

BRIGHTON 2019

***Chartist Conference Special 50p *Free to Delegates**

Staying in the best option

We're in the right place says **Alex Sobel** now Labour must campaign hard for a vote on Johnson's offer and Remain

The Labour Party has taken a lot of flak for its positioning on Europe since the 2016 referendum. Not all of it is deserved. While it has been frustrating for MPs like me who led the way in calling for a second referendum that it has taken this long, Labour is now in the right place.

It is also the only remain supporting party with a sensible position that can survive both the writing and delivery of a manifesto. We are the only Party that can come through the scrutiny of a General Election campaign with our position coherently intact.

The truth is that any Party seeking to offer the public a second referendum needs to be able to say more than simply 'Bollocks to Brexit'. That may be a fun slogan that will appeal to hardcore Remainers – those who would actually rather revoke Article 50 than take the time to convince the voters to change their minds. But as a governing philosophy in a starkly divided country, it's a hopeless cry of anger – not an answer that can be implemented by any conceivable election result.

The polls are in a complicated flux at the moment. Boris Johnson has seen a slight bounce in Tory popularity – though not much more than you would expect from any new Prime Minister – especially one following the deeply unpopular Theresa May. There is little sign yet of his so-called Heineken ability to reach the parts of the country other Tories cannot reach.

However, this has not meant that Labour is advancing in the way one might hope given the



Jeremy Corbyn, and John McDonnell in step

Tories have been in power for nearly a decade of cruel austerity, national crisis, deteriorating public services and stagnant growth. The Brexit divide is sweeping away all old certainties about how politics work and for the moment, Labour simply cannot rely on an anti-austerity message alone to get a hearing.

This is why we need to be clear about what will be in our manifesto at the next General Election – especially as this seems increasingly likely to happen sooner rather than later.

One of the key arguments made in favour of a second referendum is that it was unclear during 2016 what leaving meant. During the campaign so many different flavours of Brexit were offered by different leavers to different groups of voters that everyone who feels they knew exactly

what leaving meant at the time of the referendum can argue loudly with everyone else who agreed to a slightly different vision. Was it staying in the Single Market and Customs Union? Was it leaving on WTO terms? Are we to be Norway? Canada? Singapore?

This obfuscation was deeply helpful to the leaving cause in the run up to the referendum and has been helpful in convincing people not to support any actual deal since. The position will fall apart when the Tories actually have to choose a Brexit to deliver. If they continue down the path towards a destructive no deal, they may find a vocal minority support them – right up until it turns out to be the disaster for the country every reputable source has warned it will be. That obfuscation will then allow even those who are currently 'no dealers' to argue that this wasn't the Brexit they fought for.

Labour must not make the same mistake. We need to define the terms of the offer we are making to Remainers, to soft Brexiteers and to the country as a whole and make it explicit. Labour must offer a confirmatory vote on Brexit and be clear about the terms.

The truth is, you cannot have a referendum without at least two

Continued on page 2 >>



Alex Sobel is MP for Leeds North West

First 100 days

In this Chartist Labour conference special we outline key policy actions for Labour in Government.

www.chartist.org.uk

EDUCATION REFORM

What do we mean by a National Education Service?

Dave Lister says content and funding must go hand in hand

Unfortunately, we have seen a plethora of education reforms by different governments since the 1980s which have mostly had a negative effect on schooling. These include the development of national testing, the introduction of league tables and the academisation process. There has been a loss of local democratic control. Many schools in MATs (multi-academy trusts) have far less freedom than they had previously, contrary to what was promised.

The result of many of Michael Gove's reforms has been greatly increased stress for pupils and their teachers with much of the joy removed from learning, to be replaced by drilling/teaching to the test and an obsession with data. Children in England are among the most tested in the world. End result: teachers becoming ever more overworked. Clearly some schools and teachers have managed to rise above all this and still deliver interesting lessons, but their task has been made infinitely harder.

Education reform must be an important priority for an incoming Labour Government. Ensuring that education becomes a rewarding experience for all children is the way forward. The following points can form the basis for a programme of reform and advancement:

- The academies and free schools programme should be terminated and the responsibility for allocating school places returned to Local Authorities (LAs). The return of academies to LA control should be focused in the early stages on failing academies and those that have been forcibly academised.

- The authority to build new schools must be returned to LAs by removing the clauses in the Education Act 2011 which prevent them from doing so.

- A review with wide consultation will need to be established on the curriculum and testing to remove the abusive regime introduced by Gove and worsened



Parents and teachers against school cuts

by Nick Gibb. This could start with restoring the Sure Start network, which was one of the greatest achievements of the last Labour Government, and making Early Years education less formal and more play-based. SATs testing needs to go. The primary and secondary curriculum needs to be more broad-based with an end to the detrimental EBac restriction on subject choice and the possible abandonment of GCSEs to be replaced by exams at age 18. So, a broader and less prescriptive national curriculum needs to be developed over time with professional input, ending the cut-back in the provision of curricular areas such as arts and technical subjects and PE.

- Restore funding for schools and FE colleges.

- Reform or abolition of Ofsted in favour of a more supportive system of national inspection. Teachers and schools need to be accountable but not placed under unhelpful pressure and unduly negative judgements.

- Action needs to be taken to address the crisis in teacher recruitment and retention. This means looking at areas like pay and workload and the excessive pressures of the accountability regime.

Dave Lister (Brent Central CLP) is an ex-teacher and governor support officer

- We will also need action to deal with the growing practice of “off-loading” or informal exclusion of children especially by academies. Ofsted has started to do this but Government also needs to be involved, given that it is estimated that 30,000 pupils have disappeared from school rolls over the past three years.

- Restore funding for the vital services provided by LA school improvement services, whose advice and training is generally valued.

- All schools to have governing bodies with provision for governors elected by parents, staff and the wider community. Community representation can be by LA governors, co-opted governors or foundation governors for religious schools. We need to end the ability of trusts to run schools without any democratic representation.

So, Labour's plans for education need to cover the curriculum and testing, not just structures and pay. Our young people and teachers have suffered long enough under reactionary Tory education policies. We want to make learning enjoyable as well as fulfilling. Our children are our future.

<- continued from page 1

options. Labour cannot put ‘no deal’ on the table as they cannot countenance delivering it. But this must be made explicit in the electorate in the manifesto in order to ensure a mandate to drop no deal.

Therefore, any Labour election campaign should promise a straight choice between the offer on the table at the time of the election – i.e. May's deal with any window dressing Johnson manages to wangle – and staying in the EU. It must also make clear that in these circumstances, it will be campaigning for the vastly superior option of staying in the EU and fighting to change both it and Britain for the better through socialist cooperation between towns, regions and the countries of the United Kingdom and the European Union.

Deal with Brexit and the causes of Brexit

Duncan Bowie on a plan for reviving local government and the regions

There is a crisis in funding local government. There is no effective regional policy. The planning framework is not fit for purpose and, as Teresa May acknowledged, the housing market is broken. Moreover, Boris Johnson and his new Ministers have already indicated that they intend to reverse May's belated recognition that building new council homes was necessary and revert to the traditional Tory ideological position on focusing support on owner occupation.

Labour also needs to deal not just with BREXIT but the causes on BREXIT – the increasing differential in wealth and income between the wider South East and other regions. The leave vote in other regions was a protest at declining investment, job opportunities and quality of life relative to the perceived metropolitan elite as much as it was a vote against the European Union. So, Labour has a challenge as to how to win back votes as well as to what corrective measures it needs to take in Government. The shopping list is a long one:

- Re-establish a national and regional investment policy which focus-

es public investment and steers private investment to the most disadvantages areas of the country. This means both incentives for private investment and potentially some direction of private investment for employment generation

- Develop a national economic and spatial plan which identifies areas of the country for employment and residential growth, supported by a new regional planning and investment framework and a new structure of regional banks and infrastructure funds

Restore a system of national revenue support to local government based on an assessment of comparative needs for services and the ability of the local authority to fund from its own resources

- Reform council tax to a more progressive system and allow local authorities the freedom to set their own rates of council tax

- Replace stamp duty by capital gains tax and introduce new taxes on property and other forms of wealth, including replacing inheritance tax with a lifetime gifts tax

- Repeal the 2016 Housing and Planning Act, abolish the Right to Buy, commit to 100,000 new council homes a year and abolish all grant to forms of

home ownership

- Give local authorities the power to acquire land for council housing at existing use value

Strengthen local authority planning powers including the ability of local authorities to reject development proposals which do not meet local development requirements including the need for social housing

- Improved regulation of privately rented housing including granting local authorities the power to take over ownership and/or management of privately rented homes where appropriate.

- Ensure council and housing association rents for social housing are no greater than 30% net income for lowest quartile households.

- Ensure housing benefit/housing allowance/ universal credit supports those households who cannot afford rental costs whether in public, housing association or private sectors

- Introduce mandatory minimum standards, including construction, fire and health and safety standards, for all housing, irrespective of tenure, and prosecute landlords, developers, builders and suppliers who breach these standards.

The magic money tree

Dennis Leech on Quantitative Easing and rising government debt

The Bank of England responded to the financial crash by dramatically lowering its interest rate. It was trying to stave off recession by using conventional monetary policy. When it found that was ineffective - but could not lower the rate any more because it was already close to zero - it moved to the more radical policy of QE. This involved the large-scale purchase of government bonds with money newly created for the purpose.

It could do that because the UK government controls its own currency and it can create as much new money as required. The money is not printed banknotes but bank accounts created electronically from thin air. Those who say 'there is no magic money tree' are wrong.

QE works by raising the market price of government bonds and thereby reduces yields on existing government debt. The stated intention is to stimulate demand in the economy in order to increase price inflation close to its target rate of 2%. It is not part of the Bank of England's remit to stimulate employment but that is implicit as an aspect of

the policy.

This policy has been applied on a truly heroic scale: today the quantity of new money created for QE stands at the massive figure of £435 billion. That is around 20% of today's GDP. One result of QE is that the Bank of England now owns around 24% of government debt.

That is, the government can be said to literally owe nearly a quarter of its outstanding debt to itself - because the Bank of England is still nationalized. Whenever the mainstream media report government borrowing at unsustainable levels this should be borne in mind.

Has QE been a success? That is not clear. To some extent it depends on what happens next. The policy has certainly had harmful side effects: it has raised house prices levels to unaffordable levels for many and it has killed off many pension schemes that cannot get an adequate return from safe government bonds any more. The theory is that QE works to stimulate the economy through various channels, either via lower interest rates or increased asset values, mainly through financial institutions like insurance companies or pension funds. There is little evidence that

any of this has worked. Keynesian economics teaches that monetary policy doesn't work when interest rates are very low and there is a liquidity trap, when further increases in the money supply have no effect.

So what happens next? The theory is that the QE money is in effect a sort of loan and will at some time need to be repaid. That will mean a presumably highly deflationary monetary policy: 'unwinding QE' or quantitative tightening. When or if that will happen is an open question given the likelihood of recession. 'People's QE' is where newly created money is used directly to fund government investment to promote growth. Critics keep harping on that this will cause inflation, although QE has not so far led to that.

Then there is the radical Keynesian approach in the manner of Modern Monetary Theory where government spending is financed by the central bank rather than taxation, and budget deficits are unimportant. Making full use of the productive resources of the economy without inflation through functional finance should be the task of a Labour government.

Dennis Leech is an economist and member of Bethnal Green and Bow CLP

WORKER DEMOCRACY

Can Labour control corporate power?

Bryn Jones sees limitations in Labour's worker director model

Labour promises radical reforms to company law to make corporations more equitable, efficient and socially beneficial. It would empower employees through representation on company boards and create 'inclusive ownership funds' of collectively held shares for employees. Two important questions arise from these proposals. Firstly, are they likely to tackle the basis of 21st century corporate power or merely provide a veneer of industrial democracy? Secondly, would their practical implementation really counter the powers of the present controllers of big business? Consider first the nature of corporate power and its abuses created by contemporary neoliberalism.

Today's dominant global finance constrains share-owned corporations to maximise 'shareholder value'; forcing corporate executives to prioritise financial returns – as dividends, share buy-backs or rising share prices – rather than employees' training or wages, physical capital investment, or research and development. Companies do fund some of these non-financial assets but only if investors' expectations are satisfied; otherwise share prices fall, fresh capital is less forthcoming and other businesses may stalk and take over the company. As Labour's 2017 Manifesto put it, financial priorities: 'encourage companies to . . . cut wages, instead of investing for the long term, or . . . spend longer inventing new tax avoidance schemes than they do inventing new products.' However, this description doesn't distinguish 'short-term' investors from those holding 'patient capital': investors prepared to wait for long-term growth in a company's value through continuous investment in its tangible assets. Expert commentators argue company law reform should favour the latter shareowners – such as pension funds and small investors – above speculative investors who encourage 'short-termism'.

According to the Manifesto corporate power structures ensure 'decisions about our economy are often made by a narrow elite.' True, but this doesn't distinguish between differences within the



John McDonnell - a start but follow Swedish model

elite. Investors' expectations constrain executive managers but these can still aim to secure their own narrow interests – such as over-generous executive pay awards – by reducing dependence on longer-term shareholders and rewarding short-term investors. Recognising corporations' even wider influence over everyday life for individuals and communities, the Manifesto proposed a different tack: changing company law 'so that directors owe a duty directly not only to shareholders, but to employees, customers, the environment and the wider public'. But how would directors' obligations be monitored and policed? Labour's separate plans for 'key utilities' public ownership would mean direct accountability: to state institutions and elected bodies. However, for the greater mass of incorporated businesses, more accountability would require reforms to firms' own governance structures.

Corbyn's 2018 Conference speech proposed reserving a third of the seats on large UK businesses' boards for representatives elected by the workforce to give them 'a genuine voice and a stake'. Complementing this idea John McDonnell promised to transfer 1% of the ownership of companies with more than 250 staff into an 'inclusive ownership fund' of collectively held shares; with the same voting rights as shareholders but with dividends 'capped at £500 a year'. Any surplus would become a 'social dividend' – estimated at £2.1 billion – transferred to 'social services'.

These two proposals seem unlikely to enforce directors' duty to the broader range of stakeholders. Employee directors would lack a majority of board votes. Moreover, both worker-shareholders and directors' self-interest may prioritise financial returns rather than wider environmental or community benefits. If the board controlling Heathrow airport proposed an expansion would worker-directors prioritise environmental concerns rather than increases in distributable profits and employment?

Finally, an inner core of key executives – the CEO, finance director and chair – pre-determine board policies. So these individuals' character and ethos is crucial. Yet this same core group is, effectively, self-recruiting. Labour's proposals would not enable worker directors, nor customer, community or environmental interests to decide the appointment of new directors. Alternatively however, Labour could adapt Sweden's corporate governance model. This excludes executives from the main board and appoints them through committees of key shareholders (details in my book *Corporate Power and Responsible Capitalism*). Labour could tweak this model so that such committees include representatives of long-term, 'patient' investors, workers and small shareholders, communities and environmental interests. Corporations' vast power over all of these spheres makes it only just that these also have some say in who forms policies and how they are decided.

Bryn Jones is a member of Bath CLP and co-editor of *Alternatives to Neoliberalism. Towards Equality and Democracy*

Tory handouts for the rich versus Labour's way

Prem Sikka highlights the dividing line on taxation between Labour and Conservatives while setting out a sharper left course

The Conservatives have cut the rate of corporation tax from 28% in 2010 to 19% in 2019 in the vain belief that this will somehow increase investment in productive assets.

While Conservative tax cuts have failed to meet economic aims they have swelled corporate coffers and cash has been used to pay dividends. Compared to US, EU, Japan and emerging economies, UK companies pay out the highest proportion of corporate earnings in dividends. Investment in productive assets is low. On average EU countries put 20.1% of their gross domestic product (GDP) into long-term investment compared to 16.9% for the UK. The UK investment in research and development has fluctuated between 1.53% and 1.67% of GDP, way behind the EU average. Low investment in productive assets and research and development is translated into low productivity. Yet Prime Minister Boris Johnson has promised further cuts to the rate of corporation tax.

Any investment in the economy presupposes that people will have good purchasing power to buy goods and services. Conservatives have failed to address that and workers' share of GDP in the form of wages is now at around 49.4% compared to 65.1% in 1976.

Labour is seeking to boost people's purchasing power through a higher living wage, ending university tuition fees, empowering trade unions and public ownership of utilities and railway companies to alleviate pressures on household budgets. £500bn of investment in new industries, manufacturing and infrastructure is to be facilitated by the proposed National Investment Bank. Part of this is to be funded by reversing the corporation tax cuts and levying a 50% rate of tax on incomes over £123,000 and 45% for earnings above £80,000. This is to be supplemented by investment in HMRC which by its own admission is failing to collect



Denise Coates, head of Bet365 paid herself £265m in 2017/18

£34bn-£35bn of tax revenues every year due to evasion, avoidance and errors. Some estimates put that at around \$120bn a year. A war against tax avoidance is to be facilitated by public availability of the tax returns of large companies. A withholding tax is to be levied on interest and dividend payments routed through uncooperative tax havens.

Labour is also seeking to broaden the tax base. Its 2017 election manifesto promised to introduce a version of financial transaction tax. The party is also considering land value taxation and possibilities of taxing accumulated wealth.

Taxes on carbon emissions and consumption of sugar and tobacco products go some way towards penalising the offenders and raising revenues to cover the social costs. Labour should consider applying such policies to social pollution. A good example of this is the inequitable distribution of income as corporate executives grab huge pay packets whilst ordinary workers struggle. In just three working days, the UK's top

bosses make more than a typical full-time worker will earn in the entire year.

Inequalities in the distribution of income have harmful consequences as they affect infant mortality, life expectancy, access to education, housing, healthcare, pension, food and security.

An inequality tax should be levied on companies and other entities responsible for inequitable distribution of income. Currently, all wages, salaries and benefits paid by employing organisations are treated as a tax deductible expense i.e. they reduce the taxable profit and tax liability of a company. Companies are rewarded for excessive executive pay because that reduces their liability to corporation tax.

An inequality tax does not prevent a company from paying higher amounts to executives but would place an upper limit on the amount of remuneration that it can deduct from its taxable profits. The cap could be a multiple of the national median pay, the national minimum wage or even a straight sum which could be say £1 million per executive. This principle can also be applied to the remuneration of any employee.

In 2017/2018, the CEO of Bet365 received remuneration of £265m and all of it was tax deductible. Under the proposals outlined above, only £1 million may be allowed as an expense in the company's corporation tax liability calculation i.e. £264m would not be treated as a tax deductible expense.

The net result of this would be to increase the company's taxable profits. At the prevailing rate of corporate tax rate of 19%, the company would be required to pay an additional tax of £50.2m (£264m x 19%) to compensate society for the negative consequences imposed upon it. Those revenues can be used for redistribution. Hopefully, Labour would consider this in its quest to build a fairer society.

**Prem Sikka is
Professor of
Accounting and
Finance,
University of
Sheffield &
Emeritus
Professor of
Accounting,
University of
Essex**

PENSIONS

Where is Labour's pensions policy?

Britain's pensions are low and in crisis. **Dennis Leech** makes the case for an effective lifeboat

The party is developing a radical socialist manifesto to transform society for the many not the few. Yet it has little to say on one of the most important areas of social policy: pensions. This matters because UK pensions are in a crisis that will harm not only many current workers but future generations too. But Labour seems not to be interested.

Occupational pensions provide security for working people after they retire - yet that is decreasing even though more are being enrolled. Traditional guaranteed pension schemes are being replaced with inadequate market based alternatives that are cheaper for employers but problematic for workers. There is a danger that in future years millions of older workers will find their pension pots falling short.

All are entitled to a government pension. But in the UK the state pension is inadequate. It is a minimal safety net, worth only about 29 percent of average earnings, the lowest of any European country. It is much higher in other countries, for example Netherlands: 101%; France: 75%; Germany: 51%. The OECD average is 63 percent. Only Mexico, within the OECD, has a lower state pension ratio than Britain.

The gap between the state pension and a decent income is filled by occupational pensions, for those who have them, or means tested state benefits for others. But traditional occupational pensions - where a worker would receive over half their salary after forty years (defined benefits) - have been disappearing as employers have withdrawn them for cheaper inferior alternatives.

This trend has several causes: pensions have become more expensive due to increased life expectancy; as an unintended consequence of current very low interest rates and quantitative easing. More broadly it is an aspect of the changing factoral distribution of income from labour to capital due to neoliberalism. More specifically it is an unintended effect of legislation by the last Labour government.



Pensions on Labour's radar

The Blair government passed the Pensions Act 2004 to ensure defined benefit pensions would be adequately funded. It set up the Pension Protection Fund as a lifeboat to support schemes if an employer becomes insolvent. It also set up the Pensions Regulator with powers to proactively oversee schemes to make sure the lifeboat was only used in case of real need and that employers did not abuse it.

The result has been disastrous. The legislation was intended to halt a trend decline in provision. Instead the greater burden of guarantees and excessive prudence it placed on employers accelerated it. Employers found the cost too expensive, and scheme after scheme has closed. Instead of protecting pensions, the regulatory framework New Labour devised has had the opposite effect. In 1993 every FTSE company provided a defined benefit pension scheme to new employees. In 2019 virtually not a single one does and about half are closed to accrual for existing members.

A major factor is that the Pension Protection Fund is not fit for purpose. It is privately funded by a levy on all pension schemes and has no government guarantee. It fails in its purpose which is to reduce risk. Its assets are mostly invested in low return 'safe' government bonds rather than providing capital for industry.

If it had a government guarantee the PPF would be able to perform the job it was intended for.

Freed of the need for extreme caution it could invest for the long term to finance productive industry and receive better returns. Its funding would improve and would be better able to do its job as a lifeboat.

As a sovereign wealth fund, publicly owned but managed at arms length as a socially responsible commercial enterprise, it would be able both to support defined benefit pensions and provide investment funding for a Green New Deal alongside the National Development Bank. It would benefit the economy as well as pensions.

We are told that defined benefit pensions are finished, and that their replacement defined contribution schemes are a great success. Over 11 million members are now in DC schemes thanks to automatic enrolment.

Yet DC schemes are highly problematic in many ways. Firstly, they do not directly provide a pension: on retirement a member gets a 'pot' of money and must make financial decisions about it to turn it into an income. Many find this difficult because they are not experienced investors. They need financial advice but there are many scammers looking to charge exorbitant hidden commissions on the unwary. Second, they do not know how long they will live and must make decisions about managing their pot of money under this uncertainty. Third, they do not know what their pension is likely to be since the pot's value depends on the performance of their investments. Fourth, defined contribution schemes all have low contribution levels that might not be enough for a decent pension. Many workers will not be able to afford to retire.

The pension system now forces workers into the Thatcherite mould. They have no alternative but to join the property owning society having to make one's own investment decisions and live with the consequences. It seems that pensions policy is the perfect manifestation of the truth of Margaret Thatcher's claim that her greatest achievement was Tony Blair.

Dennis Leech is a member of Bethnal Green & Bow CLP

Hit the ground running

Manuel Cortes on taking the profit motive out of transport

Let's face it, with the shadow of Brexit continuing to hang over our country it's highly likely this awful Conservative Government could soon be gone – good riddance!

A vote of No Confidence in Johnson and his free market loving chums over crashing out of the EU with No Deal could well see Jeremy Corbyn come to power in a resulting General Election.

Our Labour Party must be ready not only to fight and win an election, but to implement a programme for the renewal of our country.

Labour must hit the ground running. After nearly a decade of needless, brutally destructive austerity our people need wholesale transformative change which must begin on day one of a Labour government.

In our union, and well beyond, there has been a long and hard-fought campaign to bring our railways back into public ownership, something which was also a cornerstone of the For The Many 2017 manifesto.

Aside from driving the privaters out of the NHS there would be no more popular move than ending the great railway rip off at once.

Privatisation has been an abject failure since the word go. In this ultimate scam we the public have been continually ripped off right left and centre, with ticket prices escalating while levels of service continue to plummet.

Since 1994 rail fares have risen twice as fast as wages with privaters laughing all the way to the bank. Just consider this - passengers are fleeced not once but twice when they travel on our railways.

Once for the extortionate fares and again through general taxation which goes towards the subsidies paid out to rail companies by the Government. Richard Branson himself once described this as a "licence to print money." And for once, he was dead right!

Yet in this deliberately fragmented system companies own neither the trains, nor the tracks or other infrastructure. They are little more than a shell, designed to maximise profit and keep



Richard Branson's Virgin Trains will lose his licence to "print money" this November

staffing levels as low as possible.

That raises the question of safety – rightly the number one issue to all our members who have vowed never to go back to the bad old days of Hatfield and Potters Bar.

Make no mistake, the only way of making sure that our railways are properly resourced, and therefore as safe as possible, is to remove the profit motive.

This is not intended as an appeal to the new Tory Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps; though he's be hard pressed to do a poorer job than his predecessor -Chris 'Failing' Grayling – the worst Secretary of State I've ever known.

Only an incoming Labour Government will have the wherewithal and political will to put people, passengers and the long-term future of public transport front and centre.

What does this mean? Aside from publicly owning our railways, it also means pushing ahead with High Speed Two (HS2) all the way to Scotland. Doing so would not only lay the foundation for a 21st century railway but put rocket boosters under regional economies.

It also means developing a radical transport policy and our union has been examining the

viability of a Taktfahrplan – or clock face timetable –approach.

This is named after the Swiss model which sees the coordination of all forms of public transport at local and national level, scheduled for the benefit of passengers rather than commercial interests.

We also stand ready to assist a Labour Government in dealing with the coming technological advances on our railways and have already held a Future of Rail conference focussing on changes that are taking place in our industry as a result of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Nor should we overlook the importance of getting it right on the future of freight. What's needed is an increase in capacity on our railways, something which, at a stroke, would move freight away from roads, combatting CO2 emissions.

We live in the third most congested country in Europe and fourth most congested in the developed world. It's a staggering fact that congestion on our roads costs Britain £30 billion a year.

So, transport is no quiet backwater for our next Labour government. Getting it right will change the lives of millions for the better and for the long term. That is the prize of getting Jeremy into number 10!

**Manuel Cortes is
General
Secretary of the
Transport and
Salaried Staff
Association**

ENVIRONMENT

Green revolution

Nigel Doggett says Labour needs to think big on its environment plans

After this year's actions leading to the declaration of a climate emergency, popular environmental awareness is greater than ever. The environmental and climate priorities relate to policies across the board; not only energy and the environment 'out there' but also how we live, produce and consume. So all new projects and initiatives must be assessed for environmental impacts just as much as equality: greenhouse gas emissions (direct and indirect), biodiversity and other forms of pollution (air, water and soil).

Recent US campaigns for a Green New Deal envisage a ten year programme to create more jobs centred on climate and environmental protection, explicitly advocating a 'just transition' to a low carbon economy. This concept can provide Labour with the glue to link environmental action to economics and employment. We will need new mechanisms for industry-wide and regional planning, as advocated by the Greener Jobs Alliance.

Strategically the party should start by:

- Instituting a government wide review with the Committee on

Climate Change to set the course for net zero emissions well before 2050

- Reviewing the mega projects for nuclear power, airport expansion and HS2 for both economic and environmental impacts. These all feature burgeoning costs and highly contested and dubious justifications – Labour must go wider than Johnson's likely cost-cutting approach.

Labour's September 2018 Environmental Policy (from principles described by Bob Newland elsewhere in this issue) promotes a range of important measures for the manifesto, which should begin with:

- Flexible 'smart' energy networks (resilient to prevent outages such as occurred in August), to utilise more renewable power and electric transport
 - Support for tidal lagoons, starting with the Swansea project rejected by the Tories
 - Removal of barriers to onshore wind power
 - A ban on fracking
 - Re-instituting zero carbon new home standards and starting a crash programme to retro-fit existing buildings starting with social housing
- On transport, the party should start with:
- A new Clean Air Act, enabling

widespread low emission zones to tackle the lethal air pollution scandal

- Powers for local government to coordinate and run public transport
- Speeded up rail electrification as part of a national network weighted towards local travel.
- Cease sales of new diesel and petrol vehicles by 2030 and start a rapid phase out in favour of electric power, with priority to buses and coaches

- Create a comprehensive standardised vehicle charging network as part of the smart electric grid

Placing the environment alongside human rights at the heart of foreign policy, the party extols a 'relationship with the EU that maintains and extends environmental rights, standards and protections as a baseline', with greater ambition in domestic policy. Commitments on fishing, farming, habitats and wildlife include financial support and regulation to enhance conservation and sustainability: all very complex areas to negotiate, especially in the context of Brexit hokey-cokey (in/out/turn-about).

The 2018 policy must be refined and extended for Labour to gain cross party and popular support to pursue its aim of 'the greenest government ever' from day one.

**Nigel Doggett is
member of
Wealden CLP &
Chartist EB**

tssa

Solidarity Greetings to all Labour Party Conference Delegates

IT'S TIME TO STOP BORIS JOHNSON'S

NO DEAL BREXIT AND GIVE THE

PEOPLE A FINAL SAY

BACK A REFERENDUM

AND LET'S END TORY BREXIT

ISSUE
02

ISSN - 0968 786
770968 786001

TSSA – the union for people in transport and travel
www.tssa.org.uk  **@TSSAunion**  **@tssaunion**