

CHARTIST

For democratic socialism

#286 May/June 2017

£2

Labour: a stone's throw away

Marina Prentoulis

Populism

Peter Kenyon

Election fantasies

Sarah Champion MP

Women

Peter Hain

Julie Ward MEP

Stephen Marks

Brexit

Naomi Wimborne-Idrissi

Palestine

Chartist

Labour's manifesto

plus

**Greenwatch, film and
book reviews**



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CHARTIST

For democratic socialism

Editorial Policy

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

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

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

Editorial Board

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Contacts

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Email: editor@chartist.org.uk
Twitter: @Chartist48

Newsletter online: to join, email
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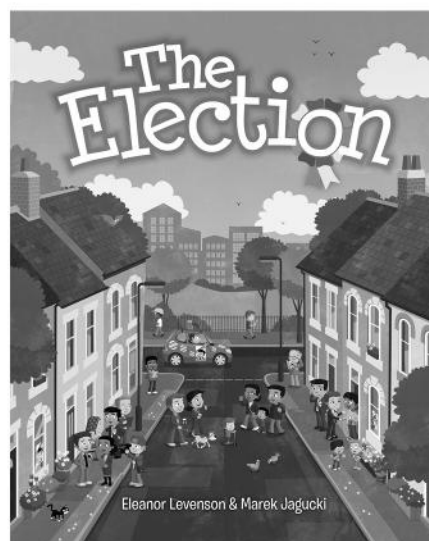
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Cover by Martin Rowson

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Sarah Champion MP on women and austerity

Together internationally

We certainly need a powerful slogan to light the socialist movement forward, ('Living together responsibly' Keith Savage, *Chartist* 284)

I grew up reciting a socialist creed week by week, "We desire to be just and loving to all our fellow men and women, to work together as brothers and sisters and so help to form a new society, with justice as its foundation and love its law". We also used to sing 'the Internationale', we looked (naively) with admiration at the Americans who had for their

mantra "We hold these truths to be self evident that all men (sic) are created equal". What has happened to these wonderful aspirations?

The Labour Party has its roots in the Christian Church and I saw those meetings as a religious ceremony without a deity. I think some of the religious fervours of today demonstrate a great thirst for a moral view of living, the Labour Party is well placed to contribute to that with a slogan such as the one Keith Savage has suggested: "Living together

responsibly" I would go a bit further.

When the Labour Party was formed the issues were more local but we have now a far greater responsibility globally as well as locally. Globalisation is not a trend; it is a tide that will not go back. Theresa May cannot get away with "citizen of nowhere". I would want to make a Labour slogan that reflects that. How about "Living together responsibly nationally and internationally."

GABRIELLE MAUGHAN
HALESWORTH, SUFFOLK

Labour's decline

The Progressive Alliance sponsored by Compass may or may not be viable, but it is becoming an unavoidable debate and *Chartist* should promote it in a structured way. It does not have to take a position, as a discussion journal the issue is one tailor made for the *Chartist* to consider as a collective. As the Green Party backed the PA at their spring conference it will not go away, and while *Chartist* today is largely a Labour oriented journal, the central challenge is key to its politics.

This is that Labour can no longer form a progressive government due to a decade and a half of electoral decline, so alliances

have to be sought. We can agree or not agree on the latter issue, the question of lack of voter support is simple and objective. It is ongoing and the May elections will underline the problem. Those who hoped Corbynism would solve the problem must face up to the failure of that project and increasing pressure on his position as his ratings fall. I personally do not want another leadership election this year, one every year since 2015 damages the limited credibility of the Labour Party, it may be impossible to resist.

This is a contentious view, so a reasoned debate promoted by *Chartist* and involving sympathetic other groups could be very

positive. The spring following the May elections going into the summer will undoubtedly raise many questions about Labour's future, while John Harris of the *Guardian* has pointed out more Labour voters back Theresa May than Corbyn, the unpopularity of Corbyn personally raises more questions than simply replacing one figure with another. I believe *Chartist* needs to set out as an immediate objective a focus on the key questions of Labour's decline since 2001 and its future.

TREVOR FISHER
STAFFORD

Prison problems

The recent article by Richard Burgon (*Chartist* 285) identifying current problems in the prison service makes sensible points about reduced prison officer numbers and increased inmate numbers(1996 48000 inmates X prison officers 2016 87000 prisoners two third X prison officers.)

True facts but not all of the story. Any total institution needs an occupation regime that keeps inmates involved in a wide range of activities. These activities do much to reduce isolation of individuals, keep minds active, promote personal activity, and provide skills for release or for movement through the release process. The activities include work – education and vocational training,

personal skills, prison industry work - and leisure activities – physical education, library, and recreational classes.

In the 1980s and 90s most prisoners serving more than 12 months would have been away from their cells for about 5 or 6 hours each weekday – not counting evening association or meal times. When men/women are occupied in these activities they are much less likely to be involved in inappropriate activities or fermenting dissent and disruption. We are all aware that bored children, teenagers, and adults find trouble on their own!

As well as reducing prison officer numbers, large numbers of teachers, instructors, probation, social work staff have 'disap-

peared' as well. Bored equals trouble (look at our own children)

The classic Tory attitude to public service appears to be "they are expensive, wasteful, and achieve little, whereas a private company could do it far better for less, or lets cut their budgets." The failure to grasp the word "service" is the underlying cause of many of our current public service crises.

The Prison Service cuts - and resulting unrest and problems - are classic examples of outcomes that follow unplanned idealism.

ROD TURNER
(FORMER REGIONAL EDUCATION
OFFICER - HM PRISON SERVICE)
POOLE

Labour against the establishment

position, will be needed. In this issue **Peter Hain** laments Labour's confused position while proposing this firmer stance. Endorsing a pro-Europe stand **Stephen Marks** identifies the Tories simmering internal divisions on Brexit. **Julie Ward MEP** gives voice to our European socialist and radical allies who clearly want Labour to stay close. **Patrick Mulcahy** looks at the potentially damaging impact of Brexit on the film industry.

UKIP looks to be imploding with Labour holding Stoke from new leader Paul Nuttall's challenge, lone MP Carswell resigning and standing down and Farage ducking out.

In Europe itself the other big election is in France. Although the far right candidate Wilders was defeated in Holland, Marine Le Pen is making a strong showing in France. **Pierre Bocquillon** outlines the key players in the presidential race with Macron now the front runner in the second round against the FN.

Austerity-wracked Britain is the real story. Local government is facing the toughest cuts with 40% funding reductions hitting services from street cleaning to nurseries, libraries and schools. **Peter Latham** asks is this the end of municipal government as we know it. **Ian Foster** explains the harsh iniquities of Universal Credit roll-out in boosting poverty, food banks, homelessness and ill health.


Peter Kenyon outlines a road map for Labour to stage a major political upset. Tory arrogance and gaffes combined with consistent Labour campaign messaging could make the difference. But Brexit cannot be avoided. Even by asking the questions about tariff free access to the single market, EU free movement of people and divorce payments Corbyn and co can do damage.

Labour must hone its message into a popular, progressive, clear mantra of a better life with Labour. **Marina Prentoulis** puts a powerful argument for a new left populism to win hearts and minds.

Labour has launched its manifesto consultation. The original plan for policy development with members was stymied. So we also outline some key policies that can help Labour make an appeal to the widest number of voters.

With half a million members, enthusiastic Momentum activists and an embattled trade union movement Labour needs to both sustain support in its Midlands and northern heartlands and break into territory in southern England to win.

Inevitably Brexit will cloud the campaign and frame much of debate. So Labour needs to connect its economic alternative to cuts, privatisation, low wages, insecure employment and rising prices to a narrative showing how withdrawal from the EU without a Brussels agreement could make economic prospects much worse.

Labour faces an uphill but not unwinnable challenge. A united and clear campaign, consistently argued through every channel could overhaul the Tories. Campaign for Labour. Vote Labour. Kick out the Tories. 

Labour
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OUR HISTORY - 72

Socialist League Forward to Socialism (1934)

"We are living today in a potential Age of Plenty, when the productive capacity of the world, thanks to man's technical and scientific conquest of nature, is so enormous that there should not be any man, woman or child poor, ill-clad, ill-shod, or badly housed. A steadily rising standard of living for the millions of workers can be achieved. But from the very fact that all production is governed by the demand of private property to receive its toll in rent and interest arises from the tragic paradox that, while colossal wealth is piled up in the hands of the few, poverty, unemployment, ill-health, ruin, and social degradation are the lot of millions.

"If we want to increase our communal wealth by enabling full use to be made of the productive capacity of Mines, Factories and Fields, WE MUST HAVE SOCIALISM.

To enable each person to have a fair and equal opportunity of making his full contribution to the advancement of life and to obtain his fair share of wealth, WE MUST HAVE SOCIALISM.

To enable all to work reasonable hours under the best possible conditions, rather than some to work long ours and others not at all, WE MUST HAVE SOCIALISM.

To see that the State accepts the responsibility of providing an opportunity for everyone to render useful service and of maintaining in decency and comfort all those who are not fit to work, through age or illness, or for whom no opportunity of work is provided, WE MUST HAVE SOCIALISM.

If we are to ensure to every family the privacy and comfort of a real home of its own and full opportunity to enjoy life

freely after work is done, WE MUST HAVE SOCIALISM.

So that society as a whole shall be responsible for the health, well-being, and education of its people, WE MUST HAVE SOCIALISM.

In order to stop for ever the exploitation of the workers by the property-owning class and the financiers, by ending the private ownership and control of the land and all other means of production, and of all those financial institutions necessary for the maintenance of a highly organised industrial life, WE MUST HAVE SOCIALISM.

"Socialists stand for true Freedom and real Democracy, but are opposed to the time-wasting and obstructive use of Capitalist democratic procedure, which has brought parliamentary government into disrepute, and on which the propaganda for Fascism fastens. Parliament must become a workshop. The issue is joined between the defenders of private ownership of the means of production, which spreads disaster and chaos throughout society, and the supporters of Socialism, which alone can remove poverty and bring prosperity and well-being to the Common People. There is no time to lose. The longer Capitalism continues the more will poverty, distress, unemployment, misery, and slumdom curse this country, the more certainly will the men, women and children of Britain be dragged into the desolation and devastation of War. Let the slogan be:

CLOSE UP THE RANKS!

FORWARD TO SOCIALISM!"

Building the Open Left

Tom Miller - Co-Chair, Open Labour explains how

By one measure, the internal popularity of a left leadership, democratic socialism in the Labour Party can be judged to have been a tremendous success since Labour's 2015 defeat. But it is now clear to thinking people that this is only one of many measures by which the success of democratic socialist politics can be judged – and right now, answers to practically every other question we face are missing.

After a year in development, Open Labour has come together to push the Labour left towards a more credible political strategy, and help renew its ideas. In seeking to build the 'open left', we represent an attempt to reorganise a tradition within the Labour left which has fallen into disrepair, having previously invested heavily in organisations like Compass. Open Labour challenges the Labour left to abandon traditionalism and defensiveness, seeking

to embed an open-minded culture of realism and tolerance among socialists in the party. It will seek a move away from a 'leader focussed' type of politics towards one with more of an emphasis on richer ideas and debate.

"Open Labour is realistic about where we are, but optimistic about what we can achieve" – Ed Miliband

Our conference 'Ideas into Action' followed several regional events in Manchester, Birmingham and Sheffield, and was held at Haverstock School in North London. The conference launched a paying membership section among the 2000 supporters we have gained since launching. Around 230 attended, where we confirmed a constitution and put in place a position paper through a motions debate.

Open Labour stands for a democratic party with a tolerant debating culture, for laying down core agreed values across the

party, and for continued opposition to austerity economics. We demand professionalism from the left: a political strategy to identify the voters we must win over to left ideas and to Labour's voting bloc, with tighter priority setting and communication.

We will campaign for Labour to adopt some specific stances: preserving EU trade relationships, workers' rights and human rights (including for EU migrants), a socialist industrial strategy which promotes collective bargaining, UK federalism including English regions, and the creation of an English Labour Party. Open Labour will oppose electoral deals with other parties, but will also press party members to involve themselves in cross party campaigns where this serves the democratic left as a whole.

We hope to use more collaborative work in future events, providing new models for the wider party. **C**

Dave Toke sees public money at risk as pressure mounts to spend more on new nuclear power

Squandering billions

Giant portions of public spending are now at risk of pouring down a nuclear power black hole as calls for the Government to make direct investments into new nuclear power plant intensify. Ultimately the sums at risk would be much larger than the Government's own estimates of the cost of the Trident nuclear weapons system.

Former Minister and House of Commons Energy Committee Chair, Tim Yeo, is the latest to call for the Government to take 'minority' equity shares in new nuclear projects. There has been a flurry of such demands in the wake of the near bankruptcy of Toshiba, who spearhead the 3GW proposed plant at Moorside in Cumbria.

In fact nuclear power is proving to be virtually undeliverable and ruinously expensive in western countries. Toshiba's problems stem from the fact that they own Westinghouse who are responsible for the construction (so far non-construction) of AP1000 reactors in South Carolina and Georgia in the USA. These plant are as costly as the failing French EPR design that is so disastrous in the cases of the Finnish and French reactors, something which is bankrupting the French nuclear industry and EDF.

Nuclear lobbyists are calling for the contracts to build nuclear power plant to be offered to a South Korean company, KEPSCO. They, so it is claimed, are going to make a better and much cheaper job at completing nuclear power plant in a programme it is expediting for the United Arab Emirates. But KEPSCO are demanding that the UK Government put a lot of money into the project, and no doubt the project would require high prices to be paid by electricity consumers, as is the case with the Hinkley C deal with EDF. What is less known however, according to UCL's nuclear expert Paul Dorfman, is that the UAE projects are being built to lower safety standards than demanded by UK nuclear regulations, casting doubt on any notion that KEPSCO could build nuclear power in the UK cheaper than anybody else.

Despite the manifest bankruptcy of the technology, rather than question whether it is right to continue with the new nuclear programme, its supporters are in effect wanting to bet the British economy on it. If the Treasury are forced against their will to sanction 'equity' stakes in new nuclear reactors, the losses and, eventually, all the liabilities will fall on the UK Government. Nobody else will invest in the

projects unless the Government guarantees the lot. Hinkley C (3.2GW planned) will cost over £24 billion according to the European Commission. The reactors at Moorside and Wylfa, assuming they cost similar amounts, would thus make the taxpayer responsible for around £50 billion of debt. People will claim that the Government is 'only' taking a minority equity stake. That's how it will start, and even then would represent an enormous amount of state spending and liabilities. After all one quarter of £24 billion is still £6 billion. But it won't end there, as sure as night follows day, with the construction costs as well as the rest. It never does with nuclear power!

Normally of course under the Government's 'low carbon' programme, projects raise their own finance and the project owners earn their money from premium price contracts (CfDs) awarded through the Government. That is always the case with renewable energy projects. They find their own money. Electricity consumers pay a premium price to enable this on their bills. Even so, renewable energy prices have been falling fast and large scale wind and solar farms are now much cheaper for the consumer than nuclear power.

But now for nuclear to go ahead, so it is said, not only will the consumers have to pay a high premium price, but taxpayers will have to fund at least part of the construction as well. This is money, please note, that will disappear from the Government's coffers as the plant is built - it is not something that will be shuffled onto future generations like decommissioning.

The fact that the Government is effectively financing the building will produce a conflict of interests with the Government negotiating with itself in setting the CfD price. No doubt a 'lower' CfD price will be set (that is less than the notorious Hinkley C price) when in fact it will be the taxpayer that will end up paying out countless billions for the projects.

Annual spending on primary education is around £26 billion. Hence building just Moorside will give the Government liabilities (likely to be paid by the Government) which will rival this spending.

But then to listen to some people, you'd think building Moorside was more important than closing down all primary schools for a year.

It isn't. **C**

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

He is author of 'The Politics of GM Food' (2004, London: Routledge)

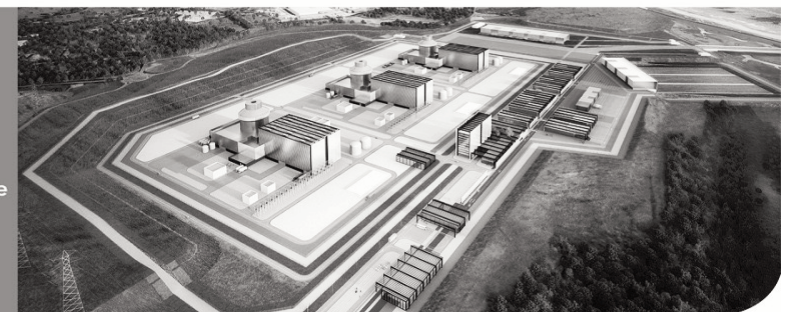
Moorside Power Station

Moorside will be the UK's largest nuclear power station with a capacity of up to 3.8GW

At its peak, construction of the Moorside Project will employ 6,500 workers

Moorside Power Station will provide about 1,000 permanent jobs when operational

Up to 60% of the supply chain will be in the UK



Moorside Power Station: spot the missing facts - cost and who pays

UK ELECTION

Corbyn in Downing Street?

Peter Kenyon reviews the prospects for one of the biggest upsets in British political history

Top marks to Labour for being ready. Tories are so vain. The idea that they would honour the Fixed Term Parliament Act 2011 was never believed by party leader Jeremy Corbyn and his close allies. With opinion polls pointing to a 20 point lead for Prime Minister May, no prospect of a quickie divorce from Brussels, and a strong whiff of Welsh air on an Easter walking holiday, the scene was set for a snap election. Mrs May has much to hide.

She dithered over going to the polls on Thursday 5 May, which was possible if she had declared on 29 March when Article 50 was invoked to apply to leave the European Union. Why burden those voters with another election on Thursday 8 June? Hopes of voter fatigue in the all too cynical decision mix to try and mask Britain's hopeless negotiating position to leave the European Union?

Own narrative

Rightly, Labour has not wasted a moment hitting the road with its own narrative. The speed with which Corbyn responded to the news clearly upset some of Labour's naysayers who thought a parliamentary war of attrition should have been fought to wipe that smirk of Mrs May's face. The vast majority of our elected representatives had the good sense to recognise 99% of the electorate would have thought they were being denied their democratic rights. So they promptly repealed the Fixed Term Parliament Act clearing the way for a snap election. The Prime Minister says she needs a fresh mandate. Her will be done. "Trust me", she purred in the *Evening Standard* (Editor: Former Conservative chancellor of the exchequer George Osborne). "Crush the saboteurs", screamed the pro-Brexit headline in the *Daily Mail* (Prop: tax-dodging, offshore aristocrat Lord Rothermere).

Within days the demarcation lines were drawn. This is a 'them' and 'us', the people versus the

establishment' election. Mrs May parachutes into constituencies in a helicopter, refuses to debate, shuns the press, and silences invited audiences. Meanwhile Corbyn's been taking the train, talking to everyone and anyone, and even finding time to sit down in a reception class and read a story. Not any old story but one that could become known as an election parable. "We are going on a bear hunt" Just in case, you have never heard the opening verse, here it is:

*We're goin' on a bear hunt
We're going to catch a big one,
I'm not scared
What a beautiful day!*

Utterly brilliant. How better to draw attention to the growing

The Tories have a remarkably consistent record for major blunders when it comes to governing Britain. The challenge is now how many times can they be tripped up with headline grabbing stories that could bring their term in office to a glorious end

clamour from school heads to parents to put their hands in their pockets to pay for books, because Conservative budgets are starving the state education system of money for essentials, such as books? Labour is going to need lots more of that sort of messaging over the next six weeks to have any hope of delivering the upset required to unseat Mrs May from Downing Street. The first week should be seen as being very good for party morale. The essential problem is that Corbyn remains unelectable in too many voters' minds. Labour's job is to change that perspective. In the first instance it can only be done by keeping the focus on the Tories themselves and what they are doing to British society. The naysayers within the Party remain. Wild ideas about mass deselections before the next

General Election have been ruled out by the party's National Executive Committee. Sitting MPs and prospective parliamentary candidates who lost in the 2015 General Election are being given an automatic right to reselection. This sticks in the craw for us democratic socialists, but needs must. The conduct of our Labour elected representatives begs a question about the idea of Annual Parliaments – the only demand in the Great Charter (1848) not to have been granted. For the moment the naysayers have been silenced. A semblance of Labour Party unity is being displayed. For the wider membership there is an obligation to put aside vengeful ideas of deselection and concentrate on winning everywhere throughout the United Kingdom. Given the state of the party in Scotland, that is rather fanciful – though why isn't the Scottish Labour Party more confident about beating the 'get rid of the Tories' drum – vote Labour. And ditto Northern Ireland, if only we allowed Labour candidates to stand. The Westminster electoral calculus centres on persuading little Englanders that Labour is best placed to get rid of the Tories. And that depends on enough of them wanting to get rid of the Tories fast – about which there is precious little evidence in opinion polls.

Defensive campaign

Allegations are already being publicised that the Labour Party paid staff are focussed on a defensive campaign to try and hold onto seats rather than a bold approach appealing to voters and known non-voters to power Corbyn into Downing Street. Of course, the existing base has to be consolidated. The main planks of Labour's 2017 Manifesto were laid down by Corbyn in the run up to and at the 2016 Conference after his second leadership contest. The ten pledges are: Full Employment, a Secure Homes Guarantee, Security at Work, Secure NHS and Social Care, a National Education Service,

action to secure our Environment, put the Public back into our Economy, Cut inequality in Income and Wealth, action to secure an Equal Society, Peace and Justice at the heart of our Foreign Policy. But how many people have even heard about them? At the time of going to press the Labour Party has issued a national appeal offering members a say. But the devil is always in the detail.

In the first week both Labour and Conservative got themselves in muddles over tax. Labour's shadow chancellor John McDonnell got caught out in a BBC radio interview about what level of income made someone rich – and Labour ended up with a £70 to £80k a year millstone round its neck. Then the Conservatives excelled themselves by proposing to drop their No TAX increases pledge from their 2017 manifesto (yet to be published). Visions of a Tory tax bombshell even had the Tory-supporting press railing against Mrs May. By the first weekend of the 'campaign', the *Mail on Sunday* claimed the blunder had already cost the Tories half their lead in an opinion poll. Now this has to be good news for Labour strategists, and those of us with a penchant for Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. But it shouldn't come as much of a surprise. The Tories have a remarkably consistent record for major blunders when it comes to governing Britain. The challenge is now how many times can they be tripped up with headline grabbing stories that could bring their term in office to a glorious end?

The idea still promoted by



Further proof that as Harold Wilson said a week is a long time in politics

some dreamers close to Corbyn that this election can be won on the doorstep is ridiculous. Even with some 500 to 600k members, there are still too few who understand that paying a subscription to a political party is not enough to get Labour Party candidates elected. It is a necessary condition of our party democracy, but not a sufficient one to secure election. However, a combination of Tory arrogance, vanity, and pomposity leading to a consistent stream of unfavourable headlines and an effective doorstepping campaign by Labour? That could be a winning formula. For those liking a flutter, it is definitely worth a trip to the bookies given the odds currently being quoted against Labour winning the largest number of seats. Then there is that idea of a Progressive Alliance, much discussed in Chartist passim. Labour's leadership has already ruled that out.

But just in case you are tempted to vote tactically in your own constituency, check out the box below.

Finally, there is an elephant in the room – Brexit. On this issue the leadership has manfully (and they still are mainly men) sought to brush it aside as an election issue. In the first week that was probably wise. But in the run up to election day? Some very serious thought needs to be given to this – some commentators are already persuaded that Mrs May's main reason for calling a snap election is that her Brexit negotiating strategy is doomed. By seeking an electoral mandate to 2022 she would be giving herself and her deeply divided party some breathing space to continue to con the British electorate that it can trust the Tories. Labour's contorted position over Brexit offers an opportunity to call Mrs May's bluff before 8 June. With a snap election, there is no need to wait until the negotiations fall apart for the electorate to see for themselves. All that has to be asked of Mrs May are questions. She is refusing to do TV debates with the other political leaders. Corbyn has to pose rhetorical questions of the 'empty chair'. Of course, the ground has to be laid across the country – Mrs May is hiding the truth. That simple truth is that there can be no access to the EU market, without freedom of movement or financial contributions. To cap her difficulties her closest ally, US President Donald Trump has just shunted the UK to the back of its trade negotiation queue.

God bless America.

C

Huffington Post reports:

A remarkably detailed spreadsheet outlining how to vote tactically in the upcoming General Election to keep the Tories from power has been turned into a website.

Becky Snowden, 28, created the online document which shows how voters can attempt to defeat an odds-on Conservative victory in June.

After it was shared far and wide on social media last week she put out a call for help to transform the spreadsheet into a website.

To find your constituency and how to vote to stop the Tories go to <https://www.tactical2017.com>

Policy planks for a Labour victory

Labour has moved quickly to get into top gear for the General Election on June 8th. With the initial challenge of poor polls, together with the difficulties of mounting a recovery in Scotland and the unremitting media hostility and diehard Blairite snipers, the Corbyn led party has taken on the task of uniting to fight on the issues which are vital to working people across the UK.

The crucial need that must be met to forge success in the campaign is for a platform of policies which address the deep discontent that is known to exist amongst the majority of voters. *Chartist* correspondents have been critical on the lassitude on developing policy but this has to be parked now in the interests working for a Labour government.

The ten pledges are being filled out in the manifesto which is being finalised as we go to press. Policy initiatives had begun in the run-up to the May local and mayoral elections. We have had pledges to put VAT on private schooling to pay for free school meals for all, pledges to improve teacher numbers and reduce super-size classes, a living wage of £10, boosting public sector contracts. These policies need to be linked in the way Corbyn did at the launch of Labour's campaign in Croydon. The over-arching narrative has to be formed from his powerful popular assault on the ruling wealthy corporate establishment and its fawning political elites epitomised by the Tory party.

Brexit will inevitably frame much of this election campaign. Remain voters will feel this is another chance to demonstrate their conviction that Britain needs to be in Europe. Brexiteers will argue the contrary, possibly without as much passion. Labour will need to connect its policies particularly those on the economy, jobs, environment and human rights with the case for Europe. The groundwork to make the case on the folly of withdrawal into a nationalist, little England redoubt (Scotland and Northern Ireland clearly see this) needs to be laid in speeches, campaign statements and

doorstep arguments.

Above all Labour, from top to bottom, needs to campaign for a common political platform with a clear socialist message. In the pursuit of this goal *Chartist* proposes some key policy ideas on a range of themes that could be used during the campaign. Some may be picked up in the actual Labour manifesto.

Economic Policy

Re-build a capacity for economic planning and positive interventions in the economy to rein in on the damage that unfettered free markets are capable of inflicting.

Re-establish a Regional Economic Policy to support employment growth across the UK. Where unemployment is high this will include incentives to employment generation and relocation of some employment, including non-local public services, away from London and the South East.

Ensure nationally funded infrastructure investment supports employment growth in the regions.

Ensure representation for workers on company boards.

Establish a green investment bank.

Transport

Take back public control of rail franchises and repatriate profits from rail and bus services currently owned by foreign companies, including companies owned by foreign states.

Implement integrated public transport plans across all regions which complement economic growth.

NHS

Replace internal market by health needs led resourcing. No more PFI deals and outsourcing.

Repeal and replace Health Act 2012.

Reverse Tory planned £22b cut by 2020.

Education

Reinstate local authority control of all maintained schools.

No new grammar schools! Scrap all existing selection for

secondary school education. Take steps to ensure every school is a good school.

Reduce the burden of testing & give teachers greater control over what they teach.

Remove charitable status of all private education provision.

VAT on private school fees to pay for free school meals for all primary children is a start.

Stop the Tory plan to move funds from deprived inner city areas to Tory shires.

Higher Education

Reinstate the system of free higher education to parallel Scottish system.

Ensure that higher and further education provide students with the skills to access the job market. This means prioritising funding for courses which relate directly to professions and other employment opportunities, in effect ensuring that some Universities return to the original functions of polytechnics.

Expand apprenticeship schemes (but without a link to 'academic' institutions).

Planning

Develop a national spatial plan to support national and regional level decisions on infrastructure investment.

Introduce a democratically accountable system of planning at city regional and combined authority level.

Re-establish a planning system which is led by an assessment of need for development which is in the public interest rather than by the demand for private profit.

Housing

Abolish the Right to Buy in England (to parallel system in Scotland and which is being introduced in Wales).

Repeal the 2016 Housing and Planning Act.

Reinstate national grant funded programme for new local authority developed housing.

Reintroduce regulation of Housing Associations in receipt of Government grant.

Stop all public subsidy to home ownership.

Allow councils to acquire land

for new council housing at Existing Use Value

Strengthen Local Authority powers to take control of privately rented homes which have been mismanaged.

Local Government

Remove borrowing restrictions on local authorities.

Restore democratic systems within local government (abolishing directly elected Mayors and two tier political structures within councils – i.e. replacing cabinet systems with committee systems).

Remove caps on local authority council tax increases.

Taxation

Introduce higher rates of income tax for persons on higher income levels on a progressive scale.

Tax savings on same basis as earned income.

Increase inheritance taxes, especially in relation to inheritance of property assets

Phased replacement of stamp duty by tax on capital gains on residential property ownership; in short term transfer liability for stamp duty from purchaser to seller.

Ensure an effective system of corporate taxation which minimises tax evasion and avoidance.

Welfare Policy

Restore cuts in Housing and other Welfare Benefits. Ensure benefits, including pensions and disability benefits, are uprated in

line with inflation. Maintain the triple lock on pensions.

Trade Unions and workers' rights

Repeal all legislation which impedes the right to organise in the workplace.

Restore access to Employment Tribunals by abolishing fees for initiating complaints.

Immigration and Human Rights

The UK government to play a full role in supporting refugees in line with its commitments under the Geneva Convention by taking

a proper share of those who need a safe haven.

Guarantee the rights of EU nationals resident in the UK.

Implement a programme for the regularisation of all migrants resident in the UK for five years.

Maintain the right to free movement for all persons resident in member states of the EU.

Ensure the right to family life through reunion with settled family members, irrespective of income levels.

Make a commitment to implement and develop the standards of the European Convention on Human Rights as the basis for human rights in the UK. **C**

**Jeremy
Corbyn**

**10 PLEDGES TO REBUILD
AND TRANSFORM BRITAIN**

An Economy
That Works
For All

Secure Homes
For All

A Free National
Education
Service

Action to
Secure Our
Environment

Security
at Work

**10 PLEDGES TO REBUILD
AND TRANSFORM BRITAIN**

Cut Income
and Wealth
Inequality

Act to End
Prejudice
and Injustice

Secure Our
NHS and
Social Care

Democracy
in Our
Economy

Peace and
Justice
Abroad

Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn's 10 pledges: Key planks in Labour's 2017 Manifesto making

Printer ad

BREXIT

Remaining for a social Europe

Peter Hain argues Corbyn's Labour must adopt a much stronger position against Brexit

Although Keir Starmer's 6-tests for the negotiations to leave the EU are both positive and welcome, the Labour leadership's lacklustre stance in Parliament on the Article 50 Bill opened the door to the hard right Brexit the Tories are determined to pursue.

It has prompted disillusioned members and supporters to resign, some to turn to the Liberal Democrats who have grabbed the Remain cause. Sadly nobody has a clue where Labour really stands on Brexit.

During the Article 50 Bill, the key vote on an amendment to stay in the Single Market, moved by myself and former TUC General Secretary John Monks, 80 per cent of my Labour backbench colleagues defied the Corbyn 3-line whip to oppose, either backing the amendment or abstaining.

Deep dismay

That reflected deep dismay amongst grass roots Party members and trade unionists, many including Jeremy Corbyn's strongest supporters. Of course Labour MPs have faced a tough dilemma. "The referendum result has to be respected. Two thirds of Labour constituencies voted Leave", they remind us.

But what about the fact that two-thirds of Labour voters across Britain voted Remain? Even in those many Labour Leave constituencies, Remain Labour voters were in the majority. Surely that should be our Party's mandate?

Owen Smith MP's Pontypridd constituency voted Leave, but he voted against the Article 50 Bill defying Jeremy Corbyn's whip alongside the Tories in favour. Yet Owen Smith reports no revolt against him – on the contrary, doorstep respect, even from Labour Leave voters, that he stuck up for what he believes in.

The Party leadership, running scared of alienating Brexit voters, has, in effect, put control of migration ahead of protecting jobs and economic prosperity. That must now change if we are

not to trap ourselves on the wrong side of history, as Labour's official stance has so far done.

The Chancellor has said that, if the UK loses access to the Single Market, the Tories would consider "abandoning a European-style social model with European-style taxation and regulation systems, and "become something different".

This would clearly mean lower labour and environmental standards, and further cuts in the NHS and public services: austerity forever.

That is why leaving the Single Market poses a threat to the social progress and increased prosperity which the Labour movement has always fought for.

At the Prime Minister's meeting with President Trump, Number 10 implied that America could somehow replace the EU as the UK's trading partner. But leaving the single market could

Labour should be standing against all this, projecting both a renewal of social Europe's vision of equality and social justice, and above all a credible -fight-back against neoliberalism

mean a loss in UK trade of up to 30% when a US deal might boost it by a mere 2%.

Anyone who knocked on hundreds of doors as I did in Welsh Valleys during the referendum, knows that fears about immigration were a motivation for Brexit. However, the right to free movement has never been unconditional. Even under current EU rules, the UK has had a number of effective tools which are used by other countries in the European Economic Area (EEA), to manage migration effectively if we wish to do so.

Rather than turning our backs on our largest export market, surely the left should push for a new interpretation of free movement of labour? It is quite possible to impose restrictions on immigration, reflecting a country's needs, whilst remaining in



Message to Labour's leadership

the EEA; Belgium, for example, does precisely this by returning to their EU country of origin each year thousands of migrants who do not have jobs.

The EU single market has more than 500 million people, representing an economy of almost £11 trillion and a quarter of the world's GDP – as well as half our trade.

Untold harm

Uncertainty and loss of market access will cause untold harm to the economy and people's jobs, which will be felt most keenly in the already disadvantaged nations and regions.

A hard border across the island of Ireland, along what will become the external customs frontier of the EU, will also have damaging consequences for the Northern Ireland peace process. On top of that, Scottish secession threatens.

Labour should be standing against all this, projecting both a renewal of social Europe's vision of equality and social justice, and above all a credible -fight-back against neoliberalism which has become too embedded in the EU's politico-legal framework and has prompted the surge of right wing populism and racism, with increasing echoes of 1930's fascism.

Above all we should be building for a referendum on the final deal to give voters the final say. **C**



Former Labour MP and Cabinet Minister, Peter Hain is a Labour member of the House of Lords; his book *Back to the Future of Socialism* is published by Policy Press

British people were conned - the view from Europe

Julie Ward explains how solidarity with our European socialist allies can benefit the anti-Brexit movement

As a member of the European Parliamentary Labour Party (EPLP), working within a consensus-driven democratic political assembly of 28 different countries, I experience both the value and challenges of collective socialist endeavour on a day to day basis, not only through membership of the Socialists and Democrats (S&D) group, but also as a member of the Left Anti-Austerity Caucus which brings together MEPs from three different political groups to oppose the neo-liberal centre-right agenda.

The 20 strong Labour delegation in the European Parliament is the third largest within S&D and we punch above our weight, occupying two committee chairs and three vice chair positions as well as a number of other co-ordination, special representative and link roles. For example, I am a link MEP for the UNCRPD, a member of the European Internet Forum steering committee, a Mental Health Ambassador and an active member of several thematic inter-groups. I am also a member of the delegation for relations with Bosnia, Herzegovina and Kosovo, which means I am helping to negotiate the accession process for these fragile states. I regularly participate in inter-parliamentary assemblies with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP) and join missions to EU Member States to observe best practice across a range of issues within my Culture & Education, Women's Rights & Gender Equality, and Regional Development portfolios.

Since being elected in 2014 I have met, exchanged views and debated with hundreds of senior politicians from dozens of different countries. I have spoken in the French Senate and the German Bundestag as well as at countless international conferences, seminars and rallies, including two gatherings of the Young European Socialists and a conference organised by the socialist LGBTI campaign organisation, Rainbow Rose. I regularly

appear on the same platform as Zita Gurmai, Chair of PES (Party of European Socialists) Women, and Conny Reuter, CEO of SOLIDAR, the left's civil society advocacy network. My EPLP colleagues are equally active in their respective fields; the aggregated value of 20 active and engaged politicians building bridges and promoting British Labour values across Europe and beyond cannot be under-estimated and there will undoubtedly be a huge void to fill after our departure.

Everywhere I go in the course of my work outside of the UK there is deep dismay at the unfolding disaster of our withdrawal from the EU, especially from European youth, the Trade Union movement, feminists, LGBTI, human rights organisations and wider civil society. We

Wherever I encounter young people in the UK and across Europe I see passionate young activists who stand up for our principles

must not forget that the loss is on all sides and that being active at a European level has never been more important as we fight Theresa May's 'hard Brexit' and demonstrate to our socialist comrades across Europe that we will continue to stand in solidarity with them, and hope that they include us in their deliberations.

Beyond the next European elections in 2019, which we will sadly not be contesting, the British left must make strenuous efforts to build on the legacy of the EPLP. Jeremy Corbyn has made several welcome appearances at PES events in recent months, and hosted a PES conference in London. Whilst he is warmly received for his clear anti-austerity agenda, the relationship remains awkward as his European peers are unequivocally pro-EU, determined to stay the course and fight for a social Europe against the narrow interests of nationalism as personified by Brexit.

Speaking at the London confer-

ence, Sergei Stanishev, MEP and PES President, said, "The British people were conned... Britain desperately needs Labour to be an honest voice, to hold the liars to account, to be the guardian of the 48%, and to be the advocate of the people who were lied to."

Like many others, I believe it will fall to young people to grasp the nettle and rebuild Britain's relationship with Europe. Wherever I encounter young people in the UK and across Europe I see passionate young activists who stand up for our principles. They understand that a united and democratic Europe, that promotes equality and social justice, is the future we must work towards together. They are not playing politics because they know that we must take immediate action to combat climate change, to defend our diversity, to welcome refugees, and invest in our economy. They recognise it is their future that is on the line, and they understand that we must do these things together, because we cannot do them apart, and that is why we need Europe.

Young people in the UK voted overwhelmingly to Remain in the EU, and they detest being taken out of Europe against their will. Europe is not just a continent for them, but a sense of belonging to that open, diverse, and prosperous world they were once promised. Young people mobilised en masse to join the Labour Party when Jeremy Corbyn stood to offer a new kind of politics, but they have watched in despair as the Party has dithered, split, U-turned, and manoeuvred around Brexit. They signed up for a fighting opposition, and that is what they deserve.

I am encouraged however when I see new slogans like "Brexit means Resist", and efforts by groups like Another Europe Is Possible, Vote Leave Watch, or Open Britain. We need these pro-European voices to continue to dispel Brexiteers' lies, to prevent the disaster of a hard Brexit, and keep the channels of communication open beyond the current legislatures of the UK and the EU. **C**



Julie Ward is a Labour MEP for the North West of England

Holding to Starmer's six red lines

Stephen Marks argues if Labour holds steady the Tories may implode

For a quarter of a century the EU issue has torn the Tories apart. Now it has split the country down the middle, and divided Labour as to how to respond. The cut and run general election call is clearly an effort by May to avoid a damaging public split in Tory ranks and stamp down her authority.

As the Lexiteers remind us - as if we didn't know - the EU has always been a club of capitalist states committed by treaty to maintaining private property and free competition. But unlike all other international trading organisations - WTO, NAFTA, ASEAN - it did from the beginning make provision to offset at least some of the known downsides of trade liberalisation.

Yes free trade increases wealth. But it also creates losers in both class and regional terms. So the original Coal and Steel Community put a levy on each tonne of coal and steel mined, to provide a 'social fund' to retrain workers in those industries who would lose their jobs as a result of 'rationalisation'.

Post-war boom

Further rounds of 'more Europe' were matched with regional development funds, environmental policies and a 'social chapter'; all supposed to offset the 'race to the bottom' which would otherwise be expected to follow continent-wide trade liberalisation. This represented the centrist 'corporatist' Christian Democrat/Social Democrat consensus on which the EU was founded during the post-war boom.

France led the charge for a single European currency after German reunification. But Germany insisted on imposing Bundesbank standards of rigour on the new currency - without of course the fiscal transfers and constitutional commitment to regional equality which make a single currency acceptable to the different German Laender.

Rules on balanced budgets and restrictions on public borrowing meant, especially after the 2008 crash, that the EU became the vehicle for imposing global aus-

terity policies on southern Europe. At the same time compulsory tendering rules facilitated privatisation.

There was no popular basis for a democratic federalism which might have installed a progressive alternative at a pan-European level. So there was a tendency for the populism of the left-behind to be hegemonised by the right.

As every good socialist knows, the Tories are the party of big business. So how come the oldest and most sophisticated ruling class in the world could not get its preferred political instrument to defend what is clearly in its interests - continued membership of the European Union?

In 1988 Commission President Jacques Delors received a rapturous reception at the TUC. The vision of a 'social Europe' frightened the Thatcherite right with the prospect that the EU could offset the worst excesses of the free market by importing through the back door elements of the postwar consensus which the Tories were busy demolishing at home. This paradigm has dominated much debate on Europe ever since.

For pro-EU Tories the remaining elements of 'social Europe' were an acceptable price to pay (especially given Britain's opt-outs) for the benefits of free trade with an enlarged single market. But to doctrinaire Thatcherites who really do believe that the market is what happens naturally when you take away the state, this appeared to be 'socialism'.

For most of the left however, these remainders of the original 'European model' were the reason for staying in despite the turn to neo-liberalism. Under a Tory government a Brexit Britain would surely be worse than staying in the EU but outside the Euro. This was the justification for Labour's refusal to campaign alongside the Tories and for Corbyn's much-maligned '70% good 30% bad' formula.

Hence the mind-blowing vacuity of Polly Toynbee's welcome for Osborne's appointment as editor of the *Evening Standard* on the grounds that it would strengthen the 'remain' camp - despite his Tory reasons for 'remain' being



EU Commission President Jean- Claude Juncker (R) offering comiserations to British Prime Minister Theresa May (L) on her hopeless negotiating position?

directly opposite to those of the left.

A 'hard Brexit' disrupting 40 year-old supply chains in sectors such as the motor industry and leading to massive delays and extra bureaucracy in cross-border traffic would be a disaster for capital and labour alike [yes comrades, that can happen even if the opposed classes have different solutions to it!].

Stupid faction

Richard North is perhaps the one Brexiteer who actually knows what is involved in a 'hard Brexit'. An original founder of UKIP along with Alan Sked, he continues to wage a well-informed guerilla war against the stupid faction who predominate in his own camp. He argues that a full disentanglement will take years. He advocates a transitional period of associate membership as part of the European Free Trade Area while the details are sorted out [see his blog at <http://www.eureferendum.com> for details].

As this penny slowly drops on the non-loony element within the Tory Brexit team themselves, expect even more shit to hit the Tory fan as the CBI and its allies throw their weight behind this as the only realistic option and as the hardliner know-nothing populist element scream 'betrayal'.

If Labour can hold firm behind the red lines of the Corbyn/Starmer 'six points' it may yet be the Tories who implode.

Making the poor pay

Ian Foster says Tory Universal Credit will sow destitution for many

If you want an evening of interesting insight into poverty or just a reason to shake you to the core with bewilderment visit your local Food Bank. I volunteer at mine and although I mainly run the food pantry away from the users, I do sometimes meet them.

One story however sticks out and reminds me every day why I am a socialist and why that means automatically I am also a Welfarist. I met a young male who was a carer until the point at which his father tragically passed away. He was receiving a carers' allowance whilst his father was alive. This stopped almost at the same time as his father's death.

The sad day a parent dies isn't always coupled with a sudden lack of income but for those who are at the lower end of the ladder, it is all too common. This example is far from unique but rather typical of the response of the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) and Job Centre. The reason can be explained in three words, 'Change of Circumstances'.

When a person's circumstances changed in the past this was dealt with by someone at the Job Centre. A member of the Job Centre team would re-assess the person's situation. However, this has changed with the introduction of the brain child of leading poverty expert and champion of the poor, Iain Duncan Smith, with his Universal Credit.

Universal Credit was hailed as a simplification of a complex benefit system: a change to reduce bureaucracy, something most

would agree with. However, the simplification of a system is not the only reason that was used back in 2013 to announce the policy. 'Fairness' was also in the equation with 'Simplicity'.

To dig to the root of the government's UC policy we have to first define this word 'fairness'. Somewhere there has been a mix-up with its definition.

Once UC has been rolled out across a local area every benefit claimant is placed on watch for this "Change In Circumstance" that might occur. It could be a positive change such as the birth of a child or marriage or a negative change such as the death of a parent. The result is the same. A change to the way you claim your

It is not until you look at the impact of the changes on the whole picture that we see the true horror of the situation

benefits and with it a new six week assessment period in which you cannot claim anything and are somehow expected to manage.

Whilst 'Simplicity' can be argued to an extent (although I would argue the catastrophic roll out of the IT service to run this has proven otherwise), 'Fairness' would be laughable if it didn't have such barbaric consequences on the most vulnerable in society.

It is not until you look at the impact of the changes on the whole picture that we see the true horror of the situation. The Child Poverty Action Group have said



Former Tory leader, poverty expert and champion of the poor, Iain Duncan Smith MP: living proof that the road to hell is paved with good intentions

that a disabled person living alone can expect to be £3,500 a year worse off. These are not people a low budget Channel 5 documentary would define as 'scroungers', but people with sometimes severe physical or mental issues preventing them from working.

We have not seen a government policy where the political decision makers are this far away from the frontline of the issue as we have with recent benefit changes.

More recent issues show that the problems go further with the introduction of the 'Two Child Policy', where benefits are cut for further children. This is the stuff of far-fetched dystopian novelists.

Yes, we must shout and scream in opposition. However, whilst our actions must be relentless, constructive and evidential we must also seek to protect those that these changes impact upon most heavily. This teaches us about the situation and keeps our humanitarian side alive.

So speak with your local Food Bank, offer to fundraise or volunteer with them. You will probably find that you need them just as much as they need you. **C**

Universal Credit – the impact on families

- Over 1 million more children living in poverty
- Couples with children will be £960/year worse off
- Lone parent families will be £2380/year worse off
- Families with one child will be £930/year worse off
- Families with two children will be £1100/year worse off
- Families with three children will be £2540/year worse off
- Working-age couples without children will be £160/year worse off

Universal Credit – impact on childless people

- Single working-age people will be £220/year worse off.
- Single pensioners will be £30/year worse off
- Pensioner couples will be £40/year worse off.

Ian Foster is a member of Tower Hamlets Labour Party

Towards a left populism

In countering the rise of the right **Marina Prentoulis** argues that Labour needs its own kind of populist politics

The consequences of triggering Article 50 are just starting to take shape. May's quest for opposition free negotiations are now tied to the General Election on June 8th. Brexit negotiations are progressively looking more complicated, more devastating and potentially more lengthy than the popular Brexit rhetoric wanted to admit during the referendum campaign. Even before getting into the nitty-gritty of the trade agreements, political hurdles are forcing Brexiters to confront the political reality they voted for. From the borders of Gibraltar and the two Irelands to the diminishing powers of the British parliament in this process, the popularity of Brexit should have grown thin. Yet this is not the case, at least not yet.

When will the Labour opposition take advantage of the situation and present a different vision of Britain (or rather England?) to the world, rather than the dystopian 'Global Britain' of Theresa May. A 'Global Britain' catering for the financial, investment and armaments needs of every autocrat and dictator on the planet, from Trump and Erdogan to Duterte. The sound economic policies proposed by the leadership team do not seem to rally the 'people' behind the Labour party, at least not in electoral terms. What is missing from Labour's relationship with the people? The same question haunts social-democratic and left parties as we witness the disturbing ascendancy of right-wing populist parties and the increasingly conservative and xenophobic environment across Europe.

In search of a game-changing recipe (especially after the electoral successes of SYRIZA and Podemos in Greece and Spain) European leaders are keen to advance some type of 'populist' claim. Taking the French elections as an example, Emmanuel Macron's anti-establishment call, even if unconvincing for many, has pitted him against the right-wing populist Marine Le Pen. Macron isn't the only French populist. Benoît Hamon the new leader of the Socialist Party, has also been seen as having a 'populist touch'. The battle for the soul of populism does not stop there. Jean-Luc Melenchon, back in 2012 was, according to Seamus Milne (the current Labour Party Executive Director of Strategy and Communications and closest ally to Jeremy Corbyn), giving a voice to the real concerns of the people (against the establishment) and as such another populist leader. His 'populism' equipped with hologram meetings and upbeat messages has given him a spectacular rise in the polls.

In Britain an attempt at left-wing populism took place in December 2016, when John Trickett, the then Labour strategist announced the re-launching of Jeremy Corbyn as a left-wing populist. That was promised to entail more media appearances and more flagship policies that will pit the people against the establishment... yet, months later (and after Trickett's dismissal), the 'people' (both Brexiters and Remainers) seem very much divided over Labour's support for the Brexit Bill and its consequences.

No one can dispute that if anyone has an anti-establishment appeal it is Jeremy Corbyn. The question is if anyone with an anti-establishment rhetoric, no matter how convincing, is a populist. Is the stance against



Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn has to sort out his stance on Brexit first and identify the enemy clearly if he hopes to offer a coherent anti-establishment message

the political, economic and cultural 'elites' a sufficient condition for populism? How has left-wing populism been interpreted by the Labour team?

First the definition: A populist discourse would bring together different demands in a chain of equivalents. From that moment on these demands will be represented by one, common demand or symbol. This symbol will be the answer to all the demands and grievances participating in the chain. In this process, the populist discourse will divide the political terrain in two: 'us' versus 'them', 'the people' versus 'the establishment'. It follows that populism is a political logic that can work both for the left and for the right, but the content will be very different in each case. What will differentiate a left-populist discourse is its egalitarian, inclusive and progressive direction.

Every time the Labour party felt pressurised to trail the right-wing discourse (on immigration for instance) in order to appease its Leave voters in the Midlands and the North, it was moving away from this direction.

Not only that, but it is losing the votes of 'liberal, metropolitan elites' (used as an all inclusive, derogatory term) who have been witnessing xenophobia, misogyny and a reactionary discourse emerging both domestically and across the Atlantic. Although this attitude can be justified if one takes into account the voting patterns of Leave/Labour supporters, it is also an indication of the inability of the Labour party to realign the political forces in a new, progressive narrative and to draw a new antagonistic frontier. In my view, one of the key abilities of a populist intervention is to shift the heterogeneous demands towards a new direction, a new left hegemony. Or put it differently: if Labour finds itself squeezed by the Leave/Remain divide, it needs to articulate a new divide that cuts across the Leave/Remain divide and is in its favour. That's what populism is about.

The rupture created by Brexit against the EU institutions and the principle of free movement dividing the Remain and Leave camps, leaves unscarred the neoliber-

eral domestic elites, which lead the Eurosceptic sentiment. The hostility towards the EU is not shaped by a critique of neoliberalism, the dominance of which has been assisted by a string of British governments in the past thirty years. Instead, the way many Brexiters imagine their social existence is along the lines of the Empire: 'we have a special place in the world, and what if this world is now full of global challenges? We are GREAT BRITAIN, we can make it, and Brexit means Brexit'.

In the past two years, Corbyn's leadership campaigns were perceived as an insurrection against the political establishment within the Labour party, an unprecedented victory against the dominant 'Blairite' frontbench. In this respect, Labour under Corbyn is in the privileged position to challenge the previous neoliberal direction of both the Conservatives and Labour. But with Brexit on the menu, the new divisions have to be taken into account. The country is divided between Remainers and Brexiters, divided not only by different economic profiles as the common wisdom wants, but also by education, age, ethnicity and national identity. This could be the terrain of a cultural war. But in order to work in Labour's favour, it must connect all these different grievances and create a 'people' who will stand against the 'establishment'. This, though, will take loads of political craftsmanship.

Labour has to sort out its stance on Brexit first and to identify clearly the enemy if it hopes to have a clear anti-establishment message. As it stands, it is confusing even for the politically initiated. No surprise, then, that in the last few weeks Corbyn's supporters have been breaking ranks and the polls show a 20 point lead of the Conservatives over Labour, hence May's opportunist decision to try to cash in.

The first indication of Labour's inability to challenge the Brexit discourse was the dispute over whether Labour MPs should have voted for the Bill starting the Brexit process in the first place. The second, over whether they should have voted for the Bill after all the amendments tabled by Labour and other parties fell. In that situation the Labour strategy was left trailing that of the Tories. With a foot on each side, Labour is able neither to appease the Leave Labour voters in the Midlands and the North of England nor to comfort the Labour Remainers. Are the latter going to accept a catastrophic Tory Brexit? Just throwing around the crude soundbite 'Labour should not represent the 48% nor the 52% but the 99%' will not do the trick.

What we have ahead of us, is the Great Repeal Bill which in a very medieval fashion will allow the Tory government to repeal legislation without parliament's approval. 'Taking back control' now sounds like a tasteless joke. The question is will Labour realize that economic policies will not make the trick on their own and will it find a way to create 'the people' in defence of democracy? **C**

A version of this article first appeared in Open Democracy

Marina Prentoulis is a senior lecturer in Politics & Media at University of East Anglia and a member of Chartist EB

Unions: backbone of advance

Marcos Garcia on new challenges for the Venezuelan trade union movement

Ever since the election of Hugo Chavez in 1998, US governments have been promoting regime change aimed at ousting the Bolivarian Government. Recently oil revenue went down from US\$ 42,990 bn in 2014 to US\$ 5,291 bn in 2016.

In this difficult context, Bolivarian trade unionism has been reorganizing its forces in a sustained way by using traditional means such as setting up new unions, strengthening existing ones, and engaging in collective bargaining, as well as new tools such as workers' participation in the management of enterprises, the establishment of Local Supply and Production Committees (CLAPs), and workers' councils, among others.

The policies implemented by the neoliberal governments between 1989 and 1998, progressively dismantled workers' social protections and through outsourcing reduced the space for organizing unions. The right-wing union leadership of the Central of Venezuelan Workers (CTV) obstructed the struggle of workers through agreements restricting labour rights, such as the 1997 Reform of Labour Law.

After Chavez's election, the CTV established an alliance with the bourgeoisie, organized in FEDECAMARAS (Venezuela's CBI) and together they staged four general strikes, a coup d'état, and in December 2002, sabotaged the oil industry, the country's main source of income. All these seditious efforts were defeated. As a result, unions organized in the CTV went into rapid decline.

In 2003, an attempt was made to reorganize the Venezuelan trade union movement with the creation of the National Union of Workers (UNT), but it failed because of internal divisions.

In November 2011, the main unions in transport, railways, graphics, oil, electrical, education, public sector, health, among others, held a national conference at which they founded the Bolivarian, Socialist Workers Confederation (CBST). President Hugo Chávez attended it and told the conference about the drafting

of a new Labour Code.

The new Labour Code bill was discussed over a period of six months in over 1,800 assemblies of workers and social movements, when unions, workers, peasants and others, submitted 20,000 proposals. It was then approved by the National Assembly on May 1, 2012 and was given the status of constitutional law. No Labour Law has hitherto granted so many rights to workers in the country's history. The Law is one of the best antidotes to neoliberalism and austerity.

In 2016, the Ministry of Labour reported that the economically active population in Venezuela increased to over 13 million. Today, it is estimated that union membership is approximately 19% of the total, that is, 2,486,925 workers. About two million are organized in the CBST. The Ministry of Labour reports that between 2000-2014,

Defeating the ongoing economic war, reminiscent of the war applied against Salvador Allende in Chile in the 1970s, is strategic for the country

6,183 new unions were registered; an increase of 47.3% compared to 1986-1999.

Trade union membership in the public sector is 70%, well over 30% of the private sector. However, in the public sector there are 2,673,067 workers, and 5,153,305 in the private sector.

In 1999, during the neoliberal era, the population covered by collective agreements amounted to just 4%. Today, it is estimated that between 30% and 34% of workers are covered.

The defeat of the 2002-03 oil sabotage led many businessmen to abandon their factories, workers proceeded to occupy them to be later nationalized by the Venezuelan state. In these factories the labour movement has been developing different models of participation and management. These experiences are also taking place in state enterprises.

Since 2014, as a result of the drastic fall in the country's oil revenues, and the increasing sab-



Venezuelan trade unionists on the march

otage of the economy, the CBST made proposals "aimed at overcoming the dependence of the oil income through the diversification of the economy productive fabric" (Resolution CBST 2014 conference). The Presidential System of Recovered, Occupied, Nationalized, Created and Allied Companies was created to improve coordination on logistics, administration and planning. A system of inspections with union participation was also organized.

On November 8, 2016, by a Presidential decree the Workers' Productive Councils (CPT) were created, in the priority areas of food, medicine, hygiene and personal care and as part of the Secure Supply Program, to increase productivity and solve technical and organizational issues, guarantee the distribution and marketing of all CTP and Secure Supply Program related products, goods and services.

Up to now, 662 CPT had been created and the Ministry of Labour issued a special protection decree for all workers organized in these councils. In most of these 662 enterprises, workers are not unionized; offering a unique opportunity to develop unions in them and the CBST intends to create new national industrial unions.

The CBST believe that defeating the ongoing economic war, reminiscent of the war applied against Salvador Allende in Chile in the 1970s, is strategic for the country, but poses the challenge of consolidating a strong and powerful workers movement, as never before seen in Venezuela. The people of Venezuela and the trade union movement continue committed as ever to building a better world. **C**

Marcos Garcia was first secretary at the Bolivarian republic of Venezuela in the UK. He is a prominent trade union leader

The World Transformed

Roland Singer Kingsmith on the birth and development of a rolling festival forum for new left ideas and action

Last September, at the Labour Party Conference in Liverpool, a small team of ambitious and enthusiastic activists organised *The World Transformed*, a fringe festival of political debate, art and music. Over the course of four days 6,000 people attended 250 hours of workshops, talks, installations and concerts. No gathering of this scale or scope had been seen at Conference in a generation.

By 11am on Saturday, two hours after we had opened, the venue was full. In the central hall of the Black-E, a two hundred year old church converted into a community centre, stood five hundred people looking at a huge screen on which the results of the second Labour leadership election were going to be announced. Downstairs there were another four hundred people in two hastily arranged overflow rooms. All the chairs were gone and there were queues down the street with more people arriving by the second.

Then it happened. The results were announced. Jeremy Corbyn had won in an epic landslide, taking an even greater share of vote than he had the previous year. The room exploded. People were

hugging, cheering, waving their fists in the air, and it went on, and on, and on.

The rest of the four days is a surreal haze. We had breakfast with Paul Mason, screened I, Daniel Blake for the first time in the UK, and watched as Caroline Lucas and Jon Lansman went head-to-head in a heated debate about progressive alliances. Journalists were everywhere. One Sky reporter brought in a life-size cardboard cut-out of Tony Blair to provoke a reaction that was sadly for him not forthcoming. Momentum Kids was launched, much to the chagrin of the mainstream media who nicknamed it 'tiny trots', and we held graffiti workshops for children. Glenn Greenwald skyped in from an airport in Brazil to tell us about the Snowden files. It was extraordinary.

But underneath the hype and the mayhem something important was happening: a new political culture was emerging. Experienced activists were sharing ideas from across the progressive and radical left, with people who had never been involved in politics before, while newcomers brought their own perspectives and energies to bear on entrenched problems.

Now *The World Transformed*



Photo: The World Transformed at Labour Party Conference, Liverpool September 2016

has grown into its own organisation, committed to developing political consciousness and culture. We have just launched our first campaign – Take Back Control – a series of participatory events happening across the country that ask questions about our place in the world and how we can take back control of Britain's future after Brexit. We are working with local activists in each location, training and supporting them to create participatory experiences in their own communities.

Each event mixes well-facilitated discussions and workshops during the day with music and entertainment in the evening. Our first event in Croydon was at the TMRW hub, a new co-working space on the High Street. Walking in off the street you could jump straight in at the deep end with a debate called 'What Are British Values Anyway?' or go and learn how to express your political views in rhyme at a lyric-writing workshop with local rapper and activist Shay D. In the evening Mercury Music Prize Nominee Soweto Kinch performed a solo set, mixing saxophone with political hip hop that blew us all away.

This September we'll be holding *The World Transformed Festival* in Brighton. We're still at the early stages of organising the programme. You can expect a multi-venue experience with talks, workshops, performances, original artwork, big networking sessions and more. We will also be working with Momentum to integrate more with conference, providing space and support for delegates to meet and get organised. Local groups and activists from Brighton & Hove will feature prominently, making this the most exciting event in the grassroots left's calendar. Make sure you don't miss it. **C**

Take Back Control runs until end of June and locations can be found at www.takebackrealcontrol.com

The World Transformed Festival will take place 23 – 27th September 2017 in Brighton

For more information contact roland@theworldtransformed.org or check out the website www.theworldtransformed.org

ANTI-SEMITISM

Antisemitism – a case of mistaken identity

Silencing critics of the Israeli state for its treatment of Palestinians, and long-time champion Jeremy Corbyn, is at the heart of the anti-Semitism row argues **Naomi Wimborne-Idrissi** of Free Speech on Israel

The recurrent unseemly spectacle, of Labour establishment worthies portraying the party as full of terrorist-loving antisemites bent on offending and driving out stalwart Jewish members, has at its heart a disputed definition of antisemitism which seeks to equate criticism of Israel and its founding ideology, Zionism, with hatred of Jews.

Making this conflation has been a years' long project of pro-Israel lobbyists worldwide, but it was rejected by most Jews pre-WWII and is not shared by many Jews now. As explained in January by Avi Shlaim, Emeritus Professor of International Relations at Oxford University (ref.2), "Israeli propagandists deliberately, yes deliberately, conflate anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism in order to discredit, bully, and muzzle critics of Israel."

Derail the Corbyn project

The election of Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader, and the consequent influx to the party of enthusiastic left-wingers with international solidarity in their marrow, suddenly presented the friends of Israel with an ardent bunch of new allies – every politician and media guru from Blairite to far Right determined to derail the Corbyn project at whatever cost. It was, and still is, an amazing confluence of interest amongst: *the Guardian*, the *Daily Mail*, Wes Streeting and Michael Gove, to name but a few of those handing out the pitchforks.

Hence the adoption in December 2016 by Theresa May's Conservative government of the so-called IHRA definition of antisemitism, and the success of its proponents in winning support for it in Labour's NEC. Presented as a crucial tool in the fight against anti-Jewish racism, it threatens to have the reverse effect. To quote a letter (3) from more than 30 Jewish LP mem-

bers who wrote to the NCC ahead of Ken Livingstone's hearing in March, "As Jews, we are appalled that such a serious issue as anti-semitism is being used in this cynical and manipulative way. It is harmful to Jewish people that false charges of antisemitism are so casually thrown around."

There are large numbers of Jews who disagree strongly with the Zionist orientation of the Jewish Labour Movement, a Labour Party affiliate which emerged two years ago from a state of apparent slumber to become a major force in promoting the IHRA definition of antisemitism.

Opposition to the definition received a considerable boost at the end of March with publication of a legal opinion from Hugh Tomlinson QC (4). Tomlinson showed the definition to be badly drafted, confusing and not legally binding. He said it would put public bodies using it at risk of "unlawfully restricting legitimate expressions of political opinion." It could make them liable to being sued if they curtail criticism of Israel that does not express hatred towards Jews. "The fact that speech is offensive to a particular group is not, of itself, a proper ground for prohibition or sanction."

So describing Israel as, for example, a settler-colonialist state enacting a policy of apartheid, or calling for policies of boycott, divestment or sanctions (BDS) against Israel, cannot be characterised as antisemitic unless there is other evidence of anti-Jewish racism.

Support for boycott

For the time being, the attempt to characterise support for boycott as driven by hatred of Jews, rather than opposition to Israel's oppression of Palestinians, is notching up successes in Western countries. Despite growing support for Palestine in civil society, including among younger Jews

who are increasingly dissociating themselves from Israeli excesses, governments have brought in some elements of anti-BDS legislation in the US, France, Switzerland, Canada and here in the UK.

Last month, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA) was forced to pull a report documenting how "Israel has established an apartheid regime that dominates the Palestinian people as a whole." Commentator Mehdi Hasan reported the furore "which led to the U.N. secretariat removing the report from its website and the Jordanian head of the UNESCWA, Rima Khalef, quitting in protest."

Hasan said the report was withdrawn after Israel's supporters, with US backing, alleged that to mention the "grotesque crime of apartheid in the same sentence as the democratic state of Israel" ... is "slander", a "smear", a "despicable" and "blatant lie", a shameful act of "Israel-bashing" and a "new form of anti-Semitism."

The report gave examples of the ways in which Palestinians were divided into four groups oppressed through "distinct laws, policies and practices."

Palestinian citizens of Israel (about 1.7 million) suffer: inferior services, restrictive zoning laws, limited budget allocations, restrictions on jobs and professional opportunities.

Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem (about 300,000) also suffer from expulsions and home demolitions and the threat of losing their residency rights.

Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory (about 2.7 million in the West Bank and 1.9 million in the Gaza Strip) live under military law, while approximately 350,000 Jewish settlers are governed by Israeli civil law.

Palestinian refugees or those living in "involuntary exile" (6 to 8 million) are denied the right, assured them by a UN General Assembly resolution in 1948, to

return to their homes or receive compensation.

A UK speaking tour in March by one of the report's authors, Richard Falk, a former U.N. human rights investigator for the Palestinian territories, who is Jewish, suffered a number of cancellations at universities intimidated by charges of antisemitism from pro-Israel lobbyists.

Not a duck – it is apartheid

However, as Hasan also notes, several high-profile Israelis have used the term apartheid about their own country. Former education minister Shulamit Aloni, said "Israel practises its own, quite violent, form of apartheid with the native Palestinian population." Former environment minister Yossi Sarid, said in more colourful language, "what acts like apartheid, is run like apartheid and harasses like apartheid, is not a duck – it is apartheid."

The axed report only underlines the daily reality of Palestinians' experience, which provides ample reason for criticising Zionism and the state of Israel, and ample reason for many Jews not wishing to bind their identity to either.

Look at the case of Israeli novelist Dorit Rabinyan. Her novel, *All the Rivers* – about a relationship between a Palestinian artist, Hilmi, and an Israeli woman, Liat – was withdrawn from the school syllabus "because it might encourage young readers to get intimately involved with non-Jewish residents of the country," Rabinyan told the *Observer* at the beginning of April.

A decision supported by the far-right education minister Naftali Bennett said: "Intimate relations, and certainly the available option of institutionalising them by marriage and starting a family – even if that does not happen in the story – between Jews and non-Jews, are seen by large portions of society as a threat on the separate identities (of Arabs and Jews)."

There is nothing inherently antisemitic about opposing the state and the ideology that could bring about such a grotesque state of affairs. There are other, Jewish socialist traditions, with a much longer pedigree, that prioritise universalist, humanitarian principles and do not seek to uncouple antisemitism from the other forms of racism that the Labour Party should be fighting.

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Deir Yassin – Massacre of Palestinians

Sue Cooke says it's time for a government apology

69 years ago on the 9th April 1948, disaster struck a small village near Jerusalem. At 4.30am during the hours of darkness, 107 Zionist militiamen entered the Palestinian village of Deir Yassin. As the villagers, taken by surprise, tried to defend their village the attackers slaughtered 170 children, women and men. A further 80 people from Deir Yassin were taken prisoner, paraded through Jerusalem and then murdered.

The people of Deir Yassin lived in peace with their Jewish neighbours across the valley in Grivat Shaul; they supported each other to give warnings of attacks. I heard today from a colleague, Mazin Qumsiyeh, in Bethlehem. At the time, in 1948, Mazin's mother was training to be a teacher in Jerusalem. Her best friend was Hayah Balbisi, who that fateful April returned to her home in Deir Yassin to be with her family. Hayah was 16 years old when she was killed by Zionist militiamen. To this day Mazin's mother, now 84, remembers the tragedy which took her friend's life.

The slaughter and destruction at Deir Yassin marked the beginning of the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people from the land of their birth, which continues today with the illegal military occupation of Palestine, and the 10 year blockade of Gaza, brutally enforced by the Israeli Government.

It is important to remember that the ongoing suffering in Palestine and Israel are the continuation of something our British Government set in train a hundred years ago this year, with the 1917 Balfour Declaration. It is time our Government apologised and helped correct the historical injustices that we are responsible for.

As we grieve for the children killed in Syria, and children killed in Yemen with British weapons of destruction supplied to Saudi Arabia, I continue to be hopeful that readers will find out more about the reasons behind these linked tragedies, and write to their Members of Parliament. **C**



The end of local government?

Peter Latham proposes a town hall rescue strategy

There are alternative models of 'socialist decentralisation' in local government to neoliberal 'austerity-localism'. In *The State and Local Government* (2011), I analysed developments in the UK, other advanced capitalist countries, South Africa, the south Indian state of Kerala, Cuba, Venezuela and the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre to illustrate these. My new book - *Who stole the town hall?* - applies the approach in the earlier book, which is grounded in Marxist political economy, to developments in the UK since the Localism Act 2011.

New Labour's Local Government Act 2000 concentrated decision-making powers in fewer hands. In most authorities the committee system was replaced by the cabinet, overview and scrutiny system. Hence most councillors no longer make policy. Most feel marginalised with little influence over issues that affect their local areas. The UK also has the highest average population size per local authority in Europe.

There should be more councillors and councils - each with the committee system, which is much more inclusive than any other form of governance - covering smaller areas. Council leaders' powers have also massively increased via the 'payroll vote' of special responsibility allowances (SRAs). In addition, as the prospect of fewer and lower SRAs may be the main reason why only 13 councils have reverted to the committee system since the Localism Act, no councillors should be paid more than the median gross weekly full-time earnings in their locality.

The privatisation model in the Tory-led coalition government's White Paper titled *Open Public Services* (2011) is based on Payment for Success published in 2010 by three senior partners at KPMG. Councils are also being neoliberalised via new models of local government, which prioritise the interests of property developers and big business. The UK outsourcing market is now the second largest in the world outside the US. The amount spent by local authorities on outsourced public services almost doubled from £64 billion during the last Labour government to £120 bil-

lion during the Tory-led coalition government. Thus, contrary to the government's empowerment rhetoric, their main purpose is to complete the privatisation of local government and other public services - started under previous Tory governments and intensified under New Labour - to restore the conditions in which profitable investment and capital accumulation can take place.

Public services provide benefits to both individual service users and the wider society. Universal access, delivery according to need, services free at the point of use and delivered for the public good rather than for profit should be at the heart of any model of service

Councils are also being neoliberalised via new models of local government, which prioritise the interests of property developers and big business

delivery. Hence, as the public sector is best placed to provide public services that meet these criteria, it should be the default model of delivery.

Developments since the Localism Act reinforce the main arguments against US-style directly elected mayors (USDEMs), including 'metro' mayors, (which the Conservative government is now imposing on combined authorities (CAs) in England) and US-style directly elected police and crime commissioners (USPCCs) which:

- lead to lead to cronyism, patronage and corruption
- are monocultures, which exclude the working class
- are the optimal internal management arrangement for privatised services
- have not increased turnout and lack voter support
- have an undemocratic voting



UK local government: another Conservative privatisation target

system and cannot be removed.

So USDEMs and USPCCs should be abolished as part of the overall reorganisation of the structure of local government proposed above. Until abolition, there should be a right of recall leading to a new election if they turn out to be bad or ineffective representatives.

Some councils, which have been cut harder than the rest of the public sector, are already becoming financially unviable. So the council tax, stamp duty land tax and business rates should be abolished and replaced by a system of land value taxation plus a wealth tax and more progressive income tax to fund increased provision of directly provided public services.

The EU's imposition of neo-liberal policies on all governments, including those led by the traditional parties of the Left, has resulted in the collapse of support for social democracy. Moreover, although Labour's national leadership until the election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader was committed to such policies, there is still a crisis of working class representation because most Labour MPs and councillors would rather he did not exist. Hence, if Labour fails to respond to the challenge of building a mass campaign of resistance to Tory-driven austerity at local level, it will fail to create the political basis in public opinion for getting a radical Corbyn-led Labour government elected, which is a pre-condition for implementing the above policies. **C**

Dr Peter Latham is the author of *The State and Local Government: Towards a New Basis for 'Local Democracy' and the Defeat of Big Business Control*

High stakes in French election

The rise of the French far right party Front National is disturbing – but maybe not for the reasons we think says **Pierre Bocquillon**

The Brexit vote and the election of the peroxide mogul Donald Trump have revealed the unpredictable nature of contemporary politics and given credit to the prophecy of an unstoppable rise of the 'populist right' tapping into the resentment of the 'losers of globalization'. Ever since, one question has been nagging political analysts: who is next? Since the no less peroxidised far-right leader of PVV, Geert Wilders, scored 'only' 13% of the votes in the Dutch Parliamentary election, commentators have temporarily eased off on the pressure and turned their eye to the French Presidential election for another scare story.

Support for Marine Le Pen, the leader of Front National, is as high as ever. Recent prediction failures have taught us how to play carefully with numbers, she has consistently polled around 25% of voting intentions in the first round. Only Emmanuel Macron (En Marche movement, centre) seems to be in a position to dispute her first place. These estimates are significantly above the score of her father Jean-Marie Le Pen in the infamous 2002 Presidential election (17%), or her personal score in 2012 (18%). They also tally with the score of the party in the first rounds of recent intermediary elections. It gained a quarter of the vote in both the European (2014) and local (2015) ballots, and reached almost 28% in the 2015 regional election.

Also striking is the stability of voting intentions for Marine Le Pen. Unlike her rivals, she is virtually uncontested internally and can count on a strong base of devoted supporters. More than 70% of those who intend to vote for FN consider that they have already made up their mind, while many of Macron's supporters are still uncertain as to their final decision.

Front National has been embroiled in several affairs – from the fictional employment of party members as European parliamentary assistants, to accusation of irregular campaign financing. Yet, party supporters remain

unshaken. This contrasts with François Fillon (Les Républicains, right), whose support has been eroded by a series of embezzlement scandals involving, amongst other things, the attribution of fictional parliamentary jobs to family members.

Front National has come to embody the protest vote against a political class whose policies are perceived as indistinctly similar and detached from the everyday concerns of most citizens. Marine Le Pen stresses the similarities between the economic policies of Les Républicains and the Party Socialiste, which have both failed to reduce unemployment. Although an emphasis on security issues, a strongly anti-immigration outlook and racism – disguised as cultural incompatibility and predominantly directed against Islam – are still at the

The chances of Marine Le Pen becoming President remain limited, but the stakes are high. Her party could consolidate its status as the main challenger within the political system

core of the party's identity, Marine Le Pen has tried to polish the FN's image as a 'normal' party, avoiding the sulphurous rhetoric of her father. She has also put some distance with the latter's neo-liberal economic agenda (he used to present himself as the 'French Ronald Reagan'), emphasizing the defence of public services and the welfare state while attacking an overgrown financial sector and the European Union to appeal to disaffected voters. This new orientation reflects the support base of the party. Blue-collar workers, small employees, self-employed workers and farmers represent the largest shares of its electorate.

It is clear that Marine Le Pen is in for a top score and will, in all likelihood, be one of the two candidates in the second round of the Presidential election on 7th May. In fact most of the uncertainty seems to lie in the identity of her contender. We now know Macron won the first round, and is pre-



Five leading candidates in the 1st round reduced to two: front-runner Macron and Le Pen

dicted to win in the run off. Although FN has considerably enlarged its support base, it still remains too repellent to most left-wing and centrist voters to win in a one to one contest where vote transfers are crucial. In the second round, the so-called 'Republican front' limits the FN's progression, but the cordon sanitaire has also weakened, especially as Les Républicains have moved further to the right.

Despite difficulties in forming alliances, Front National has already conquered a significant number of cities and positions of local and regional Councillors. It counts 23 Members of the European Parliament but has only two national Members of Parliament and two Senators. The Presidential election is important for Marine Le Pen to gain media presence and shape the political discourse. However the real battle may be legislative elections in June 2017, when the party could win several additional seats in the National Assembly, thus getting more deeply entrenched in institutional politics. The chances of Marine Le Pen becoming President remain limited, but the stakes are high. Her party could consolidate its status as the main challenger within the political system, at a time when both left and right are in a process of re-composition. **C**

Pierre Bocquillon is a lecturer at the University of East Anglia

President wins autocratic powers

Sheila Osmanovic examines the forces behind Erdoğan's narrow referendum victory

On 16 April the Turkish people voted in a referendum for constitutional changes. By the narrow victory of 51.4% 'yes' over 48.6% 'no', voters have chosen to support President Erdoğan and his leading Justice and Development (AKP) Party in establishing an executive presidency, (enabling Erdoğan to rule for 12 years) and abolishing the office of Prime Minister.

Whilst the new constitution bestows on the President further executive powers, such as the appointment of judiciary and ministers, the pro-government Turkish media have been celebrating the result as an affirmation of love for democracy amongst the Turkish population. The media reported a general mood of celebration amongst the Turkish population. The difference was 1.3 million votes for Erdoğan's plan, though the percentage figure might have seemed somehow insignificant. Many citizens have been ecstatic over the annihilation of military figures ruling behind the scenes in the Parliament, following last year's failed coup, in a mode widely known amongst Turks as 'Deep State.' However, not only have many military personnel been arrested, but so too have hundreds of journalists and academics.

In this regard, the outcome of the referendum was not totally unexpected. Two other key factors were at work. Firstly, was the way conservatives perceived the changes the constitutional package promised to bring about. There has been always a clear rift between the conservative faction who believed the proposed presidential system would accelerate democratisation of the political system in Turkey, and more liberal segments who rejected changes as Erdoğan's attempt to dominate and control the political scene in all spheres. The paternalistic mesh, however, has always had a strong hold amongst a majority of Turkish voters, as demonstrated by the snap elections called by Erdoğan last year which only strengthened his political grip.

The second reason is the

omnipresent narrative that Turkey is waging an existential war against Western forces who are plotting to carve up the country and who might be behind the recent wave of terrorist attacks. This line of argument, which increasingly includes secular neo-nationalists, emphasizes stability as the priority. Erdoğan is perceived by many as the preserver of the Turkish nation and lands, in the face of the Treaty of Sevres, seen as the main weapon of Westerners to keep Turkey under political control. The Treaty was signed after World War I between the defeated Ottoman Empire and victorious allies Britain, France and their partners. The Sevres Peace Treaty aimed to dismember the remainder of Ottoman lands (most of them with a majority-Turkish population) and establish Western spheres of influence. The

The conflict between the secular and orthodox Muslim, the democratic and autocratic has been heightened. How this will play out in a turbulent geo-political environment is uncertain

Treaty was overturned after the Treaty of Lausanne was signed in 1923 following the end of the two-year war against Greece conducted under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

In his speech of 22nd December 2016 Erdoğan said, 'We are a nation that still lives with the sorrows of what we lost at Lausanne. To speak frankly, Turkey is going through its greatest struggle since the War of Independence. This is a struggle [to preserve] a single nation, a single homeland, a single state.'

This approach resonates well with some leaders of the Muslim world. Erdoğan is often perceived as the Neo-Ottoman reviver of the unity of the Muslim Umma, an image that he certainly enjoys. Post-referendum, the media followed up with a series of congratulatory messages coming from Middle East states, that promises improved relations with many of their leaders. Significantly, this would be an improved relationship with Iran, perhaps due to



talks Turkey recently led with Russia over the Syrian war.

Indeed, the war in Syria is an extremely important pretext for the Erdoğan presidency. Other notable greetings to Erdoğan came from the rebel groups Jaish al-Islam, linked to Saudi Arabia and the Sultan Murad Brigade, controlled by Turkish intelligence, both allegedly forming part of the Free Syrian Army. Turkish military has fought with these groups at Al-Bab, the town at the crossroads of Syrian-Kurdish influence, and the strategic objective of Ankara policy.

It is in the light of this context that the pro-Kurdish opposition Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) presented complaints about unstamped ballots they said affected three million voters. They joined with the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) in requesting the Electoral Commission annul the referendum on the basis of an extra-legal decision to allow unstamped ballots. The request was swiftly rejected, as was the ECHR's judgement on the unsoundness of the result.

The result of the referendum has highlighted and exacerbated the bipolar profile of Turkish politics. The conflict between the secular and orthodox Muslim, the democratic and autocratic has been heightened. How this will play out in a turbulent geo-political environment is uncertain. **C**

Brexit and the British Film Industry

Patrick Mulcahy
on starting
over again
with Europe

Article 50 has been triggered and there is no turning back. As on most other aspects of British lives, the impact of Brexit on filmmaking and cinema-going in the United Kingdom will be significant.

First cinema-going: a range of cinemas from the Belmont Film House in Aberdeen to the Lighthouse in Wolverhampton, supported by Europa Cinemas will lose their funding to show European films. This will in turn diminish the availability of European movies in cinemas. A response may be to move them online for personal consumption, but the thrill and impact of a collectively-viewed experience of some of the future classics of European cinema would be lost. I will always watch a Michael Haneke movie in a cinema – his latest, *Happy End* starring Isabelle Huppert, premieres at Cannes in May. After Brexit, I might not be able to do so. The beneficiary cinemas will be forced to programme more conservatively or else may even close altogether. The British Film Institute could play a part in preventing this by replacing the Europa programme with funding for cinemas that showcase diversity in British filmmaking. At present, there are no plans to do so.

Second, film production: the United Kingdom will no longer be able to access funds from the Creative Europe programme. This is a Euro 1.46 billion programme allocated over seven years for film, TV, games, publishing, music, heritage and the performing and visual arts produced within Europe. The single project grants – Euro 50,000 for a fiction project with a budget above Euro 1.5 million – are relatively small but can help with development or completion. The recent releases *City of Tiny Lights*, starring Riz Ahmed and Billie Piper and *Their Finest*, a World War Two comedy about a woman (Gemma Arterton) who becomes a screenwriter, benefited from this. The Tentmaster's Daughter, a British project in development from director Isabel Anderton, has similarly received Euro 50,000 in post production services as well as Euro 5,000 in 'soft money', an incentive offered by a government for the purpose of basing a production there.

Third, film sales: significant sums of money from Creative Europe are awarded to sales agents who take on European film productions and try to find distribution for them. There will be no financial incentives for beneficiary sales agents to take on British films and the British Council will have to step up its game to fill the gap. The problem is that outside of films by Stephen Frears – *Tamara Drewe* was a huge hit in France – and Ken Loach, few British films outside the blockbusters receive wide distribution in Europe. British films without film

festival recognition will struggle that much harder in the European market place.

Fourth, subject matter: I for one will be glad there will be a disincentive for British filmmakers to make films from European writers in English. *Suite Française* adapted from Irène Némirovsky's novel, unpublished in her tragically brief lifetime, was a depressing example of this; subtitles should not and do not prevent films from becoming financially successful. There will be no incentives for British filmmakers to adapt foreign novels for the big screen. This will force British filmmakers inwards – or else to adopt a new nationality. This is the only aspect that genuinely thrills me, watching how they will adapt.

Here though British film could play a vital part in repairing the damage caused by the Brexit referendum, a vote that divided people between economic sense ('remain') and casino gambling ('leave') and a defiant belief that forging relationships with differ-

ent partners who don't share our values ('leave') is somehow better than working with those with whom we are geographically and culturally aligned ('remain'). Films can celebrate both humanism and risk taking. They can also prove that there is a viable alternative to European bureaucracy and inertia, often seen as drivers towards leaving the Union. Such projects may not be overtly commissioned but, as artists, filmmakers have a responsibility to respond. It is worth remembering that Thatcherism inspired a purple patch in British filmmaking, contributing to the birth of Channel Four and Palace Pictures.

The reallocation of resources within the British Film Institute will be crucial in determining how British cinema lands after Brexit.

Whilst acknowledging the decision to leave the European Union, 'BFI 2022', a five year plan for support to the British moving image industry from 2017 to 2022, doesn't anticipate the loss of resources to cinemas and filmmakers. The plan, launched last November, appears to have been written without Brexit in mind. Yes, there are devolving budgets and decision making regionally and for promoting diversity as well as expanding film education (the 'Into Film' programme) but there is disappointingly no acknowledgement of the challenges that British filmmakers will face. It will be churlish to think that America will provide the same level of support or co-productions with China and India will result in popular and therefore sustainable British hits. Our new relationship with European cinema will have to be from a zero-base with filmmakers rather than bureaucrats within the British Film Institute being our principal hope. **C**



European films: another casualty of Brexit for UK cinema goers?

BOOK REVIEWS

Mike Davis on home grown fascism



British Nazis

WHAT DID YOU DO DURING THE WAR?
Richard Griffiths (Routledge, £19.99)
FASCIST IN THE FAMILY
Francis Beckett (Routledge, £16.99)

Subtitled 'The last throes of the British pro-Nazi right 1940-45' Griffiths' book is full of unexpected revelations on the odd alliances against war with fascist Germany. Appeasement with Hitler had been the *leitmotif* of the Chamberlain Tory government. Avoidance of war was the aim. Many on the left, including the Labour Party led by Attlee, advocated putting Britain on a war footing. Churchill and other leading Tories were also for rearmament.

Amidst this darkening political climate of the late 1930s British fascists were manoeuvring. They were the most vocal advocates of support for Germany and Hitler's anti-Semitic, anti-big-money capital (read Jewish) rhetoric. They were to find strange bedfellows.

Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists, later British Union is well known. Lesser known figures like Admiral Sir Barry Domville (The Link), Major Douglas, Jeffrey Hamm, Arnold Leese, Captain Ramsay (The Right Club), Lord Tavistock (British People's Party) crop up time and again under various guises promoting pro-German, anti-Semitic attitudes. An ex Mosley man John Beckett (whose son, Francis has updated his biography, published in this same series), also features prominently among these fanatics.

Level of infiltration

Griffiths' research reveals a disturbing level of infiltration, and at times overlap of views, of previously bone fide pacifists and pro-Nazis. As Griffiths argues, there is a perfectly legitimate strand of pacifism but there was a blurring of differences. He cites the case of Ben Greene, a cousin of writer Graham, who was a Labour parliamentary candidate until defecting in 1938. He joined the Peace Pledge Union and set up the 'Peace and Progressive Information Service' within it. Its aim was to combat war propaganda and oppose a system of usury, a code for 'Jewish Money Power', underlying capitalism. Greene supported the German

invasion of Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland (as did other British fascists) and wrote pro-Nazi pamphlets like *The Truth about this War*. He was arrested and imprisoned soon after war was declared.

However, the Peace Pledge Union, and *Peace News* started by Quaker Humphrey Moore, never supported the war. 'While many pacifists maintained purity of their ideals, in the late Thirties and Forties there was...a significant minority whose views became tempered with a desire to see the best in motives of Nazi Germany...and even to promote Nazi attitudes' writes Griffiths. From 1939 numerous fascist groups, including Mosley's, encouraged members to join the PPU. Many articles in *Peace News* were written by pro-Nazis. After Kristallnacht in November 1938 some PN writers excused the Nazis by pointing out Britain had been guilty of similar treatment of Jews in WW1. Nor did the German invasion of Prague change the PN view with Moore describing Hitler as 'an idealistic dreamer'. Naivety and gullibility partially explains this stance. A further sinister turn occurred when war was declared. Griffiths gives numerous examples. Many pacifists attended Mosley's rallies and pro-German articles continued to appear in PN. Rose Macauley frequently protested against fascist tendencies in PN. Adverts appeared for the fascist British People's Party meetings and the related movement, Campaign Against War and Usury. At one point the rabidly pro-Nazi The Link was advertised in the *Peace Services Handbook* and was considered as a candidate to handle all PN foreign correspondence.

Moore seemed sucked in. Leftist writer Ethel Mannin wrote a piece entitled *Anti fascists propaganda a danger* blaming Jews for the war mentality. Griffiths paints a picture of a peace movement in disarray. When John Middleton Murry took over editing *Peace News* the policy remained with Murry talking of Nazism as 'the destined instrument of European unification' and speaking favourably of the German 'new order'. Orwell was prompted to bemoan the decline of British pacifism.

Under the wartime Defence

Regulation 18B the Home Secretary could detain any person suspected to be of hostile origin or association or to have been recently concerned in acts prejudicial to the public safety or defence of the realm'. Initially, only a handful were arrested. Mosleyites continued unhampered.

Then in May 1940 it all changed. Churchill became prime minister and further emergency legislation proscribed membership of numerous fascist groups. The attack on the 'fifth column menace' saw many pro-Nazi leaders, including Mosley, but many more rank and filers, interned. Some fascist top brass, with establishment contacts, got off lightly or were released well before the end of the war. Those who had broadcast open and persistent pro German propaganda during the war – most notoriously William Joyce (Lord Haw Haw), were tried and hanged after the war. But many others escaped the death penalty, again due to their connections.

Share platforms

Prominent anti-war Independent Labour Party MPs like John Mc Govern crossed the line in showing a willingness to share platforms with fascists. Worse with John Beckett we find the story of a man who was a leading ILPer, but jumped ship to the fascists in the late 1930s. Beckett juniors' account of his father's embrace of anti-Semitic, pro Nazi politics is as absorbing as it is salutary in its explanations of the transformation of radical socialist to racist national socialist.

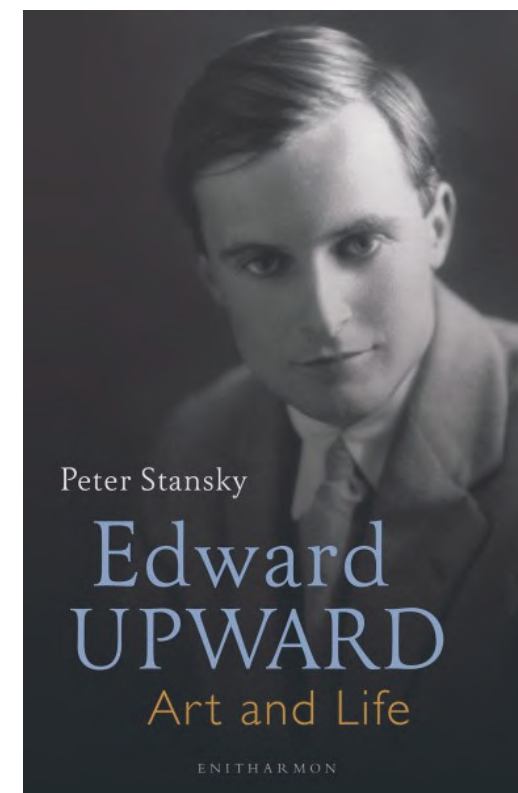
The chapters of Griffith's book detailing the antics of prominent fascists, MI5 monitoring and the cat and mouse games that ensued are fascinating and underline a largely benign approach on the part of the government. There is a useful 'rogues gallery' potted biography chapter to conclude. After the war many leading activists went on to campaign with Mosley and helped form the League of Empire Loyalists and National Front.

In today's climate of growing race hate, populist nationalism and neo fascism it all makes for a sobering read.

Duncan Bowie on communism in Dulwich

EDWARD UPWARD
Peter Stansky (Eritharmon, £25)

Upward was a communist novelist and school teacher. Upward wrote a trilogy – *The Spiral Ascent*, a novelised autobiography of his life in the Communist Party from the 1930's to the 1950's, which I remember reading when it was republished in a paperback edition in 1979. The three volumes: *In the Thirties*, *The Rotten Elements* and *No Home but the Struggle*, have sat



in pride of place next to Orwell and Olivia Manning ever since. I have been puzzled as to why he was so little known and Stansky's biography should now correct this. Eritharmon Press has also published Upward's first novel, *Journey to the Border*, originally published by the Hogarth Press in 1938, as well as some short stories written in his 90's. Upward lived to the age of 105.

Upward was one of the group of public school intellectual communists never much of an activist and certainly not a militant street-fighter. Educated at Repton school and then at Cambridge University, his closest friend was Christopher Isherwood, with whom he collaborated on a number of juvenile

fantasy writings, centring on a fictional village of Mortmere. Upward was not however a homosexual as were Isherwood and his other close friend and collaborator Stephen Spender. Upward's wife Hilda was also a member of the Communist Party. What intrigued me most about Upward was that for over 30 years he was an English teacher at the prestigious if liberal Alleyn's school in Dulwich, and that for most of this time he lived in a house in Dulwich Village only a few hundred yards from my own.

The biography, as do the autobiographical novels, traces Upward's increasing disillusion with the Communist Party. This was not over the German-Soviet Pact of 1939 nor over the invasion of Hungary of 1956 nor of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Upward and his wife left the party in 1948, criticising the Party for being reformist as the Communist Party leader, Harry Pollitt brought the Party into supporting the Labour Party. The Communist Party was to lose its only post-war MPs, Phil Piratin and William Gallagher in 1950, with Communist influence subsequently limited to the trade union movement.

Much of Stansky's study focuses on Upward's dilemma of trying to write readable novels and short stories while at the same time holding to his communist principles. Alleyn's school seems to have been tolerant of their Communist teacher as both head of English and housemaster, clearly not too concerned that he would corrupt their sixth formers and turn them all into Soviet agents or Communist militants. In many ways, it would appear that Upward was a fairly traditional English teacher.

Despite attending Dulwich branch communist meetings and

holding meetings of the Communist writers group in his house and being active in the teachers union, he does not appear to have been active politically locally. Nowhere in the book is there any reference to the activity of Mosley's British Union of Fascists, which was strong in Dulwich and included William Joyce (Lord Haw Haw) and his brother Quentin. No mention is made of a hotel on Dulwich common between Dulwich College and the golf course, used by a group of Nazi spies (later demolished to make way for a house in which Margaret and Dennis Thatcher were to live). All of this perhaps makes Dulwich a bit more interesting that at first appears to be the case.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Traitor to the Republic

**Duncan
Bowie** on
protector
as
monarch

CROMWELL
David Horspool (Allen Lane, £12.99)

The no doubt intentional controversy over this short new biography is that it is published in the Penguin Monarch's series. The author is history editor of the *Times Literary Supplement*, not at expert on 17th century English history. His previous studies include biographies of King Alfred, entitled *Why Alfred burned the cakes*, and *Richard III*. Such a short biography can have little new content and the book shows no evidence of new primary research. The book's argument is 'monarch' does not necessarily imply kingship (as it is derived from the Greek for 'single ruler') and that anyway Cromwell as Lord Protector had all the trappings of kingship, was referred to as 'Your Highness' and in effect operated regal powers.

What is curious about the book is that as a study of Cromwell as 'monarch', it devotes only 14 pages to Cromwell's time as Lord Protector, only a few pages more than devoted to his childhood. This last section focuses almost entirely on his 'kinglike' style and behaviour, including a discussion of Cromwell's rejection of the offer of kingship, but implying that a second offer would have been accepted. There is no consideration whatsoever of his political decisions, his actions in government, his relationship with the military and with parliament, with the State Council (with its rotating monthly presidency) and the major-generals (unelected and with military authority), or with his successive deputies John Lambert and Charles Fleetwood.

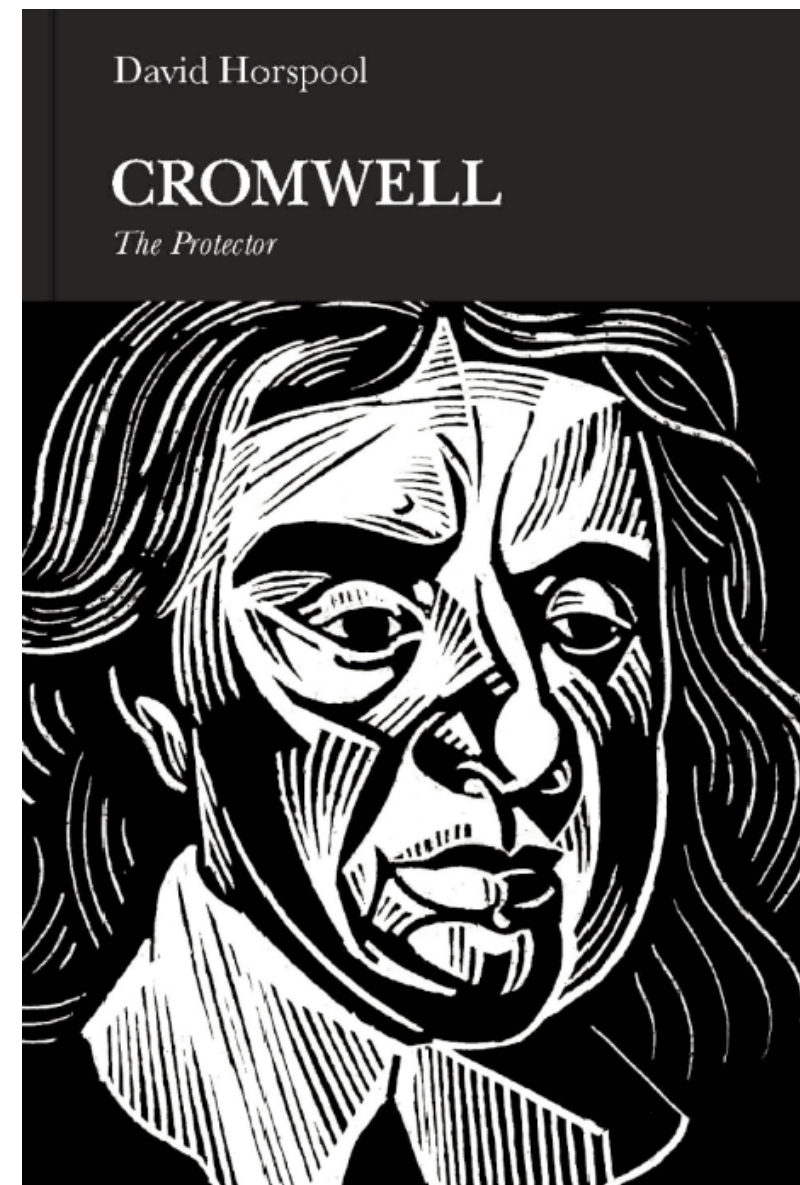
Ireland and Scotland get brief mentions in terms of Cromwell's military activity. John Lilburne appears in passing but not the Leveller movement as a whole. There is no discussion of the religious politics of his administration and no serious consideration of the political and constitutional implications of his use of the army to over-ride parliamentary decisions, of his twice dismissing of parliament (though noting that this was within his monarchical powers – after all Cromwell had attacked his predecessor Charles I for dismissing parliament when he had been a member).

Cromwell's monarchical status

is reinforced by his decision to appoint his son Richard as his successor and in effect creating a new royal dynasty, though it was in his power to do so, according to the 1657 Humble Petition and Advice voted by parliament, and the succession was confirmed after Cromwell's death by the Council of Estate, which Cromwell had created to replicate the royal Privy Council but which in effect was of limited power while the older Cromwell was still alive. If you are however more concerned with the substance of how England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, first 'united' under Cromwell's protectorate, and the colony of Jamaica, were governed by Cromwell, and about Cromwell's autocratic government and anti-parliamentary and

anti-democratic acts, it is better to read Barry Coward's two volumes on Cromwell and his 'protectorate', return to the classic and lengthy narratives of Firth and Gardiner or the shorter contribution of Roger Howell.

Cromwell was a traitor to the republican 'Good Old Cause' in substance not just in style, and it is an insult to parliamentary democracy that his statue has pride of place outside the Houses of Parliament which he treated with such contempt. Had Cromwell focused on developing a collective rather than a personal leadership and a leadership based on a Council of State reporting to an elected parliament, the English Republic could have had a chance of survival.



**Duncan
Bowie** on
our
greatest
PM

CITIZEN CLEM
John Bew (Riverrun, £30)

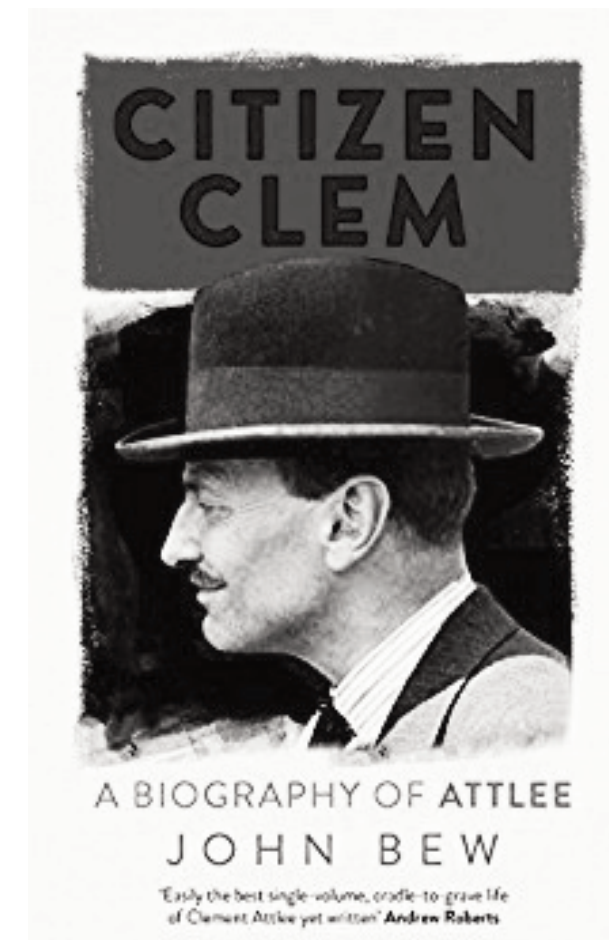
Why another biography of Attlee? On checking my bookshelves, I discovered I already had seven: Jenkins (1948), Harris (1982), Burridge (1985), Brookshire (1995), Beckett (1997), Pearce (1997), and Thomas-Symonds (2010) – no doubt there are others which have not reached me. We also have Swift (2001) on Attlee in opposition before 1940, Cowcroft (2011) on Attlee during the war and Brooke (1992) on Labour in the wartime coalition and several studies of the 1945-51 Labour governments.

The answer must be partly nostalgia, a wish to revisit a time when Labour was more successful and actually in Government. But Attlee has always presented a challenge for would-be biographers, often seen as an enigma, a quiet man who appeared to be a patriot who believed in the British empire – a 'conservative' with a small 'c', who actually introduced a socialist programme in government and whose legacy lasted longer than any post-war prime Minister other than perhaps Thatcher, whose main achievement was to destroy that legacy.

Attlee's own autobiography *As it Happened* is so understated as to be dull. Attlee himself wrote very little – a pamphlet and an essay on local government – the first for the Fabians and the latter for a Socialist League book (in his most radical period) and in retirement a set of short unrevealing lectures given in the US on the transition from Empire to Commonwealth.

Bew is perhaps a surprising biographer of Attlee. A lecturer in war studies, he has never before written on Labour politics and his most acclaimed previous work is a study of Castlereagh, British for-

eign secretary at the beginning of the 19th century. His unfamiliarity with British socialist history shows – with a number of errors in the book's early chapters, notably confusing Morris' Commonwealth with the Christian Social Union's Commonwealth and referring to Margaret Bondfield, the trade union organiser as an 'undercover journalist'. The fact that the cover blurb states that the book is the best biography of Attlee written, from the Conservative historian Andrew Roberts, also worried me a little.



However Bew's volume is worth reading, despite its length at 650 pages if you include notes and bibliography. Bew's main argument is that Attlee had a clear political objective and principles throughout his political career and that his commitment to the welfare state and nationalisation of key industries and managed decolonisation, can be traced to his early work at the Toynbee Hall settlement in Whitechapel and his early writing on social work. Bew presents a fairly familiar narrative of the wartime coali-

tion and the post-war government. His focus is rightly on government rather than internal Labour party divisions and is perhaps stronger on international issues than on domestic matters.

A novel approach is the extensive use of letters which Attlee wrote to his brother Tom, a pacifist with different views to Clem's. The lifetime correspondence reveals more about Attlee's opinions and principles than his brief, often curt, political statements or the official records.

In my view the book rather runs out of steam in 1951 when Labour lost the general election and the coverage of Attlee's role as leader of the opposition between 1951 and 1955 is very brief – at only 18 pages. Perhaps we should thank Bew for his brevity at this point, but I think it is a mistake that this important period and Attlee's role within it is treated in so dismissive a manner, especially as it has not perhaps been fully studied in previous biographies. Thomas Symonds shorter biography only gives 15 pages to this period in a chapter called 'Managing the Party', though this has more substantive content, focusing on the politics while Bew focuses on the personal.

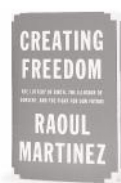
Despite this criticism Bew's book is

worth the slog, even for those who thought they knew everything they wanted to know about Attlee. The main value of the book is that it shows Attlee to be a thoroughly decent and principled man and a committed socialist, as well as a highly competent politician and Prime Minister, a man without ego and always understated. The error of his rivals was to mistake his quietude for timidity. What a contrast with more recent politicians we could think of.

BOOK REVIEWS

We are not responsible

Bob Littlewood
on finding solidarity



CREATING FREEDOM
Raoul Martinez (Penguin, £20 h/b)

At the heart of *Creating Freedom* is a direct challenge to the idea that individuals are responsible for their own behaviour. Martinez goes beyond telling us that we do not control our upbringing nor the way our brain works (undeniably true) to the statement that 'Luck has been the decisive force in the life of every person that has ever lived'. He starts with examples of criminal behaviour. No psychopath chooses to be a psychopath and then "Ultimately all that separates the criminal from the non-criminal is luck....our system of punishment is the means of reinforcing social injustice rather than preventing it."

How, then are we denied choice and are dispossessed of any freedom? Martinez uses insights from philosophers, psychologists, historians, scientists and other disci-

plines with some well researched empirical evidence to demonstrate the myths surrounding not only individual responsibility, but justice, political democracy and the market.

There's a discussion of how: opinions are manipulated, consent manufactured through corporate propaganda, the role of the media ('the press writes the first draft of history'), myths about democracy, the American Dream and Social Darwinism and much more. Put together this looks like an overwhelmingly determinist view of society.

But the book is about how to create freedom. On what basis is there 'hope'? Martinez covers historical and current examples of disobedience, heroic activism and social progress. What's necessary is to fully understand the limits of our freedom so that we are better placed to transcend them, he says. It's the dreamers who make change. 'Rules mark out what we

can do; values tell us what we should do' and the key to change is to develop and encourage empathy.

None of us is ultimately responsible for who we are or what we do, Martinez says. Understanding this "creates the possibility for a deep solidarity between human beings, one built on the understanding that, had I truly been in your situation, I would have done as you did....all systems of oppression and exploitation depend on the denial of this equality"

This is a challenging book for those who think themselves progressives but who are focussed on piecemeal change through the usual methods. It's written by an artist and film maker, not an academic. We need writers who imagine a better future and challenge our assumptions about how to change the world.

Rogues, swindlers and frauds

Brian O'Leary
on the rise of modern finance



FORGING CAPITALISM
Ian Kraus (Yale University Press, £14.99)

Contemporary City financial fraudsters are the latest in a long line of rogues stretching back centuries. They swam in a sea of expanding credit supporting endless Empire building wars, booming British international trade and to a much lesser extent industrialisation.

This is a narrowly focused book about the trials and tribulations of the pre-1914 British rentier class. As the needs of the Empire increased finance's functional role needed to evolve, both geographically and in the varieties of credit instruments on offer. Gentlemanly traditional exclusive social networks of trust no longer sufficed to meet this demand. However, widening the personnel beyond the privileged merchant and aristocratic classes to include more diverse social groups, particularly over long distances, inevitably increased the risk of deceit and theft. Equally the sheer complexity along with the mushrooming quantity of credit, not only opened new opportunities for profit but also increased

opportunities for subordinates as well as rivals to muscle in on the action. Copious details of these dastardly acts fill most of the book.

Consequently, in a dog eat dog world, there was an on-going arms race between the alleged goodies and the baddies. As trust could not just be confirmed by birth, education and religion, new means had to be found to ascertain reputation and maintain trust and thereby confidence. Social class as a marker was not abandoned but seriously bolstered by checks and inspections of ownership title, personnel and performance as management began to be more systematised. In turn this led to the 'era of verification', overseen by experts and the State applying the latest technology e.g. the telegraph and fingerprinting

Klaus reminds us, the need for all this was not supposed to happen. Earlier thinkers, like Adam Smith and David Hume, had assumed that private property and commerce would lead to both wealth and moral improvement. In this model of the prudent and industrious man, self-interested desires for riches was welded to reputation, thereby leading to a

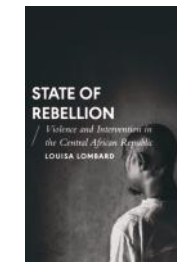
virtuous circle of material and moral plenty.

Mandeville, in his 'Fable of the Bees', disagreed with this utopian vision. For him vice and commerce were intricately linked. England's wealth was not the result of frugality or responsibility or liberty but borne of envy and greed. Theft was everywhere, although its legality or illegality depended upon who made the rules.

Given that Klaus favourably quotes Hayek, he obviously cannot entertain the thought that capitalism is itself based on exploitation and therefore theft, whilst its reproduction depends upon fraudulent lying to the unsuspecting. With his overwhelming sympathies for the problems of the rentier class, he has no useful historical insight for understanding or addressing our current financial traumas. His account is blind to Rule Britannia spawning gross inequality, concentrations of capital, footloose finance, crony capitalism, democratic vacuums and imperial expansionism that once again haunt us, but on a magnified scale.

Violence and Intervention

Nigel Watt
on the Central African Republic



STATE OF REBELLION
Louisa Lombard (ZED, £11.99)

The author is an anthropologist, she writes from her own academic perspective. This does not make for an easy introduction to the country but it does enable her to make some very pertinent comments about post-colonial states, about the nature of rebellions and about international intervention. The French created a boundary within which they could exploit the people to pay for the running of Oubangui-Chari, a colony they never asked to be part of. The spirit of rebellion began during these times as the people were forced to cultivate cotton.

Independence in 1960 provided the trappings of a state. But what

is a state? In the case of the CAR it is a vast area sparsely populated with a number of ethnic groups. Yet the people, most of whom were converted to Christianity, came to like the idea of a state and at least in the earlier years of independence those with some ambition could gain status and personal dignity through government salaries, university studies or being able to travel. They knew the CAR was at the bottom of every UN statistic but they believed the country was potentially rich and it had its unifying language, Sango.

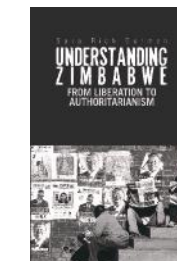
In reality the country has always been run from outside – first by France, now joined by UN agencies and NGOs (creaming off the local talent by paying better salaries) – and by neighboring

states, especially Chad. Rebellions, usually not very violent, were regular and often complicated by the involvement of Chadians and Sudanese, but as the state grew weaker and jobs fewer, the reasons to rebel increased. In 2013 things became violent and gained a religious dimension. Even with more peacemakers it is not clear the situation has been resolved. The new president may lack the authority and resources to do more than hold the ring.

The book provides insight into the general problem of ex-colonial 'failed' states and the workings of international organisations that spend a lot of money and often fail, but it's not a light holiday read.

From Liberation to Authoritarianism

Nigel Watt
on Mugabe's Rule



UNDERSTANDING ZIMBABWE
Sara Rich Dorman (Hurst, £17.99)

At Zimbabwe's independence election in 1980 Robert Mugabe's ZANU won a convincing victory over the other main nationalist movement, ZAPU, led by Joshua Nkomo and the UANC of Bishop Abel Muzorewa which has briefly been popular just before independence. This book is a very detailed academic account of how ZANU, which became ZANU(PF) after the Unity Accord with ZAPU in 1987, has held on to power by fair means or foul ever since. This is not a book that will give you any flavour of the personalities or motivations of the key players – Robert Mugabe and his ministers or his opponents, Morgan Tsvangirai, Arthur Mutambara and Margaret Dongo. It does, however, trace the history of the nationalist liberation movement under useful headings.

"The Politics of Liberation 1965-1980" examines the growth of the two main movements and their part in the war of liberation (which ended not in victory but in the rather unsatisfactory negotiated settlement at Lancaster House.)

"The Politics of Inclusion 1980-87" was the golden age of the new Zimbabwe when the economy was good and national development

was the watchword. The golden bit did not, however, include Matabeleland where the government fought a savage war of repression. ZAPU was brought back into the government in 1987 and the next ten years (1987-97) are dubbed "The Politics of Durability", a time when the economy was declining and when the ruling elite were seen to be enriching themselves but local civil society was becoming influential. Things heated up badly from 1998 to 2000 ("The Politics of Polarization"). A debate opened up about the constitution about which the government lost a referendum; the economy was in free fall causing protests in the cities, the trade union movement turned against the government and intervention in the Congo was hugely unpopular. ZANU(PF)'s rhetoric was now back to liberation and anyone who was not on their side was a "sell-out".

2000 to 2008 Dorman labels "The Politics of Exclusion", a period when the government was not popular, yet it survived by developing diamond exports, building relations with China and by the conflict over land which saw the so-called war veterans take over white farms and the government joining in. This was the time of hyper-inflation. (I was the proud possessor of a 100 trillion Zim Dollar bill!) Finally came "The

politics of 'Winner Takes All'" (2000-2008) where the Movement for Democratic Change won the parliamentary election but was terrorised into forgoing the presidency. The Global Political Agreement, a coalition of ZANU(PF) and the two factions of the MDC, was agreed. ZANU(PF) kept the key ministries, apart from Finance where Tendai Biti moved to solve the inflation problem by bringing in the US Dollar as the main currency. Mugabe's men consistently outmanoeuvred the MDC with the result that today they are firmly back in control and the main debate is about who will succeed the aged president.

In her final chapter Dorman sums up the story neatly. "The argument of this book has been is that the basis of the regime's power over society is not simply coercion, but a tightly welded together fusion of ideology, coercion, material interests and state control attempting to incorporate society within the regime's hegemonic framework. But it also remains a nationalist project at heart". In spite of many bad decisions and wrong choices the party never lost its determination never to let go. Sara Rich Dorman has written an interesting political case study.

WESTMINSTER VIEW



Austerity hits women hardest

Sarah Champion
on why the
General
Election is
a chance to
end harsh
Tory
policies
penalising
women and
families

Sarah Champion
MP is Labour
shadow minister
for Women and
Equalities

Several years ago, my predecessor as Shadow Secretary of State for Women and Equalities, Yvette Cooper, began to commission a piece of research every Budget Day.

The research, undertaken by the impartial House of Commons Library, shows what the Tories are afraid of us knowing: just how much their economic policies negatively affect women.

Over the past seven years that Labour have served in opposition, the percentage of how government cuts will negatively affect women has increased dramatically. In 2010, the figure was 70 per cent. On the day of the Autumn Statement last year, I was shocked; the research I commissioned showed that figure now stands at 86 per cent.

Spurred on by the figure, I led a debate in the House of Commons following the Autumn Statement. In that debate, I questioned why this government, who have so often talked the talk on their commitment to protecting women, are still failing them in one of the areas it most matters. This debate, and strong criticism from my fellow Labour MPs fell on deaf ears.

Following Philip Hammond's Spring Budget last month, it was revealed that the figure has not changed: a staggering 86 per cent of net gains to the treasury through tax and benefit cuts still come from women.

Put simply, time and time again, women bear the brunt of the Tories' economic agenda.

Through the shameful gender pay gap (which currently stands at 18.1 per cent) to maternity discrimination, which sees 54,000 mothers a year forced out

of work, and cuts to universal credit which shockingly sees women having to fill out an eight page form documenting that they've been raped in order to claim for a third child – time and again women are being systematically failed.

That's why in March, Labour announced a 12-month consultation into a potential Economic Equality Bill. This will look at the ways governments audit their policies, not only to the benefit of women but to those with protected characteristics.

It will no longer be possible for governments to talk the talk on equality while implementing economic policies that make life

hit with cuts constantly.

If we are to create a budget that works for women and those with protected characteristics, these factors must be properly taken into account during the formative stages of policy making and budget setting. It needs to be done in a way that ensures that women are not disproportionately penalised, and that gender economic equality is advanced.

Recent ONS data has uncovered that 29 per cent of young black men in London aged 16-24 are unemployed, higher than the same age group in white men. And a recent joint study by the Women's Budget Group and the Runnymede Trust has shown that

in every income group, BME women will lose the greatest proportion of their individual income – and low income black and Asian women will lose around twice as much money as low income white men as a result of tax and benefit changes. Muslim women are three times more likely to be unemployed than women generally, and twice as likely to economically inactive – something the government simply isn't doing enough to combat.

The Conservative government have failed consistently to audit their own policies, despite being regularly called upon to do just that by the Women

and Equalities Select Committee. Their refusal to send a representative before the committee to explain why their economic policies are not equality audited is absolutely indicative of their flippancy towards damaging the financial prospects of some of the more vulnerable members of our society.

If we're to have an economy that benefits all and not just the privileged few, it is once again up to Labour to ensure that we consult, discuss and analyse exactly how this could be achieved – and the positive effects it would have on so many people. An economy that works for everyone is not just morally right, it is financially right for the growth of the UK. **C**



harder for women and allegedly protected groups.

It's about ensuring that we eliminate intrinsic, structural barriers that prevent people reaching their full economic potential.

The perceived assumption is often that budgets are neutral, that they benefit and impact on everyone equally, regardless of gender, ethnic background or disability; this simply is not true.

Women are particularly vulnerable to being hit harder by this Government policy, for a number of reasons, including their greater use of public care services and their greater share of social security payments as a portion of income. They also work more in the public sector than men, so are

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