

# CHARTIST

For democratic socialism

#284 January/February 2017

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**Dave Cunningham**

**Paul Garver**

**Dave Toke**

**Trumpism**

**Rebecca Long**

**Bailey MP**

**Westminster View**

**Claude Moraes**

**MEP**

**Populism**

**Julie Timbrell**

**Common rights**

**John Palmer**

**Brexit**

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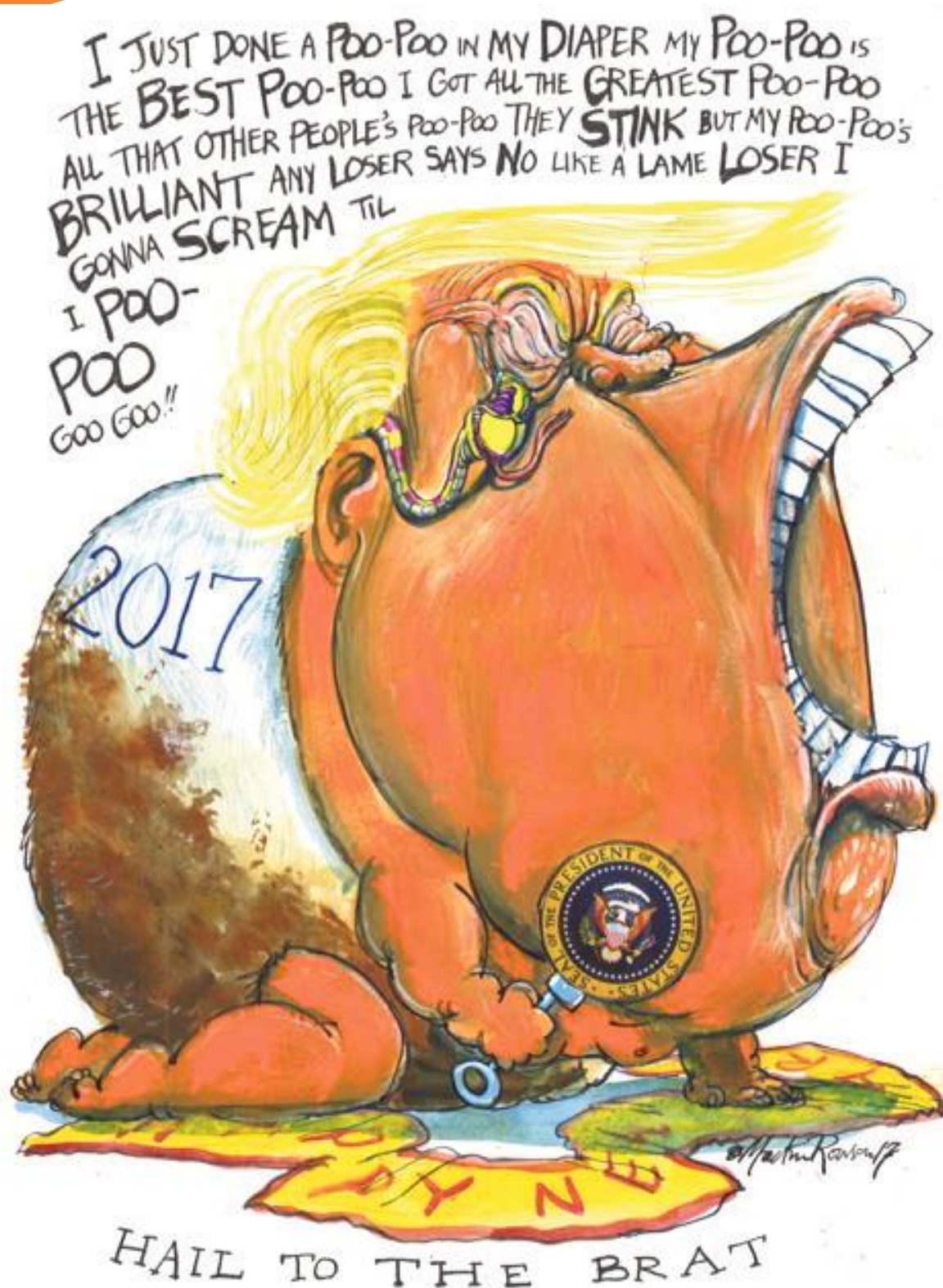
**reviews**

ISSN - 0968 7866 ISSUE

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# CHARTIST

For democratic socialism

## Editorial Policy

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

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

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

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Published by Chartist Publications  
PO Box 52751 London EC2P 2XF  
tel: 0845 456 4977

Printed by People For Print Ltd, Unit 10, Riverside Park, Sheaf Gardens, Sheffield S2 4BB – Tel 0114 272 0915.  
Email: juma@btconnect.com

Website: [www.chartist.org.uk](http://www.chartist.org.uk)  
Email: [editor@chartist.org.uk](mailto:editor@chartist.org.uk)  
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Contributions and letters deadline for

**CHARTIST #285**

**7 February 2017**

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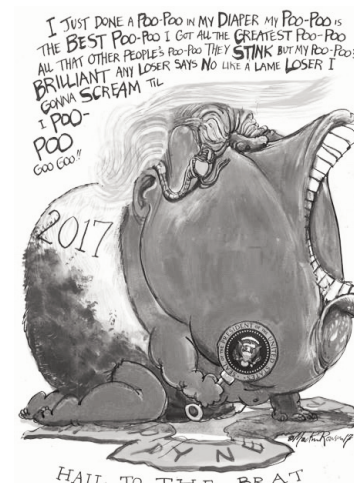
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Cover by Martin Rowson

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FOR DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM

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## OUR HISTORY

## EDITORIAL

## OUR HISTORY - 70

## R H Tawney - Equality (1931)

**T**awney was an economic historian. Influenced by the social idealism of Edward Caird and the religious liberalism of Bishop Charles Gore, after Balliol College, Oxford, he went to live at the Toynbee Hall settlement in Whitechapel, where he became involved in social work. He then became a teacher for the Workers Education Association.

This was a lifelong interest and he served 42 years on the WEA's executive council and was president from 1929 to 1945. Tawney's academic base was the London School of Economics, where he was first Reader and then Professor of Economic History. His first academic work was a study of the *Agrarian Problem of the Sixteenth century*, published in 1912. He fought in the First World War, being severely wounded. His 1920 study, *The Acquisitive Society* was a critique of capitalism. In 1926 he published *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*. *Equality* followed in 1931.

Tawney was a Christian Socialist moralist not a Marxist. He had a profound belief in political democracy and an opponent of all forms of totalitarianism. He served on a number of Government Commissions, including the Sankey Commission, in 1919 where together with Sidney Webb, he argued for the nationalisation of the coal industry. He was a regular contributor to the *Manchester Guardian* and the *New Statesman*, writing mainly on educational reform.

Tawney joined the Fabian Society first in 1906 (later serving on its Executive committee), then the ILP in 1909 and then the Labour Party in 1918. He stood unsuccessfully for a parliamentary seat on three occasions though he considered he was more useful outside parliament. In 1922 he published *Secondary Education for All* and in 1924, *Education: The Socialist Policy*. He also contributed to the Labour Party's 1928 manifesto, *Labour and the Nation*. Tawney was a member of the education



committee of the London County Council and of the consultative committee of the Board of Education. He died in 1962. He is the subject of biographies by Ross Terrill (1973) and Anthony Wright (1987).

"It is true that while inequality is easy, since it demands no more than to float with the current, equality is difficult, for it involves swimming against it. It involves material sacrifices by some, and a lot less painful surrender of sentimental claims by others, and on the part of all, sufficient self-control and public spirit, sufficient respect for themselves and appreciation of their neighbours...."

"The reasons for equalizing, as means and opportunity allow, the externals of life is not that the scaffolding is more important than the shrine, or that economic interests, for all their clamour and insistence, possess the unique and portentous significance with which the fashionable philosophy of the age is accustomed to ascribe too them. It is not, as austere critics assert, to pamper the gross bodily appetites of an envious multitude, but to free the spirit of all.... The chief enemy of the life of the spirit, whether in art, culture or religion ... is as everyone knows, the idolatry of wealth, with its worship of pecuniary success... and its strong sense of the sanctity of possessions and weak sense of the dignity of human beings, and its consequent emphasis, not on the common interests which unite men, but on the accidents of property, and circumstance, and economic condition, which separate and divide them."

"Though the idea of an equal distribution of material wealth may continue to elude us, it is necessary, nevertheless, to make haste towards it, not because such wealth is the most important of man's treasures, but to prove that it is not. It is possible that the ultimate goods of human life .... May be more easily attained, when its instruments and means are less greedily grasped and more freely shared."

## Left needs a message

**I**n the wake of the Brexit vote and Trump's election victory the received wisdom is that the Left needs a message that will counter those populist Right slogans – "Make Britain Great Again" or "We want our country back." The question is, what form might these populist Left slogans take?

Corbyn's Labour talks a lot about 'Fairness' and 'Equality' and whilst there is nothing wrong with these ideas as such do they really have a resonance? There are several problems. There is something passive and paternalistic about these notions – it is implied that equality will happen

for you and your community if you vote Labour. There is a rational, logical argument behind the message.

The Left has a long-standing insistence that political progress results from rational argument and persuasion – that decisions result from clearly thought through analysis. In reality, of course, most of us make choices based on intuition and gut feeling – we are creatures driven by emotion as much as by reason. So what might a populist Left slogan be that appeals to our instincts or emotions?

Let us consider "Living together responsibly." "Living together"

recognises that we rely on others and that we value others; we cannot live alone and that interdependence is a crucial part of the human experience. "Living together responsibly" emphasises that we should take into account our own physical, mental and emotional health and that of others, and the environment, in our life choices and behaviour.

Seen this way what may appear to be a bland platitude can be imagined as having a bold and progressive political content.

KEITH SAVAGE  
BUXTON

## Time to turn tide against Tories

**I**t is clear the Government has no coherent plan on Brexit. Teresa May is looking more isolated in Europe and her three Brexiters seem wilfully oblivious both to the consequences of leaving the EU with no deal or explaining this to the British people.

But a lack of coherence extends beyond Brexit. The Autumn Statement from Chancellor Hammond revealed the Tories have no answers on the economy. The government has failed on their own deficit reduction plan, abandoned Osborne's targets, failed on clamping down on tax evaders, failed on holding down inflation. Rebecca Long-Bailey Shadow Treasury minister itemises the sorry list of failures. Hammond has no answers on the crisis facing the National Health Service. There was no mention of social care in the Autumn statement. Hospitals face ever growing waiting lists and bed blocking as a result of patients without community support. A&E closures, demoralised junior doctors and a threat to 50,000 EU nationals working in the NHS. The NHS chief says the underfunded service is on the brink of collapse. The Sustainability and Transformation Plans, supposed to aid merging of health and care, provide a paltry carrot to Local Authorities (facing 50% cut backs) and health boards. Even Tory MPs like GP Sarah Wollaston have recognised STPs as a cover for cuts.

Neither does the government have answers on schools funding, instead wasting funds on a throwback grammar school programme. It has no answers on the homeless crisis or for millions struggling to pay rising rents and housing costs. No answers on transport as the chaos on Southern rail demonstrates. No answers on prisons as riots, over-crowding and understaffing protests show.

Meanwhile working people are experiencing the worst decade of wage restraint since the 1980s. Alongside one million people using food banks is a precariat of five million plus workers on zero hours contracts, insecure agency work and self employment facing yet more reduced work benefits. They struggle in a twilight zone of uncertainty, unable to plan or be sure bills can be paid from week to week.

Overhead hangs the prospect of a huge jolt to the economy as a result of Brexit. This could deepen the anxiety and confusion in which the populist right seek to prosper. The election of Donald Trump underlines the dangers for the labour movement and left in the West, indeed the whole world. 2017 is not the 1930s, but the rise of the populist right, pandering to racism, xenophobia, sexism and nativist nationalist sentiment is a chilling portent. Claude Moraes MEP examines the rise of the populist right with elections in Italy, France and Germany this year, indicating the danger of further gains for the far right and neo fascist parties.

Whilst globalisation, automation and a net-

worked world has been the leitmotif of the 21C there is nothing to say this phenomena can't be turned back with the narrow nationalist economic agenda that Brexiteers, Trump, Le Pen in France and the right in Italy advocate. Protectionism is the herald of trade wars. Trade wars usher in military conflicts. This is not a place we should revisit.

**Dave Cunningham** and **Paul Garver** look at the reasons for Trump's victory identifying the challenges facing the US left, while **Dave Toke** is sanguine on prospects for a major reversal of the Paris climate change accords, despite Trump's scepticism.

For Britain Brexit is the defining political challenge. **John Palmer** argues that while the left must sharpen its assault on the government's incoherence, support parliament against the executive, with a possible Supreme Court ruling backing not only the Westminster parliament but elected houses in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales also having a vote on the Brexit plan and triggering Article 50. However Palmer sees the key moment to scupper EU withdrawal in 2018 or 2019 when the emptiness of the government 'deal' is fully revealed.

The irony is that government Brexiteers campaigned to 'take back control' but when it comes to fundamental decisions they don't want parliament in control.

When it comes to extending greater control for workers on company boards and in workplaces Teresa May's pledge has been torn up at the first test.

**Clive Lewis** Shadow Business secretary exposes government hypocrisy in the retreat evidenced in corporate governance proposals.

Whether hard or soft Brexit the real question is how to build a winning pro EU alliance for the 48% and peel away the doubting and disillusioned leavers. The evidence of the economic, social and cultural perils of withdrawal is stacking up. **Keith Savage** highlights the catastrophe for the creative arts while scientists and universities are looking down a barrel of oblivion for many projects and research collaborations.

Labour's front bench team need to go on the offensive in 2017. **Duncan Bowie** argues forcefully that Labour has to expose Tory gaffes, gaps and weaknesses with clarity, coherence and a unified alternative narrative. This must begin with clarity on Brexit and no equivocation on a commitment to working to stay in Europe. Corbyn is strong on free movement but this is not enough. Nor is it sufficient to be 'anti-austerity', for equality and a National Education Service. These abstract slogans need to be surmounted by a positive story on building an economy that works for all and a responsible society that stands for the 99% against the 1% corporate elite.

In the cold climate of 2017 the stakes could not be higher. **C**

Labour has to expose Tory gaffes, gaps and weaknesses with clarity, coherence and a unified alternative



## Going vertical on rail

**Paul Salveson**  
on a Tory  
change of  
track

There are signs that Chris Grayling, the new Transport Secretary, is flexing his political muscles and moving away from the cautious approach adopted by his predecessor Patrick McLoughlin. That's not necessarily a bad thing. He wants each rail franchise to be run by joint management teams, including representatives from both the train operating company and Network Rail. In his recent announcement he said "I intend to start bringing back together the operation of track and train on our railways." He continued "We need to change the relationship between the tracks and the trains on the railway... passengers don't understand the division between the two. They just want someone to be in charge. They want their train to work. I agree with them," he added. I agree with him. He suggested that the pilot for this new approach will be the Oxford – Cambridge line, a victim of the Beeching cuts and a route which is gradually coming back to life. On December 12th, Chiltern Railways began operating from Oxford via Bicester into London. The projected new line would continue eastwards on to Cambridge. The market for the new route is massive.

The idea of a vertically-integrated organisation for the proposed East-West Rail line from Oxford to Cambridge makes a lot of sense. It will be small enough to have real focus, but big enough to have benefits of scale. Appropriate size and focussed management is actually more important than whether it's public or private. And the idea that future franchises will have much greater integration between Network Rail and the franchise operator makes sense as long as there are ways of harmonising the relatively short-term horizons of a franchisee. I'm against franchises because they don't engender the long-term commitment and loyalty that a permanent business has (again, whether public or private). Could long-term concessions that are vertically integrated be the way forward? It should be tried, with a clear remit from Government to extract maximum social and economic benefit from the concession and a strong degree of commercial freedom for the operator to develop new services and products.

It's seldom recognised on the left, but the Government's Department for Transport has been pursuing a radical agenda towards new franchises, insisting that bidders bring tangible 'external' benefits to the operation and also pursue enlightened HR policies internally – including doing something about rail's traditionally poor record on diversity. This may not be something that you would expect from a Conservative Government, but it is happening and it is forcing train companies to see 'corpo-

rate social responsibility' as more than the occasional charitable grant.

Grayling is clearly moving away from the separation of operations and infrastructure which was a hallmark of the original privatisation model in the 1990s. It hasn't worked and there is huge unhappiness within the rail industry about the slow delivery of infrastructure enhancements. The latest fiasco with Great Western electrification, with several routes falling off the programme, is just one example. Some talented managers within Network Rail feel frustrated about the situation but are powerless within this large (state-owned) bureaucracy to effect change.

The next two franchises will be interesting tests of the Government's willingness to force more radical change and begin steps towards vertical integration. The Wales and Borders franchise will be let by the Welsh Government, which has aspirations for a publicly-owned railway, whilst East Midlands will be the responsibility of the Department for Transport. I suspect both will end up with broadly similar approaches, with greater vertical integration between the train operator and Network Rail, and clear requirements to ensure positive impacts in terms of employment policies and community benefit.



**Tory Transport Secretary Chris Grayling on the right track?**

What should a 'left' response be? We need to drop this childish attachment to 'bringing back British Rail' and recognise that smaller units of management are needed, whether public or private. Cooperative models need to be explored and encouraged. Both Wales and Borders and East Midlands make sense as management units, though more could be done to devolve responsibility to the

local level. In the short term, why not try an integrated approach for an existing line or local network which would be low-risk, probably on a regional group of lines. Given that we're leaving the EU one benefit is that we won't be tied by EU laws on operations/infrastructure separation so we might as well get some benefit from the Brexit shambles.

An intelligent 'left' approach would be to push the franchising authorities (Welsh Government and DfT) towards further positive social, economic and environmental outcomes. This should include much greater emphasis on bus-rail integration and encouragement to operate integrated services. The unhelpful attitude of the Competition and Mergers Authority needs to be challenged.

People want to use railways. We are, at last, making the right moves to encourage that and the left needs to engage positively and imaginatively – and not be stuck with out-dated solutions. **C**

Paul Salveson blogs at [www.paulsalveson.org.uk](http://www.paulsalveson.org.uk)

**Dave Toke**  
explains  
why Trump  
might not  
make  
much of a  
difference  
to action  
on climate  
change

## Trump: climate change denier

The election of Donald Trump probably means that, one way or another, the USA will pull out of the Paris Agreement on climate change. This may make less difference to how much carbon the world would have emitted in future years than what you might think.

For a start the Paris Agreement already has enough national states as signatures representing a high enough proportion of global greenhouse gas emissions to remain valid with a US withdrawal. The Agreement requires there to be signatories representing at least 55 per cent of global emissions, and there's more than that left in the agreement without the USA.

Second, internally, such downwards pressure on carbon emissions as there is is mainly bound up with technological changes or policies that are likely to continue anyway. Coal consumption in the US has fallen by around a quarter since 2008, but according to a recent paper published in *The Electricity Journal* this has very little to do with Obama, and almost all to do with the increased availability of cheap natural gas. The growth in production of shale gas has been the factor that has reduced the demand for coal and led to the closure of increasing numbers of ageing coal fired power plant.

Another factor reducing coal use is the growth of renewable energy - mainly wind and solar. These technologies are promoted by a bi-partisan Congressional agreement on a policy of production tax credits (wind) and investment tax credit (solar). These will decline in force and run out in 2020. However, many Republican Congressmen are relatively sympathetic towards renewable energy, and there are possibilities that some form of tax credit support could be renewed. The Republicans may not care much for the climate issue, but they are interested in helping people, including often the renewable energy industry, make money.

Certainly Trump is likely to want to short-circuit Obama's 'Clean Power Plan' which was being pursued through the aegis of the Environmental Protection Agency, although even here, many states

will continue with their own clean power plans. Trump may order the reversal of the regulations restricting mercury and toxic emissions, compliance with which makes coal plant more expensive. However, as stated already, coal power plant are being retired without this measure anyway. Resistance to Republican initiatives to pare down environmental regulations may prove to be rather sturdier and more effective than the anti-environmentalists bargain for.

Third, there is the global impact of Trump's protectionist trade strategies to consider. Trade restrictions on China, and quite possibly even the EU, may help relieve competitive pressure on some US industries, but they will, overall, make the world poorer. China's economy is less robust than it appears, with rising levels of bank debts and it is vulnerable to US pressures to increase the value of its currency. Indeed, my outlook is that there will be anything from a global slowdown in economic growth to a full-blown world economic meltdown. This of course, to a greater or lesser extent, will have a downward pressure on carbon emissions and probably more than offset the impact of Trump's reversal of Obama's internal energy measures.

But there's no doubting the ferocity of the attack on climate change science being waged by many conservative Republicans. Indeed climate change deniers circulate petitions saying that scientists do not accept the notion of human-induced climate change. They get thousands of signatures for this, except that it seems just about anyone with a degree can sign them and that there seems to be a lack of climate scientists themselves signing the petition.

Trump is apparently intending to abolish NASA's climate science portal, and administrators working for US Government agencies are scurrying to get their science data copied before it is erased by the 'post-truth' brigade. Scott Pruitt, the man picked to be the new Head of the Environmental Protection Agency has said (in the *National Review*): 'Scientists continue to disagree about the degree and extent of global warming and its connection to the actions of mankind'. **C**



President-elect Donald Trump in evidence based policy mode



TRUMP

# Trumpism's triumph

Forget the rust belt, **Dave Cunningham** on how Trump won

Several polls conducted last summer suggested Clinton and Trump were the most disliked candidates in the history of the Presidency. Clinton was an exceptionally poor candidate given the baggage she carried, some of it not her fault as a victim of a 30-year Republican demonization campaign. Much related to her hawkishness (voting for the Bush-Blair war against Iraq, sabre-rattling against Russia, involvement in the Libyan destabilization), personal friendship with the war criminal Henry Kissinger and her cosiness with Wall Street, none very palatable for progressives or liberals, the people who drive Democratic Party get-out-the-vote ground-work.

## "Vote for us: we suck less"

Add to this a truly awful campaign...unfocussed, rambling and lacking a clear narrative and point. Clinton's message was heavily negative, endless fundraising paying for massive television advertising, focusing on Trump's grotesqueries and loutishness, exposing Trump's bigotry, misogyny the videotapes immigrant bashing, all of course true. But she gave no particular reason to support her. "Vote for us: we suck less" is not an effective motivational approach. To the extent she made programmatic points, as John Judis commented, they "read like bullet points in an office memo and simply eluded the greater public".

The Democratic Primary season should have warned her. 40% of the Democratic electorate voted for Bernie Sanders, a man probably unknown to party activists a year ago: a Senator from a tiny Northeast state, in his mid-70s with no money sources behind him and who self-identified as a democratic socialist (in mainstream US politics since the McCarthy 50s) and who had beaten Clinton in the rustbelt states of Michigan and Wisconsin. No one in the Clinton campaign seems to have noticed that the very states that Sanders won on themes of economic inequality,

the increasing wealth gap, the debt trap for college students and the proposal for free university education were presumed to be part of her Electoral College fire-wall!

An informative and insightful article, which appeared on [www.chartist.org.uk](http://www.chartist.org.uk) a few days after the election headed, 'Trump, white nativism and economic populism: a new (r)age for western politics', adds context and detail to the above:

"Economic populism has long been the not-so-secret-weapon in the rust-belt. Obama won in these rustbelt states in 2012 as he pushed a government bailout for the treasured (but declining) American car industry. The auto industry has become a symbol of America's once mighty Fordist production regime. Obama's opponent in 2012, Mitt Romney, was against the bailout and wanted to let the auto industry fall. This decided Ohio's result in 2012 and it took the rest of the rust belt with it...This year the party roles were reversed: Democrat Clinton – the face of Wall Street, and anti-trade Billionaire Trump (implausibly) – the 'champion of the people'...Donald Trump combined a different brand of economic populism with a counter-culture white nativism that, as right-wing populists usually do, included a heavy dose of racially charged anti-immigrant rhetoric."

Most of Clinton's losses in the rust belt states were by razor-thin margins. Nationally she won the vote by 2.6 million, some 2%.

Sociologists, Kilibarda and Roithmayr, did exit polling in five Rust Belt states in the online journal *Slate*. They challenge the growing consensus the white working class in the Rust Belt played a decisive role.

"Trump did not really flip white working-class voters in the Rust Belt. Mostly, Democrats lost them....The real story—the one the pundits missed—is that voters who fled the Democrats in the Rust Belt 5 were twice as likely either to vote for a third party or to stay at home than to embrace Trump."

"In short, the story of a white working-class revolt in the Rust

Belt just doesn't hold up ... In the Rust Belt, Democrats lost 1.35 million voters. Trump picked up less than half, at 590,000. The rest stayed home or voted for someone other than the major party candidates."

"This data suggests that if the Democratic Party wants to win the Rust Belt, it should not go chasing after the white working-class men who voted for Trump. The party should spend its energy figuring out why Democrats lost millions of voters to some other candidate or to abstention...."

In the early 1970s, then-President Nixon sought to reinvigorate the sclerotic Republican Party. The 'Southern Strategy' aimed to make the Republicans a national party by flipping the solid-south Dixiecrats, by inflaming white people's resentment of black gains in the Civil Rights movement and subsequent legislation. Cynical beyond belief, the strategy proved a roaring success, needing only a few election cycles to transform the whole south into a red zone.

## White nationalism

Over the past 40 years the Republican Party has morphed into a tightly-knit coalition of Southerners, rightwing evangelicals, the 1% and other wealthy and white people, by an ideology of white privilege and white resentment, expressed by racist dogwhistling (though rarely upfront racism). In 1980 Reagan used this approach effectively; eight years later Bush routed Michael Dukakis the same way. White nationalism now seems a part of the DNA of contemporary Republicanism (as is fervent anti-abortionism).

The Democratic Party has become, not always willingly, a loose coalition of groups opposed to or threatened by the values of the Republicans. This is the so-called Obama Coalition, containing the organized labour movement, African Americans and other ethnic minorities, immigrants, liberals, progressives and leftists, single and working class white women and lots of white people under 40 contains a large

proportion of Jews and increasingly Muslims and gay people. Its platform supports the gains of the New Deal of the 30s and 40s, Social Security, Medicare and the like, now under threat.

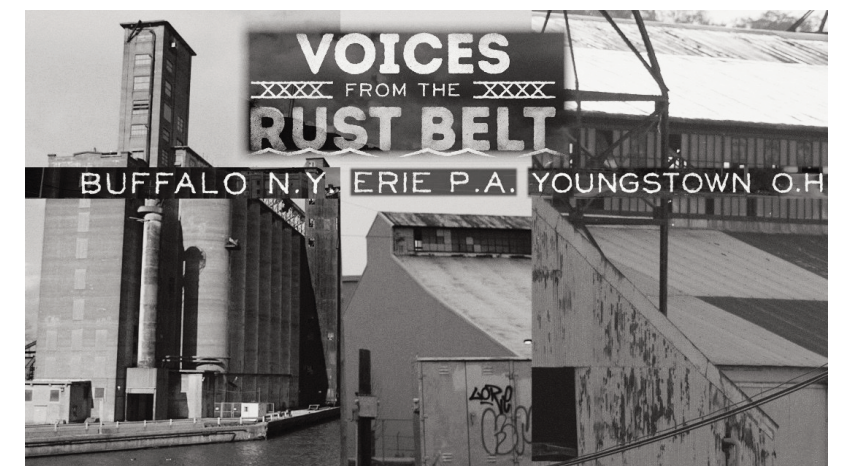
It is also funded to a large degree by major corporations, wealthy liberals and Wall Street firms and is led largely by a 'centrist consensus' of a whole generation of Democratic Party leaders, including Obama. Over the past decade they lost nearly a thousand seats in state legislatures, a dozen Governor's races, sixty nine House and thirteen Senate seats.

The face-off of these coalitions increased the polarization bemoaned by pundits and editorialists, but as the blocs represent existentialist threats to each other, this can only increase. The day after the election, African-American environmentalist commentator Van Jones charged: 'This was a whitelash against a changing country. It was whitelash against a black president in part.'

Clinton's loss is catastrophic

because the Republicans now control House and Senate, the Presidency and undoubtedly the Supreme Court in the near future. The Democratic Coalition is increasingly unable to protect its own members and its long-term social, ecological and economic gains. Trump's staff and Cabinet choices indicate he intends to push a hard-right administration, and the Democrats have little leverage to stop him.

Trump, whose rise to political prominence was based on promoting 'birther' nonsense about Obama, was able to pull the vast majority of Republicans, includ-



US rustbelt voters don't account for Trumpism's triumph

ing most Republican women, into a unified bloc with the far right and white supremacists enraged with the election and then re-election of a black President. Anything like this is almost without parallel in US politics, and to a very heavy degree the product of racism and misogyny. But it seems to be what really happened. **C**

# The left woke up too late

Although the electoral victory of Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton was not predicted by most of the media, an explanation is relatively uncomplicated says **Paul Garver**

The Democratic Party campaign unerringly found the narrow path to defeat. The framework for this defeat is established by the Electoral college, which awards all the electoral votes in a state based on even the narrowest plurality of votes in a way that favours states with smaller populations by granting them more electors per voter. Trump won the majority of national electoral votes in enough states.

For decades there has been a rough balance between Republicans and Democrats at the national level, with only marginal changes. Most cities vote Democratic, most suburban and rural areas Republican. There remain strongly Democratic areas in the Northeast and West Coastal states, even in suburban and rural areas, while Republican majorities dominate the Southern and Western Mountain states. With the larger turnout of younger and more racially diverse

voters in Presidential elections, Democrats like Obama could narrowly win states like Florida and North Carolina, allowing the election of a Democratic President.

However over the past decade, Republicans have solidified their political control over interior states, including formerly liberal ones like Wisconsin and Ohio. By carving up national and state legislative districts to create per-

## Clinton's major talking point in debates and advertising was that she was not Donald Trump

manent Republican majorities in rural and suburban areas, Republicans have entrenched their control of the national House and most state legislatures.

The Clinton campaign became over-reliant on anticipated favourable demographic changes, particularly the growth of the Latino population, presumed to be alienated by Trump's anti-immigrant and anti-Mexican poli-

cies. It also assumed that the normally Democratic preferences of unionized households would restrain the growth of the male white tribal vote that has increasingly leaned Republican.

The Clinton campaign relied too heavily on wooing millions of partisan Republican and conservative Independent voters who normally vote Republican by waging a largely negative campaign that pilloried Trump's myriad blunders and offensive comments and positions. Clinton's major talking point in debates and advertising was that she was not Donald Trump. She barely mentioned the progressive platform adopted by the Democratic National Convention under pressure from Sanders and his supporters.

Though the Trump campaign sent many prominent Republican politicians into fits of despair, very few Republican voters were sufficiently alienated to vote for

**Paul Garver is a member of Democratic Socialists of America**

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## TRUMP

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Clinton. On the other hand, the demographic constituencies the Democrats counted on – women, people of colour, educated urban dwellers – were not motivated to turn out in large enough numbers to win most of the swing states that Barack Obama had narrowly won in 2008 and 2012. There was a strongly anti-establishment mood among white voters particularly in the former industrial heartlands, and many of them viewed Clinton and not the billionaire Trump as representing the Establishment they feared and despised.

## Negative factors

The Democrats could not control these negative factors, particularly the unexpected surge of racial and nativist fears and animosities among the White tribe that Trump ruthlessly exploited making the election unpredictably close. But for Democrats to lose the election to such a flawed candidate as Trump required several blunders that were related and interactive.

I identified the first of these (*Chartist* 282) in predicting the possibility of a Trump victory, “enabled by Clinton’s waffling on the TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership), which is giving Trump a huge opportunity in several states that normally vote Democratic in Presidential elections (Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan), where corporate-dominated trade treaties are widely held responsible for industrial collapse.”

Trump’s razor-thin victories in Michigan and Pennsylvania (giving him a national electoral majority) were clearly based on his criticism of Clinton’s prior support for the TPP and the refusal of the Democratic platform to come out clearly against ratification.

## Underestimated the danger

The Democratic Party underestimated the danger of households of present (and former) unionized industrial workers switching their votes to Republicans to protest the loss of well-paying jobs in these states. It did not support the large-scale deployment of canvassers from Working America (an AFL-CIO associate) to talk to white working-class vot-

#WeNeedBernie: Support Sanders for President in 2016!



Democratic Socialists of America attracting millennials following Clinton’s defeat in the 2016 Presidential election - is there a pattern developing across the pond?

ers in these states, thinking them safe for the Democrats. In 2016 a majority voted for Trump.

It is tempting for the Left to complain about the failures of the neo-liberal wing of the Democratic Party, but we must take our share of responsibility. We had a good run with the candidacy of Bernie Sanders, coming closer than we could have hoped to his selection as the Democratic candidate. He would have defeated Trump. But we could have done more to insist that Clinton actually run on the progressive

### Too many sulked for too long about Sanders before waking up and reacting to the real dangers posed by Trump

planks we forced her to accept at the Democratic Convention. Too many sulked for too long about Sanders before waking up and reacting to the real dangers posed by Trump.

The progressive wing of the Democratic Party led by Sanders and Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren is trying to oust the discredited leadership by electing progressive Minnesota congressman (and Muslim) Keith Ellison as head of the Democratic National Committee. Ellison has been endorsed by the AFL-CIO. Ellison’s election would mark significant progress towards establishing a more left populist alternative to right wing Republicans.

Regardless of what happens within Democratic Party circles,

the Left and social movements are energized and prepared to organize effective resistance against the worst measures of the Trump administration. The (if perhaps temporary) victory of Native Americans against the routing of the Dakota Access Pipeline is encouraging, despite the catastrophic threat of inaction on global climate disruption.

## Numerous indications

There are numerous indications of growth and revitalization of Left and socialist organizations since the election. Throughout the country grassroots groups are accepting Sanders’ challenge to create local chapters of *Our Revolution* to continue the struggle both electorally and around issues. A massive march of women is being planned in DC for Trump’s inauguration day.

A major influx of millennial youth into the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) that began earlier in 2016 accelerated after Trump’s election. Thousands of young people woke up the day after the election to the necessity of the struggle for economic and social justice. Many new DSA locals and organizing committees have been established throughout the country, and the membership of some DSA locals quintupled within the last month.

The coming years will be challenging for the U.S. Left, as for the Left in Europe. We need to develop our international communications and commitments for mutual learning and support. **C**

## BREXIT

## Creating in a post-Brexit world

As the reality of Brexit begins to become clear **Keith Savage** examines some of the issues facing the creative industries in the UK

Those working in the creative industries were among the most committed to the Remain argument during last June’s referendum campaign. When the result was announced the level of despondency was not surprising. The sense of disappointment was personal but there was a broader sense that a significant part of the UK economy was now at risk.

The creative industries are said to be the fastest growing sector in the country, providing 1.11 million jobs, earning £87.4bn annually and contributing £20bn (10%) of services exports. For some the realisation that they were so out of touch with ‘their’ communities was shocking. Many arts organisations are small in terms of scale and funding; they are based in some of our more disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The artists and the administrators are generally liberal in social outlook and found what they saw as an illiberal, negative or hostile vote in those areas as hard to accept. “How did we come to be so out-of-touch?” one festival organiser from Kent asked me. Part of the answer, some would say, is that the arts and creative industries have got a bit too comfortable when it comes to working with Europe and the EU – they see all of the benefits and none of the problems.

## Benefits of being a member

So, what are the benefits of being a member of the EU to the creative industries? A recent report by the Creative Industries Federation (CIF) suggests that there are four key areas where the industries and Europe are crucially connected. These are to do with talent and skills; funding and cultural exchange; trade and investment; and regulatory frameworks, such as that dealing with Intellectual Property Rights. This article focuses on the first two of the four. What the CIF describes as ‘Brand Britain’ relies on a pool of specifically skilled and trained technical staff. Some will have valued talents that sin-

gle them out but most will have expertise that results from high-level training and industrial experience. Much of that comes from home-grown professionals but in some parts of the creative industries up to 40% of the workforce has come from the rest of Europe and beyond. The relatively easy movement of labour has been a great advantage to such specialist areas of work. Animation, visual effects and video game design are all industries with a widespread skills shortage. In a post-Brexit world there are two solutions that might make up for this shortage.

Either we could provide the training and experience for workers that live here already and who will continue to have the right to remain, or we can allow those with specialist knowledge the right to entry. Neither seems likely to happen. The government is rooted in a mid-20th century educational world where the industrial changes and opportunities of this century have yet to penetrate. It seems that creative subjects are more likely to be marginalised when it comes to the core curriculum. At further and higher education level there is little sign of the significant investment required in industrial apprenticeships of the sort demanded by the creative industries.

As for migrant labour making up the shortfall - well the Home Office regulations are unlikely to allow that. The £35,000 annual income requirement before being granted right of entry is beyond most. This will be especially true of those businesses located beyond London and the M25 belt. The CIF warns of serious problems for these industries and government action to anticipate these issues is needed now - not sometime in 2019 when the red, white and blue Brexit is close to being a reality. The widening of the industrial skills gap may be one issue. It may also become more difficult for British-based artists and performers to travel and earn money. The tumble in the value of sterling may make exports cheaper but currently



Sage at Gateshead: dependent on EU funding - like many regional regeneration schemes

simple visa requirements make travel and commercial touring relatively cheap, flexible and easy to arrange.

## In a post-Brexit world

One downside of ‘protecting our borders’ will be an inevitable tightening on travel for UK citizens. It is a fact that major UK arts projects have been dependent on a significant element of European funding. This is especially true of regional schemes such as the Sage in Gateshead or HOME in Manchester. In a post-Brexit world the UK government might make up for the loss of European grants for the arts - but a degree of scepticism could be forgiven. Bigger transformative projects are also at risk. Few cynics remain when it comes to recognising what being European Capital of Culture did for Glasgow and Liverpool. UK bids are due for 2023 - with Leeds a likely candidate. The present political uncertainty leaves this development in the balance. At a British level alone will this bring an end to the UK City of Culture initiative? It is already evident that Hull will be transformed by its successful 2017 bid and this owes a lot to the historic connections, as a port, it has with Europe. The post-Brexit world may give artists plenty to produce work about but it may well be produced by a smaller and less well equipped workforce undernourished by weakened international links. **C**



# Labour: after the Referendum

Policy confusion on numerous fronts means it is time for Corbyn's front bench to get a grip says **Duncan Bowie**

The Labour Party appears to have a low profile at present. The leadership still seems to be having difficulty in both deciding its position on BREXIT and if and when it has one on promoting it in a consistent manner. The Party seems to be focusing on criticising the Government on the lack of clarity in its position without having any more clarity as to its own, other than arguing for a 'soft' BREXIT rather than a 'hard one', which is not very different to the Government's 'have one's cake and eat it position'. What the Labour Party should be arguing much more clearly is that BREXIT will not solve the problems Britain faces and in fact is a diversion from facing up to these challenges.

Labour has been thrown off course, first by the EU referendum vote and then by the rushed restructuring of the Government under a leadership which is at least appearing to be more sympathetic to the concept of a 'One Nation' conservatism and even gives an impression that they believe that society should at least be a little more equal than it has been.

The Corbyn leadership did not have much of a chance to set out a new course with the shadow cabinet splintering and then the disruptive challenge to Corbyn's leadership. Corbyn, despite his second leadership victory has not however been able to exert any authority over the Labour party organisation or establish any sense of collective responsibility within his reconstituted shadow cabinet, and seems to be making a habit of making inappropriate appointments to his staff, which give an impression that he is not on the same planet as the rest of us.

Despite some valiant efforts by some shadow cabinet members, the Party's new leadership remains largely unknown to the electorate as a whole and has little media profile. It is perhaps not surprising that the media tends to focus on those who had profiles

both in opposition or in Government, such as Andy Burnham (soon out of parliament to be Mayor of Greater Manchester), Yvette Cooper, who has had a high profile on the refugee issue, and Ed Balls for his performance on Strictly Come Dancing.

The Party does not seem to be able to take a clear position on any substantive issue, whether it be Trident, where the party seems to be supporting renewal for fear of upsetting the unions over job losses, despite having a leader, shadow foreign secretary and shadow defence secretary who oppose renewal. The Party actually seems to be arguing for increasing the defence budget, though it is unclear who we want to fight.

Why is the Party not arguing for a programme of arms conversion? Securing Britain against terrorist threats does not necessarily mean we have to drop

**The Party does not seem to be able to take a clear position on any substantive issue**

bombs on other countries, which surely by now we have learnt is counter-productive, or implying support for dissidents when we do not have the political will or military capacity to back them up. What is the Party's position on interventions in other countries, described as humanitarian or otherwise? Where is the notion of a more ethical foreign policy, which we could have expected Emily Thornberry to support? What is the Labour Party saying about the UN and its clear failure to do anything useful in the horrific series of conflicts both in the Middle East and elsewhere, where the Security Council can't even agree on arrangements for evacuating non combatants?

On domestic issues, the Party also seems quiescent. There is little sign of John McDonnell's investment strategy, least of all because the Party won't discuss the tax issue so does not know how to fund any investment – the



Labour's shadow chancellor John McDonnell and leader Jeremy Corbyn weighing up policy options

quantitative easing proposition seems to have been dropped as it tends to appear to be 'funny money' and the notion that Labour cannot be trusted with the economy. The Party recognised that there is a need to rebalance the regional economy (and should have done so before the regional divisions over the referendum made it a bit more obvious that not all parts of England had recovered from the 2008 recession) but is frightened of depressing London's employment growth and after all Sadiq Khan, the pro-growth London Mayor is the most senior elected Labour politician, and appears to be a source of stability and sound thinking in this fractured country as well as within the fractured party.

The Party seems to be reluctant to make political choices which would upset anybody. On housing we can't decide whether to subsidise home owners (as proposed in the Redfern report led by a private developer commissioned by the Labour Party) or to fund new social housing. We can't do both. Labour would not even commit itself to repealing the appalling Housing and Planning Act, a piece of legislation which the Conservative government has itself recognised is unworkable and have in effect abandoned. On planning, the Labour Party appears to support localism rather than a structure for national and regional planning which would most effectively use both development capacity and infrastructure investment. On education, the Party remains con-

fused about academies and free schools, while on transport and the NHS we oppose the cuts without setting out how we would fund improved services – and on the issue of strikes whether on Southern Rail or in the postal service, we keep mum for fear of upsetting trade unions, employers or consumers and take the easy option of criticising the Government for not sorting out the mess.

What is perhaps most disappointing is the failure of the Party and many MPs to engage with the massive new membership.

Momentum groups continue to enthuse new activists, but rather than focus on campaigning issues, some activists have chosen to focus on internal Labour Party factional activity. This is disruptive, counter-productive and at times unpleasant and alienating. The fault however is on both sides – not every new activist should be treated as either a Trotskyist 'entrister' or naïve or both.

We should be prepared to collaborate with a range of allies where the objective is shared. I have spoken at Momentum meetings, at Defend Council Housing

and Axe the Housing Act meetings and even at the SWP's annual Marxism conference. I also work with professional groups, campaigning groups and councillors and MPs and even members of the House of Lords of all political parties (except UKIP) if necessary to argue the case for changes of policy in my areas of interest. We all need to be pluralist. We must forget the personalities and factional rivalries and get on with the real politics, which can have a real impact on peoples' lives. **C**

## Tories renege on worker's voice

Teresa May promised workers on the board in her PM acceptance speech. **Clive Lewis MP** highlights yet another dropped pledge

We have heard a lot about the Prime Minister's policy on corporate governance, but the more they said, the less we have actually known.

When the Prime Minister launched her leadership bid she said she wanted a change in the way big business is governed. She said: "later this year we will publish our plans to have not just consumers represented on company boards, but workers as well. Because we are the party of workers."

But it seems there has been a change of mind because just weeks ago we heard it was not about putting workers on boards but about finding a model that works for everyone. Perhaps it is the same model as for Brexit: to have their cake and eat it...

In November parliament debated the fate of Sir Philip Green. I said that the most shocking thing about the whole affair is that everything he did was legal. A key question today is whether anything that has been proposed would change that: do the proposals pass the BHS test?

Bringing private companies into the PLC rule book is a move so targeted at a particular series of events that I expect it will come to be known as the BHS law. However, had the proposals outlined by the Secretary of State been in place six months ago I am not wholly convinced we would have avoided the corporate governance scandals of last summer. To force private companies

to abide by the corporate governance code will do little unless the code is tightened. BHS may have been a private company, but Sports Direct is not, and we know what has gone on there.

To strengthen the power of boards to give oversight on how companies are run or their remuneration structures will change little unless the make-up of those boards is also shaken up, yet we all know what has happened to the Government's commitment to put a diversity of voices on boards.

For too long our economy has suffered from an inherent short-termism—a short-termism that sees the long-term health of a company being sacrificed for a quick buck, and that all too often obscures the link between rewards and long-term performance. In 1970, £10 in every £100 went on dividends; now, it is between £60 and £70. It is employees and investment that have lost out from this shift.

We see that in our pitiful investment and productivity rates. Britain now languishes 33rd out of the 35 OECD countries on investment rates. Seen in this light, it is no surprise that it takes British workers five days to produce what German workers



Clive Lewis is Labour MP for Norwich South and shadow Business Secretary

This is an edited version of his speech in the parliamentary debate on corporate governance

produce in four—and we see this in the yawning gap between top pay and average pay: in the 10% increase in executive pay when workers are suffering 10 years of stagnant wages...

Corporate governance reform is not just about improving the image of our corporate sector or placating our innate sense of injustice at the lack of proportionality between the salaries of directors and their employees; nor is it just about fulfilling the wishes of the six out of 10 members of the public who, as TUC figures show, want to see workers on boards. These things matter, of course, but corporate governance reform is also about changing the way our companies, and therefore our economy, work.

The recasting of how our economy works is key to Britain's success. Without more long-termism in our corporate practices, we will not be able to address the problems. **C**



## POPULISM

# Spectre of the far right in Europe

**Claude Moraes** surveys the far right threat in Europe post-Brexit and Trump

**M**uch is being said and written about the threat of the far-right in the EU, and the common denominators with the Trump result in the US. Chartist readers will no doubt be aware of the competing arguments about what underpins populist, neo-fascist and far right gains both across Europe and now in the United States. From my perspective chairing the European Parliament's biggest committee dealing with issues of migration, fundamental rights and values (and where the membership of my committee includes far-right MEPs, including Le Pen and Udo Voigt) there is nothing new about this steady and deliberate rise of fascism in the West. But undoubtedly we have reached a dramatic tipping point where the levers of power in key countries could more visibly be pulled by racist populists and opportunists and by those whose ideology is clearly neo-fascist, but presented in a more complex way. So the election of Trump, the prospect of Le

Pen, close shave with Hofer in Austria, the AfD in Germany – were these the votes of the “left behind” people affected by austerity and globalization, voting against elites or was it a racist reaction against immigration and refugees?

The answer is that all of these issues are coming to bear on what is a serious development in western countries. We have reached a point where the dominant groups in most western democracies feel a sense of threat and electoral advantage can be made of the sense of threat by any strategic or charismatic populist with a far right or populist movement.

If it were simply the vote of the “left behind” and globalisation in Trump's America, or in the French Presidential elections next year, then the populist Left would also strengthen its arm. But only one component of this dangerous composition are voters, who are reacting to losing out through globalization, the stagnation of their wages, loss of jobs, and the increasing gap between rich and poor in virtually all western

democracies particularly since the crash in 2008. In the United States the poorest Americans and the vast majority of ethnic minorities still voted Democrat. Many people who were doing well were strongly attracted to the protectionist, overtly racist and white supremacist message of Trump. It is shocking when written down and said aloud, but when millions of well educated, well off Americans vote in this way, it is important to understand exactly what people are voting for. The deep seated racism and misogyny in the US elections are very clear but can be confused in an economic analysis which somewhat dilutes their effect.

For the Left all over Europe, we are now faced with the complex mix of populists like the Five Star movement in Italy, the reinvented neo-fascist Le Pen in France, the ultra nationalist racism of Orban in Hungary, the neo-nazi FPOe of Norbert Hofer in Austria and multiple populist and far right parties like our own UKIP. It is important to understand that their appeal is to an

anti-immigrant and protectionist sensibility. While there are many moderate members of the Five Star Movement for example, its emerging new young leader is the son of an Italian fascist. It is important to always remember the far right and national socialist roots of Europe's and indeed US populist movements.

The Left should be in no doubt about the historical parallels, mainly because the movement of the far right across the EU has been taking place for many years. They have slowly and steadily taken their position in most member states of the EU as either coalition partners of centre right governments, or as with UKIP and the Five Star Movement in Italy, they have helped shift public opinion in a more anti-immigrant, anti-EU populist direction even though they have not achieved a place in government.

If we had stopped and looked at what was happening in Hungary and Austria before even the refugee crisis, we can see this development building on austerity post the 2008 crash and of course rapidly rising as the refugee crisis moved into top gear. The reality however, in most western countries is that the demographics are changing fundamentally. When Trump told his voters repeatedly “that this was their last chance” to vote for his politics he was sending a message about a United States where in a

few years time the working population would be less than 50 per cent white. Blaming the ‘other’ for the problems of austerity now no longer brings a place in coalition government for the Danish Peoples Party in Denmark or Jobbik in Hungary - it can help deliver you the Presidency of the United States.

**For the Left all over Europe, we are now faced with the complex mix of populists like the Five Star movement in Italy, the reinvented neo-fascist Le Pen in France, the ultra nationalist racism of Orban in Hungary, the neo-nazi FPOe of Norbert Hofer in Austria and multiple populist and far right parties like our own UKIP**

For the Left the challenge is enormous, but history tells us that there is no time to lose or to lie down in front of far right populism, racism and protectionism. If we buy in to the racist and protectionist philosophy of right wing populists in a more globalized economy, it is the most vulnerable in society who will be further hit. The Left must take care not to pick up the wrong lessons from the populist right. Immigration, for example, is now a reality as western populations age. This will mean the movement of people

will not stop just because freedom of movement to the UK has ended. In time this reality will become clearer and the need for politicians to tell the truth more urgent.

The coming months and years will see a popular and populist take down of so called elites by ‘the most elite’ politicians: hedge fund managers, right wing and fundamentalist politicians and media owners. We will see this in an increasingly monopolised right wing media driving home the message that populism is working.

It is entirely possible that as the American economy rises after years of rebuilding, following the post 2008 crash, far from losing the argument, populists and racists may find some temporary vindication. This will be the toughest moment for the Left, as it has been during right-wing protectionist inspired periods in the past. We have to learn from history and ensure that we have the courage to present socialist and social democratic policies, knowing that in time the Left and centre-Left will have to clean up the mess. Until then the West is about to go through a painful period of adjustment. That cannot mean we sit back and watch, we have to fight every day, every election, confident in an anti-austerity and yes, anti-racist platform. **C**

**Claude Moraes is Member of European Parliament for London and Chair of the European Parliament's Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee**



**Claude Moraes** Labour MEP for London championing civil liberties and justice in the EU

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## BREXIT

# Will right-wing 'Populism' kill the European Project?

John Palmer questions the irreversibility of Brexit and calls for Labour to work for derailment

*Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The best of us lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.*

It is easy to see in W.B. Yeats powerful 1919 poem *The Second Coming* a prophetic warning for our times. The threat from the rise of profoundly reactionary, nationalist, racist and potentially totalitarian forces throughout much of the 'western' world is unmistakable. The precise circumstances which produced Brexit, the election of Donald Trump as US President, the emergence of 'illiberal democracies' in parts of Eastern Europe, the defeat of the Renzi referendum in Italy, the continuing rise of the French National Front and other far right parties, may differ – but they have similar roots and share a common political direction of travel.

The common roots include a bitter, popular backlash against the protracted economic crisis of the past two decades, profound anger at growing inequality, falling real living standards, the insulated life styles of the super-rich, contempt for mainstream and centrist political parties and an alarming acceptance of a narrow nationalist and racist reading of the causes of the crisis. All of these helped form the toxic mix which has led to Brexit and the current crisis in Italy.

This should not justify any sense of political fatalism. The biggest danger posed by the populist far right is not that it can take political power in the short term, but that its values and goals increasingly penetrate the centrist parties of the right and even social democratic parties. Nowhere is this danger more clearly manifest than in the case of Brexit where most of the Tory party and swathes of the Parliamentary Labour Party are moving to a 'we too' attitude on Leaver issues such as ending free movement of EU labour and accepting Brexit as irreversible.

One reason to question irreversibility is the obvious chaos ruling within Theresa May's government on how to actually handle EU withdrawal negotiations. Confusion rules on whether the government wants to remain a *member* of the single market or merely retain general or partial *access* to it (an access they may seek only for some selected economic sectors). Linked to this is the squabbling over whether or not any access should involve some continuing payments to the EU budget or *some* degree of submission to the European Court of Justice for those sectors. Even membership of the EU Customs Union is in question.

Increasing differences are also emerging over whether – in a worst-case scenario of breakdown in the negotiations – the UK should depend only on World Trade Organisation rules. This would not guarantee tariff free trade access to the EU single market. In addition, there are big differences over the extent of any exceptions to the end of free movement of EU citizens. Above all there is no clear agreement on what a possible, protracted 'transitional agreement' with the EU might look like and

for how long it would mean actually deferring full EU withdrawal (some talk of 2029).

Labour has not voted to expedite the government's submission of Article 50. Admittedly the attempt to block it would have been politically risky. It would have been presented – and look to many people – like an attempt to negate the outcome of the referendum. It became clear that only a very small minority of MPs – including the Scottish and Welsh nationalist parties and some Liberal Democrats with a handful of Labour members – would support such a move.

However, the eventual ruling of the Supreme Court next month on the legal procedures for triggering Article 50 may include some serious political headaches for the May government. If the Court rules that the consent of the Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast administrations is necessary before Article

meets the terms of the complete rupture with the EU which they have always argued for. Would the hard right really accept continued EU budget payments or some continuing European Court of Justice's jurisdiction for the UK?

It is not difficult, therefore, to foresee circumstances in which the government – already facing a diminishing Parliamentary majority and being weakened further by the impact of slower growth, rising inflation and falling living standards – could lose that vote. What then? The government would face some very unpalatable options. They include:

1. Return to Brussels to beg for a further opportunity and yet more time to renegotiate the terms of the agreement. There is precious little evidence that, having made some concessions to the British government the other 27 Member States would want to protract the process still further, given the

and Northern Ireland is also necessary for Article 50 to be activated, the government's position would become perilous.

For the socialist left there is, however, an even more serious challenge looming over the Brexit dramas. Can the Euro currency and even the European Union itself survive the nationalist tempest sweeping across the whole continent, not just the UK?

There is a danger that the demoralised centrist parties and even European political establishment as a whole will try to buy time by adopting some of the most pernicious slogans of the populist far right. But this kind of manoeuvre is most unlikely to fool the populists' voter base.

By legitimating racist and xenophobic responses, these voters will only be more inclined to vote for the real racists and xenophobes – not their imitators – in future. That is surely an obvious lesson from the 1930s.

In all of the current political turmoil, a serious alternative socialist, progressive European voice has yet to make itself heard. Jeremy Corbyn is to be congratulated for advocating a fighting front of 'European socialists and other progressive forces.'

The first step will be an important conference in London in the near future to organise opposition to austerity. Such an alliance should include not only EU social democratic parties but also radical socialist parties like Syriza in Greece, Podemos in Spain, the German and Portuguese Left parties, among others.

The European left should also work with as many of the progressive Green parties in Europe as possible. In Germany, in a stark contrast to what happened in the 1930s, the SPD, the Left party and the Greens have already agreed a common platform to fight the right in the next general election.

There is also a case for extending cooperation in Britain to left nationalist parties such as the SNP and Plaid Cymru as well as Sinn Féin and the SDLP in Northern Ireland, who all campaigned to remain in the EU. Such an alliance must hammer out a European programme to defend the progressive social, environmental and equalities achievements of the EU ever since the Delors years, whatever the pressure from the right. It must also work out an economic and social recovery strategy to be fought for and implemented across the EU.

But any European left strategy has got to affirm the goal of a more democratic and federal European Union, capable of meeting the increasingly global challenges of economic stagnation, grotesque social inequality, a disastrous degradation of the environment and – above all – a security and disarmament strategy to counter the rise of bellicose power politics in Washington, Moscow and beyond. This might boost the case for a much more thorough-going democratic federalising of the ramshackle and deeply reactionary UKanian state.

There is nothing inevitable about any repetition today of the lines of Yeats' apocalyptic conclusions in his *Second Coming* poem. But his is a warning we ignore at our peril. **C**



Populism: corroding the the values of the body politik

50 can be triggered, the May government will be in a serious mess because the Scottish government might insist on the right to a different, closer relationship with the EU.

Moreover the activation of Article 50 does *not* mean that the Brexit cannot be derailed by a later vote in Parliament. The really important moment for Parliament will come when, at some stage in the two years following the triggering of Article 50, the government has to report back on the deal they have obtained (assuming some such agreement can even be reached).

At that point MPs will have to decide whether the eventual draft agreement fully protects the rights and standards citizens have as EU members. This will also depend on what assurances the government gives that existing rights and standards will be guaranteed against future government action after leaving the EU to weaken labour rights, environmental standards and other parts of EU law.

But questions will also be asked by hard line Tory 'leavers' about whether the agreement actually

many other existential threats to the future of the Union.

2. Acknowledge that no agreement is possible and that when the two year Article 50 clock runs down, in March 2019, pursue the worst kind of ultra-hard Brexit, some type of World Trade Organisation regime for trade with the EU and the rest of the world. This would be a nightmare for exporters into the single market and would eliminate any prospect of a privileged status for UK companies (including the City) in the single market.

3. Withdraw the UK Article 50 submission and try to campaign for some changes in the details of British rights and responsibilities while remaining full members of the EU. It is now clear that the government can unilaterally withdraw Article 50 at any stage until the expiry of the two-year grace period.

If the Supreme Court ruling on the role of Parliament in the Brexit process underlines the 'revocable' nature of Article 50 itself and insists that the consent of the governments in Scotland, Wales

John Palmer is  
former European  
editor of the  
*Guardian*



## LUCAS PLAN

# An idea whose time has come?

Nigel Doggett reports on the Lucas Plan - Forty Years Anniversary Conference

The visionary Lucas Plan (see [lucasplan.org.uk](http://lucasplan.org.uk)) was prompted in 1974 by the Lucas Aerospace company plans for restructuring involving job losses. Trade unionists across the company realised that opposing redundancies was not enough; they should develop socially useful alternatives to its heavily armaments-oriented product range. The resulting 1976 Alternative Corporate Plan's proposals included green technologies such as energy conservation, wind turbines, hybrid car engines and a celebrated road rail bus. A documentary film and a reissued book by Hilary Wainwright and Dave Elliott are due out this year. Although the Plan's ideas were not implemented by the company and lacked support from the government or wider trade union movement, they inspired various initiatives, some adopted later by the Greater London Enterprise Board, and many were developed elsewhere.

What can we learn for the challenges we face in 2017?

The week of the anniversary conference in Birmingham last November, temperatures in the Arctic were shown to be 20 degrees above the norm, with potentially devastating consequences. 'Business as usual' in several senses is no longer an option.

The event provided a chance to learn and build on the inspiration of this grassroots-led process. Major themes were arms conversion, socially useful production and the Just Transition, encapsulating the need to move from the UK's dominant arms and fossil fuel industries to low carbon alternatives, whilst ensuring that skilled, well paid, unionised jobs are created with employee participation. Dominant ideologies still emphasise the roles of big government or private companies, with simplistic narratives largely ignoring the knowledge, motivation and skills of employees. The innovative role of civil society groups is increasingly prominent but the trade unions have been cast in defensive roles from the 1980s miners strikes up to the

current Southern Rail dispute.

Technology doesn't get much coverage on the left beyond being seen as good, modernising and implicitly politically neutral. Yet there is a rich tradition of radical science and technology exemplified by Mike Cooley's book *Architect or Bee*, covering the Plan and a radical critique of technology under capitalism (see review below). Cooley's work presaged the wave of technological change through the ICT revolution, the destruction of traditional heavy industries and the wholesale destruction of working class

**Nigel Doggett is studying Innovation and Energy Transitions as part of an MSc in Climate Change and Policy at the University of Sussex**



cultures and communities reliant on them.

The 'Jobs vs Environment' myth refuses to die, despite studies showing that low carbon industries create more sustained employment than armaments, fossil fuels or nuclear power. At the 2016 TUC Conference a motion on Climate Change proposed by TSSA was defeated by Unite and GMBATU, unions dominated by old heavy industrial interests. Any green activist will be dismayed by the GMB positions on fracking, nuclear power and renewable electricity. Yet

these are contested: the big super-unions span many sectors and interests, so GMB represents many members in education. There are voices arguing for change in Unite, while public sector and new technology-related unions such as the UCW, FBU, UCU, Unison and PCS have adopted progressive positions. There is huge potential in renewable energy, green transport, control and storage technologies but new constituencies and coalitions need to be built and the fears of those who could lose out must be addressed by local alternatives. Numerous local alternative plans are being developed and there is scope for sharing, co-operation and publicity.

There are still differences of outlook between the Labour movement and the largely middle class green movement. There are many activists who span this divide but their impact has been less than the sum of their parts. Yet a plethora of lively campaigns have sprung up. The Million Climate Jobs campaign sponsored by the Campaign against Climate Change has produced an accessible booklet, available from its website. Its Trade Union group is

organising a conference on *Climate Change and Migration* in London on February 11th.

The Green Jobs Alliance is pursuing challenges such as alternative methods of steel production in Yorkshire. Green economist and MEP Molly Scott-Cato recently issued a report on conversion options for the Devonport dockyard, which plays a major role in maintaining nuclear submarines. The Green Party has an active Trade Union Group and the new Labour Energy Group is seeking support. SERA, the long-standing Labour environment campaign held its AGM on the same day.

The conference showed a unity of purpose between trade unionist, Labour and Green party members, academics and environmentalists, many attendees spanning several groups. Green left activists working across the labour movement need to address the many local economic and social challenges involved. The walls between the Labour and green movements are breaking down but in the age of Trump and Brexit we need to dissolve divides of class, gender and culture. **C**

## Taking control

Mike Davis on a pioneering study inspired by the Lucas Plan

**ARCHITECT OR BEE? THE HUMAN PRICE OF TECHNOLOGY**  
Mike Cooley (Spokesman, £10.99)

This was a ground-breaking book when first published in 1980. Today in the midst of global warming and economic turbulence with continuing deindustrialisation in Britain, its republication is both timely and its message prescient.

Cooley was an engineer who achieved an international reputation as an activist trade unionist and academic. The centrepiece of his thinking was that technology and automation need not be driven by destructive arms production and capitalist profit maximisation. Nor need the process be alienating and repetitive for the worker.

Rather the skills and ingenuity of workers could be harnessed in the creative design of human centred socially useful production.

Cooley came up with a huge variety of ideas, developed with colleagues in trade unions. These included the hybrid road rail bus,

prototypes of city cars and medical equipment for developing countries. The book is more a mosaic of sketches and views drawn widely from speeches in Trafalgar Square to conference papers. The ideas were worked out in practice and brought together in this volume. It may be uneven, and a little technical and dated in places, but actual experi-

**The skills and ingenuity of workers could be harnessed in the creative design of human centred socially useful production**

ence is like that.

The title always intrigued me. It's from Karl Marx and means that while the bee creates hugely complex cell structures the human architect creates in her imagination that which s/he will ultimately erect in reality. Future planning is the difference. So we have choices. The book has a new introduction by TUC head Frances O'Grady. She highlights

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# Bring back Robin Hood

The Charter of the Forest is still relevant says **Julie Timbrell**

**T**his year will be the 800th anniversary of the Charter of the Forest. While the Magna Carta of 1215 is now much more famous, the Charter of the Forest of 1217 at the time was certainly as important, maybe more so, because it gave commoners rights, privileges and protection against the abuses of the king, his sheriffs and the encroaching aristocracy.

Crucially it allowed people to subsist and have access to the commonwealth, in the forests, chases and heaths. It prevented the king and his agents from continuously enclosing the common land. More than that, it required King Henry III to give up the parts of the royal forest lands that had been seized by the previous kings Richard and John. From the time of William the Conqueror, the Norman kings had enclosed more and more land, for hunting and for levying tax receipts and fines for war. Huge tracts of land were turned into Royal Forest, including most of Essex.

## End to cruel punishments

The Charter of the Forest also put an end to cruel punishments and arbitrary fines. Before the agreement, hunting for deer was punishable by death, and poachers could be castrated and blinded. The Robin Hood legends are set in this period and tell of feasting on the venison in the Greenwood, and of evading the Sheriff of Nottingham in the Royal Forest. These are tales of brave resistance in a brutal time.

One of the major conflicts that raged throughout the 13th century and beyond was the continued enclosure of land. Successive kings, with early support from the Pope, either reneged on the Magna Carta and Charter of the Forest agreements, or simply ignored their provisions. Kings continued to seize land, which led to conflict and war with the barons. As a result both the charters were revised and reissued several times throughout the 13th century, as peace treaties to settle civil war. Finally both charters

were incorporated into statute in 1297.

At a time when the royal forests were the most important source of food, fuel and wood, the Charter guaranteed commoners rights to gather berries, herbs and honey, to have pasture for pigs and other animals, to collect wood for building homes and for firewood, and to cut turf for fuel. The charter also granted to smallholders the right to farm or make a mill or fish preserve.

The rule of law was also established within the Royal Forests. The charter laid down a system of governance for the common stewardship of shared resources, which has lasted for centuries.

Conflict over land ownership and common rights has continued down the centuries as kings and landowners have continued to grab land, demand unreasonable taxes and curtail access to the commons. They have been met by protests, revolts, and

## The charter laid down a system of governance for the common stewardship of shared resources, which has lasted for centuries

uprisings. The rights and traditions of commoning, laid down in the Charter of the Forest, have been a constant source of creative resistance.

In the decades leading up to the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 there were gatherings throughout the forests where *villains* (the poorest with fewest rights) joined together to set labouring rates. This movement for economic justice was supported and aided by agitators, some of whom were travelling jurists who attended the courts established by the Charter of the Forest, and enabled the spread of ideas. The local assemblies formed became known as the 'Great Society' and were one of the means of building opposition to ending serfdom and resisting the Poll Tax, two of the main demands of the Peasants' Revolt, when thousands gathered in Blackheath Common, London.

By the 19th Century the commons in the cities took on a differ-

ent role for everybody, becoming primarily places of leisure, rather than places for needed for subsistence and economic survival. Successive land enclosures had moved many of the rural poor off the land and there was now a need for open spaces in the overcrowded cities. Both the middle classes and working classes visited commons and parks to enjoy the greenery, play sports, enjoy fairs and meet people. Commons were a popular location for preachers to address the crowds, and for protesters to meet and assemble.

This transfer of land from common to park land was a frequent compromise reached in the Victorian era, with local working class people often working alongside more privileged commoners in the Commons Preservation Society to save public space. London would not still have large open spaces but for the combination of direct action, community organisation and legal action taken by thousands of local people mobilising during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries to stop the plans of rich.

## Conflicts over the use of space

These conflicts over the use of space have intensified in London in our century. Council housing estates are being sold off to private developers, frequently with significant loss of public housing. Some of the most intense recent protests have been over housing. Community protests around the Garden Bridge in Vauxhall have united disparate social groups protesting at the folly of the enterprise, the loss of trees, and the corporate takeover of public space. The denuding of public space by regulation and red tape is as much a danger to democracy as the outright loss of public space.

New Putney Debates, a collective that emerged out of Occupy London, will be hosting a celebration of the Charter of the Forest in the autumn of 2017, exploring its contemporary relevance to struggles for land, housing and the commons. **C**

# British bombs: human disaster

**Andy Gregg** highlights UK government hypocrisy as Labour calls for suspension of British involvement and the Foreign Secretary attacks proxy wars

**V**ery occasionally, Boris Johnson's scattergun self-promoting pronouncements hit the mark. It is ironic that his recent critique of both the Saudis and Iranians for conducting a proxy war in Yemen is not only bang on target but has also caused significant embarrassment to the UK Government as well as the British military and diplomatic establishments. The deliberately indiscriminate bombing campaign by the Saudis conducted with both British aircraft and missiles is surely a prima facie case of a war crime. Over 7000 people have been killed and over five times as many injured since March 2015, mostly in air strikes by a Saudi-led multinational coalition that backs the current President Hadi. The conflict and blockade imposed by the coalition has also triggered a humanitarian disaster, leaving 80% of the population in need of aid. The most vulnerable children have already begun dying of famine and malnutrition in this, the poorest country in the entire region.

## The Saudis claim

The Saudis claim that the rebels are backed by Iran because the backbone (though not by any means the entirety) of the rebel forces are made up of Shia Houthi fighters from the north of Yemen. Saudi Arabia has for many years been terrified of its own Shia minorities who are located in the same north and eastern parts of Saudi Arabia as its major oil fields. Since the Iranian revolution in 1979 the Saudis have felt threatened by the Iranians and their Shia allies both in Saudi Arabia itself but also as the disenfranchised but majority population in Bahrain and other key oil producing areas in the region. This regional rivalry continues to bedevil the whole of the Middle East and can be found lurking behind the conflagrations in Syria (where Iran and its Hezbollah allies support President Assad – who is himself from the Alawite

sect, a branch of Shia Islam), Iraq, Lebanon, Kuwait and even further afield.

The war in Yemen has its roots in the breakdown of the political transition that was intended to stabilise the country following the overthrow of its longtime authoritarian president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, who was forced to concede power to President Hadi, previously his deputy, in 2011. In the following months the state of Yemen fell apart under a plethora of problems. Al-Qaida captured large parts of the countryside in the eastern regions and there was a separatist movement in the south. Constant threats of army revolts by officers loyal to former President Saleh, as well as massive corruption, unemployment and food insecurity led to a power vacuum. Disillusioned with the transition, many ordinary Yemenis - including Sunnis - supported the Houthis and in September 2014 they captured the capital, Sanaa and took over swathes of the Western and Northern areas of the country.

In the teeth of this appalling catastrophe Labour's call for a suspension of arms sales to the Saudis is absolutely vital even though it has little chance of success. Since the multibillion pound Al Yamamah arms deal in the 1980s between the Saudis and the Thatcher Government, successive UK Governments have always cared more about the billions of pounds flowing into the British armaments industry than about any ethical or even strategic problems such as arms sales might throw up. The Al Yamamah agreement is the largest ever UK export agreement. In 2005 the then CEO of BAE Systems confirmed that BAE had already earned £43bln in 20 years from these contracts and that it was expecting to earn at least another £40bln. How appalling that these contracts are without exception for weapons systems that have been used against civilians in the region despite pathetic attempts to manipulate end-user certificates and secure meaningless assurances that the arms would not be

used against civilians. In 2010 BAE pleaded guilty in a US court, to charges of false accounting and making misleading statements in connection with these sales. An investigation by the UK Serious Fraud Office into the deal was discontinued after political pressure from the Saudi and British governments.

## Suspend arms sales

In September 2016 the Foreign Affairs Select Committee published a report that set out their views on the situation in Yemen. However, plans to have their recommendation to suspend arms sales endorsed by the joint committee on arms controls exports (CAEC) were blocked by opposition led by Conservative chair, Crispin Blunt. In a highly unusual move, however, the foreign affairs committee simultaneously produced its own report suggesting the legitimacy of UK arms sales should be left for a court to decide, but also called for an independent UN-led investigation into allegations that Saudi Arabia has repeatedly violated international humanitarian law in Yemen. Crispin Blunt said: "We have substantive recommendations on the need to establish clarity on such issues as the alleged use of UK-manufactured cluster bombs in Yemen and the activities of UK personnel with the Saudi-led coalition..... there is a clear need for a wider discussion on the suitability of the laws governing arms exports. The Government has serious work to do in answering this report."

In these circumstances Boris Johnson's off-piste statements about the Saudis puppeteering and waging proxy wars with the Iranians should have received far more attention from the British media if they weren't so constantly intent on attacking Corbyn and the left. Corbyn called for Johnson to be 'brave enough' to back calls to stop selling arms to Saudi Arabia at his recent speech on human rights day. Sadly this appeal received virtually no press coverage. **C**

**Andy Gregg is  
Director of Race  
on the Agenda**



## PALESTINE

# 'New-anti-semitism' - an opportunity for Palestinian advocacy?

**Salma Karmi-Ayyoub** argues that the current debate has opened up space to restate the case for a secular single state solution

The anti-Semitism row within the Labour Party is part of a broader Israeli campaign which asserts that opposition to Zionism or the "right of Israel to exist" – which really means the right of Israel to be a Jewish state – is in itself anti-Semitic. Mark Regev, Israel's recently-appointed ambassador to Britain, told the BBC's Andrew Marr on 1 May, a few days after the row erupted, that, "Today, modern anti-Semites target the collective Jew, the Jewish state." Israel claims that pro-Palestinian activists, particularly the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, are engaged in the "delegitimisation of Israel... denying the Jewish people the right to self-determination in their homeland – Israel."

Yet, is anti-Zionism, or opposition to the existence of Israel as a Jewish state, anti-Semitic per se? Hostility or hatred towards Jews because they are Jews – truly unacceptable – is surely distinguishable from opposition to a political movement that established a Jewish state in Palestine, even if many Jews support it. Furthermore, Israel itself is a political construct and thus separate from the people it claims to represent, so opposition to it as a state does not constitute a form of racism against the Jewish people.

The real question is this: why is Israel so intent on promoting the idea that opposition to Zionism is specifically and necessarily a form of anti-Semitism? This assertion has only come to the fore of Israeli propaganda relatively recently and is distinct from the more general assertion that criticism of Israel indicates an underlying anti-Semitism because it singles Israel out for special treatment or is especially vociferous. And what will be the effect of the anti-Semitism campaign on Palestinian rights, if it succeeds in silencing all opposition to Zionism?

Israel's motivation for the anti-Semitism campaign is clearly that

it hopes to silence widespread international condemnation of its policies, particularly over illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank and assaults on Gaza. However, Israel's deeper objective is also to block questions about Israel's legitimacy as a Jewish state.

By asserting that anti-zionism is a form of anti-semitism Israel aims to prevent discussion about the nature and consequences of Zionism by silencing debate about the political ideology that governs Israel's constitution and is therefore at the heart of its perceived legitimacy. It is an idea that has only been promoted intensely in recent years in direct relation to developments that threaten Israel's legitimacy or viability as a Jewish state.

In fact the suggestion that anti-Zionism is a form of anti-Semitism dates back at least to 1973, when it was aired in an article written by Israel's then Foreign Minister Abba Eban, in an article for the *American Jewish Congress*. However, it only emerged prominently in Israel's political discourse in 2001 in response to the UN's Durban conference on racism in which the idea that Zionism is a form of racism was discussed. Israel then established the "Coordination Forum for Countering Anti-Semitism" to monitor anti-Semitism worldwide, defining anti-Zionism as a form of "new anti-Semitism".

The most recent developments that have renewed the issue include the breakdown of negotiations for a two-state solution – itself rendered virtually impossible by Israel's illegal settlement enterprise in the West Bank – which has led Palestinians and their supporters to discuss alternatives. These include proposals for a single democratic state in Israel-Palestine, or for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza to pursue a civil rights-style movement for voting rights in Israel. Both ideas, if implemented, would see the end of

Israel as a solely Jewish state.

Moreover, and partly because the Oslo peace process failed to end the Israeli occupation, Palestinian civil society activism, with the BDS movement at the fore, has increased. BDS indirectly calls Israel's claim to be a Jewish state into question by placing the Palestinian right of return and equality for Palestinian citizens of Israel among its key demands; these demands explicitly challenge the state's self-proclaimed Jewish character.

In addition, Palestinian Israeli citizens have, since at least 2000 – the start of the second Palestinian intifada – become more demonstrative in support of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and more assertive in demanding their right to full equality in Israel. In part, this has been a response to the Israeli government's discrimination and increasingly hostile rhetoric towards them. For example, Israeli politicians, including Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman, have advocated their transfer out of Israel altogether. Their demands for full equality in Israel also compromise its ability to be a state that privileges Jews. In short, these recent developments have rendered Israel increasingly insecure about its legitimacy.

Thus, and especially in response to the BDS movement, Israel's anti-Semitism campaign has become far more robust. For example, in 2012 the National Union of Israeli Students launched an initiative to spread propaganda on the internet to counter the "delegitimisation of the State of Israel". In 2014, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also complained of Israel's "delegitimisation" in his speech to the UN General Assembly, while Israel's 5th Global Forum for Combating Anti-Semitism, held in Jerusalem in 2015, developed an action plan to tackle anti-Semitism. It emphasised "the Jewish consen-



Former Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban who first suggested anti-Zionism is a form of anti-semitism in an article for the *American Jewish Congress* in 1973

sus that BDS is anti-Semitic" and the need to "reassert the legitimacy of Israel's founding as a state for the Jewish people."

Israel has taken other measures to entrench its Jewish character. For instance, in 2011 Knesset members proposed a bill that would have confirmed Israel as the nation-state of Jews alone, thus disenfranchising its Palestinian citizens, although it has yet to be voted into law. In addition, since around 2009, Israel has insisted that any future peace treaty with the Palestinians will require their recognition of Israel "as a Jewish state".

If Israel's campaign is intended to label all anti-Zionist activism and questions about Israel's legitimacy as anti-Semitic hate speech, what will be the implications for Palestinian advocacy of such positions if the campaign succeeds?

Firstly, Palestinian advocacy of rights that challenge Israel as a Jewish state would be considered to be a form of anti-Semitism. Thus, Palestinians could not demand the right of return to Israel, or full equality for Palestinian citizens of Israel because these rights would make it impossible, or at least more difficult, for Israel to maintain its Jewish character. Hence, to advocate for them would be deemed to be anti-Semitic. Indeed, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs website discusses the Palestinian right of return on its anti-Semitism webpage.

Secondly, because all opposition to Zionism would be anti-Semitic, all opposition to policies central to the Zionist project would also be classed as such. Thus, Palestinians would not be

allowed to oppose, for example, Israel's discriminatory nationality laws that allow Jews anywhere in the world the right to obtain Israeli citizenship – a central plank of Zionism – whilst denying Palestinians parallel rights, for to do so would be to oppose Zionism and be deemed anti-Semitic.

Palestinian advocacy would then be limited to challenging only those Israeli practices that are not an inevitable consequence of Zionism; the Israeli army's treatment of Palestinian children in the West Bank, for example. Although this may be an important issue, it is hardly at the heart of the Palestinian cause. Palestinians, in short, could complain about Israeli behaviour but not oppose the ideology behind the laws and institutions that drive its oppressive practices. The anti-Semitism campaign will, in effect, inhibit Palestinian ability to seek basic rights.

Yet, ironically, the campaign might have inadvertently created an opportunity for a broader, rights-based advocacy for Palestinians than that pursued in recent years. Since the start of the Oslo process, the Palestinian leadership has focused on an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza and, in consequence, has marginalised the Palestinian right of return to what is now Israel. Indeed the Palestine Papers, leaked in 2009, indicated that the PA had been willing to give up this right in return for an independent state. Furthermore, the rights of Palestinian Israelis have been absent from the political agenda. Similarly, many Palestinian human rights organisations in the West Bank and Gaza have

limited their objectives to achieving better treatment for Palestinians under military occupation, ignoring wider aspects of the Palestinian cause, particularly the rights of refugees and Palestinian Israelis.

By contrast, the current row has renewed, for the first time in many years, public debate on issues at the heart of Israel's legitimacy, such as Zionism and Israel's constitution as a Jewish state, and, by extension, issues that are central to the Palestinian cause. These include the dispossession and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in 1948 by Zionist forces, the denial of the Palestinian right of return, and Israel's imposition of a regime of racial discrimination on Palestinians in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, to ensure privileging of Jewish Israelis that Zionism demands. Israel's anti-Semitism campaign has thus brought into focus issues fundamental to both Israel's legitimacy and the Palestinian cause. This allows Palestinian campaigners to engage with these issues and, in so doing, to advocate for the full scope of Palestinian rights in ways that have been neglected in recent years.

Palestinians and their supporters have a choice: they can act defensively in the face of allegations of anti-Semitism and avoid a discussion of the fundamental issues, or they can respond to the campaign by raising matters central to the Palestinian cause. If their objective is to engage in advocacy that truly serves the Palestinians and seeks the full range of Palestinian rights, the choice is clear. **C**

**Salma Karmi-Ayyoub is a British Palestinian lawyer**



2016

FILM REVIEW

# The legacy of 2016

**Trevor Fisher** on the year the centre collapsed

**T**rump was the big story of 2016, which will go down in history as the year the centre collapsed in liberal democracies. The challenge of fascist candidates across Europe came a close second. Left advances have been marginal at best. Clinton's failure in the US was also the failure of the old Democrat-Republican post New Deal politics, and we will have to address that to make any progress at all. But for Britain, the major story is the continuing decline of the Labour Party. This has generated the call for a Progressive Alliance to stop the Tories, but the chances are limited as I suggested in *Chartist 283*.

As 2017 opens, the core issues are the imperatives of Labour's problems at the ballot box and understanding its crisis of strategy. It is ominous that a Blair revival looks on the cards with the *New Statesman* at end of November interviewing the old fraud under the heading 'Back from Exile'. The first essential is to remember that great victories of 1997 and 2001 were followed by decline to when in 2005 only 37% of the vote gave a majority – with disasters in 2010 and 2015. There is no New Labour route to recovery.

## Reverse these figures

But secondly, the Corbyn record has not even begun to show the green shoots of recovery. Since Corbyn won his second leadership victory and Labour reluctantly fell in behind him, polls show the Tories well ahead. Since 14th September, when the lead was only 6% and Owen Smith might have won the leadership, 18 polls were published in the period up to 20th November. No poll showed the Tories less than 8% ahead, and 13 gave them double digit leads. If the Corbyn camp is to claim their man can become Prime Minister, they have to reverse these figures.

The Richmond Park and Sleaford by elections emphasise that polls are if anything over estimating Labour's support. In Richmond Labour lost its deposit

in London for the first time since 1909, and in Sleaford the party fell from 2nd to 4th behind UKIP and the Lib Dems, the latter having something of a revival. The results reinforce poll findings that voters identify with their Brexit choices. Not good for Labour, as it continues to sit on the fence of its poor Referendum campaign. It can now fall between the two stools of Lib Dem and UKIP. The choice is between In or Out the EU, and cannot be fudged. Owen Smith was right. A second referendum call is the only way to stop pro-EU Labour voters turning Lib Dem. Stopping the anti-EU voters going for UKIP is the second difficulty Labour has to face.

## Clear policy differences

The Compass answer to the clear fact that Labour will not win the next election on its own is the Progressive Alliance. The attractions are obvious, but it will not happen save at by-elections. The SNP have wiped out Labour and have no reason to hand back seats while the other minor parties in the UK mainland do not have any votes worth speaking about. There are clear policy differences between the parties. The Lib Dem victory in Richmond depended on Tory voters in favour of the EU rejecting an anti EU Conservative.

In Scotland the SNP was reported by the *Times* of 3rd December to be raising money for another independence referendum, and the fight there is Tory v SNP, Labour being down to 14% in the polls at the start of December. The Federalist Commission advocated by Labour is of little relevance. As the national voting pattern fragments, there are clearly dangers in 2017 of a dominant Tory party being challenged by four parties, none of which is Labour. The



An unlikely answer to Labour's electoral woes : former leader Tony Blair

Scottish position can be replicated in middle class pro EU seats where the Lib Dems are the opposition, and in working class anti EU seats where UKIP can become the opposition. In Wales, Plaid can take over the pro EU position of the Lib Dems and UKIP the anti EU vote, if Labour continues to fail to become the pro EU party.

## Wider internal problems

Meanwhile Momentum mirrors Labour's wider internal problems, suffering from its own entryist crisis with the microscopic Alliance For Workers Liberty playing the part that Militant did in the 80s, but within a left organisation. Corbyn's own political base is likely to be affected by this internal battle but more importantly, unless the AWL challenge is defeated then Momentum will be a potent source of anti Labour stories in the right wing press.

It is ominous that Blair is choosing to throw his hat into the ring. There is objectively no New Labour way forward, but a considerable potential for more Labour splits. The progressive movement has to face up to the fact that contrary to what the Labour Party officially believes, all the cards are in the hands of other parties. Developing a winning strategy must now be the priority topic for debate. **C**

# Learning swerve

**Patrick Mulcahy** on an insight into the Russian mentality

**T**he World Order is changing. One country can work within the United Nations Security Council and paralyse it. In so doing, that country can support its strategic ally to oversee the killing of thousands of civilians and the displacement of millions more.

That country is Russia, whose representatives employ a winning strategy of 'engage and frustrate'. Yes, they will take part in talks but show no desire to abate their actions. Russia can survive sanctions. International censure does not hurt it. It distorts the language of a perplexed media, with independent reports of the civilian casualties of Russian airstrikes dismissed as 'fake news'.

How do you respond to such a country? Understand it first. Who are these people who check their humanity at the door and cover up mass murder?

An insight into this mentality can be gleaned in the Russian film, *The Student* directed by Kirill Serebrennikov and adapted from the German play 'Martyr' by Marius von Mayenberg. It explores the fanaticism of a young student, Veniamin (Pyotr Skvortsov) who refuses to go swimming owing to religious views and uses the Bible as a means of rebellion. His increasingly intransigent behaviour stokes a conflict with a young teacher, Elena (Viktoria Isakova), the only adult willing to stand up to him, who is in turn at odds with the school board (mostly portrayed for comic effect). The film asks: how far can you take dogmatic behaviour, using a text to justify anti-Semitism and violence? The answer is: quite far.

Veniamin, brought up by his single mother (Yuliya Aug) creates his own universe, literally tearing down the wallpaper in his room to better

reflect his puritan state. He refuses the advances of a girl and acquires a disciple, Grigoriy (Aleksandr Gorchilin), a fellow student with a disability. Eventually he builds his own man-size crucifix.

The power of the film comes from a recognisable failure to deal with his fanaticism. It isn't a manifestation of sexual frustration common in puberty, nor is it exactly a desire to replace the missing father. It is a drug, a set of quotations used as bullets to counter any criticism of his actions. For Veniamin, knowledge of the Bible is power.

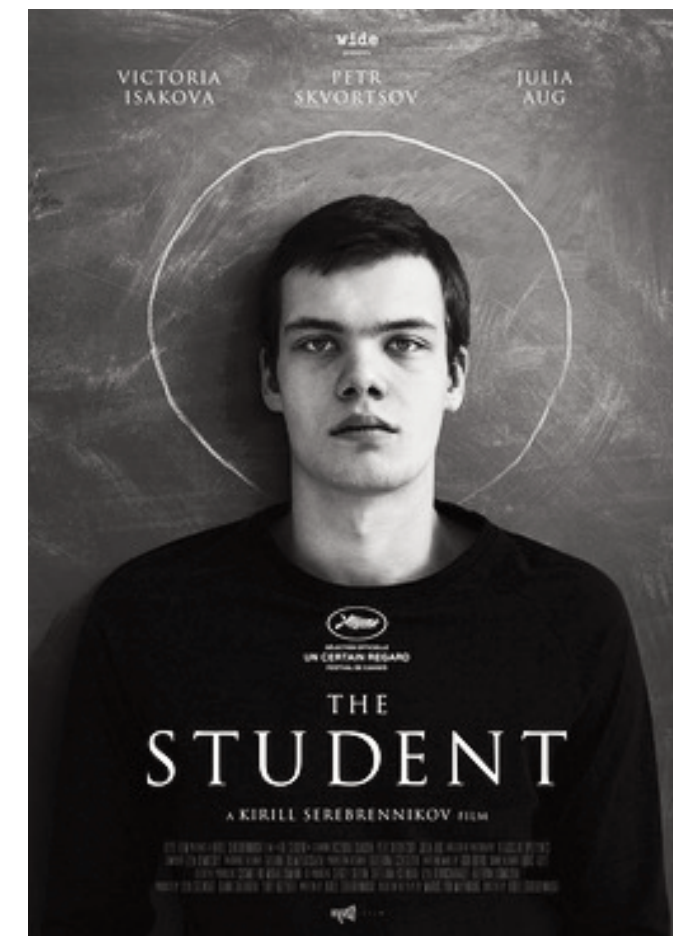
It is Veniamin's immersion in dogmatism that gives us pause for thought. He has an answer to everything - well, almost. When he cannot defeat Elena intellectually he assumes the role of the abused child.

The film explicitly asks us to consider the language and apparatus we use to defend our order. It shows how the school utterly fails to support Elena, a response that has fatal consequences.

Veniamin is a terrifying figure, a school bully with no friends. His peer group ignores him rather than takes him on. When he has a meeting with the school cleric, he refuses to put his phenomenal Bible learning to Church use. The Cleric refuses to see him as a threat, a distortion of religion. Equally, he gives Veniamin latitude to continue.

The long scenes, established from the get-go, belie the film's theatrical origins. Serebrennikov fills some of the screen space with the source (chapter and verse) of Veniamin's quotations. This is dynamic cinema, forcing us to spend almost two hours in the company of an odious, self-justified individual. At the end of the film we are blasted by heavy metal.

*The Student* isn't a film to take to your heart. It troubles you. It asks you, why is this the best we have to face such dogmatic fanaticism? The argument is extreme but real. Don't go to see it wanting feel good cinema. See it to remind you of the challenge ahead.



*The Student* opens in UK cinemas on 28 February 2017



## BOOK REVIEWS

## Radical rebirth

**Harry  
Bentham**  
on Corbyn

**CORBYN: THE STRANGE REBIRTH OF  
RADICAL POLITICS**  
Richard Seymour (Verso, £12.99)

Richard Seymour's book is a realist assessment of the hopes represented by Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, as he repurposes the party to oppose the neoliberal state. Writing the book in sympathy with him, Seymour nevertheless warns against Corbyn being 'encircled' and 'chewed up' by entrenched governing elites even if he achieves state power.

The book claims the success of Corbyn over the political cadavers of the Blairites was largely a response to British politics becoming 'less and less democratic'. Labour had suffered from this decay, as workers were simply ignoring them. Many Labour members also perceived a 'crisis of legitimacy' in British parliamentary democracy, Seymour believes, and they gave up on their own party.

Labour had become 'symbiotically dependent' on banks, business, media, and the rightist wings of state under the Blair government. The author dismisses that Labour government as 'flimsy' for the left and "inessential" to the labour movement, because the Blairites became rightist ideologues of privatisation and US-led wars.

Seymour seemed to anticipate the so-called Labour coup of 2016, questioning the legitimacy of the Parliamentary Labour Party in the minds of members. The book is sceptical of the idea of deselecting Blairite MPs, however, saying the politically 'underdeveloped' students who rally behind Corbyn are no match for the 'immense, lordly dominion' of the PLP. Corbyn is going to have to work within the tolerance of his critics in the PLP at all costs, Seymour suggests.

Contrary to much of the press, Seymour points out that it is not Corbyn but his critics within the party who are undermining Labour and making it less electable at present. As Seymour wrote, they believe 'it would be better to crash Labour than to let it win under a left-wing leadership'.

Writing a chapter on the history of Labour, Seymour says Corbyn's democratic socialism is in fact unusual in the party's history. Corbyn may be against the party's history as the "rearguard of reaction", wishing to instead recreate it as a radical socialist party. In a somewhat pessimistic account, the author believes the party will eventually return to centrist roots.

Seymour writes of the 'degeneration of the union link'. Blairite reforms shifted the party to depending on 'passive supporters paying a small fee' rather than receiving union funding. This has backfired on the Blairites, driving unions that normally preferred

Certainly, Corbyn's policies are likely to meet with popular opposition on some issues, even among poor people he intends to stand for. State intervention in the economy and the perceived excesses of the welfare state meet with opposition from most of the British political audience, Seymour writes.

Despite popular distrust of some of his ideas, most of Corbyn's 'radical' ideas do resonate with voters. Opposition to US military aggression and rejection of unethical arms deals, nuclear weapons, spending cuts, privatisation of vital services, and bailouts for banks seem quite sensible to most Britons. Taxing the rich and making homes and rents affordable to young people is also likely to win over many voters.

Corbyn shares most of our views that 'British banks and British tanks do not appear to be doing most British people any favours' and this makes him a popular and effective leader, at least in the Opposition. If applied in power, Corbyn and his Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell's ideas would be unprecedented in 'reversing neoliberalism', Seymour writes.

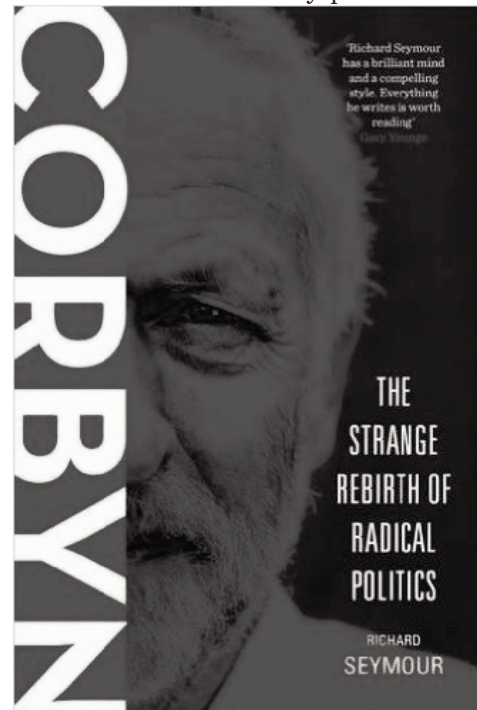
The book's introduction stating 'the problem for the establishment is not necessarily Corbyn's agenda' but 'the type of politician that he is' offers the most compelling of its arguments. Corbyn's real advantage may be his kind demeanour and personality, while voters have lost trust in other politicians, seen as dishonest. A lot of people do not like Labour, but they do like Corbyn. An alienated and volatile public, filled with the belief politicians are dishonest, could be persuaded to vote for this man where they would not have voted for his party.

If Corbyn should lead a future government, Seymour believes it will only open up a new front against him. The unkind state will push back against Corbyn's kinder politics. Neoliberal governing elites will remain in key positions of power, insisting on keeping the old policies of war and austerity.

'moderate leadership' into backing Corbyn's openly socialist leadership.

The Labour leader should not limit his attacks to 'the Tories', Seymour writes. Bernie Sanders had spoken directly to America's poorest with terms like 'billionaire class', 'one percent', and other language of the Occupy movement. With party loyalties unimportant to the wave of anti-establishment sentiment in Britain, Corbyn could go beyond the language of the party and speak directly to the lowest earners with the same language.

There are, of course, significant questions to be asked concerning electoral feasibility and making policies practicable to ensure Corbyn's path to power.



**Duncan  
Bowie** on  
Somalia

**THE MAYOR OF MOGADISHU**  
Andrew Harding (Hurst, £20)

Most recent writing on Somalia focuses on Al-Shabab, the fundamentalist Islamic group which controls most of the country. Harding's book has both a narrower and a wider focus. The book focuses on a single individual, Mohammud Nur, known as 'Tarzan' who returned from exile in London in 2010 to become mayor of Mogadishu, Somalia's capital city. The book however has a wider focus because it seeks to examine Somali history and politics and the Somali diaspora over a longer period, back to the authoritarian administration of Siad Barre of 1969-1971, arguably the last time the country had a country-wide stable government, well before the emergence of Al-Shabaab.

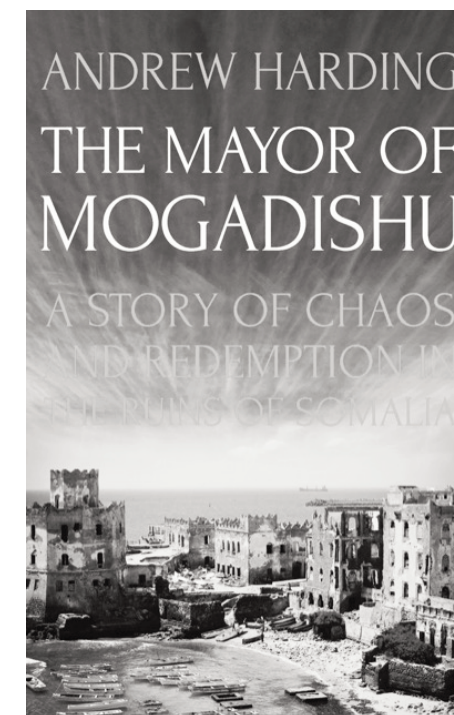
In 2010, much of Mogadishu was in ruins and in fact the transitional government which appointed 'Tarzan' to the job controlled only a small part of Somalia, and in fact Al-Shabaab, actually controlled part of Mogadishu. Tarzan was to spend much of his term of office on the front line, escorted everywhere by cohorts of security guards and liable to be bombed out of his own office.

Nur became something of a hero in Mogadishu, or at least for some Somalis, not of course including Al-Shabaab, but also a hero for the western powers who saw Nur as a symbol that some restoration of governance in the failed state might be possible. The book's subtitle is: 'A story of chaos and redemption in the ruins of Somalia'. There is much chaos but not much redemption. Nur organised street cleaning parties and festivals (which tended to attract Al-Shabaab suicide bombers) but still need armed escorts as did Harding when travelling to meet him. There is little evidence that he governed much – he had few resources, not least because the Governments itself had few resources.

Harding is however focusing on

the man rather than his achievements so there is not much information about the attempts to reconstruct the city and to bring in Western consultants to modernise its governance – perhaps somewhat ambitious given the lack of interest western states of investing in the city, despite the occasional heroic attempt to reinvigorate a tourist industry – though war-zone tourism has become something of a cult activity for some – a bit like extreme sports. Attempts to set up restaurants for an international market or beach based boutique hotels have met with limited success.

Much of the book focuses on the



clan and sub-clan networks which continue to dominate Somali politics. Nur might argue that clans should work together but still relied on his own clan network. He was sacked from the Mayoral post in 2014 and apparently now wants to stand for president. What I found most interesting is what is in effect a study of the Somali diaspora, of the networks Nur developed in London and the extensive connections he had with exiles in other countries. Leading Somali figures in exile struggled to find employment to support their families and lived in council flats or privately rented rooms, but still managed to set up a network of Somali community organ-

isations, though generally clan based, with one clan living in one part of London – another clan in another – Nur was North London based with little links to the East London Somalis. I remember twenty years ago interviewing a group of Somalis in London who were seeking to register their housing association for government funding, where I had to assess whether they had sufficient experience to run a publicly funded organisation, to discover that in the room I had a former brigadier in the Somali army and a former chief justice.

Harding follows such exiles back to Somalia, where the transitional government was mainly comprised of returning diasporans, which led to tensions with those who had never left the country throughout the years of civil war. Somali remains divided. Western commitment to the transitional government is still limited. It is perhaps ironic that the government was suspect because of its basis in the Islamic Courts movement, which had provoked the intervention of the Ethiopian government in a dispute over the Ogaden region – populated mainly by Somalis but within Ethiopia, and incidentally where Nur was born despite his claim to have been born in the main Mogadishu hospital.

The Government is now seen as moderate compared with Al-Shabaab. As Harding notes, western powers are more concerned about the pirates operating out of the Puntland towns such as Eyl, and tend to leave the Kenyans to deal with Al-Shabaab. Meanwhile Somaliland (the formerly British colonial territory) in the north has been autonomous for decades though not recognised by the UN despite it having a more stable government than southern and mid Somalia centred on Mogadishu. Perhaps the picture on the book cover of the majestic ruins of central Mogadishu will attract western investment as well as tourists, but I doubt it.



## BOOK REVIEWS

Paul Mackney  
on Greek dilemmas

## Turbulent times

**DEFIANCE: GREECE AND EUROPE**  
Roger Silverman (Zero Books, £15.99)

Roger Silverman has done us a great service with what he calls a “single straightforward account Greece’s story; to draw people’s attention to the rich historical background to today’s news”.

He tells us, in a plain, passionate and often humorous way, the struggles of the Greek since the successful uprising against the Ottoman Empire led to the establishment of modern Greece in the 1820s.

It is a complicated tale. “In the 193 years since its foundation, Greece has had no fewer than 186 governments – some of them concurrently”. There is therefore plenty of room for differences of interpretation and Silverman is, in his own words, “frankly partisan”, lacking his description with delightful side comment aphorisms – e.g. describing the monarchy as “that symbol of national humiliation”.

The first chapter covers the turbulent first century with recurrent debt crises, uprisings, wars, territorial expansion, hunger, emigration, depressions, military coups, foreign meddling, an imposed monarchy, popular resistance, battles for democracy and class struggle. In passing, Silverman still manages to let us know that the new young King Alexander died in 1916 after being bitten by a garden-er’s pet monkey.

With an influx of 1.4 million Greeks expelled from Asia Minor in the 1920s; a neo-fascist dictatorship in 1936 headed by General Metaxas, ironically best known for saying ‘Oxi’ (No) to Mussolini’s request to send his army into Greece in 1940; repulsion of the consequent Italian invasion; brutal occupation by the Nazis generating one of the biggest mass resistance movements, which was denied the spoils of victory by occupying British and US forces, a period of state McCarthyism with many left-wingers interned or in exile, a resurgence of the left in the mid-1960s, cruelly crushed by a group of Colonels whose incompetent Junta held power from 1967 to 1974, when an ill-planned intervention in Cyprus plus the risen

population brought their downfall.

The restoration of democracy and, in particular, the rise of the new social democratic party PASOK from 1980 led to a degree of political stability and something approaching a European standard of living for many citizens, which is associated with preparation for and entry into the European Union.

Then in 2010, the international financial crisis found its weakest link in Greece, where debt bailouts from the Troika (of the EU, IMF and European Central Bank) and failure by all established government parties to find a solution, caused a catastrophic collapse in the standard of living affecting all but the richest.



From 2010 a popular resistance far surpassing anything seen anywhere else in Europe in over fifty years grew up in Greece with mass assemblies in the squares, over thirty general strikes and the development of a network of solidarity support in the form of social pharmacies and people’s markets.

On this rising tide, Syriza, a relatively unknown left wing coalition of parties, led by Alexis Tsipras – was swept to power with its share of the vote increasing from 4.6% in October 2009 to a triumphant 36.3% in January 2015.

The question which dominates the last half of Silverman’s book

is what was possible for a far left Greek government, in such a crisis-ridden country with 3% of Europe’s population, generating only around 2% of Europe’s GDP?

Silverman is not unsympathetic to Syriza’s dilemma. He recognises that the rise of Syriza helped spark a frisson of hope, similar to Podemos, the Portuguese coalition government, Bernie Sanders in the USA, the election of Jeremy Corbyn. It could be catalytic but was unable to transform the situation on its own.

In 2015, after four months of trying to face down the powerful and vindictive forces of EU finance ministers and international finance, Tsipras called a referendum and the Greek people delivered a massive 62% (Oxi) rejection of the terms on offer from the European institutions.

Then, to almost everyone’s surprise, Tsipras did a somersault and went back to the ‘institutions’ and ended up signing a new memorandum of cuts in return for a bail-out which was every bit as harsh as the previous two.

Was this forced on Tsipras having assessed the prospects for Greece of holding out, or was it an unnecessary loss of nerve and betrayal of the Greek people?

Silverman assesses the real possibilities for the Syriza Government and notes that “the Greek misfortune is that they launched their struggles a little ahead of the rest of us and found themselves facing the enemy alone.”

Nevertheless his main analysis is close to that of the Popular Unity MPs who split from Syriza after what they saw as ‘capitulation’, but failed to reach the 3% threshold for winning MP seats in the September 2015 election, which Syriza won with 35.5% of the votes.

This story is far from over. International solidarity is still vital. As I write, it is reported that Golden Dawn has organised attacks on refugee camps in the Aegean Islands. Greek families are struggling to make ends meet on wages and pensions which have been cut by 30-50%, with unemployment around 25%, and 300,000 Greeks in economic exile.

Dot Lewis  
on South Africa**SELLING APARTHEID**  
Ron Nixon (University of Chicago, \$24)

Selling Apartheid shows South African public relations abroad moving from diplomats presenting apartheid as a bulwark against communism in the Cold War, to a much expanded government department and agencies bought in to argue the case against sanctions and divestment as the campaigns developed after the Sharpeville massacre in 1960. Information Minister Connie Mulder announced that the regime must “buy, bribe or bluff its way into the hearts and minds of the world” and Nixon estimates that Pretoria spent over \$100 million pa doing just that. US public relations firms were hired, politicians and journalists lobbied, entertained and hosted on trips to experience the ‘real’ South Africa. Capital was not idle either – for example, some 200 representatives of South African and multinational companies joined the South African Foundation set up by the giant Anglo-American Corporation (gold, diamonds, platinum, uranium) in 1960 to oppose sanctions and divestment.

While the book claims to cover the ‘global’ propaganda war, its focus is largely on the SA/USA networks. Some of this draws on previously published material, but Nixon also calls extensively on archives. The republican and

far right involvement in support of apartheid is no surprise – but Nixon, himself an African-American, also shows some African-Americans ‘taking the shilling’ – including religious groups arguing that ‘communism is worse than apartheid’. As the winds of change seemed to blow over Africa, Pretoria increased its efforts to win over African-Americans, for example by paying William Keyes nearly \$400,000 a year to organise African-Americans in university exchange programmes and study tours. Keyes argued: ‘It is important that we recognise in the US the reality of the ANC as a terrorist outlaw organization, which has perpetrated violence primarily against innocent black people’. In the UK, Strategy Network International was just one of a number of lobbying firms funded by South Africa. Operating in the 1980s it supported SA policies on Angola and Namibia and sent conservative politicians to enjoy the South African sun. Neil Hamilton and David Cameron were among the beneficiaries. SIN was set up by a South African diplomat and included British military characters.

As changes in South Africa began to look probable, attacks on the ANC built up; any political change must be gradual - and partial. The International Freedom Foundation, based in Washington, circulated ‘informa-

tion after the 1988 ‘Free Mandela’ concert in Wembley stadium claiming that the money raised would be used to finance ‘terrorism’. Desmond Tutu’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission subsequently found that the IFF was one of Pretoria’s costliest ‘front’ organisations.

*Selling Apartheid* rightly provides some of the context of the propaganda war: events in South Africa, the civil rights movement in the USA and campaigns outside South Africa against apartheid. Nixon concludes by suggesting that the effect of the propaganda onslaught was to delay the inevitable. When Pretoria withdrew funding from its front organisations in 1993 most or all of these agencies folded. Many of the named individuals who participated are however still around.

The production of this book seems to have got into difficulties: each chapter has a list of sources, but no footnotes, and no booklist. The index is very short, and – more importantly – very inaccurate.



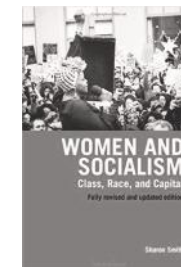
## Intersectionality and social reproduction

**WOMEN AND SOCIALISM: CLASS RACE AND CAPITAL**  
Sharon Smith (Haymarket Books, \$16)

This is a fully revised and updated version of *Women and Socialism: Essays in Women’s Liberation*, first published in 2004, and represents the author’s personal development and study of race and class, as well as gender, within a Marxist perspective. The book aims to provide readers with a far reaching and historical framework to understand the oppression and liberation of women- especially in the US, and to provide strength for future women’s liberation.

Of note is the development of the concept of Intersectionality, in the 1970s which posits that race, class and gender which have all

contributed to the oppression of black women since the time of slavery in the US.



The second theoretical base is Social Reproduction Theory, which tries to locate the economic root of women’s domestic labour as a crucial aspect in maintaining the capitalist system, as conceived by Marx.

The ten chapters are divided within this theoretical frame-

work, but also look at related topics such as Modern Women’s movements, and Women and the family. There is an historical chapter on Revolutionary Russia which I think sits rather oddly near the end of the book before the conclusions, and would have been better placed nearer the beginning of Smith’s account. But this is a minor quibble.

In this darker age of protectionist, white supremacist, misogynistic, racist Trump, we shall need more texts of this quality to provide a clear light on the history of women’s oppression, how it has been fought to date, and how working class women of colour will take centre stage in the future. This will be a critical battle in the US, but one to be anticipated in the new world order.

Paul Mackney is  
Co-chair Greece  
Solidarity  
Campaign



## BOOK REVIEWS

## Burying the evidence of imperialism

**Mike Davis**  
on industrial  
scale  
subversion

**THE HISTORY THIEVES**  
Ian Cobain (Portabello, £20)

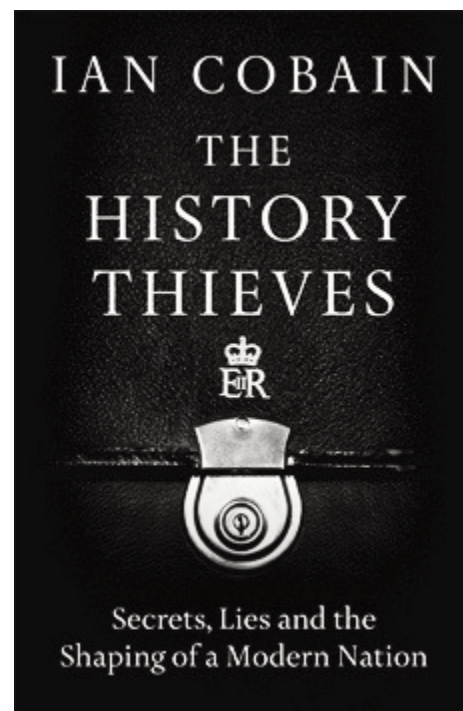
There's a popular myth that the post war decolonisation period was a speedy and relatively peaceful process with Macmillan's late 1950s 'winds of change' curtain call. Not so. And the winds were fanning tropical flames throughout the empire. Subtitled 'Secrets, Lies and the shaping of a modern nation' Cobain's forensic examination of the process of British de-colonisation is a revelation.

Many readers will know that the British empire was not the unalloyed blessing, bringing civilisation, prosperity and British values to subject peoples across the globe, of orthodox history. The process of conquest was often bloody and brutal. Protest and resistance was suppressed. Cobain looks at the other end of the imperial arc, when Britain under sustained pressure from the colonised and severe economic dislocation as a result of world war was being forced to pull out.

The many examples covered here tell a very different story from the benign myth. Cobain has uncovered the way the Foreign Office and MI5 systematically went about destroying the evidence of brutality and repression. The chapter on Kenya—'Sinning Quietly: Operation Legacy and the theft of Colonial History' reveals that through a secret coordination centre at Hanslope Park near Milton Keynes, an operation was piloted to both burn, dump at sea or ship back to England vast quantities of incriminating documents on the nature of British rule.

Much of this would not have been known but for the tireless work of Kenyan Mau Mau veterans and their legal team that successfully fought a long battle for justice finally won in 2013 in the British high courts. More than 5000 claimants won damages of 19.9m. They were also able to draw on research by US historian Caroline Elkins. Cobain reports 'The documents contained

accounts of torture that colonial officials were writing and passing on to their superiors throughout the eight years of the insurgency'. Horrendous details follow. Also buried within the 1,500 files at Hanslope Park was a letter from one ex Kenyan police commissioner, Colonel Arthur Young, who had reported to superiors that in the prison camps holding thousands of Mau Mau suspects urgent investigation was required into 'the ever-increasing allegations of inhumanity and disregard for the rights of African citizens.'



Many documents record the requirement that officers 'facing accusations of murders, beatings and shootings should not be prosecuted'. All received an amnesty.

Among the most damning papers were a number of letters and memoranda written by the colony's Attorney General Eric Griffith-Jones. At one point, Cobain reports, 'Griffith Jones describes the mistreatment of detained Mau Mau suspects as 'distressingly reminiscent of conditions in Nazi Germany or Communist Russia'. It turns out Griffith-Jones's concern was not so much with the victims but rather with protecting the perpetrators.

Aden, in the Yemen, where Britain continues to play a role in the brutal bombing by the Saudi-led coalition today, we find a simi-

lar story of skullduggery, deceit and destruction.

The chapter focussing on Northern Ireland contains further revelations of torture, brutality, killings and cover-up largely perpetrated against Catholic nationalists. The cold-blooded murder of solicitor Pat Finucane and a litany of other British state orchestrated murders is clinically documented with the key players identified.

The purging of the records happened across the world, in British Guiana, Malta, Malaya, North Borneo, Belize, the West Indies, Uganda as well as Aden, Kenya and Northern Ireland...in fact wherever Britain ruled. It was subversion of the Public Records Act on an industrial scale involving thousands of colonial officials, MI5 and Special Branch officers and military personnel.

Cobain calculates 15 miles of floor-to-ceiling shelving at Hanslope Park was packed with files dating from the 17th Century to the Cold War and 'troubles' in Northern Ireland.

For Cobain 'Operation Legacy' was not just about the British state wanting to protect individuals from embarrassment and prosecution or to secure loyalty from successor regimes during the commercial, military and political competition of the Cold war. It was also intended to promote a rose-tinted memory of both imperial retreat and the empire's hey day. Why else ask officials to destroy or return any papers that "might be interpreted as showing religious intolerance on the part of HMG" as well as "all papers which might be interpreted as showing racial discrimination against Africans (or Negroes [sic] in the USA)".

Cobain reminds us that Britain's rulers love secrecy. He recounts an 800 year old habit, sustained by the 1911 Official Secrets Act, exemplified in the burning and burying of imperial papers. While Northern Ireland remains Britain's last colony, there are likely to be many more secrets of that conflict to be opened up. Cobain's book is a chilling reminder of what has gone before.

**Duncan Bowie** on  
the socialist  
opposition

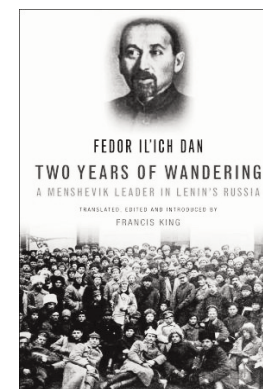
**TWO YEARS OF WANDERING**  
Fedor Dan (Lawrence and Wishart, £15)

Dan was the most important leader of the Mensheviks after Martov. He remained in Russia until 1922. This memoir was published in Russian in Berlin and has been translated into English by Francis King, a lecturer in Russian History who is editor of Socialist History and treasurer of the Socialist History Society. King has also written a substantive introduction which outlines the role of the Mensheviks in the first years of the Soviet state.

Dan's memoir presents a fascinating narrative of the role of the Menshevik opposition to Leninist rule, with the Mensheviks seeking to operate legally (in contrast with the Social Revolutionaries who at times sought to overturn the Soviet leadership). Dan and his fellow Mensheviks, who had

significant support in the trade union movement, were at times tolerated by the Leninists, who respected them as former colleagues, but who were also seen as a threat and imprisoned. Dan led a double life – as an official within the Soviet apparatus, as a medical administrator, but also as an opposition leader, both participating in Soviet meetings, but at times hiding from arrest and at other times in prison.

A prisoner of the Tsarist regime before the revolution, he is imprisoned in the Peter and Paul Fortress by Soviet leadership. The Soviet leadership finally chooses repression, associating the Menshevik leadership with the Kronstadt revolt, without producing any evidence of Menshevik involvement. Menshevik leaders had the choice of exile in Siberia or northern Russia, or exile abroad. Dan, with his wife Lydia, who was Martov's sister, chose the latter, and became one of the



Menshevik leaders in exile and active participant in the social democratic Socialist International. Dan was to write a classic work on the *Origins of Bolshevism*. This memoir is a rare socialist perspective on Leninist rule and King has done an excellent job in translating and introducing the memoir. There are other Menshevik memoirs in need of translation, notably Ivan Maisky's memoir of his involvement in the Democratic Counter-revolution – the KOMUCH government in Samara.

## Infidel

**Duncan Bowie** on  
Boko  
Haram

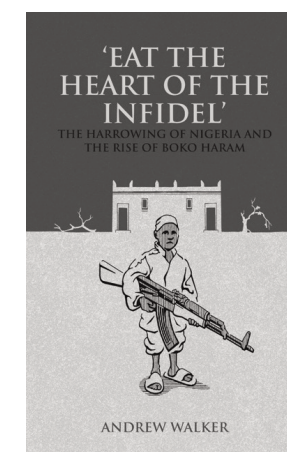
**'EAT THE HEART OF THE INFIDEL'**  
Andrew Walker (Hurst, £14.99)

Perhaps not the most uplifting title for a book but an important one to read. Boko Haram hit the headlines two years ago when the capture of 276 schoolgirls in Chibok in northeastern Nigeria led to an international 'Bring Back our Girls campaign'. This has rather faded from Western attention, given the focus on Syria and so-called Islamic State.

Walker is a journalist, who has lived in Nigeria for a Nigerian newspaper as well as reporting for the BBC. His book takes a somewhat different approach, as it is based on his own experience and interviews with politicians and fellow-journalists in a number of cities in northern Nigeria. The first section of his book examines the historical and cultural background, returning to the British colonisation in the 1890's and Lord Lugard's operation of indirect rule, empowering the local chieftains but also studying the earlier rise and fall of the Sokoto caliphate, using material from the earliest European explorers such as the German, Heinrich Barth, who published

his travelogue of northern Nigeria in the 1850's.

The book explains the Nigerian political system and the conflict between Islamic leaders in the north and Christians in the south and the theoretical system of alternating power within the federal state. He examines the inter-religious conflicts, making it clear that the extreme violence was perpetrated by both sides. He examines the long history of fundamental Islamicism, mainly Salafist, with preceded the evolution of Boko Haram, tracing the origins of the group to links of the original leader Mohammed Yussuf with Saudi Arabian wahhabism. He focuses on the core beliefs of Boko Haram - the rejection of western education. Walker also notes to the links between Boko Haram and leading Nigerian politicians and the corruption in the Nigerian political and military system which goes some way to explain the failure of the Government to organise a coherent political and military response. For the government in Abuja, Boko Haram was seen as a northern problem, as while Boko Haram started operating within Cameroon and Chad, they never threatened either Abuja or the



southern states. The defeat of the southerner Christian Goodluck Jonathan by the northern Muslim opposition leader Muhammudu Buhari (who was as a major general, head of state in the 1983-5 military regime as well as three times failed presidential candidate between 2003 and 2011), is not in itself any guarantee of good government or suppression of the Boko Haram insurgency. Despite all those celebrities wearing T-shirts, not only has 'the west' lost interest but it has no confidence in any political leadership in Nigeria to find either a political or military solution.



## WESTMINSTER VIEW



**Rebecca Long-Bailey MP** says the Tories only plan is to protect the rich

**Rebecca Long-Bailey** is MP for Salford and Eccles, and shadow chief secretary to the Treasury

# No help for the left behind

Last November Phillip Hammond delivered his first Autumn Statement; an opportunity to signal a change of direction and to repair some of the damage caused by six years of Conservative failure. Now, the people where I live in Salford are of good heart. They will always pull together when times are tough and that's what many thought they were doing when they were subjected to a vicious and economically illiterate austerity agenda. "Lets fix the roof whilst the sun is shining!" we were told, but little did we realise that this 'nasty medicine' we were being forced to take was in fact making us worse off and stifling our economy's ability to flourish in the future. We have seen six wasted years where the deficit has spiralled, debt has spiralled and productivity, which drives our economy, is at rock bottom. Six years where taxes were cut for the wealthiest and the most vulnerable saw their incomes savagely cut. Six years of pernicious cuts and schemes aimed at dismantling and marketising our public services so that now they are teetering on the edge of a cliff.

So was it worth it? In short, no. The economic plan the Tories 'supposedly' followed has failed on a spectacular level.

We are now looking at a cumulative rise in the deficit of £122 billion by 2021, and this from a Government who told us if we slashed public spending, slashed support for the most vulnerable, whilst also slashing taxes for the most wealthy, we would have eliminated the deficit by 2015. Even more concerning is the damage this failed plan has caused in the longer term, with the Institute for Fiscal

Studies stating that real wages will be lower in 2021 than in 2008. This lost decade is unprecedented in modern British history. But the Chancellor knew this was coming.

Leaked Treasury documents recently made clear that the failure of Conservative policy was known in Whitehall for some time, with the government's old targets on debt and the deficit missed, even before Brexit had become an issue. Following the Autumn Statement the Tories' spin machine went into overdrive in the attempt to make us believe that the whole financial downturn was as a direct result of Brexit.

In reality however, the figures provided by the Office for Budget

despite there now being over one million vulnerable elderly people left without care. There was no turn on harsh ESA and Universal Credit cuts. A single parent, in work, is still set to lose over £2,000 a year and the Employment Support Allowance cuts mean £30 a week will be taken from 500,000 disabled people. And all they could offer to an education system facing the first real-terms cuts since the 1970s was £60m for the Prime Minister's throwback vanity project of grammar schools.

Hammond attempted to announce some new government investment as Labour have demanded. But the amounts offered are feeble, even with re-announcements like the £1.1bn earmarked for roads.

We are the second lowest country in the G7 in terms of investment so we are far from competing with other industrial countries across the world. Even the OECD has stated that any country serious about being a global economic player must invest at last 3% of Gross Domestic Product each year. The Chancellor's investment proposals come in at a paltry 1.9%. Nor has there been any sight of a real industrial strategy – essential to support the industries of the future.

Labour's economic vision will not prioritise the few over the many. We will reverse these tax giveaways, channelling the billions of pounds lost into our public services. We will deliver real substantial investment in infrastructure and research with a programme to mobilise £500bn through direct Government expenditure and a National Investment Bank. We will tackle low paid work and the disgraceful level of in-work poverty it creates by introducing a Real Living Wage, expected to be £10 an hour in 2020. And we will deliver an industrial strategy to create high-skilled, well-paid secure jobs right across Britain.

Labour will rebuild and transform our economy so no-one and no community is left behind. **C**



**Labour's pledge : no one will be left behind**

Responsibility were staggeringly clear: Of the 122bn cumulative deficit due by 2021, the Tories' mishandling of Brexit is forecast at £58.7bn, the rest of the deficit is as a result of the Tories' mishandling of the domestic economy. Yet despite this gloomy news, the Chancellor steadfastly refused to change tack. He abandoned his predecessor's plans to deliver a surplus (of course he did, there wasn't the slightest chance he or his predecessor would achieve this on the basis of their economic plan) but there was nothing in the Autumn Statement to help those "just about managing" people he was supposed to watch out for. There was no new money for our National Health Service, despite the worst deficits in the NHS history and the longest waiting lists for decades. There was no money to end the crisis in social care,

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