

BUMPER 300 ISSUE

CHARTIST

For democratic socialism

#300 September/October 2019

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Showdown

Alena Ivanova

Alex Sobel MP

Brexit crunch

Nick Dearden

US-UK trade deal

Alice Arkwright

Sexual harassment

Don Flynn

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Immigration

Simon Hannah

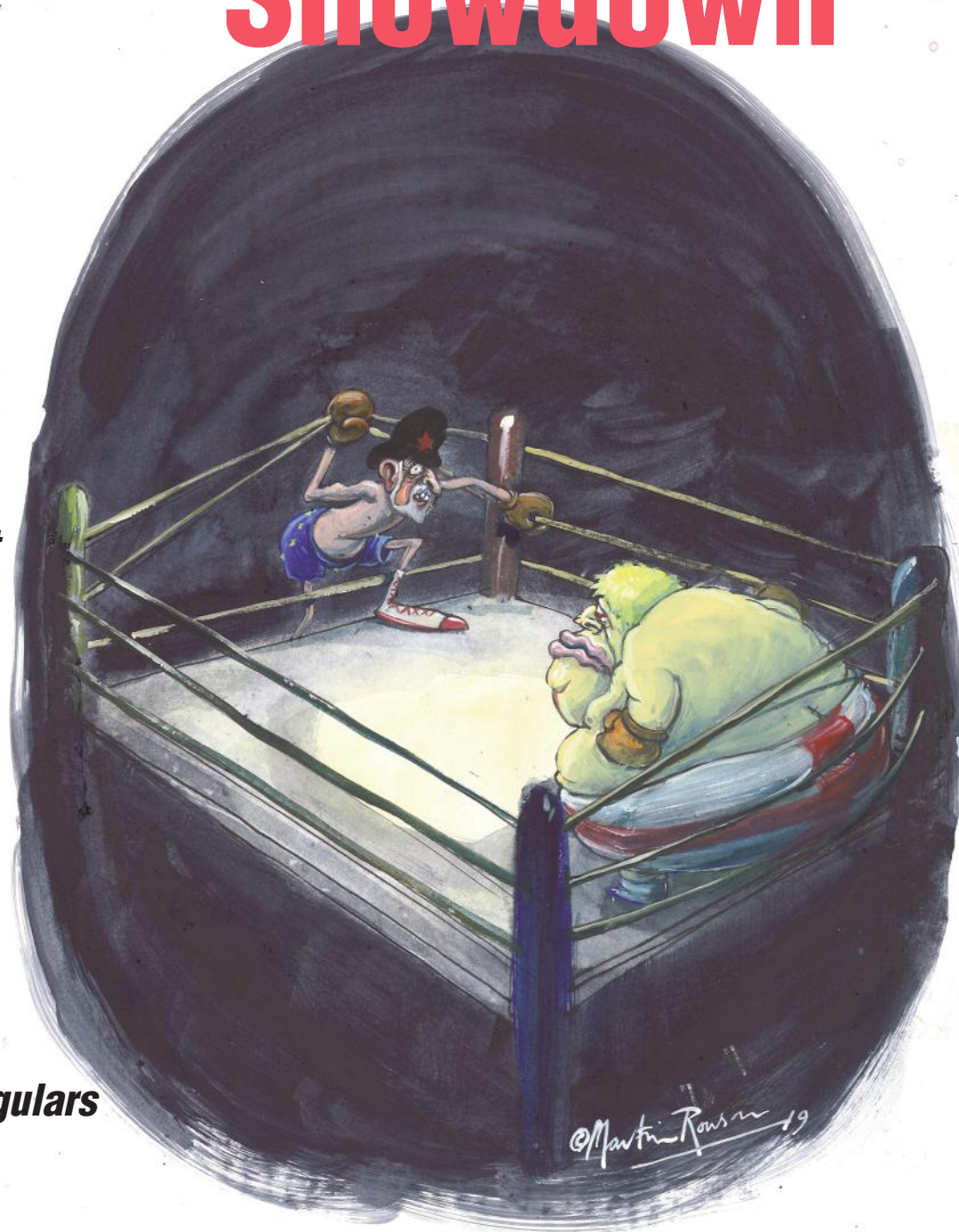
Labour strategy

Prem Sikka

Taxation

plus

Book reviews & regulars



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CHARTIST

For democratic socialism

Editorial Policy

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

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

CHARTIST is not a party publication. It brings together people who are interested in socialism, some of whom are active 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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Editorial Board

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

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Chartist 300 up– an historical perspective

Though Chartist derives its title from the Socialist Charter – a Programme for the Labour Party of 1973, the journal also looks back to the legacy of the Chartist movement of the late 1830's and 1840's.

The first Our History column published in the May/June 2005 issue therefore looked back to the Peoples Charter of 1839, published by the London Working Mens' Association.

Drafted by William Lovett and published by Henry Hetherington it argued for six key reforms: Universal (male) Suffrage, No Property Qualification for MPs, Annual Parliaments, Equal Representation (in terms of electorate in each constituency), Payment of Members and Vote by Ballot.

Four of these six demands have been achieved, the last with the Ballot Act of 1871, though it could be argued that equal universal suffrage (male and female) was only achieved with the abolition of the University seats in 1950.

Although the boundary review commission seeks to equalise constituency electorates, there remain wide variations.

Most significantly, we do not have annual parliaments and annual parliamentary elections, with a

fixed parliamentary term of five years under the 2011 Fixed Term Parliaments Act. The electorate can however, following 2015 legislation, now petition for recall of a sitting MP convicted of a crime or suspended by parliament for a breach of parliamentary standards.

A successful petition forces a by-election, though the convictee/suspendee is not debarred. This procedure has been used three times, with in two cases the MP being replaced. In the third case, the petition did not reach the required threshold. The Chartists did however not argue for a recall procedure nor did they advocate any system of proportional representation.

The Our History series has now reached its 86th column and in chronological terms 1965. The purpose of the series is to provide extracts from important British socialist writing with brief biographies of the authors.

As with contemporary contributors to the journal, we have tried to adopt a pluralist approach. We consider history is important and that contemporary socialists have much to learn from the past. The column is intended to inspire as well as educate.

Duncan Bowie



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Cover by Martin Rowson

CHARTIST

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OUR HISTORY

OUR HISTORY - 86

Problems of Socialist Strategy (1965) Perry Anderson

This essay was published in *Towards Socialism* by New Left Review. Other contributors were Thomas Balogh, Robin Blackburn, Ken Coates, Richard Crossman, Andre Gorz, Tom Nairn, Richard Titmuss, John Westergaard and Raymond Williams. Anderson and Blackburn were joint editors. Anderson was editor of the New Left Review, having succeeded the first editor, Stuart Hall. The review was a bi-monthly journal founded in 1960 as a merger of the New Reasoner (edited by E P Thomson and John Saville) and the Universities and Left Review. The New Reasoner had been published by a group of Communist dissidents, often referred to as the 'first New Left'. The Universities and Left Review had been the journal of a group of young Oxford University Marxist academics: Stuart Hall, Gabriel Pearson, Raphael Samuel and Charles Taylor.

Towards Socialism was the New Left Review's first book, published by Fontana, and attracting contributions from a wider range of academics: For example, Crossman, a Minister in the Wilson government and former leading figure in the Keep Left group, was not a member of the New Left Review editorial board and his essay 'The lessons of 1945' had previously been published in the New Statesman. Thomas Balogh was economic adviser to Harold Wilson. Richard Titmuss was Professor of Social Administration at the LSE, where John Westergaard was a sociology lecturer. Raymond Williams, an English lecturer at Cambridge had already published *Culture and Society* and the *Long Revolution*. A history of the New Left Review was published as *Pessimism of the Intellect?* by Duncan Thompson in 2007. A study by Perry Anderson, *Marxism and the New Left* was published by Paul Blackledge in 2004. The New Left Review is still published bi-monthly:

<https://newleftreview.org/>

The editors' introduction to *Towards Socialism* set out the book's two basic ideas: 'that the advent of political democracy in Britain has not created a true equality of power in British society', and that 'socialism in rich societies of the West must move beyond the traditional preoccupations of the labour movement, towards a political programme which conceives men (sic) in their entirety, and tries to liberate them in their whole social life'.

"The Left in Britain has always been open to the damaging accusation that it lacks any strategic perspective. It is difficult to deny the charge. The Left has never, historically, been able to offer a convincing or coherent answer to the question: how is socialism to be achieved? It is striking that in all the debates and conflicts of the fifties, strategic arguments proper played almost no role at all. All sections of the Left were alike in this: the basis of their politics was a moral critique of society, disassociated from the complex historical process in which values can alone ultimately find incarnation. This attitude, with all its characteristic strengths and weaknesses, has been a hallmark of the British Left since the foundation of the ILP. Its best thinkers - Morris, Tawney, Cole, have never departed from this tradition. Today, however, it has become urgent to surpass it. The lack of any strategic perspective has been one of the key reasons for the eclipse of the Left since 1961 - its swift and sudden effacement before the rise of Wilson. For Wilson above all has offered a strategy to the Labour Party - it is this that has enabled him to temporarily cancel the divisions within it and dominate the party. A strategy for the Labour Party as it exists today, however, is one thing; a strategy for socialism is another. It is precisely in this that so much difficulty lies."

Labour's Green Revolution

Bob Newland reports from Labour in Hillingdon

Labour has long been committed to environmental issues but now, preparing for government, the Party is developing "The Green Transformation", an environmental policy addressing the global crisis, domestic policy and international initiatives.

Three principles underpin the policy:

1. Ambition is based on Science. Environmental policies will be defined by what is necessary to keep temperatures within safe levels.
2. Interventions are transformational, bringing about the structural change needed to address drivers of environmental degradation.
3. Interventions will advance Labour values - justice, equality, solidarity, and democracy - at home and abroad.

Britain has a major responsibility for climate change and has the wealth

and resources to tackle it.

Members are involved in developing these policies through consultations organized by Shadow Ministers and the Community Hub. I recently attended one in Hillingdon focussing on the Green Industrial Revolution. Discussion aired concerns about energy sources, transport and housing and ideas to address them.

Participants suggested reclaiming land from developers' land banks and utilizing empty commercial properties (some already owned by Rail Companies and Transport for London) providing land for housing and premises for environmentally friendly businesses.

It was argued that it is faster and cheaper to retrofit existing housing stock (insulating, upgrading windows and replacing gas cookers) than demolishing and rebuilding. An advantage would be regenerating existing communities rather than

their destruction through gentrification. This work would best be delivered by Local Government through funding to council direct works teams.

Little was said about the international implications of the Green Revolution. Britain has signed up to the Sustainable Development Goals but more is needed. As a lifelong campaigner against imperialism and colonialism I think it essential that aid budgets assist environmentally friendly development in the Global South.

Imperialist powers gained so much of their wealth exploiting the resources and people of these countries and should now provide financial support to redress the balance. Such initiatives can help to stop war and local conflicts and reduce the number of refugees these create.

Read more at www.labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/The-Green-Transformation-pdf **C**

**Bob Newland
Poplar &
Limehouse CLP**

Love Socialism, Hate Brexit

Halloween approaches. The options: a no deal crash out of the EU or some tinsel on May's deal around the Ireland backstop. The latter looks unlikely with top EU heads of state Merkel and Macron standing by their man in Ireland and by the Good Friday Agreement that has helped keep the peace for 20 years.

Johnson has no parliamentary majority for a no deal. Perhaps upwards of 40 Tory MPs could break with the government to reject a crash out. John Bercow the speaker will allow time for parliament to discuss alternatives to no deal.

Any Brexit will be bad: that's why Labour's embrace of a further referendum with backing for a remain option is welcome, while fuzziness on a possible Labour Brexit is not.

We know from leaked Operation Yellowhammer that the consequences of no deal will be horrendous. Medicines supply interrupted; no chemicals to treat water supplies; fresh food shortages; ports chaos for three months then only a 50% restoration of service; food riots; sterling plunging even further and banks disrupted; closure of oil refineries, strikes and fuel shortages; care homes closing within months; civil unrest around Ireland's border; embassies besieged by expats with visa and passport problems: the list goes on. This is not Project Fear but the government's own civil service contingencies' team report.

This is Project Reality. An unnecessary but ideological hard-right drive to create chaos out of which the state can be shrunk, taxes on the rich further cut and living standards and human rights further eroded. Then there is the no deal contingency to waste over £10 billion that could be spent on our hard-pressed hospitals, schools and local services. Mr Johnson has found a magic money tree after all. The cost will be paid for by working people.

Another feature of this right-wing demolition job is the further tightening of restrictions on migrants and refugees. As **Don Flynn** reports, new hard-line Home Secretary Priti Patel is intent on scrapping EU free movement on day one and worsening an already hostile environment. Existing EU workers in Britain, like doctors and nurses, will face restrictions on travelling back to work and families could be separated. **Wendy Pettifer** highlights the cold-hearted position of the government regarding children and the abdication of responsibility for refugees fleeing war and oppression.

Nick Dearden further sets out a chilling prospectus offered by the free-market deregulators now running the ship of state. When and if they get the chance for a UK-US trade deal consequences for our food and health and safety standards will be dire. The NHS will be further exposed to rapacious profit-seeking Big Pharma companies while any number of public services will be vulnerable to privatisation.

TTIP will seem as nothing in comparison.

Alena Ivanova sets out the challenge in rebutting the argument that Labour MPs in leave voting seats need to back-peddle on Labour's policy of remain and reform. The ground for any further equivocation has disappeared. In an imminent General Election Brexit and in or out of Europe will be the dominant theme. Voters will want to know Labour's stance. This has to be that the prosperity and security of British people lies in critical cooperation within the EU. Our anti-austerity messages, our Green Deal, our investment plans for jobs and economic development must be cast in a European framework.

Alex Sobel MP believes Labour has now moved to a more settled position on remain in a referendum or General Election. What is clear is that the party needs to move on to a war footing. Campaigning should intensify in every constituency, every region, town and village. This is one of **Simon Hannah's** key messages for longer term success.

Labour could be on the cusp of government. In this edition *Chartist* carries a supplement on policy initiatives for the first phase. We have picked some key areas covering Europe, education, transport, local government, pensions, taxation and economic policy, workplace democracy and the environment. Some areas are works in progress for Labour. But this policy work and campaigning must go hand in hand.

Labour has committed parliament to recognising the climate emergency. Alongside Brexit this is the other mammoth issue threatening our health and wellbeing. **Nigel Doggett** welcomes Labour's Green Deal while setting out additional proposals. **Cat Smith MP** highlights the damage that the Tory green light for fracking is causing in Lancashire. Over the pond **Paul Garver** argues that in defeating the incumbent climate denier, racist, misogynist, authoritarian Trump regime requires opposition Democrats to diverge from the failed Clinton path of 2016. The 'Squad' of four left-wing Democrat women of colour offers some inspiring examples of a new way.

In the UK mobilising and energising Labour's army of half a million plus members will be central to success in the election. Labour will face a media red scare onslaught against Corbyn, McDonnell, Abbott and team. But the policies of the 2017 manifesto and those we are outlining are designed to implement a radical shift of wealth and power to the many, while the Johnson plan aims to enrich the few and deepen social, regional and national divisions. Love Socialism, Hate Brexit could be the *leit-motif* of Labour's campaigning. Many thousands of Labour members have demonstrated to put Brexit back to the people. Whatever the outcome of Johnson's shenanigans, we the people must have a say.

[M]obilising and energising Labour's army of half a million plus members will be central to success in the election

Northern Powerhouse puffs along

Paul Salveson on northern routes and the likelihood of HS2 hitting the buffers

There seems to be renewed efforts to breathe new life into 'The Northern Powerhouse', a concept which most Northerners have always treated with a degree of healthy scepticism, given its origins in the halcyon days of the Osborne Era. It's always been an elusive concept, more about branding than a real programme of regional development. Where it has edged into the realms of reality has been in rail. We have been sold a project which is variously called HS3, Northern Powerhouse Rail and Northern CrossRail. It's basically about a high-speed rail link from the Mersey to the Humber, linking the cities of Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, York and Hull, with connections heading north to Darlington and Newcastle.

One of Johnson's first announcements on becoming Prime Minister was to give the go-ahead for that part of 'Northern Powerhouse Rail' between Manchester and Leeds. But it's very early days and engineering a new railway, high-speed or otherwise, between Manchester and Leeds will not be easy and a final route has yet to be identified. Local politics suggest that the route should be via Bradford, which would add massively to the cost and engineering challenges. The fact there's a relatively modern tunnel sat doing very little (Woodhead) seems to have escaped the attention of the route planners. A route running eastward from Manchester using part new and part-existing formation via a re-opened Woodhead Tunnel and then veering to the north near Penistone would be far easier and less environmentally damaging. It could potentially connect with the proposed route of HS2 'phase 2b'.

And that's another interesting issue. Johnson has announced a short-term review of HS2, chaired by Doug Oakervee and comprising an advisory panel which is nothing if not diverse (but not in the sense that most Chartist readers imagine, since it's mostly white and all male). I mean diverse in terms of its views. On the one hand Oakervee was briefly chair of HS2 and presumably thinks it's generally a good idea. But also involved



Osborne's white elephant

are (Lord) Tony Berkeley, a Labour peer and intelligent critic of HS2. Other members of the panel veer to being generally pro-high speed rail. Andrew Gilligan, a vocal opponent, is also involved in the background, as Johnson's transport advisor.

I've long been a HS2 sceptic. Not that I'm against high-speed rail as such, just that this scheme is very poorly conceived and over-engineered for our small island. It should be lower speed than planned with more stops serving major towns and cities and better connected to the existing rail network. If we're going to do it, it should extend to the central belt of Scotland. It's those journeys from Glasgow and Edinburgh to the North of England and the south where high-speed rail would really demonstrate benefits and lead to modal shift from air to rail.

There is a strong feeling in the North that the region needs not so much better links to the south, but priority given to the regional networks. Jumping back to 'Northern Powerhouse Rail' that would help but it's only part of the answer. It very much assumes that the priority is inter-city journeys (Leeds-Manchester in particular but also Liverpool, York and Newcastle). Talk to most rail travelers and they will say that it's the middle-distance journeys that are too far for the bus and seriously congested to boot. Journeys to, from and between large centres such as Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, Rochdale, Manchester, Sheffield, Bolton, Preston, Wigan but also

the smaller towns linked by these regional networks. 'Northern Powerhouse Rail', as currently envisaged, will do little to help the situation. I reckon even with a favourable wind in its sails, a new route from Manchester to Leeds via Bradford or not, will take at least 15 years (probably more) to build and end up being unaffordable.

An interesting case of schemes which aren't particularly sexy but are deliverable in a few years, bringing real benefits, is what old railwaymen call 'The Calder Valley Line' between Manchester, Rochdale, Halifax, Bradford and Leeds. It links sizeable communities on a route that is slow and uses ancient diesel rolling stock which cannot cope with numbers who want to use the train. Despite a strong local lobby there are no plans to electrify the route.

A final observation about HS2 and the Johnson review. It is highly political. We are told that HS2 is supported by Northern political leaders but this is only partly true: Manchester wants it, Leeds wants it. Most other towns and cities are lukewarm at best, and they have good reason to be. Their priorities, even in rail, lie elsewhere. I suspect the review will find HS2 is unaffordable. The proposed routes beyond Birmingham to Sheffield and Leeds, and Manchester, will be kicked into the long grass. Johnson will call an election and say that the money saved will go into expansion of regional networks in the North. Which wouldn't be a bad result, even if it may be for the wrong reasons. **C**

**Paul Salveson's
blog is at
www.paulsalveson.org.uk**

Defeating the Tories

Dave Toke explains why Greens need a Progressive Alliance not a Lib-Dem-Green Alliance

As the UK faces the worst political crisis since WW2, with the political and economic dangers of a no-deal Brexit, the last thing pro-EU parties need to do is to actively split the forces trying to combat a no-deal. Yet, I fear, if a Lib-Dem-Green Alliance takes shape which treats Labour as a more or less an equal electoral foe compared to the Conservative and Brexit Parties, it may ensure a Boris Johnson victory.

Now I want to make it clear that 'Remain' is my first option. However, simply having a general alliance between avowed Remain parties at the coming General Election may well play into the hands of a soft electoral alliance between Brexit Party supporters and Conservative candidates committed to tolerating 'no-deal'.

There was an effective soft alliance at the 2015 election between many UKIP sympathisers and the Conservatives. Indeed it was a successful strategy so that where the Conservatives (committed to holding a referendum) were in close contention with Labour, including many northern seats, UKIP sympathisers often voted tactically for the Conservatives so Cameron won an overall majority. The danger of the current situation is that this general pattern could be repeated (with the Brexit Party replacing UKIP of course), this time in support for 'no deal'.

Ironically, much as Jo Swinson may declare her dislike of Corbyn, the main chance of getting another referendum is to get (what will in practice be probably) a minority Government led by Corbyn to organise a three way referendum. This would be about whatever 'deal' he cooked up with the EU, remaining or no-deal. It is fairly transparent nonsense for Lib-Dems to claim that they will refuse to support a minority Corbyn Government (in confidence votes) so long it is following such a path.

No, the Labour Party is not going to ditch Corbyn as leader in the week following a General Election at which the Conservatives have lost their majority. It strains credulity to think that the Lib Dems are



Caroline Lucas (left), Nicola Sturgeon (right), Leanne Wood (centre) up for tactical voting?

going to (or even be allowed to) call another election at short notice (it could be very bad news if they did). Given that the Lib Dems cannot do a deal with Boris Johnson, that leaves few other options.

The Lib Dems were willing to be a full coalition partner in a five year austerity Cameron Government, tolerating xenophobic immigration initiatives, funding Hinkley C, backing shale gas and so on, but are they seriously saying they won't even back a minority Corbyn Government on a short term basis? If they won't back Corbyn what would they do? Have another General Election quickly so that Bojo could drive us into a no-deal Brexit? And the Green Party is going to be at their side when this happens?

There is a broader problem with the Green Party of England and Wales having an alliance with the Liberal Democrats that excludes Labour. This is that the Green Party is in danger of being cast as more like a radical appendage of the Liberal Democrats rather than having its own distinct identity. That could certainly tip the balance for the Conservatives in a tightly fought election if greens shifted to the Lib Dems rather than Labour.

Hence, purely on tactical grounds, the idea of a 'Remain Alliance' which is antagonistic to

Labour is an idea that is fundamentally flawed if defeating the Conservatives is the prime objective. Having a pure Remain Alliance may work in a place like Brecon where the Lib Dems are the alternative (most likely to win) to a 'no-deal is tolerable' Conservative, but it would be disastrous in a place like Peterborough where the choice was between a 'no-deal' candidate and Labour. There was, in Peterborough, a wise decision not to have a pure-Remain Alliance. That's the pattern we need, except perhaps that the support for Labour ought to be more explicit in those circumstances.

If, as seems very likely, there is a pattern of tactical voting between the Brexit Party and the Conservatives, then there needs to be an equivalent pattern of tactical voting between the anti-no-deal parties. That's what I call a Progressive Alliance.

In fact, a formal Progressive Alliance is unlikely to develop – though mainly because the Labour Party would not or could not seriously engage in the idea. But I do hear from some senior Green sources that the Green Party will try to avoid dislodging sitting Labour MPs, and focus on their most winnable seats. So, in the end it may be that the Green Party will be the ones that will look more to be cooperating most progressively. **C**

Dr David Toke is Reader in Energy Politics, University of Aberdeen. His latest book is *Low Carbon Politics*, published by Routledge (2018). See <https://www.routledge.com/Low-Carbon-Politics-A-Cultural-Approach-Focusing-on-Low-Carbon-Electricity/Toke/p/book/9781138696778>

BREXIT

Anti-Brexit home truths

Alena Ivanova says Labour's previous triangulation has failed so it's time to bury the idea of a Labour Brexit

A few months back the Chartist held its Annual General Meeting where I was pleased to be invited for a second year to discuss the Brexit challenge for Labour and how we campaign for Remain. The topic dominated most of the panels and a variety of views were comradely expressed, with or without substantial evidence backing. With the situation changing by the minute, it is doubly important to be mindful of what the data is telling us beyond the pithy headlines of the not always reliable media and the myth of the Labour heartlands' support for Brexit is one that needs continuous debunking.

It is an undeniable fact that around 60% of Labour-held constituencies voted to Leave the European Union (and around 70% of Tory-held ones too). It is also true that Labour cannot rely on electoral safety as it needs to make up ground to win a majority - and therefore reach beyond its safe seats to capture marginals. The path ahead has never been clear, or easy, and for Remainers such as myself the argument was always that we need to make up our minds about what is politically and morally right, and then campaign for our lives on it. Therefore, I have spent the last two and a half years shying away from the argument around the electoral necessity for Remain.

But of course that is not to say that such an argument does not exist. Taken on average, most polls show a consistent - if small, reversal of the Leave/Remain percentage, with roughly 55% to 45% now backing Remain. While some of this is explained by the natural demographic changes of the electorate (voters coming of age, older people dying), it is also the case that some sections of the population have been changing their minds. Peter Kellner reports that this is particularly the case with Labour voters, nurses especially, who have previously believed some of the fairy tales of more funding for public services.

This matters not only because these will be the very Labour vot-



Anti-Brexit demo London in London

ers we'd need to regain marginals, but also because it confirms another piece of statistical evidence - for Labour Leave voters, Brexit comes after the NHS and decent services on their list of priorities. Meaning that when Labour inevitably has to accept the democratic will of its membership and back a Remain position, it still has the full arsenal of its bold domestic programme to respond to its own Leavers' concerns.

And to go back to the constituencies themselves, it is a truth not spoken out nearly as often as 'Labour constituencies voted to Leave' that these voters were not the Labour voters in those constituencies! The majority of Labour voters, even in the marginals, voted to stay in the European Union. Of course that doesn't mean that the party should ignore this previously inactive electorate - but it is lazy and untrue to think of Labour voters as Leave voters, just because that was the overall outcome in the constituencies they live in.

In terms of numbers, we now know (although you won't hear it nearly as often) that the imaginary geography that emerged soon after the referendum in terms of Leave/Remain = North/South is just that - imaginary. As professor Danny Dorling points out, Essex not Sunderland is the capital of Brexit. In fact, it

was the Home Counties, Kent, Essex in the South that won Brexit, and the Labour party should not feel any additional allegiance to a result that was not the obvious will of the people the party was created to represent, when it clearly is not in their interest either.

Ultimately, dwelling on the numbers is not going to save us - it will not stop No Deal (or any) Brexit, it will not make a general election more or less likely and it will not be a substitute for a better, bolder, socialist campaign in a potential referendum. Whatever the supposed merits of Labour's triangulation so far, they failed. The electorate is either unclear or uninterested on the party's position regarding Brexit - Leavers think we're Remain (because mostly we are), Remainers think we're for Leaving (because mostly they spend hours on Twitter with the Lib Dems fake pie charts).

We have reached a point where we need to bury the alternative deal corpse for the sake of the party's survival more so than electoral gains. I am writing this as various journalists are debating whether Corbyn and McDonnell's latest statements could see Labour go into an election promising a referendum and then remaining neutral once it's called. Whether you're a Leaver or Remain, you've probably made up your mind so why would you back a party that can't? **C**

Alena Ivanova is an organiser for Another Europe is Possible

Another Europe at conference

At Conference this year, Another Europe is Possible, alongside Open Labour and Labour for a Socialist Europe, as well as other Remain groups, is pushing for a motion that commits Labour to a Remain position in a manifesto. We also stress the need for the party to be ready to revoke Article 50 in the case of No Deal, as well as to defend unequivocally free movement of people.

We are prepared for a robust discussion on the conference floor but we will also hold fringes and sessions at TWT where we will discuss the future of a transformed Europe.

Last year produced a consensus that helped spur the party on the path to rejecting Brexit. This year, we have no more time to lose and no more compromise ground to negotiate. Labour needs to come out of conference firmly opposed to delivering Brexit, as is the democratic will of its membership.

CHARTIST 300 UP

Mike Davis, editor, on Chartist past, present and future



Chartist celebrates its 300th edition. Produced as a bi-monthly for over 40 years we continue to stand on the shoulders of the pioneering radical democratic movements of the past: the Levellers and Diggers, the 19th century Chartists, the suffragettes, anti-colonial movements and more. (See Duncan Bowie page 2).

The original Chartists also argued for 'The Charter and something more'. It is both the democratic spirit that animated these pioneers and the necessity for something more that inspired the founders of the current Chartist back in the late 1960s. That something more was a form of democratic socialism in the face of statist social democracy and authoritarian Stalinism. Side-tracked for a few years in the mists of critical Trotskyism, whilst still fighting through the Labour Party, the magazine was born (following almost ten years of tabloid format) in 1979 in an effort to provide some greater theoretical insight and political reflection on the troubled state of the socialist movement. Inspired by third wave feminism and gay liberationists, the insights of the emerging ecology movement and the civil rights movements against racism and for equal rights, and new initiatives from workplaces and trade unions, the magazine has sought to plough a course for libertarian socialism, democracy, internationalism, equality and social justice.

Through the dark days of Thatcherism and Major and into the sunny uplands of Blairism with its continuing neo-liberal economic policies but more progressive, if limited social reforms, we have championed core socialist values whilst seeking to flesh out the contours of a relevant C21st alternative to capitalism. We have sought to be pluralist, transparent and

open minded. We continue to see the Labour Party as a primary vehicle for the transformation of Britain though without vibrant, active extra-parliamentary social, cooperative and trade union movements real sustainable change will be impossible. Without bottom-up democracy in our movement the quest for a progressive Labour government will see bureaucratic patterns and power cliques reproducing themselves.

The 2015 Corbyn election was a huge boost, opening doors to a new approach and a more radical inclusive socialist politics. We have maintained a critical friend stance, though the early openness and pluralism seems to have considerably weakened. The Brexit vote has created new fault lines on the left. We have nailed our colours to the remain and transform mast recognising that internationalist socialists must work through all democratic institutions: local, regional, national and supranational, including the EU, however limited by capital, if we are to overcome the divisions of class, wealth and power in this era of globalised capitalism.

The left stands at a critical juncture with a right-wing Johnson Tory government seeking to implement a no-deal Brexit. Any form of departure from the European Union will represent a major defeat for progressive anti-racist, internationalist, human rights champions let alone the dire economic consequences in this world of menacing authoritarian nationalist rulers and mounting trade war.

Aside from an irregularly produced Tribune Chartist is probably the longest standing left-Labour journal in production. We aim to continue to provide a forum for cutting edge ideas, debate, analysis, criticism and actions to transform our society and the world, for the many not the few, at this critical time. We hope you'll continue to read it in print and online.

US-UK TRADE DEAL

When Johnson meets Trump – what to expect from a US-UK trade deal

Nick Dearden on the chilling world that awaits if the free marketeers get their way



A sign reading 'Don't flush our NHS' featuring Donald Trump Credit: PA Images

Boris Johnson has been clear that a trade deal with the US is an absolute priority for him, and has planned a series of meetings with Trump's administration, while snubbing European leaders. Johnson's new Trade Secretary Liz Truss met the US ambassador to talk trade only a few days into her new job. So what is this trade deal likely to mean for us?

First it's important to recognise that Johnson's new cabinet is stacked with ultra-free marketeers, who are deeply sceptical about protections for workers, consumers or the environment. Founder of the Free Enterprise Group of Conservative MPs, Liz Truss herself is a turbo-charged Thatcherite who has spoken of her desire to drive down taxes, cut back public spending and strip away regulations on everything from housing, to education, to the workplace.

In 2012 she authored a report with a group of Conservative MPs

who are now in key government positions: Priti Patel, Dominic Raab and Kwasi Kwarteng. 'Britannia Unchained' claimed the British were "among the worst idlers in the world", and declared war on the "bloated state, high taxes and excessive regulation" believing, somewhat surprisingly, that Britain suffered from masses of over-regulation on the part of successive governments from Tony Blair to David Cameron.

This is all deeply worrying, because the post-Brexit trade deals Truss hopes to sign give her the perfect vehicle to introduce some of these policies – none more so than a trade deal with the United States. Many Brexiteers have looked longingly across the Atlantic for decades, to an economy where, as they see it, business is free from the shackles of tax and regulation. Brexit gives them the opportunity to emulate that model. And because modern trade deals are concerned less with tariffs, and more with how a country can regulate food standards, run public ser-

vices and treat overseas investors, a trade deal with the US would be a powerful mechanism for transforming our economy.

Truss will see eye-to-eye with Donald Trump's administration. We know this because Trump's administration, unlike our own government, have told us exactly what they want from a trade deal with us. First, they are clear that under a trade deal, Britain must allow food produced in enormous animal factories, pumped with steroids, hormones and antibiotics into our markets. That's the chlorine chicken, but it also involves lower standards on the amount of pesticides allowed on vegetables and the quantity of pus cells acceptable in milk – as well as less labelling, which would at least allow us to know what we're eating. British farmers will naturally lobby to push down our own standards, unless they want to be forced out of business because they can't compete with these industrially produced horrors.

But it's about much more than

**Nick Dearden is
director of Global
Justice Now**

chlorine chicken. The US wants us to accept even greater monopoly rights for big pharmaceutical corporations, meaning higher prices for medicines and more strain on the NHS. They will want to lock in privatisation of those parts of the NHS which are already being run by private companies. And they will want more opportunities for US companies to get procurement contracts, potentially making it more difficult for public services to purchase supplies from good quality, local businesses and farmers.

The US want us to allow the Silicon Valley tech firms from Amazon to Facebook to Google to have greater power to use and abuse our data. And they want to extend the rights of American corporations to enjoy 'regulatory stability', potentially giving them the right to sue the British govern-

[Truss] will rather collude with Trump to unleash a bonfire of regulations, and clear away any impediment to the big businesses agenda

ment in secret 'corporate courts' for daring to do things like introduce a sugar tax or pass a law to stop fracking.

In early August, documents were leaked from the US trade talks to the Telegraph, documents that neither we nor our MPs have been allowed to see up till now. They show that the US is streets ahead of us in negotiating ability



Trade Secretary Liz Truss- free market crusader

and that they are fully prepared to use a trade deal to prize Britain away from the standards and protections we enjoy in the EU. US negotiators were clear that we will not be able to introduce the sort of special tax on Silicon Valley corporations which Philip Hammond proposed, and which is being introduced now in France, if we want a US trade deal.

This should alarm us, but will doubtless be music to the ears of Liz Truss, who believes we are "a nation of Airbnb-ing, Deliveroo-eating, Uber-riding freedom fighters." She has criticised any attempt to control the overwhelming power of these corporations. When people have raised concerns about Airbnb in the tourist industry, or on the cost of housing, her answer is simple: cut all regulations in those sectors too. She's called for sweeping cuts to regulations in the workplace too, boasting about making it easier for employers to sack the idlers and make the country more efficient. Anyone who disagrees must be part of that "blob of vested interests" seeking only their own protection to waste the country's resources.

Given that trade deals now

focus extensively on regulation, they will give Truss a mechanism to drive forward this deregulation agenda. They are particularly useful mechanisms for politicians like Truss because they are also highly complicated agreements with almost no transparency or accountability to parliament. During his time at the department for international trade Liam Fox, refused to give MPs any right to amend or stop trade deals, or even to see the papers during negotiation. When parliament tried to give itself the power to stop trade deals earlier this year, Fox simply left his Trade Bill to die in the House of Lords. So Liz Truss will be operating under royal prerogative. What's more as international treaties, these deals take precedence over domestic law and can be difficult and time-consuming to extricate yourself from.

Given the beliefs of Truss, as well as her new colleagues in cabinet, it's impossible to imagine she will stand up to Trump's negotiators even if Britain had the ability to do so. Unless stopped, she will rather collude with Trump to unleash a bonfire of regulations, and clear away any impediment to the big businesses agenda.

In the months ahead, we will need to work with others to build a movement capable of stopping this trade deal, just as we did on TTIP. Part of that struggle will be continuing to support trade democracy, something which all opposition parties in Parliament now agree with us on. Part of it will be ensuring that people understand the impact of modern trade deals on our everyday lives. So get prepared – we're in for one hell of a battle to protect people from the ravages of the free market. **C**

Printer ad

IMMIGRATION

Immigration – after the short pause expect hostilities to be renewed

Don Flynn finds the Johnson government sending mixed messages

The old debate about immigration, largely pushed into the background after the 2016 referendum vote, is set to return to the front pages as the Johnson government works out its line on the issue.

For the past three years there has been a sense that UK voters have been on a learning curve about the issue since the majority win for leaving the EU. Old worries about migration driving down wages and crowding public services have been displaced by concern over who will do the essential work – from nursing through to bringing in the crops – once the migrant workers stop coming.

At the policy level the discussion has veered away from traditional concern about the ‘swamping’ effect of large numbers and instead centred on the problem of making sure that the newcomers were shifted up a few grades in terms of education and skills than those admitted under the EU’s free movement rules. There was no longer the great anxiety about a population of 70 million living on the British island, so long as they were all properly qualified.

Signs of this approach came from the May government’s prompt acceptance of the report of the Migration Advisory Committee in the autumn of last year, which set out recommendations on how the UK should run a migration policy to meet the needs of the UK economy after Brexit. Amongst the detail of its proposals was a lowering of the baseline educational qualification required from newcomers from degree level to the equivalent of A-level standard. It also recommended keeping the annual salary level for the jobs open to migrants unchanged at £30,000.

The question now, with Boris Johnson at the helm, is whether things are going to change from this position. As ever with Bullingdon Club blusterer, mixed messages abound. Soon after getting the keys for No 10 he resurrected an idea from his days as London Mayor for the regularisation of people who had overstayed



Colnbrook immigration Removal Centre

their leave to remain, providing they had at least 14 years residence and were otherwise of good character. The old story about him having a Turkish great-grandfather was given another airing though, perhaps for the purpose of diluting the unfavourable reminders of the casual racism scattered across his journalism and off-the-cuff remarks over the years.

Hardliner

At the level of cabinet and ministerial appointments the messages are mixed. Right wing hardliner Priti Patel is nominally in charge of immigration policy from her position as home secretary, but her harsh stance on law-and-order issues might not be the complete guide to her views on immigration. She was certainly a leading light in the immigrant-bashing Vote Leave campaign, but in a more recent article penned in 2018, she argued that the UK recognised the “immense benefits” immigration brings to the economy and society. She then went on to argue for a “cap” and an “end to people being able to come into Britain with no job or on low wages”. Ominously for immigrants of more humble status, she is also of the view that “billions of pounds” could be saved by axing “handouts to recent migrants”.

Johnson’s views on the matter will be tugged backwards and forwards between his desire to keep the a highly-mistrustful business community onside by offering them visa channels for jobs which cannot be easily filled from the domestic labour market, and appeasing old-fashioned immi-

grant bashing which is still prevalent among the Brexit-at-any-price members of the Conservative party. An early manifestation of this has been a report coming out of Ian Duncan Smith’s Centre for Social Justice which calls for a minimum salary requirement for new migrant workers entering the UK to be set at £37,500.

The CSJ report argues that earnings at this level mark the boundary between skilled and unskilled jobs. More knowledgeable authorities on labour market conditions are quick to dismiss a rigid rule that links skill to wage levels, particularly when issues like gender and age are taken into account. An immigration policy of this sort will be in danger of missing out on a younger and more diverse talent pool in order to offer a later career option to middle-aged, mostly male professionals.

There are no easy compromises to be struck between the contending parties. Already Johnson’s promise to scrap the current cap on the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) visa category has been rubbished by experts from the industries which aim to recruit these ‘brightest and best’ candidates. The forces which have been shaping immigration policies for the past 20 years – migrant hungry employers versus visceral anti-immigrant ideologues – are still firing shots across the ramparts. Mr Johnson and his cabinet are set to suffer the sort of discomfort over the issue as felt by all their most recent predecessors.

Stop Press: Limbo-land beckons with border chaos

Keeping pace with fast-moving developments in the field of Brexit policies is bound to be a challenge for contributors to a bi-monthly journal. Since writing the above piece news has been breaking about a plan by the Home Office to curtail all the rights and freedoms associated with EU freedom of movement from 1 November in the event that the UK leaves with no deal.

Under suspicion that the threat might be part of the government’s

Don Flynn is ex-Director of Migrant rights Network & Chartist Managing Editor

attempt to force the EU back to the negotiating table, the mere fact that it is being issued reveals a lot about the extreme policy action that the UK authorities are prepared to consider.

With no deal looking increasingly likely the very real prospect of a policy which would subject all EU citizens to immigration policies which haven't yet been written is deeply alarming. It would require the tens of thousands of citizens of other member states who cross UK borders on a daily basis to be subject to detailed examination on the purpose of their visit, currently the lot of nationals of non-member countries. At the very least this will lead to chaos at airports, ferry crossings and the Eurostar terminals where EU nationals are presently waved through.

Even more ominously, the estimated four million EU citizens who are now resident in the UK will find their biggest fears about their status in their adopted home country being realised. Until regulations are produced that cover their circumstances, they will find themselves in a limbo-land where rights to work, rent accommodation, drive vehicles, receive NHS treatment and register children at schools are all absent.

Can the government bring in regulations before the end of October that will re-establish a basis in law for the rights which are in danger of being removed? The omens do not look good. An immigration bill designed to do some of this work has been stalled in Parliament throughout this year because of the absence of an assured government majority for

its proposals. Johnson's even smaller majority, still dependent on the support of his Ulster Unionist allies, stands no chance of getting the measure through on time for the October deadline.

Home secretary Priti Patel is reported to believe that she can use so-called secondary legislative procedures to get some framework for the regulation of EU nationals to operate if the cliff edge is reached. Constitutional lawyers will be scrambling to contest this belief. The most likely outcome is that MPs will be forcing Patel to bring her proposals to the Commons for an examination which will prove excoriating. If she is not defeated on this point the country seems set fair for even more chaos at its border come 1st November. **C**

How can Labour become a member led party?

Post Democracy Review **Dermot McKibbin** wonders where the results are and calls for fuller member rights

If Labour is to be a genuinely member led party, there needs to be a right to more information about what the activities of the party at a senior level.

The party's Democracy Review Report September 2018 contained a series of recommendations. Many of the reforms that were agreed at the conference in 2018 were positive and covered the rights of individual members to stand for internal party offices and to vote in internal elections.

The report also proposed that members were to be given more rights to information within the party. Implementing the Democracy Review refers to a charter of members rights to be brought forward for approval at Annual Conference in 2019.

However, the leadership have been very quiet on this issue lately. In a proper democratic party, the leadership's proposals on improving members rights should be circulated well in advance of the annual conference so that local parties can discuss this issue and give guidance to their conference delegates.

It is surprising that the general secretary's annual report and the national treasurer's report to annual conference are not available on the Labour Party website. This needs to change. The lack of access to information is also contrary to the spirit of the NEC Statement on the importance of our members in Appendix 1 in the Party's Constitution.

Labour Party members should have a constitutional right to information based around the following:

1. The minutes of the meetings of the National Executive Committee and the National Policy Forum should be made available to party members only.

2. The spreadsheet which shows how each constituency Labour party voted in the NEC elections should be made available to all party members. It is wrong that this spreadsheet is currently circulated to campaign groups close to the Leadership but not the entire membership.

3. Membership figures for all local parties should be published on a regular basis. If the membership has fallen, all sec-

tions of the party should be encouraged to reflect on the reasons and to take appropriate action.

4. The sex and ethnic composition of the party membership should be published by constituency as well as how many disabled members we have.

5. Without revealing individual details, there seems to be no reason why the rate at which complaints are dealt with should not be made available to party members. The same would apply to members subject to disciplinary proceedings.

6. Reports by the General Secretary and the national treasurer to annual conference should automatically appear on the Labour Party website five working days prior to annual conference.

The leadership should present proposals to conference in September to empower members and to demonstrate accountability to the membership. This would encourage the morale of party members and show that the national leadership does not take them for granted. **C**

Dermot McKibbin
Beckenham CLP

GREECE ELECTIONS

Syriza: Is this the end of the dream?

July's snap election brought another dramatic twist in the ongoing Greek saga reports
Isidoros Diakides

After 4.5 turbulent years of a minority Leftist government, the conservative New Democracy (ND) regained power, with 39.8% (up 11.7% from 2015), and a majority in parliament.

SYRIZA, surprise winner of two successive 2015 elections, came second with 31.6% (down 3.9%), and the fascist "Golden Dawn" drops off parliament having failed to reach the 3% threshold required.

A coalition around the once all powerful PASOK came distant 3rd, the isolationist Communist KKE 4th, and two new small parties, (an extreme Right Wing one and Varoufakis's Leftist one) managed to (just) enter parliament.

A number of other Left-Wing parties failed the 3% threshold, thus rendering a significant number of left-wing votes wasted.

Despite voting being compulsory about 40% (an all-time record) did not bother to vote.

SYRIZA, born initially out of the 'Squares Movement' (in response to the debt crisis in the early 2010s), as a coalition of left-wing movements, has governed Greece since January 2015 (albeit without an absolute majority) having won 35-36% of the votes in two elections during 2015.

Heralded as Europe's first 'Left' government, it revived hopes of breaking the neoliberal stranglehold over European governments, inspiring the birth of similar parties in other EU countries (notably Spain's Podemos and Portugal's Left Block). However, in its first six months in government it was forced into a humiliating climbdown in its epic confrontation with the EU/IMF establishment, resulting in a loss of trust from sections of the Greek (and wider) Left, splits, breakaway parties and new elections in September 2015. SYRIZA won again with a similar vote, whilst being under constant attack ever since, from both right and left, throughout its 4 years in government.



Kyriakos Mitsotakis of New Democracy: a return to old politics?

In fairness, there were some notable achievements during these years; extracting Greece from various suffocating EU/IMF supervision regimes, restoring financial stability, growth and basic social protections, introducing a range of anti-poverty measures, reducing unemployment (from 28% to 18%), restoring access to free health care to millions, introducing progressive legislation in various areas (LGBT rights, electoral reform, citizenship for various categories of migrants, Trade Union rights) and a progressive foreign policy.

These however weren't enough to counterbalance the relentless, often underhand attacks from both the establishment dominated media and various Left factions. The government was painted as extremist/communist, soft on law and order, unpatriotic etc, by the establishment, and variously as sell-outs, American/EU puppets, right-wing etc by the Communist party and others on the left.

By mid-2019 SYRIZA was trailing badly in the opinion polls, hoping to recover in time for the next elections (scheduled for October 2019), as people start experiencing the benefits of the various measures.

However, two significant factors intervened:

The government's successful settlement of the age-old dispute with FYROM over the name of North Macedonia, although lauded internationally (even potential

Nobel Peace prize nominations for Tsipras and Zaef, the two PMs involved), was cynically exploited by the Right, as evidence of SYRIZA's "lack of patriotism" with accusations of "selling out" to American-EU interests. This had a negative impact on its popularity, especially in North Greece.

In May's European and local elections SYRIZA did badly, losing mayoralalties, councillors and MEPs. This led to the surprising decision to call a snap election in July, in the hope of regaining the initiative, which also reduced by three crucial months the time available to convince, as planned, the population of the benefits of the government's reforms.

In the event, SYRIZA's c32% actual vote came as a surprise, although it did not prevent the ND achieving a parliamentary majority.

Looking for positives, Golden Dawn was knocked out of the parliament and SYRIZA has been established as the dominant Left party of Greece, (still remaining the largest, Left party in the EU).

In his concession speech Tsipras pointed out that, although SYRIZA's vote was 4% less than in the 2015 elections, there was a qualitative difference; namely, whilst most of SYRIZA's 2015 vote was, in his words, "borrowed" (i.e. people using the party for a protest vote, not necessarily understanding, or supporting, its nature and philosophy), that wasn't anymore the case. He also hinted that SYRIZA's future should be more as part of a wider "progressive front" rather than a narrow traditional political party.

Both observations are consistent with his past pronouncements, since before becoming PM and also with the electoral reforms he introduced as PM (e.g. the eventual abolition of the 50 seat bonus etc).

How significant a setback is this defeat for the Left? SYRIZA certainly seems "down but not out" yet. A sense of relief and an almost strange sense of optimism is oozing out of key party

Isidoros Diakides in co-chair of the Greece Solidarity Campaign and a Haringey councillor

See Marina Prentoulis's article on www.chartist.org.uk for more analysis and details

activists, despite what must be a major defeat. Is this just putting on a brave face, (or even some kind of Monty Python's "Black Knight" syndrome), or is there something deeper involved?

Tsipras and co seem confident that these five years have consolidated a more mature, clear-headed and experienced Left movement, with deeper roots within Greek society. A left that is on course to get back (after a brief 'Right Wing Parenthesis'?) into government, only better prepared next time and on a more solid basis. Is that just wishful thinking?

On a practical level, it is true that, despite the unprecedented onslaught, demoralisation and

mass abstentionism, half of those who bothered to vote, supported parties and programmes far more to the Left than anything we've been used to in the rest of Europe. Greece still seems to have the most Left-wing population and SYRIZA still seems to be Europe's largest Left-wing party.

On a theoretical level, it's intriguing to see SYRIZA's post-election efforts to recast itself as a broad progressive 'Popular Front', rather than a traditional political party. This doesn't seem like a simple, short-term electoral expedient (as one could probably describe some of our own "progressive alliance" proposals), but something potentially deeper. SYRIZA's founders have strong

ideological roots in Althusserian 'structural' Marxism (with its social movements prescriptions) and the Bolivarian (grass-roots, populist, bottom-up) traditions, which seem consistent with the implied scepticism of any over-reliance on 'institutions' (including traditional political parties) that seem to create their own easily infiltrated, manipulated and corruptable power structures.

It is too early yet to attempt any solid conclusions or predictions, but my instinct tells me that, when in a couple of months' time, we take stock of the "first 100 days" of the ND government, I'm likely to conclude that little Greece is still at the centre of our global struggle. **C**

Euro Mediterranean migration crisis

Wendy Pettifer on the consequences of hostile environments

I'm a solicitor who worked in Calais throughout 2016/17 and Athens in 2017/18 to unite children and vulnerable adults with family members in the UK and in Northern Europe. I have been to Naples, Calais and Athens in May and June this year.

Until we can tackle the root causes of the current migration explosion: climate change, the effects of Western imperialist interventions on Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Libya there is no durable solution. People will always flee poverty exploitation and persecution.

Across Europe we are operating in a hostile environment, which downgrades the rule of law, democracy and human rights. Everywhere rich states externalise their borders: the EU to Libya and Turkey, the UK to Calais resulting in horrific hardship. In 2016 the EU gave Erdogan 2 billion euros for vast migration camps along its coastline with the Greek islands.

The 2013 EU Convention known as Dublin 111 designed to enable family members to be reunited is not fit for purpose.

Italy and Libya

The EU has stopped funding Frontex, the international rescue scheme operating in the Mediterranean out of Italy. Instead the EU funds Libyan coastguards to transfer migrants to

Libyan camps. Save and Rescue Missions run by NGOs have been criminalised. As a result deaths in the Med per 1000 have increased nine-fold.

Greece

In Greece, since the 2016 EU/Turkey deal thousands of migrants languish in dire conditions in camps in Turkey or on the Greek islands closest to the border with Turkey where conditions are acknowledged to breach Article 3 ECHR (the right to be free from inhuman and degrading treatment). Funding provided for UNHCR to pay the rent for 2000 families in Athens has stopped.

Calais and the UK

In Calais the hardship and homelessness of unaccompanied children, single adults and families trying to get to the UK did not disappear when the Jungle was destroyed in October 2016. On the contrary, it rendered migrants even more vulnerable as hundreds now sleep in about 10 informal camps in the pas de Calais area. Police harassment has got much worse: regular tear gassing, destruction of tents and theft of trainers means no-one wants to stay in France.

Since 2016, 293 children at least have been trafficked illegally into the UK and are now forced into bonded labour and/or child prostitution.

The UK's hostile environment



Migrant ship off Lampedusa

ensures that the numbers of children able to access the UK through DUBS and Dublin 111 is pitifully low. In 2016 the Government promised to fill 480 Dubs places with children from Calais, Italy and Greece, but until now only 220 have been transferred.

Lord Dubs succeeded in obtaining an amendment to the EU Withdrawal Bill. The Government initially excluded Dublin III from the Bill but the amendment now means that children will still be able to apply to join family members in the UK, although the definition of family has been tightened to include only parents and siblings.

Every child should have a chance to thrive somewhere. The hostile environment fostered by the Government since 2010 against migrants is wrong. We have to find ways to dispel myths and fears about migrants and campaign against the far right populist movements in Europe. **C**

Wendy Pettifer
Hackney North
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UK DEMOCRACY

What does winning mean?

Simon Hannah poses some longer term questions for Labour

This isn't going to be an article about how Labour can win the next election. If I knew the answer to that I would be paid 80k a year and I would be working in the Leaders office. I think we need to dig a little deeper, beyond the immediate chaos of the current electoral cycle to think about longer term questions.

When we talk about winning, what does it mean? To get 350 MPs in parliament? Perhaps a *longue durée* of several governments? Of course winning elections matters, Attlee and Thatcher proved that. But how to we build a society that escapes from the swings and roundabouts of parliamentary democracy? We had 18 years of Conservatives, 13 years of Labour, then back to nine years of the Conservatives. Now we are in a crisis where neither party can establish its hegemony, where hung parliaments and minority parliaments and unprincipled coalitions look like they might become the norm.

If we are about changing society, for a fundamental and irreversible shift in power and resources from the rich to working people (not just in Britain but internationally) Labour needs to win by looking beyond the narrow question of the Westminster timetable.

There are questions being posed now that outstrip the confines of parliament. Brexit alone shows how inadequate our current political systems are for dealing with deep schisms that cut through society, politics and economics.

The last months of 2019 will be crucial. It probably isn't a stretch to say that the future of the country depends on it. Brexit is Britain's version of Trumpism - a right populist backlash against the 'establishment' which paves the way for a sharp turn towards authoritarianism on the back of decades of anti immigrant politics. Now, thanks to Brexit, we have our own version of Trump. Sure he is a British version, a bumbling foppish elitist megalomaniac instead of a swaggering American real estate agent megalomaniac, but he is on the same political spectrum. Behind



Johnson lies figures like Steve Bannon and through him looms Bolsonaro and Salvini. The grotesque growing pantheon of the far right.

With climate change looming we now face a tangled Gordian knot of far right climate change deniers taking power whilst each month between now and 2030 is a precious time that cannot be

If Labour wants to win then the social and political crises need to be seen as opportunities for a radical new vision

wasted. If we are serious about the extent to which capitalism as a socio-economic system is destroying the planet then Labour needs to get serious about the extent to which it wants to get rid of capitalism - not ameliorate it, not regulate it, but end it.

This is going to take a political struggle beyond the cycles of the parliamentary calendar. Whether in power or not Labour activists need to be front and centre in campaigns. We need to base ourselves on the socialist maxim that 'the emancipation of the working class is the act of the working class'. Power does not just exist in parliament. Indeed, the power that comes from parliament is always a dangerous force, corrupting as much as it strength-

ens. It isn't for nothing that Fenner Brockway declared that he had been in prison for three years and parliament for the same amount of time and he had seen parliament rot men's souls more quickly than being behind bars (and I am not referring to The Churchill Room drinking den in parliament).

When we think about extra-parliamentary politics we can already see the contours of the battlefield ahead. Climate change, and with it a huge surge in refugees, food prices and global instability. This means the fight over immigration and refugee rights, over open or closed borders is going to increasingly dominate the next decade or more. The growth of the far right is something that isn't going away. It would be naive to think that the people turning out for Brexit protests or the Tommy Robinson demonstrations are people solely motivated by disillusionment with mainstream politics. They are also people who feel the workers' movement can do nothing for them and are susceptible to the demagoguery of the racists and nationalists.

If Labour wants to win then the social and political crises need to be seen as opportunities for a radical new vision. Not warmed up Keynesian social democracy but an entirely new vision of socialist democracy and economic planning that cannot be undone by a bad election. One that creates a socialist hegemony, not just in Britain but globally. **C**

Simon Hannah is author of *Labour: a party with socialists in it*

Amritsar Massacre 1919- a shameful imperial legacy

Kabul Sandhu remembers 100 years ago when British troops killed hundreds of peacefully protesting unarmed Indians

In July 1974 the body of a man hanged for murder was exhumed at Pentonville prison and without fanfare was put on a plane to India. In India the body was received by Indira Gandhi (prime minister of India) and Zail Singh (chief minister of Punjab, later president of India). The body was that of Udham Singh, his ashes now lie in Jallianwala Bagh where the Amritsar Massacre took place.

In India Udham Singh is commemorated in at least one place name, statues and in annual ceremonies as a great martyr. In Britain he is unknown.

What had he done? In 1940, in Caxton Hall, London, he shot and killed Michael O'Dwyer, the Governor of Punjab at the time of the Amritsar massacre. As a boy Singh had been providing water for those attending the meeting in Jallianwala Bagh and witnessed the 1919 massacre. He like other Indians hadn't forgotten what happened that day. Victims of horrendous wrongs remember, perpetrators forget.

On the 13th April General Dyer marched with about ninety troops to Jallianwala Bagh and with no warning to disperse ordered troops to open fire on a crowd of thousands. By Dyer's own admission firing only stopped when his men had loosed off 1650 rounds. By one account between 200-300 were killed, but other accounts claim that 379 killed and 1100 wounded. Among the dead were 41 boys and a six week old baby. The number of dead and wounded might have been even higher if two armoured cars with mounted machine guns Dyer had taken had been able to get through the narrow entrance to the Bagh. All those killed were unarmed, many passing through or around to listen to protest speeches on the day the Sikh Baisakhi festival was held unaware that an order against gatherings had been declared.

The background to this mas-



General Dyer - butcher at Amritsar

sacre was the increasing agitation for Independence that Indians felt they had a right to and in recognition of Indian help and sacrifices in the First World War. There had been the arrest of two nationalists and the meeting in the Bagh was in protest against that action. There had been strikes and rioting and twenty Indians had been killed. In this febrile atmosphere four Europeans had been killed and a white woman had been beaten.

An outrageous order was given that any Indian using the alley where the woman was beaten had to crawl on his or her hands or knees, the order was enforced by British soldiers. An element of racial revenge and teaching Indians a fearful lesson played a part in General Dyer's actions.

The government of Punjab tried to suppress the news and information about the massacre. But that was impossible in India and details of the event reached Britain in December. In the House of Commons Dyer was condemned. Churchill called the

action 'unutterably monstrous'. Many Britons in India and England, however, regarded Dyer as the saviour of the Punjab. At the request of O'Dwyer the then Governor General of Punjab, the Vice-Roy of India Lord Chelmsford, put Punjab under martial law.

The massacre far from suppressing the nationalist movement gave it a further boost. To many Indians the British had lost any moral authority they had. A non-co-operation movement against British authorities began. This was refined over the years by Gandhi and the Congress party. Twenty-eight years later India had gained independence.

General Dyer, the Butcher of Amritsar, as he was termed in India, was not condemned by his military superiors but he was obliged to resign from the army and he retired to England. Here through a public subscription he received £26000 from people who saw him as a hero. He died of natural causes in 1927. He was given a grand funeral.

The Amritsar massacre is a grim and shameful event in British History. There have been expressions of regret in recent times by British leaders but so far no official apology.

Did Britain and the army act differently after this event? In Ireland as in India there was much agitation for independence. On Sunday morning of 21 November 1920 the IRA assassinated 14 British intelligence officers in Dublin. That same afternoon British troops with armoured cars mounted with machine guns went to Croke Park where a Gaelic football match was taking place. They entered the field and shot into the crowd of spectators. Fourteen civilians lay dead. Did this act of revenge stop the campaign for independence? Two years later most of the island of Ireland became independent. The Irish remember this atrocity as do the Indians theirs. The memory of injustices lives on in the histories of its victims. **C**

Kabul Sandhu is a member of South Basildon CLP

US DEMOCRATS

How can we stop Trump?

Preventing the re-election of Trump in 2020 is imperative both for the U.S. Left and for centrist corporate Democrats argues **Paul Garver**

It will be harder than it would have been to block Trump's election in the first place. The mainstream Democratic Party stumbled through the 2016 campaign, failing strategically by merely running against Trump while ignoring the progressive campaign planks hammered out at its 2016 convention in Philadelphia at the insistence of Sanders supporters. The Clinton campaign also ignored the frustration in the declining industrial states of the Upper Midwest, alienated by Obama's free trade policies and swayed by nativist rhetoric. Clinton barely campaigned in Wisconsin, Michigan and western Pennsylvania, losing these states by razor-thin margins, conceding Trump a majority in the Electoral College despite losing the national popular vote.

By November 2020 Trump will have had four years to consolidate an authoritarian, nativist, and White supremacist bloc, one that could be identified as proto-Fascist. The combined forces of conservative Republicans, many evangelical Christians, racist Whites and disaffected rural and small town voters do not constitute a majority. However, despite his numerous gaffes and consistent buffoonery, Trump has retained a base of support amounting to some 35% of the national electorate. Given the electoral geography of the USA, skewed by disproportionate influence of voters in smaller states, Trump only needs narrow victories in a minority of 'swing' states to repeat his 2016 victory.

Some trends over the last three years have increased Trump's chances for re-election in 2020. In brief:

1. Although income inequality continues to increase, the economy has grown for a decade, beginning with the recovery under Obama after the financial collapse of 2008-9. The enormous tax cuts for corporations and the wealthiest have increased inequality and mortgaged the future, but also fueled lop-sided economic growth. Wages for most of the population have stagnated, but unemployment is relatively



Rashida Tlaib (R-MI) Detroit, Ayanna Pressley (R-MA), Ilhan Omar (R-Min) Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (R-NY)

low. Usually a President in office benefits from a growing economy.

2. With Trump's appointments tilting the Supreme Court in a reactionary direction, voter suppression, newly permitted by courts in swing Southern states like Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and Texas is removing hundreds of thousands of likely Democratic voters of colour from electoral rolls.

3. The constant attacks on immigrant rights are sowing fear in Hispanic communities, even among citizens, that they will be targeted for repression or deportation for exercising their political rights.

4. As right-wing nativist politicians are elected elsewhere, Trump appears less like an exception on the world stage and more like the vanguard of a shiny new authoritarian, pseudo-populist future.

However these obstacles can and should be overcome if the Democratic Party and the U.S. Left can work together to block Trump. Several recent developments suggest both ways forward and some obstacles to surmount.

The 2018 mid-term elections for the House of Representatives resulted in a Democratic majority with some potential to thwart the worst of Trump's policies. Most promising was the election of four

new women of colour from four major metropolitan areas, who quickly took on the mantle of advocating new progressive policies and militantly challenging Trump.

They are Rashida Tlaib (Detroit, Palestinian-American, 43 years old), Ayanna Pressley (Boston, African-American, 45), Ilhan Omar (Minneapolis, Somali born, 37), Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (New York, Puerto Rican, 29). Forming a 'Squad' for mutual support, they have drawn the wrath both of Trump, who infamously tweeted that they should "go back where they came from", and of Democratic House leaders like Nancy Pelosi.

Noting that only the four Squad representatives voted against a Democratic-sponsored 'compromise' bill to provide more funding for Border Control/Immigration enforcement, Pelosi claimed that the four Squad Representatives represented only themselves, trivializing what she should welcome as the faces of a revitalized Democratic Party.

The corporate Democrats who control the Party apparatus plan essentially to rerun the 2016 election with a more popular candidate than Hilary Clinton, preferably former Vice-President Joe Biden or a younger 'moderate cen-

Paul Garver is a member of Democratic Socialists of America

trist', without proposing ambitious structural reform proposals like the Green New Deal or Medicare for All that are attacked as 'socialist' or too expensive.

Their tactic is to gain support from moderate voters in swing states to win enough electoral votes to defeat Trump in the Electoral College and to elect a few new Centrist Democrats to the Senate. The New Left contending for influence within the Democratic Party has a different plan both, for the upcoming elections and for the future of politics in America. This constellation of Left forces follows the strategy most clearly outlined by the small but energetic Justice Democrats (plus the Working Families Party, Democratic Socialists of America, Progressive Democrats, MoveOn, Democrats for America, etc.) Simply put, it is to elect more new legislators at all levels on the model of the Squad, forthrightly campaigning on Medicare for All, the Green New Deal, free public higher education, abolition of repressive immigration enforcement and mass incarceration, in the belief that a majority of Americans will support these, particularly younger voters who

might vote in larger numbers for progressive programs.

Most Democratic Party leaders fear this approach so much that they are scrambling to protect even the most reactionary Democratic incumbents against new insurgencies. The Democratic National Congressional Campaign Committee is already enforcing a blacklist of all campaign consultants who work for insurgents like the Squad.

Among the myriad of Democratic Presidential contenders, Bernie Sanders and Liz Warren are the most vocal advocates for major structural reforms. But many other candidates are responding to well organized pressure from the Left. This suggests that a constellation of interrelated and increasingly collaborative movements and organizations are helping to shift the political debate in America. Candidates supported by DSA and other progressive organizations are being elected at local and state levels, often replacing machine-backed Democrats.

Whether the welcome growth of a democratic socialist left current in American politics leads to

a transformation or to the collapse of the current Democratic Party remains to be seen.

Though the mainstream Democratic Party appears devoid of ideas and seems more concerned with fighting the progressives within its own ranks than on challenging Trump, we must somehow build a united effort to block the threat that Trump's authoritarian, racist, white supremacist regime will consolidate itself after an electoral victory in 2020.

The best strategy to defeat Trump is still unclear, but surely replaying the 2016 campaign is a likely loser, and a disastrous future choice for both the Democrats and the USA. A vague and compromised message trying to swing ten thousand former Trump voters would leave tens of millions of potential younger and more racially diverse voters unmotivated. Over the next year, it will become clear whether voters in the Democratic Presidential primaries will support an advocate of sweeping change like Sanders or Warren, a more ambiguous centrist, or a neoliberal restorationist like Biden. **C**

Universal Basic Income - panacea or snake oil?

Rory O'Kelly has his doubts on the benefits

The idea of a universal basic income (UBI), an unconditional regular payment made to everyone, is becoming increasingly popular on the left. This might seem surprising. However severe the obstacles facing people trying to claim current benefits there must surely be a solution which does not involve giving shedloads of public money to trustafarians and the trophy wives of oligarchs.

The UBI concept is however supported by an important perception. That is, that wealthy people already receive benefits through the tax system. The personal allowance in income tax has a cash value directly comparable to a social security benefit and in bringing this to light UBI proponents perform an important ser-

vice.

The idea behind UBI is more ambitious. There is however a fundamental flaw in the simple amalgamation of benefits and tax allowances which can be explained simply through the concept of a 'subsistence income'.

This can be defined as the amount of money which a person needs to live on. It should determine benefit levels, in that adequate benefits would bring everyone up to subsistence level. It would also determine tax allowances, in that income tax should never reduce people to below subsistence level. Taxable capacity is income in excess of subsistence.

Supposing therefore that subsistence level is set at £100 per week for each individual. This should be the basic benefit level

for people with no other income and the personal tax allowance should be £5,200 per annum.

If however this allowance is simply converted into a cash payment of equivalent value this value, given a 20% tax rate, will not be £5,200 but £1,040, or £20 a week. Conversely a payment of £100 per week will be equivalent to a tax allowance of £26,000 a year. This will be the income level at which what the person pays into the system equals what they get out.

Using real-life figures instead, the standard rate for benefits paid weekly is £73.10, which is too low. This is equivalent in value to a tax allowance of £19,006, which is much too high. Conversely the current personal tax allowance is

Continued on page 20 >>

BASIC INCOME

<<- continued from page 19

£12,500, which is too high. Converting this into a benefit produces a figure of £48.08 a week, which is much too low.

The present 20% tax rate is of course too low. Governments have come to dislike income tax because it is too simple and too progressive and it has been gradually displaced either by openly regressive alternatives (e.g. VAT, charges for services) or by strange fiscal devices which may be intended to be progressive but which are hopelessly complex and expensive to operate (e.g. student loans). Taking the income tax rate back to 25% or 30% would indeed reduce the problem with UBI but only a 100% income tax rate would eliminate it completely.

There are also major administrative problems with a universal basic income. A tax allowance system makes it possible to ignore a very large number of small and irregular incomes. UBI advocates claim that it would simplify the benefits system, which is true enough. It would however hugely complicate the income tax system. Sick or unemployed people who did occasional bits of work for cash and did not declare them would no longer be guilty of benefits fraud but they would all be guilty of tax evasion instead.

To summarise, a UBI would achieve neither of its objectives. If paid at any realistic level it would still have to be topped up by other benefits to provide a living income and for practical reasons some sort of tax allowance would have to continue alongside it.

There is a more fundamental objection for socialists. When one sees that a UBI is equivalent to a huge increase in the personal income tax allowance it follows that introducing it would virtually wipe out the income tax base. Obviously it could be replaced by other taxes, but why would we want this? Income tax is an excellent tax and we should use it more, not less. Proponents sometimes say that within a UBI system we could make income tax more progressive, with more bands leading to a higher top rate, but of course we could do this within the present system instead.

Finally, we should question how electorally popular a UBI would be. Many of our present problems arise from the fact that people seem to like tax allowances more than benefits, however described. The current policy of



Source: Getty

huge increases in personal tax allowances alongside a Child Benefit freeze has aroused virtually no criticism though the combined effect, a transfer of money from children to adults, is not one that anyone has ever advocated. Without challenging this attitude we would never be able to achieve a UBI but if we were able to challenge it successfully we would not need one.

At this point we may ask why so many people on the left are so attracted by the UBI concept. The simple answer seems to be that it is a response to the undoubted problems with the present benefit system. It is unnecessary to describe yet again how extraordinarily oppressive this system is or how it systematically generates poverty, fear and mental ill-health across an ever-increasing proportion of the population, in and out of work. Against this background it is easy to see how giving people an absolute and unconditional right to an income might seem attractive.

At earlier periods benefits were largely unconditional, with entitlement depending on showing that one fitted into a certain category rather than on doing anything specific. People too ill to work could receive Incapacity Benefit for as long as they were ill and it was largely accepted that unemployed people were responsible for getting themselves back into work. There were some sanctions for people who ostentatiously refused to do this but they were light and rarely applied.

It need hardly be said that none of this produced any adverse social or economic effects. The entire theory underlying the present approach, that significant numbers of people actually prefer to live on benefits rather than working and that it is therefore necessary to build the social security system around incentives to

work and punishments for not working, is delusional. It is also self-defeating. We have seen that withholding or reducing benefits to increase incentives to work fails not only because so many working people need to claim benefits but also because falling benefit levels tend to pull wages down behind them.

An incoming Labour Government could eliminate all the most abhorrent features of the present regime almost at the stroke of a pen simply by returning to something like the pre-1979 system. Getting away from means-testing, another objective of UBI, is a bigger task. Means tested benefits are complex and expensive to administer, always have take-up problems and are disliked both by those who claim them and those who pay for them. At the same time however the deep feeling that benefits should be paid to those who need them, not those who do not, cannot simply be ignored.

Again the answer lies in the past. The contributory principle embodied in the National Insurance fund means that people who are no longer working or able to work can draw money out as long as they have previously paid in, however rich they may be. This is something which most people would recognise as fair, within its context. Redistributing from rich to poor is a separate task; one for the tax system, not the benefit system.

This conclusion is actually quite a common finding when looking at many aspects of social policy. People who think long and hard about causes of the present housing crisis and possible solutions generally end up by inventing Council Housing. It is not surprising if those who think equally long and hard about the crisis in the Social Security system should end up by inventing National Insurance. **C**

For a more detailed analysis of the basis for conditionality in the benefit system, see Rory's Chartist e-book 'The Work Agenda' on www.chartist.org.uk.

Sexism at work still rife

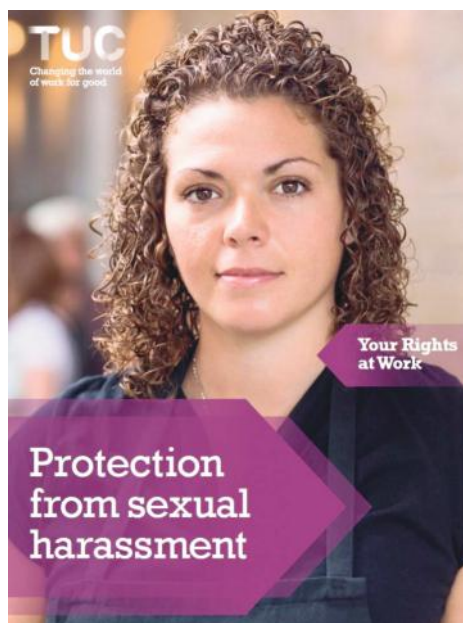
Alice Arkwright on a new report exposing widespread sexual harassment in the workplace

It will be two years in October since hundreds of thousands of people tweeted about their experiences of sexual harassment and abuse, sparking the MeToo movement which placed sexual harassment high on the public agenda. Whilst sexual harassment can happen anywhere, all too frequently it happens at work and, worryingly, many see it as an inevitable part of working life. The most recent development is a new phone line for women who have experienced sexual harassment at work to get specialist legal advice. Launched with the help of actor Emma Watson, it is the first service of its kind in the UK.

TUC research since 2016 has helped to highlight the prevalence of harassment. The report Still just a bit of banter showed that half of women have experienced some sort of sexual harassment at work. This is mirrored in a BBC poll, which showed that 50% of women compared to 20% of men had experienced sexual harassment at work. This can include sexual comments and questions, unwanted touching, seeing pornography at work, sexual assault and rape. The experiences of women at work reflects the violence against women that occurs across society because of imbalances of power, structural inequalities and sexism.

A report by the TUC this year also demonstrated shockingly high levels of sexual harassment amongst LGBT workers. The first research of its kind, showed that 70% of LGBT workers had experienced some form of sexual harassment at work, one in eight LGBT women had been seriously sexually assaulted or raped at work and over 40% of LGBT workers surveyed said that colleagues had made inappropriate comments about their sex life.

The frequency with which LGBT workers received verbal sexual harassment appears to be linked to societal sexualization of LGBT identities, leading people to think that it is acceptable to ask questions that they wouldn't of their heterosexual counterparts. I write this just after Toni Morrison died, who powerfully stated: "Oppressive language does



more than represent violence; it is violence", reminding everyone that the way we speak, the words we choose and the 'banter' we partake in are part of the fabric of discrimination faced by women, LGBT people and other groups.

Research into third party harassment also shows that sexual harassment is not just by col-

The TUC has been pushing for the government to introduce a statutory duty on employers to prevent sexual harassment at work and serious repercussions for those who don't

leagues, but clients, patients and customers that people come across every day at work.

Despite the prevalence, current laws put the onus on individuals to report incidents to their employer, but currently four out of five people who experience sexual harassment do not. There are multiple barriers to reporting including the fear that doing so would have a negative impact on relationships at work and be

detrimental to career progression. Additionally, many victims assume they would not be believed, are too embarrassed, think the perpetrator would go unpunished or simply don't know they are able to report this to their employer. For LGBT workers, there is the added fear that reporting will result in them being outed at work.

The TUC has been pushing for the government to introduce a statutory duty on employers to prevent sexual harassment at work and serious repercussions for those who don't. Under the duty, employers who fail to take reasonable steps to protect people would be in violation of the Equality Act, meaning the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) could take action.

Additionally, under the duty anyone who feels an employer is not doing enough to protect workers could report them to the EHRC, regardless of whether sexual harassment has taken place.

Employers can take clear actions including adopting a zero-tolerance approach to any form of harassment at work, mandatory training so people are aware of what sexual harassment is and what their rights are and introducing protections to keep lone workers or night workers safe.

As well as a new duty, any government, including a potential future Labour government, must reinstate funding for specialist services that support victims of harassment and violence and allow victims to report incidents to a regulator, removing many of the barriers that prevent people from speaking out. Time limits on issuing a tribunal claim should also be reviewed. Currently a claim needs to be started within three months of the incident of sexual harassment, a very small timeframe for people to act.

These are just some changes that would shift responsibility from individual to employer. The shocking reality is that sexual harassment at work is common and one example of the structural violence and inequalities that women and LGBT people face every day. A structural and legal change must be part of the solution. **C**



Alice Arkwright works for the TUC

FILM REVIEW

Departure Scrounge

Patrick Mulcahy
on
Tarantino's
60s
Hollywood
pastiche

For much of its running time, *Once Upon A Time ... in Hollywood* is something of a departure for its writer-director Quentin Tarantino. It is not a genre film in which Tarantino inverts certain elements. Rather it is a luxuriously-paced (read: somewhat slow) contemplation of the life of a once successful actor, Rick Dalton (Leonardo di Caprio), in his first film since winning the Best Actor Oscar for *The Revenant* who still has his mansion in the Hollywood Hills.

Tarantino pastiches the 1950s and 1960s television shows that he grew up with, but he does so straight – the film is set in February and August 1969 – as we watch Rick and his clean-shaven stunt double Cliff Booth (Brad Pitt) in various states of humiliation. The drama has a ticking clock, as Tarantino weaves in encounters with the disciples of Charles Manson, living on Spahn's stunt ranch that was once used to stage westerns. He builds to the evening in which four young people – one guy and three women – decide to kill everyone in a home occupied by film director Roman Polanski's very pregnant wife Sharon Tate (Margot Robbie) and some of her friends.

Rick's drinking (and a DUI ticket) means that he needs a designated driver – that's Cliff, who can't get work as a stuntman because of something in his past. Cliff takes instructions with good grace. He doesn't get above his station but has a confident masculinity – he is a more natural movie star than his employer. It is his actions that the audience is encouraged to cheer, first when the tyre of his boss' car is punctured with a knife. This becomes problematic because Tarantino uses him (and Pitt's charisma) to justify violence against women.

The long recreations of scenes from (mostly) westerns show how Tarantino is utterly seduced by the factory-farm genre films and television shows of the 1960s.

In as far as the film is revisionist – at least before the ending – it shows Cliff taking on the hyper-confident martial arts advisor,

Bruce Lee (Mike Moh). You think Cliff doesn't have a chance. The scene is played for a single laugh – the owner of a car (Zoe Bell, Tarantino's regular stunt coordinator) explodes with rage at the damage caused. However, it shows this fallen hero's high level of competence.

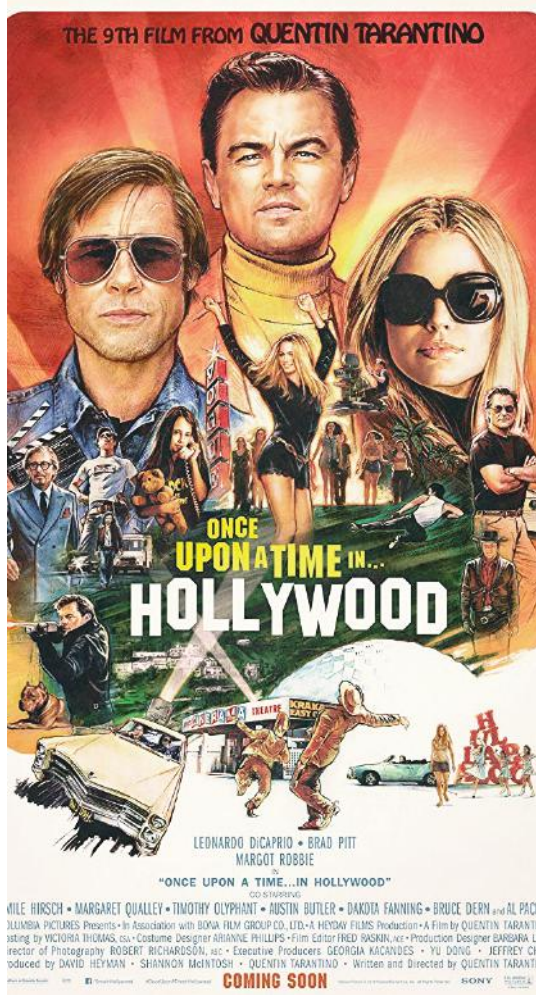
Contrast this with scenes involving Sharon Tate, as she goes to a party and visits the

Sharon buys Roman a first edition copy of Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, illustrates the sunny actress sleepwalking to her death.

Revisionism is Tarantino's thing – it is what Hollywood movies do, providing happy endings where there are none in real life. Not only does he insert di Caprio/Rick into a well-known Hollywood classic, he provides his own violent-comic spin on the events of 9 August. In his own mind, he is doing this to prove a point – that movies are harmless. He shows the attackers psyching themselves up by saying that 'most television shows and films are about murder. Let's take revenge on those who taught us to kill'. The line is so on-the-nose that you can't believe that Tarantino is so open about his intention. But films and television shows are used for social conditioning. Even the crappy programmes that Tarantino re-creates are designed to show human actions divided between good and evil, that there is no moral ambiguity.

What comes across most is that Tarantino hates hippies, those who assume a position of moral righteousness and steal from those who have more than them. Yet that is exactly what Tarantino does, pilfering throughout his work music and scenes from other movies. Normally, he makes something that connects with an audience. Here, aside from a set piece of brutal misogynist comedy, he induces yawns – an audience member behind me made his response known. Tarantino is as nasty as the people he establishes as the villains, but the surprise is that he brings the audience to life without irony when he does this. The post-set piece exchange is the only one that drew steady laughter, providing Tarantino with a sense that he has done okay. To get there, we suffer Tarantino's shallow aestheticism and a nasty punch line.

'Once Upon A Time ... in Hollywood' is on release



Bruce Lee in *Westwood* to sit in on a screening of *The Wrecking Crew*, an equally laboured caper she made with Dean Martin, whose disinterest is written in his drink-addled face. The sense of pathos is cranked up to eleven as Sharon watches her film get laughs and her action scene merit a cheer – Tarantino intercuts it with Robbie as Sharon training with Moh as Bruce Lee. Tarantino relies on the audience knowing that Tate and her friends were brutally murdered in the early morning of August 9th. Every scene, even one where

A shape-shifting ghostly creed

Glyn Ford
on the
impact of
Chinese
Marxism

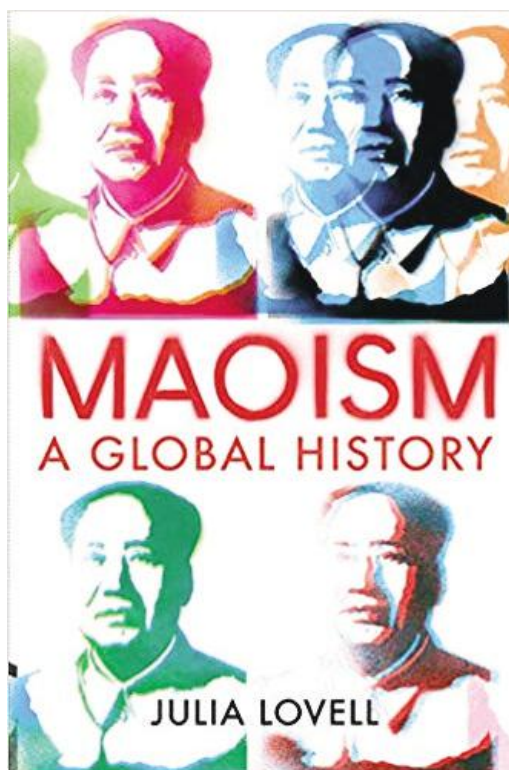
Maoism; A Global History
Julia Lovell
Bodley Head £30.00

Despite Chinese amnesia and Western disdain, Maoism's impact on history has been global and persistent. Even as China's people starved and suffered in their millions during the depredations of the Great Leap Forward and the havoc, with the Red Guards running amok, of the Cultural Revolution the Party was spending hundreds of millions of Euros selling Maoism and gifting training and weapons to all those that bought it and were prepared to march to the Chairman's tune. Interference in the politics of third countries was the order of the day and the Party's International Liaison Department the vehicle.

Timing was opportune. The late fifties and sixties and the death of European colonialism saw emerging indigenous elites searching for new rules of the road to guide them to power and their new countries forward. The Soviet model was incongruent: urban, workerist and underpinned by heavy industry. China and Mao, in contrast, chimed with their peasant economies with cities as islands adrift in their midst encircled by the countryside. State capture was to be rooted there. Neither Washington, nor Moscow. Beijing was the Third Way. All this was predicated on the nationalisation of Marxist-Leninism. Here Stalin had led the way, but Mao was a fast learner and rapidly surpassed his mentor.

Maoism went global. It had its 'rice Christians', only in it for the ordnance but most bought the whole parcel. The USSR was left with the crumbs: Angola, Afghanistan and Ethiopia, while China made away with almost the whole of the revolutionary cake. Lovell has chapters on Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia, Africa, Peru, India, Nepal, and the United States and Western Europe. She paints a bleak picture. The results were at best mixed and at times even tragic. Without China's early and massive material help Ho Chi Minh's revolution might well have

gone the way of Chin Peng's against the British 'emergency' in Malaya. No good deed goes unpunished. Hanoi resented that they were denied total victory in Geneva in 1954 in exchange for Zhou Enlai's honing his diplomatic skills. Within four years of the civil war finally drawing to a close in 1975, Hanoi invaded Cambodia and Beijing retaliated (unsuccessfully) by attacking Vietnam. Leaving Beijing and Washington washed up together on a sordid political beachhead propping up the remnants of Pol Pot and his Khmer Rouge.



In Indonesia a bungled attempt in 1965 by the leadership of the Indonesian Communist Party, intoxicated by Mao's militant rhetoric and addiction to violence, led them to assassinate a group of seven hostile Generals. This precipitated a bloodbath where in six months a million men, women and children were brutally slaughtered in the name of anti-communism. The descendants of those who survived are still bereft of their full civil rights half a century on. In the case of Peru, the butchery balanced. The 70,000 mainly poor Quechua speaking peasants who died in Shining Path's insurrection had an even chance of dying at the hands of the state's 'death squads' or the

acolytes of Abimael Guzman.

Nepal was possibly Maoism's greatest success outside of China. Its late flowering in 2008 led Beijing to sharply distance itself when Nepal's Maoists finally came to power through the ballot box having abandoned the bullet, but not in time to avoid thousands dying on both sides. Of the ongoing struggles 'Maoism' shows empathy for India's 'Naxalites' fighting together with the 'untouchables' and the most vulnerable and exploited group in Indian society the 'tribals' or Adivasis. Initially their struggle was against the violence and rapine of officialdom. This transferred to the multinationals as they began the exploitation of natural resources around and under the Adivasis homelands in West Bengal. It continues.

The weakest section of the book is Maoism in the West. Germany and Italy's 'Red Brigades' borrowed from Mao as did the Black Panthers - there are men of colour approaching their fifties answering to the name of 'Mao' - and the Weathermen, but Lovell at times gets sidetracked by the farcical cults like London's six strong Workers' Institute of Marxist-Leninist-Mao Zedong Thought whose leader ended up in 2015 in prison for false imprisonment and sexual assault. She has nothing to say about the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), who split from the Stalinist Communist Party of Great Britain, and was led by

Reg Birch from the Party's Executive Committee and who was subsequently elected and spent four years on the General Council of the Trade Union Congress in the late seventies.

Nevertheless, Lovell has produced a remarkable tome - 606 pages - that will underpin the further shores of Maoist studies for the future. It's a ghostly creed that shape-shifts as she says to fit 'winners and insiders, losers and outsiders, leaders and underdogs, absolute rulers, vast bureaucracies and the oppressed masses'. Now Beijing is again turning 'Mao-ish' - Lovell's term - it is important to pay attention. After all the ripples from its first incarnation are still with us.

BOOK REVIEWS

Capitalism: The journey from ethical system to vampire squid

Don Flynn
on two
takes on
modern
casino
capital

The Future of Capitalism: Facing the New Anxieties

Paul Collier

Allen Lane £20

Darkness by Design: The hidden power in global capital markets

Walter Mattli, Princeton, £24

The Oxford economist, Paul Collier, has felt the need to revitalise the revisionist cause with a book that takes its cue from Anthony Crosland's 1950s opus. But where the old Labourite had envisioned a future for his version of socialism, his acolyte admits that what he is really looking forward to is a future for capitalism.

His new book asks us to accept that this system has done a remarkable job in creating wealth and raising the living standards of those lucky enough to live in its heartland countries. But he sees it as having gone wrong in recent times and is now dominated by a drive and an ethic which is bent on rent-seeking activity, grabbing monopoly control of an asset, and milking it for all value that can be extracted. Sad to say, but the famous image of modern capitalism as a vampire squid, forcing its feeding tube down the throat of society to suck nutrition out the system, isn't a half-way bad analogy for the way things have turned out.

How does this happen? The myth of a golden age of 'ethical' capitalism is invoked in which firms worked hard to produce the goods and services which everyone needs, working happily with government to make sure the resources were available to educate, house and care for the health of their workforces, and generally get along with everyone. At some point a serpent appeared in this Garden of Eden and things have been going to hell in a handcart ever since.

Actually, there were two snakes involved – one named utilitarianism, and the other, human rights culture. The first worked to undermine the morality of communitarian capitalism by detaching rationality from our instinctive value systems. It ignored the role of reward that came from winning the esteem of one's fellow citizens. This in turn cemented self-interested individuals into

their places in coherent communities. Utilitarianism disregarded the affective dimension of human existence and presumed that social good emerged as an accidental by-product of individuals pursuing their selfish interests. Human rights culture added to the corruption of what had once been an ethical and communal system by offering strategies to alleviate suffering based on providing citizens with legal routes to obtaining individual redress.

The prospect of collective activity based on solidarity between people was expunged from the social scheme. Utilitarianism and human rights culture, when added together, had the effect of turbocharging the rampant individualism which marked capitalism's fall from grace. The malign work led to a further round of changes to the structures of the market and institutions of government, eventually dragging down the ethical state and ethical firm, also doing damage to the ethical family and the individuals it produced.

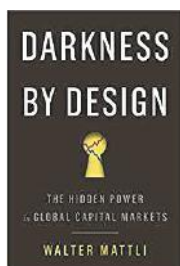
As people ceased to care about each other divisions opened up which changed the character of neighbourhoods and communities (Collier sees the work of selfish immigrants here), separated cities and regions, wrecked capacity to provide basic housing, as well as undermining the social obligation to provide 'rescue' to people who genuinely merited it (refugees get a positive look-in at this point). With such an analysis of the reasons for our fall from grace Collier believes he can deduce a route to salvation. Utilitarianism and human rights culture are not intrinsic to capitalism. A strong dose of pragmatic politics married to the ethics of communitarianism can, even yet, bring the system back onto its true course. What this might look like is revealed in the second half of the book, which reads like an anthology of recent Fabian pamphlets dealing with issues like taxation policy, education and security in retirement. This he thinks would get social democracy back on track and return capitalism to the sort of tamed beast he imagines it once was.

The objection to Collier's perspective is the standard one of

how he managed to so completely invert cause and effect. In seeing the changes which marked the corporate state capitalism of the post-war decades transformed into the uber predatory beast that exists today as coming about because of a shift in systems of ideas seems exceedingly naïve. It is far better to understand the neo-utilitarian ascendancy of Friedman and Hayek and Rawlsian social contract theory as an event which came about because the post-war settlement had become unpicked by profound changes to the way markets stood in relation to national states as the drive towards a fresh period of globalisation took hold of the capitalist system.

Collier's account can be usefully contrasted with the exploration of the changes that took place in one corner of capitalism over the same period, provided by Walter Mattli in his book, *Darkness by Design*. The real spirit and driving force of capitalism is shown up on the trading floors of stock markets with more acuity than anything found in the works of the various ideologues. What Mattli shows in his study of the New York Stock Exchange is that, prior to 1970, it is quite possible to believe that capitalists did behave with a degree of honour and regard for the public good in the way they conducted business.

Securities were traded in a transparent public market place, with brokers bound together in a mutual association which made underhand behaviour a severe reputational risk, not to mention costly. The old ways were not eclipsed because utilitarians and human rights lawyers snuck up on the brokers to demand they change their values. It was rather the disembodied logic of capital accumulation which did the deed, asserting pressure for change because the old markets were running short on the liquidity needed to grow their markets. The cash they needed was locked up in the big banks which had historically been barred from participating in the security exchanges. In the 1970s the barriers to their participation began to come down. Once admitted as member organisations, their sheer size and the vast resources they could draw on



edged the small, traditional broker partnerships out the way.

So why couldn't these newcomers to the trading floor carry on with the same ethical standards that had been upheld by the specialist brokers who had policed the old system? Mattli explains that they brought with them a practice of off-floor trading which made use of the large pools of clients already on their books as customers. Without having to pay scrupulous heed to the 'discovered' price of securities being traded in the open markets, the banks worked through 'dark pools' to manufacture deals which more directly served their own interests.

Markets thus became fragmented and devoid of the forms of transparent oversight which were supposed to keep them honest. From there the whole sorry story of predatory financialised capitalism takes over. The quest of self-

serving advantage threw up the whole gamut of special order trading which moved deals out of the queues the old system had confined them to and gave critical advantage in deal making to the operators who had high volumes of trade and more control in determining price structures. The rapacious appetite of the trader seeking short-term profits displaced investors who looked for securities which could be expected to grow in value over longer periods of time. Prices were manipulated through quote stuffing strategies which worked to the advantage of the banks but exacted a price from investors.

How can the utilitarian philosopher or the jobbing human rights lawyer be blamed for any of this? It is more accurate to understand their role as ideologues who were dragged along in the tow of changes to capitalism that worked at the more fundamental level of

markets and the power of business hierarchies. This is not a predicament which will be remedied by Collier's mix of Fabian enthusiasm for 'pragmatic policies' and nostalgia for the time when we all lived in tight-knit communities in which people looked out for one another.

The appeal for more ethical behaviour recalls the admonishment of another great socialist, RH Tawney, who also rooted his work in an obligation of people to behave better towards one another. But Tawney had less illusion in the merit of the capitalist system than Collier. "You can peel an onion layer by layer, but you can't skin a live tiger claw by claw," he famously opined. Capitalism is a tiger and it will not be rendered passive and useful by bit-by-bit pragmatism. If it not to be permitted to skin us all it will need to be put in a cage and permanently subdued.

African Emperor

**Duncan
Bowie**
on Ethiopia

King of Kings
Asfa-Wossen Asserate
Haus £12.99

This is the first comprehensive biography of Haile Selassie, emperor of Ethiopia, by an Ethiopian.

Asserate is a close relative of Selassie, in fact a 'prince of the Imperial house', a student in Germany at the time of the 1974 revolution, in which his father was executed, and subsequently in exile. The book was written in German before being translated into English. The biography is therefore somewhat partisan. Though evidence based and not hagiographical, it is largely uncritical of Selassie's rule, published intentionally as a riposte to Ryszard Kapuscinski's highly critical journalistic 1978 biography *The Emperor*, which was subtitled *Downfall of an Autocrat*.

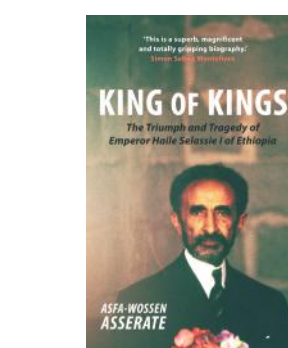
Asserate seeks to present Selassie as a moderniser, though this is not convincing, given Selassie, even in his final years, saw himself as a descendant of King Solomon as autocrat by divine right. While Selassie modernised what had been a feudal society through developing the physical infrastructure of what had been a largely primitive rural society, he maintained the medieval feudal governance structure, which included a central role

for both the church and the 'princes of the Royal blood'.

Asserate's narrative focuses on the rivalries between the imperial family. Selassie, as Ras Tafari, had to fight both for his role as regent and then for the Imperial crown, before writing into the constitution that only his own direct descendants could succeed him. The challenges from rival princes who often controlled large provinces within the ethnically divided country, were perhaps greater than the challenges of imperial powers including that of Mussolini, whose army successfully invaded the country in 1935. Mussolini was in fact supported by several of Selassie's rival princes.

It was the British who restored Selassie to power in 1941 through military force. The left in Britain was divided over whether Selassie should be supported as despite their anti-fascist stance, supporting one despot against another was seen as a somewhat questionable crusade. Nevertheless the failure of the League of Nations to intervene to support an independent African state (Liberia, in effect an American colony and the Boer occupied South Africa being the only two other 'independent' African states) was rightly seen as the end of international governance.

While Asserate recognises the weakening of Selassie's authority



in his final years, there is little sympathy with the revolutionaries of 1974 and their case for replacing feudal government by more democratic forms, perhaps not surprisingly given the revolutionaries turned quickly to extreme violence and a new form of despotism under Mengistu. More could perhaps have been made of Selassie's role in international politics, his pan-Africanism and his sponsorship of the Organisation of African States – Asserate focuses more on the narrative of Selassie's international travel rather than on the politics of his diplomacy. Nevertheless, this biography is a useful study of a significant African statesman. I would however suggest that those interested in Ethiopian history would get a better perspective from reading *Bahru Zewde's 1991 History of Ethiopia*, which rather strangely is not included in Asserate's bibliography.

BOOK REVIEWS

EU - from rules to ruling

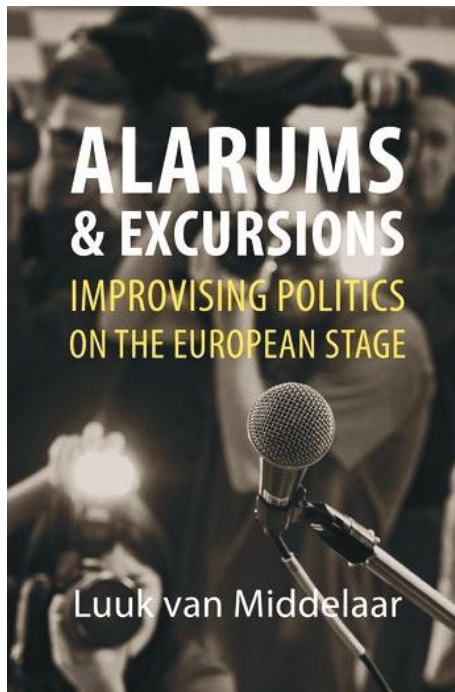
Peter Kenyon
on a
political
transformation

Alarums & Excursions: Improvising Politics On The European Stage
Luuk van Middelaar
Agenda Publishing £25

When I saw this book referred to as "Quite simply the most insightful book on Europe's politics today" by the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, I immediately sought a copy. The author Luuk van Middelaar who worked for Tusk's predecessor, Herman Van Rompuy, the first President of the European Council, offers vivid accounts of the crises that have marked the transition of the European institutions over the past six decades from rule-making to ruling in responses to events.

Referencing back over 400 years to an expression in Elizabethan stage direction for the title adds piquancy to his sharing of insights into this new power house of the European Union. We hapless Britons are being dragged off-stage by groundlings mindful of the developing plot that might stymie their selfish, greedy lusts. (My words not the author's.) If we Britons manage to wriggle free from Brexit and retake our place on the European stage then van Middelaar's book is a must read. As the author states in his Prologue: "The old Europe of a market and mania for rules encountered indifference or mild

ridicule from its population...(remember straight bananas?) ...the new Europe of currency, power and borders sets loose larger public forces and counterforces...in this new Europe, decisions are taken that are no



longer based on treaties or expertise but instead are a joint response to the needs of the moment, born out of a clash of opinions....and have to be fought out on an open public stage."

In Part 1, Acts and Scenes, he

takes the major crises facing Europe over the past ten years – the Euro, Ukraine, refugees, Brexit/Trump – to highlight the remarkable transformation of institutions designed to regulate trade and agriculture. The most significant being the emergence of the European Council of heads of government with its own convenor elected for five years, not to be confused with the Council of Ministers – a forum chaired on six-month rotation by a member state. Part 2 reflects on the two major historical events that led to the creation of the Union today – the end of the Second World War in 1945 and the Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the battle of ideas between the federalists and the pragmatists.

The emergence of the European Council is proving an institutional stop (repeat stop) to the creation of a United States of Europe. "We have to make do with national governments, parliaments and identities," Middelaar concludes. It is the European Commission and the European Parliament that have to adapt to that reality. Today's agenda is events-politics driven. Recognising that is critical to the resolution of government and opposition. The epilogue summarises how these issues might be addressed, critical to Europe's new politics will be a new openness.

Suffragette, socialist, rebel councillor

Duncan Bowie
on an
inspirational
story Minnie
Lansbury
Janine
Booth Five
Leaves
£12.99

Minnie Lansbury: Suffragette, Socialist, Rebel Councillor
Five Leaves £12.99

We need more studies of local socialist history. Janine Booth has already written a book on the rebel Poplar councillors of 1919-25. This new book is a study of Minnie Lansbury, one of the rebels – an appointed alderman rather than an elected councillor (the term alderwoman was not in use). Minnie was born Minnie Glassman and grew up in Poplar in the Jewish community. A teacher, she became an active suffragette working closely with Sylvia Pankhurst and Charlotte

Despard in the Women's Suffrage Federation/Workers Suffrage Federation before and during the First World War.

In 1914, she married Edgar Lansbury, one of the sons of the Labour leader, George Lansbury. Joining the Communist Party with her husband on its foundation in 1920, she nevertheless continued to be active in the Labour party, as at the time communists were not excluded. When Labour won control of Poplar council in 1919, Minnie was appointed an alderman together with Susan Lawrence (formerly a Conservative and later a Labour MP), John Scurr, who also became a Labour MP and Robert

Hopwood. George Lansbury was elected Mayor.

The book gives lots of detail on Minnie Lansbury's suffragette activity, much of which parallels Sylvia Pankhurst's own memoir of the Home Front (1932). The WSF in effect ran a welfare service for East Enders throughout the war, including a mother and baby clinic, a free milk distribution centre and a day nursery known as the 'Mothers Arms', converted from a pub called the Gunmakers Arms.

Booth also recounts the activities of the councillors to maintain welfare services in the post-war period, including building the first council houses on the Isle of Dogs.

During the war, Minnie had been actively involved in a League of Rights for Soldiers and Sailors Wives and relatives. On the council Minnie was a member of the public health committee which took over the running of the infant welfare clinic and the TB care committee. With the Council's revolt against the inequitable rating system, Minnie and 30 other council members were imprisoned for refusing to raise the rate for the London County Council. The story of the revolt has been told several times before, but Booth adds to the narrative, recounting the experience of Minnie and her women colleagues in Holloway prison, joining their male colleagues for meetings of the Council held in the boardroom of Brixton prison. Minnie however herself caught influenza in December 1921 and died on New Year's day, only 32 and only 21 months into her six year term as

alderman.

Booth's biography is told with the passion of a political activist. It is also well researched. It demonstrates not only the commitment of Minnie Lansbury and her colleagues to improving the lives of the working people of Poplar, but also points to the breadth of support among the Poplar residents for their political struggle, which at times even won the support of some of the moderate conservative councillors. The Poplar councillors had at least a partial victory as changes were made to the local government funding system in their favour. There is a lesson here for current left councillors or other advocates of rebellion and deficit budgeting – make sure you have popular support. It should act as a reminder to the current Labour leadership – if you want a local welfare state, you have to work out a way to fund it. History is relevant and we have to learn from the past.

Minnie Lansbury

Suffragette, Socialist,
Rebel Councillor



Janine Booth

Frustrating on anti-colonialism

Duncan Bowie on Pan-Africanists in London

Kwame Nkrumah and the Dawn of the Cold War
Marika Sherwood
Pluto £25

Marika Sherwood is the doyenne of British pan-African studies. Her previous works include a 2011 book on the Origins of Pan-Africanism, a 1996 study of Nkrumah's Years Abroad, and a study with Hakim Adi of the 1945 Manchester Pan African Congress, published in 1995. Born in Hungary, Sherwood has been based in Britain since 1965. Now over 80, she is attached to the Institute of Commonwealth Studies at London University. Studies by younger academics often refer to Sherwood as a key informant. This new volume focuses on Nkrumah's time in London at the West African Secretariat between 1945 and 1948. However, only two short chapters actually focus on this initiative. Nkrumah himself returned to Ghana in November 1947 to establish the United Gold Coast Convention which collapsed the following year.

The book is frustrating for a number of reasons. Firstly, much of the book reads as a series of unedited and often loosely connected notes, which seek to provide contextual information as to global politics in the wartime and immediate post war period. Another chapter summarises pan-

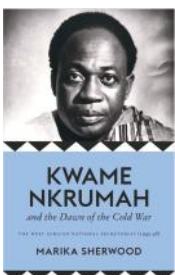
African initiatives before 1945, whereas a further chapter seeks to provide a brief overview of political developments in the Gold Coast and Nigeria (and francophone West Africa which gets two pages) between 1945 and 1948.

What is a little unusual is that at the beginning of some chapters, there is an acknowledgement in italics that the author was unable to access some key sources (whether for reasons of logistics or restricted access). Also frustrating was that in the chapters on the Nkrumah's time in London, the book refers to more detail being provided either in Nkrumah's 1957 autobiography or in Sherwood's earlier study, both of which are now rare.

The justification for writing the new book would appear to be the availability of British and American intelligence sources. The basic narrative of the book is that after the end of the war, Nkrumah in London tried to initiate a campaign for a federation of British and French West African colonies. The French colonial leaders such as Houphouët-Boigny in the Ivory Coast and Apithy in Dahomey (now Benin) were not interested, and most of the nationalist leaders in the Gold Coast, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, despite their pan-Africanism, were focusing on winning political power in their own colonies, as Nkrumah himself was

to do on his return to the Gold Coast.

Sherwood's main purpose in writing the new book is to focus on the surveillance of Nkrumah and his colleagues, using the argument that this was part of a US/UK conspiracy to curtail the growth of communism in Africa in this period of the early Cold War. Nkrumah was therefore tarred as a communist, which is perhaps unsurprising given the strength of Nkrumah's communist links. It would perhaps have been more interesting if the book had included more information on Nkrumah's links with the Communist Party, the Labour Party and organisations such as the Fabian Colonial Bureau and Brockway's Centre against imperialism and the approach of Colonial secretary Arthur Creech Jones to de-colonisation. This would have made the book comparable with Sherwood's earlier work and would have supplemented recent studies by younger academics such as Marc Matera's 2015 *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization*, Leslie James 2015 study of *George Padmore and Decolonization from Below* and Jonathan Derrick's 2008 *Black Agitators: Militant Anti-colonialism in Africa and the West*, previously reviewed in *Chartist*.



BOOK REVIEWS

Gossiping about Jeremy

**Duncan
Bowie** on a
hatchet job

**Dangerous Hero Corbyn's Ruthless
Plot for Power**
**Tom Bower William
Collins £20**

Bower is known for his hatchet job biographies. His previous 'victims' include Robert Maxwell (twice), Mohammed Fayed, Richard Branson (twice), Conrad Black, Bernie Ecclestone, Prince Charles, Geoffrey Robinson, Gordon Brown and Tony Blair. Bower uses his material selectively and every page shows not just that he is partisan but that his whole objective is to mock and discredit his subject. It would be tempting for another biographer to give Bower the same treatment. The book is largely a mixture of title-tattle and a biased interpretation of reported facts, often taken from partisan newspapers. Some of his sources will no doubt be surprised that their anecdotes are included in the book as facts. The book is unreferenced and many of the apparent sources are anonymous. In his acknowledgments, Bower thanks his lawyers, though given he has repeated the old 'canards' about Michael Foot and Jack Jones being Russian agents, his lawyers' main advice seems to be that you can slander the dead as dead people cannot sue you. Bower would have benefited however from employing fact checkers - the book is riddled with errors - for example Cat Smith appears in the book and index as Cat Stevens! There are references to Momentum's role in running Corbyn's first leadership campaign, ignoring the fact that Momentum was only established after Corbyn became leader. Boris Kagarlitsky, the Russian sociologist and Marxist theoretician is referred to as a Putin spokesman. Bower refers to Kate Hudson as being 'at the heart of Momentum', clearly confusing the organisation with CND.

What is perhaps most surprising about the book is how many of Corbyn's friends, relatives (including both former wives) and (former) political allies have provided Bower with gossip. Perhaps for the politically disappointed, jealous of Corbyn's current fame, the opportunity to be quoted in a biography was too great to resist. We now know more than we did about the internecine factional

struggles in the Hornsey Labour Party, the Haringey council Labour group and the London Labour Party in the late 1970's and early 1980's - Corbyn was not apparently the nice softy we now know, but neither were some of his rivals. Corbyn was also a bit scruffy, bearded and obsessed with political machinations and lacking much of a life outside politics, but perhaps he was not the only one.

One of the major faults of the book is that Bower uses the terms communist, Marxist and Trotskyite (applied to Corbyn and most of his associates) without any distinction. Social democrats are referred to as 'moderates'. Given Corbyn is shown as completely lacking in any knowledge of political history or theory, this is both lazy and inappropriate. It is revealing that Corbyn not only had a very poor academic record, but has read very little of anything. He is basically a romantic, supporting the underdog against an autocratic state (except where the autocratic state defines itself as 'socialist'). Corbyn is seen as principled and consistent, not having changed his basic views in 50 years, rather than pragmatic - pragmatism seen as compromising and therefore bad. To Corbyn, the world is binary. You are either a friend or an enemy and your enemy's enemy is your friend. You are either for him or against. Real politics is however not that simple.

This is why Corbyn is so dependent on his advisors, most of whom have no tradition within the Labour Party, but who are much brighter than he is. Without them Corbyn would be both incoherent and indecisive when it came to real political choices. Not only has Corbyn no experience of actually running anything. His time as a Haringey councillor he saw in a campaigning role while in his dual role as a trade union official, representing council employees, involved no governing function). He is clearly not well informed about economics, thus his dependence on John McDonnell. The later chapters of the book which examine Corbyn's relationship with his advisors, trade unions and Labour MPs are much more important than the anecdotes of previous chapters. They show how Corbyn relies on Seamus

Milne and to a lesser extent on Andrew Murray and Karie Murphy, who not only tell Corbyn what to think and say but also believe that it is their role to give the policy line to shadow cabinet members. It is not surprising that many left shadow cabinet members won't take this.

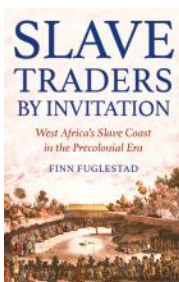
Bower's book probably does not tell us anything we did not know, and contains much that we did not need to know (some of which is factually questionable or exaggerated anyway).

At the heart of the story we do however have a major problem. However much we might see Corbyn as both left wing and principled, it is his naivety and dependence on his advisory clique whose vision of socialism is autocratic not libertarian socialist and whose means to power is not democratic, which has serious negative consequences. This means that Corbyn, however much he may be a cult hero to some, is dangerous, not so much to the future security or economic success of the country (whether within or outside the EU), but to the socialist project and the role of the Labour party within it. We have to return to a collectivist, social democratic and libertarian party leadership. This is not so much an issue of whether or not Corbyn is replaced as party leader (and if so, by whom) as to the need to have a more pluralist and empowered leadership which allows the shadow cabinet to fulfil their functions and to replace Milne, Murray and Murphy and their acolytes by advisors who are as intelligent and well informed but who actually share socialist values.



Studying the Slave Trade

Nigel Watt
on the
anthropology
of slavery



Slave Traders by Invitation
Finn Fuglestad
Hurst £55

Travelling through Africa in 1971 my wife and I stopped for the night in the little town of Ouidah, made better known through Bruce Chatwin's book *The Viceroy of Ouidah* and the film *Cobra Verde*. It was for a time the hub of the horrific export trade and the centre of the so-called Slave Coast (to the east of the Ivory Coast and the Gold Coast. These labels say a lot about the reasons European traders were there!) A more inconvenient port you could not imagine as the town was separated from the sea by a number of lagoons and at sea several sand bars meant the ships had to anchor some distance from the beach. Surf boats rowed by crews from the Gold Coast (Ghana) were used to ship the cargo, human and otherwise. Sleepy though it is, it is still a fascinating place to visit, a centre of voodoo with a temple of sacred

pythons.

This book is a fairly academic study of the anthropology and history of this coastal area – and it is a complex history of rival kingdoms and their interaction with slave traders who each built their own forts in the town, British, French – and Luso-Brazilians who actually sold what the Africans wanted, tobacco and gold. A lonely Portuguese fort survived until 1960 and is now The Ouidah Museum of History recording in detail the strong links with Brazil. The Europeans on the coast – who also included the Dutch and, on the Gold Coast, the Danes – were constantly quarrelling and the African traders could play them off against each other.

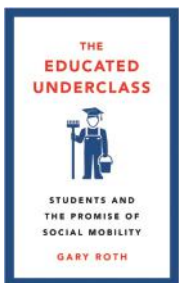
The most notable historical development was the growth of the autocratic and ruthless kingdom of Dahomey which early in the 18th century came to dominate most of the region and captured Ouidah. Dahomey was in theory a vassal state of the large empire of Oyo, in what is now

south-western Nigeria. In its final phase and as a result of Britain changing from slave trader to anti-trade policeman, Porto Novo had replaced Ouidah as the principal entrepot and Dahomey retained the monopoly of the slave trade on this part of the coast until the trade finally ended in the 1850s. The French defeated the kingdom in 1894 naming their colony Dahomey (it's now Benin) with Porto-Novo as its capital. Britain annexed the former slave port of Lagos in 1861 and the region that had been Oyo was finally absorbed into British Nigeria in 1885.

The title of the book indicates correctly that African traders were willing sellers and capable of cynical cruelty, though nothing compared with the inhuman conditions which began as soon as the slaves embarked at Ouidah and worsened as the ships crossed the Atlantic. But in fact, in spite of its name, the Slave Coast was not the only source of slaves on the coast of western Africa.

The bleeding obvious

Dave Lister
on
American
Higher
Education



The Educated Underclass
Gary Roth
Pluto Press £14.99

There is some repetition and some restatement of the “bleeding obvious” in this book but there are also some useful insights into the relationship between higher education and class in the United States, with clear parallels to the British experience. Roth explains how higher education greatly expanded in the 1960s and 70s, allowing many more working-class and ethnic minority students to enter the system than ever before. Education became mass education. The great majority found jobs even as a significant portion of the working-class were losing theirs.

However, by the 1990s, the previously optimistic view that a college degree would lead to upward mobility became less and less the case. Roth traces the development of what he calls the ‘underemployed’, whereby graduates take on jobs which do not require

degrees. Thus, increasing numbers become baristas, waiters, victims of the ‘gig economy’ etc. and 40% of graduates are now working in jobs that do not require a college education.

There is clearly a bipartite system in American higher education: two-year community colleges, which offer vocational courses, and four-year universities. However, there is also an underlying stratification in the latter group between the more selective, high achieving colleges and those which are less successful (c.f. the Russell Group of British universities). It is not surprising to learn that there is a definite correlation between having wealthy parents and winning a place at the more prestigious institutions. A New York Times columnist is quoted as saying that “higher education, once seen as the nation’s great leveller, has become a guardian of class divisions and privileges in America”. There is further information on tuition fees, which are expensive generally, although student loans

are available. Unlike in Britain, as a rule the more selective the institution, the higher the tuition fee.

This book is at least as much about class as it is about education. In relation to the future, Roth does not foresee much change in the gloomy picture that he presents. Changes in the US economy and the nature of employment will create even less graduate-appropriate jobs than there are at present. He concludes that capitalism creates more intelligence than it can use.

Travelling on the London Underground you can identify where some of our graduates end up. The more financially fortunate are driving the trains. The less fortunate are urging us to ‘mind the gap’. My generation, the 60s generation, at least in the middle-class, tended to assume that we would go to university and did not doubt that there would be suitable employment to follow. Contrary to the views of such as the Webbs, things do not always change for the better.

BOOK REVIEWS

Cooperation and prejudice in East London

Mike Davis

on a legacy of inter-communal action

Socialism and the Diasporic 'other'
Daniel Renshaw
 Liverpool University Press £85

This is a very thorough study of radical Irish Catholic and Jewish migrants in East London between 1889 and 1912 and their wider relationships with socialist organisations. Renshaw compares the experiences of both communities finding the common ground and differences at work, at worship, in political organisation and at school.

With its huge docks East London has for centuries been a melting pot of migrant communities fleeing poverty and oppression from Europe and more recently the Indian sub-continent and Africa.

Current controversies about antisemitism and Islamophobia find echoes in the reactions and attitudes of the emerging socialist and trade union movements of yesterday. It is no surprise that right wing politicians, employers and the media promote fear and suspicion of the other. Divide and rule has a long tradition. This book reminds us that such sentiments can also infect socialists and trade unionists as well.

Both the Social Democratic Federation and Independent Labour Party and Fabians harboured members who replayed antisemitic tropes. Most notorious was SDF leader Henry Hyndman who regularly inveighed against 'Jewish bankers'. During the Boer War his invective reached a point where prominent Jewish member Theodore Rothstein and other leading figures like Ernest Belfort Bax responded forcefully, declaring certain statements 'a disgrace to our movement'. Hyndman had to resign his editorship of Justice the SDF newspaper for a time. Renshaw discusses in some detail 'the prevalence of antisemitism in language and attitudes' and the responses.

Robert Blatchford, author of best-selling Merrie England and editor of the popular Clarion newspaper trod a fine line attacking Jewish employers and communal leaders for their pro capitalism rather than their Jewish

identity. During the Dreyfus trial in France Blatchford could be seen as crossing the line when writing that the persecution of the Jewish Dreyfus could 'in part be motivated by the action of 'rich Jews' themselves'.

Many more examples of positive socialist action are provided. When the German anti-Semite Herr Stocker attempted a speaking tour in 1883, constant barracking and protests at initial meetings led to the abandonment of the whole tour.

Renshaw acknowledges that the British socialist movement condemned and acted against the outright antisemitism expressed by the Black Hundreds, the avowed racists of the British Brothers League and the right wing of the Conservative Party.



SOCIALISM AND THE DIASPORIC 'OTHER'

A comparative study of Irish Catholic and Jewish radical and communal politics in East London, 1889-1912

DANIEL RENSHAW

However, he identifies a strand of prejudice in the anti-colonial rhetoric of the SDF, Socialist League, early Labour Party and Fabians, who 'all made use of antisemitic language and imagery on occasions in an anti-colonialist context'.

The period examined opens and concludes with widespread waves of industrial action in the East End, where politics was conflated with ethnic and diasporic identity. Whilst seeking to protect and extend the hard-won gains of the industrial working-class socialist movements were often unclear about the 'correct' path to take throughout the period. Understandable given the path-breaking work these early socialists and organisers were engaged

in.

Renshaw covers the work of anarchist socialists like those around Rudolf Rocker (the German emigre who taught himself Yiddish) and the Arbeiter Fraynt he edited. Painstaking agitation helped organise thousands of largely Jewish garment workers. These socialists had little time for 'Synagogue Socialists' and sought to undermine the hold of Orthodox Judaism over workers. Conversely, Renshaw sees little evidence for any equivalent public rejection of Roman Catholicism by Irish socialists and trade unionists with activists treating a loss of faith more as a private affair, as indeed was the case with most Jewish socialists.

While the London Irish community produced some of the most notable labour leaders over the following decades, with the docks acting as a 'finishing school' for effective trade unionism, the Catholic hierarchy sought to resist and maintain hegemony against any modernisation and did so more effectively than their Jewish counterparts.

Renshaw finishes with a valuable chapter on the grassroots interaction between the communities giving various examples of support and cooperation. A notable episode was during the dock strikes when Jewish bakers kept striking dockers and tailors and their families supplied with bread and other produce, sometimes 600 loaves in a single day, with Jewish families undertaking to provide three hot meals a week for families of strikers.

There are also numerous examples of inter-communal cooperation, evidence of inter-faith/no faith marriages, mixed communities at school, less so at leisure and most conspicuously of Jewish and Irish activists in the various socialist and trade union organisations.

This is the positive legacy of inter-ethnic cooperation surviving today in the East End labour movement which continues to challenge racism, fascism and xenophobia. A very rewarding read, but given the price, order the book through your local library.

Understanding the far-right and how to stop them

Liz Baker
on the new
Right

New Authoritarians: Convergence on the Right
David Renton
Pluto Press £16.99

My dad was watching the news. The UK had recently voted for Brexit, unleashing a wave of racist and xenophobic attacks. In the US, presidential candidate Donald Trump was attracting mass support despite his divisive America First policies and his obvious racism and misogyny.

"I thought I'd die in a better world than the one I was born into in 1930. Have people forgotten our history? Last time it was Blackshirts, this time it will be red baseball caps." Could red baseball caps become the 21st century Blackshirts? What can we learn from history and how can we apply its lessons to our current crisis?

In his latest book, historian and barrister David Renton applies his professional skills to analyse the challenge from the far-right. He aims "to encourage readers to see our enemies clearly, without fear, and to focus on where they are now in the hope that by understanding them better, we can more effectively challenge them". Central to his argument is that we are 'in a post-fascist moment', that those successfully pushing the far-right agenda understand that 'fascism remains a despised tradition' and have adopted electoral means. He distinguishes them from traditional interwar fascists, because they have neither 'an organised militia of supporters willing to use violence' nor a desire to purge the nation of their enemies.

You could argue that modern fascists do not need traditional militia when they can, and maybe do, deploy on-line military style psychological operations but in Renton's analysis the threat is from an 'aggressive, authoritarian but non-fascist right'. Whether you agree or not, he has a point when he warns that calling them fascists is counterproductive as it

distracts us from the real threat and allows them to accuse opponents of scaremongering and being stuck in the past.

Renton builds his case by showing that where the far-right has adopted an electoral approach, frequently exploiting the war on terrorism to justify its policies, it has threatened the voter base of the centre right.

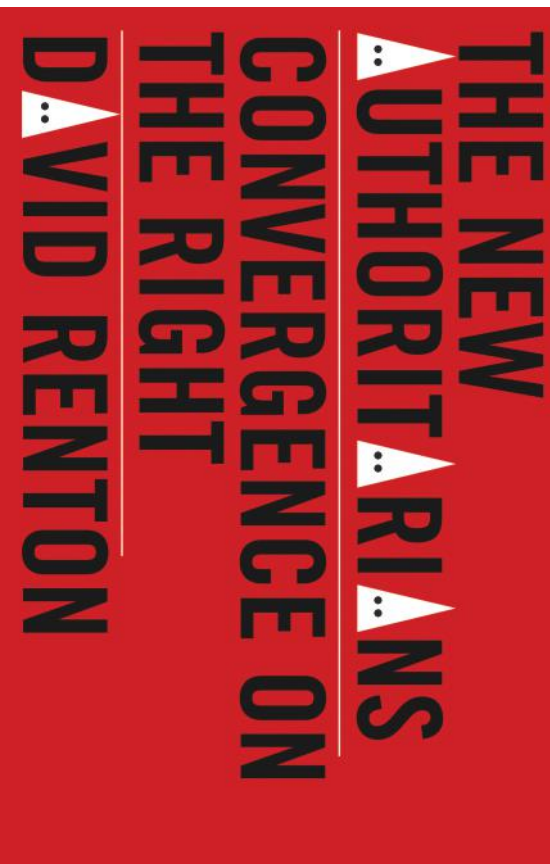
He argues that in response to the loss of voters the centre abandoned its old role of gatekeeper against extremists. By not challenging far-right's claims but instead attempting to flatter their voters they reinforced the extremist message and spread its influence out of all proportion to the

Party following bad publicity as examples. While not completely dismissing the street movements he does not see them as the main current threat and to my mind paints a far more realistic scenario capable of triggering the re-emergence of traditional fascism. Continuing co-operation between the mainstream and the far-right, he suggests, could reshape political forms by merging far-right styles of leadership (authoritarian, nationalist and hostile to opposition) with political democracy. If this happens, he warns, a further (likely) financial crisis on the scale of 2007-08 could unleash new far-right partisans into an environment conducive to fascism, with many more potential supporters.

By identifying the methods deployed by the far-right to achieve their current position, Renton puts context and structure to what otherwise may appear chaotic and illogical, enabling him to extrapolate where it may lead. In doing so he shows the cycle of convergence on the right that needs to be broken. He exposes the techniques that must be disrupted and thus paves the way towards identifying and recommending counter measures.

Subsequent to his book's publication the failure of Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (aka 'Tommy Robinson') in the European Parliamentary election, the rise of the Brexit Party under Nigel Farage's sole direction, Johnson's appointment as UK Prime Minister, his ministerial appointments and his failure to rule out proroguing parliament to force

through a no-deal Brexit suggests that Renton is thinking along the right lines. Whether you agree or disagree with his argument you should not ignore it. If you are serious about stopping racism, misogyny, nationalism and the rise of the far-right, read this book. It provokes thought, prompts proper scrutiny of our opponents and better equips the reader to meet the challenge



original base. He shows that whenever this happens the result has been to increase rather than weaken the far-right's share of the vote and provoke further lurches to the right.

He briefly reviews the history of the modern far-right street movements, few of which have had long term success and he cites loss of support for Unite the Right and the British National

VIEW FROM WESTMINSTER



Frack off

Cat Smith on fracking in the face of climate emergency

Cat Smith is MP for Lancaster & Fleetwood and a shadow minister

On the 1st May this year the House of Commons unanimously supported a Labour motion declaring a climate emergency. This motion built upon similar action taken by local authorities up and down the country and followed the inspirational school climate strikes, Extinction Rebellion protests and address to Parliament by Greta Thunberg.

It has been inspiring to see young people take the lead in forcing our politicians to address the climate crisis we face. Lancaster City Council, which covers part of my constituency, was one of the first in the country to declare a climate emergency and it was the city's young councillors and activists who were the driving force behind it. Sadly, while Lancaster City Council has responded positively to this challenge from the next generation our Government has to date failed to do so reverting instead to empty promises, creative accounting and ultimately business as usual.

The Government's headline response to the declaration of a climate emergency was an announcement that the UK would reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. This would be a welcome announcement were it not for the fact that there was no accompanying plan outlining how this would be achieved and that the Government is currently off track to meet its existing climate targets. In fact, when you look at the number of omissions and caveats in the Government's announcement, it makes you wonder whether this meaningless promise was in fact a deliberate deception.



Fracking protest in Lancashire

Worryingly this appears to be a common theme when it comes to climate change. The Government claims that it has achieved a 37% fall in carbon emissions since 1990. However in her speech to Parliament Greta Thunberg highlighted that this figure falls to around 10% when you consider shipping, aviation, imports and exports. When Jeremy Corbyn challenged Theresa May in July to measure total UK emissions she pointedly refused to do so.

We can't afford to allow ourselves to become complacent - lulled into a false sense of security based on dodgy data. Last year's IPCC report could not have been any clearer: we have just 12 years to take real action. That is not 12 years to debate whether we need to take action, but 12 years to implement policies that dramatically cut down on our carbon emissions. A key part of this is keeping fossil fuels in the ground and making the switch to renewables but rather than do this the Government scrapped the feed-in tariff; they failed to invest in the Swansea tidal lagoon; and they slashed investment in onshore wind.

Nowhere is the Government's commitment to the catastrophic status quo more evident than in its unwavering support for fracking. In Lancashire Cuadrilla are seeking to extend the period in which they are allowed to frack at Preston New Road despite the fact that fifty-seven earthquakes of up

to 1.5 magnitude were detected in Lancashire last year in the two months when Cuadrilla was fracking at Preston New Road. The only reason they are fracking at all is because the Government overturned the democratic decision of Lancashire County Council to reject fracking in the county. When I challenged Ministers in the House of Commons to prevent permitted development rights being granted to fracking operations the astonishing response I received was that I should be grateful that we were burning less coal - as if this was some form of fossil fuels top trumps! When Jeremy Corbyn urged Boris Johnson to ban fracking at his first appearance as Prime Minister in Parliament, he simply ignored the question.

So, while Parliament may have woken up to the climate emergency facing our planet it is clear the Government has not. Thankfully though we have a Government in waiting that has grasped the seriousness of the issue. During the summer recess Jeremy Corbyn met with anti-fracking protesters at Preston New Road and reaffirmed our commitment to a ban. Labour is committed to creating a sevenfold increase in offshore windfarms, a tripling of solar power, enabling nearly 20m homes to be powered by wind and solar by 2030. Addressing the climate emergency requires nothing less than a Green Industrial Revolution. This is what the next Labour Government will deliver. **C**

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