU was first founded and we can and must do it again for the 21st century. **C**

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