

Scottish Left Review

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'best re(a)d'



Taking on Theresa's Tories

On the eve of the Labour leadership and the SNP deputy leader elections, we ask:

Who will lead the Left, and how?

FIGHT ANTI-UNION LAWS



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ASLEF CALLS FOR AN INTEGRATED, PUBLICLY OWNED, ACCOUNTABLE RAILWAY FOR SCOTLAND

*(which used to be the SNP's position
– before they became the government!)*



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Dividing lines and decision times

With the decline of the radical and revolutionary left, many on the left assumed political parties had had their day. The goal then was to get in amongst, build and direct social movements – whether they be anti-war, student, anti-capitalism, pro-independence etc ones. But, as it often does, history has its revenge. Party membership is now back in vogue – first with the SNP rising from 25,000 before the 2014 referendum to some 125,000 today. Then Labour membership began to rise after its defeat in the 2015 general election and has continued to rise under Corbyn’s leadership campaigns and party leadership. It is

now over 500,000. Both parties also received post-Brexit boosts. The Greens in Scotland have also experience similar relative sizes of growth although not in absolute terms.

So the party is back. *Guardian* journalist, Owen Jones, has come in for much criticism for his snide attacks on Corbyn. But he is right on one thing. Mass ranked numbers of members do not of themselves make for mass parties if, by mass parties, it is meant active members where the centre of gravity is amongst the members and the members through debate and discussion decide and help implement policy. In the case of Labour, this is clearly a work

in progress and if Corbyn, McDonnell and their allies win the day, then Labour will return not just to something of its former self in terms of party democracy and processes but hopefully something more innovative and better. Smith promises change to but this is harder to take as a genuine, long-term commitment. The SNP has long mirrored ‘new’ Labour in its managerial tightness of party organisation. Whether that will be shaken up politically and organisationally remains to be seen after the conclusion of the election of a new depute leader. The two left candidates laying out their respective wares – in response to a set of questions - in this

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issue both hope for change here.

But there is something more fundamental in the relationship between parties and movements. We can say for certain that political parties do contest public office through elections and social movements do not. Instead, they seek to put pressure upon the economic and political elites from without. Contesting elections does dictate a certain dynamic and way of operating (like having members, constitutions and rules). But after that, the differences between the two are somewhat illusory for political parties, if they are to be mass parties, must take on some the qualities and activities of social movements (as Labour used to be and as Corbyn no doubt wishes). That is why the Labour Party was part of the labour movement or labour and trade union movement.

Organisational forms cannot be separated from the political decisions that give rise to them but it is also worth noting that political parties are broader than social movements (even where social movements are not single issue movements) in political terms. At the same time, political parties are usually narrower than social movements are they organise around an ideology. But what both have in common is that they are collectives whose main *modus operandi* is mobilization of people (activists/members/supporters in the case of parties, activists/supporters in the case of social movements). This is what has to be understood if Corbyn and others are to make good on their laudable slogan of ‘people powered politics’.

Corbyn is a socialist but he is not putting forward arguments for socialism or advocating socialist policies. Instead, he is putting forward arguments for social democracy. Social democracy is about ameliorating the outcomes of the market through state intervention. This involves a certain amount of state regulation as well as state ownership. Social democracy can make capitalist society better but it cannot and will not do away with the capitalist system that gives rise to the vast inequalities in wealth, power and life chances. So, social democracy is not about ending or abolishing the market whereas socialism is. Socialism is the rule by majority of citizens – namely, workers – of a society built in their image and for their benefit. It is not a society run for ‘the benefit of

all’ as this currently includes capital and bosses. Society would then be based on ‘need’ and not ‘greed’.

Is this splitting hairs? Is this getting ahead of oneself in an ultra-left fit of pique? Maybe, given how far the left has been forced to retreat in the last forty years and given the continued dominance of neo-liberalism. And, maybe, in terms of the practical task of having to build a bridgehead from where we find ourselves now.

But there needs to be intellectual clarity on this (as on the aforementioned relationship between political party and social movement). The relationship between reform (social democracy) and revolution (socialism) is straightforward in theory and less so in practice. To get to revolution, we need reforms (over and above the fact that they make lives better) because they are potential staging posts to revolution - and struggling for them builds capacity for going further. There are dangers here, however. Sometimes reforms can become the end in themselves and socialists are often not fully open about their visions and strategies (like whether reforms are part of a longer transitional or a bigger transformational project). These are issues the socialist movement has had to confront since its beginnings in the early nineteenth century. They were not resolved by the splitting of the socialist movement into reformist and revolutionary camps in the run up to and after the October 1917 revolution in Russia.

Despite proclaiming to be socialists, and in a similar vein to Corbyn, Bernie Sanders in the USA and Podemos in Spain, the most that was offered by them was social democracy (and not socialism). In his article, Gerry Friedman makes the argument that by Sanders not offering more, this held his campaign and levels of support back. This echoes one of the longstanding beliefs on the radical left, namely, more than piecemeal reforms are needed to inspire and motivate citizens and workers. The argument usually then moves to when is or is not the most appropriate time and place by which to raise such truly radical demands.

Returning to the subject of the SNP, at least Labour is advocating social democracy (although with Owen Smith there are doubts about the veracity of his commitment). With the SNP,

it’s case of it proclaiming to be social democratic but not acting as such. Since Nicola Sturgeon became First Minister, the only examples of state intervention to change market outcomes have been temporary ownership of Tata steel and the proposal to take £100m of council tax revenue from the richer areas and give to the poorer areas. The latter is a particular dubious example given how underfunded councils are and that much of this is a result of SNP policy to restrict how much councils can raise by this tax. Currently, the SNP seems to talk an awful lot in order to hide that it’s doing very little on this score. Some have suggested the SNP can only play this game for a few more years before people start seeing through it.

So, and as has been argued before in editorials and articles in previous editions of *Scottish Left Review*, the SNP represents ‘neo-liberalism with a heart’ and not social democracy. This is why not only is the depute leadership contest significant but so too was the launch of SNP Socialists on Saturday 20 August at the STUC in Glasgow. One of the founders, Rory Steel, explains what they seek to do in this issue. Until the left organises itself in the SNP, the party will remain centralised, top-down and not even social democratic.

Lastly, we promised more Brexit coverage in this issue. We have only one dedicated article this edition because it is still not clear yet what Brexit will look like in terms of immigration levels and controls, the free movement of labour, security and trade deals (not just with the EU but all other nation states/economies) and so on. We shall return to these issues when appropriate. But in the meantime, and given the option was ‘stay’ or ‘leave’, there is an arguable case to have another referendum on whether there is support for the negotiated terms of exit with the EU given that these could vary so much. If there was a rejection of these terms, it would be an open question of whether there should be a return to negotiations to gain terms that are sufficiently favourable to be put again to a referendum or whether there should be another ‘in/out’ referendum.

Feedback

First, let me congratulate you for the sixteenth anniversary of the journal, a worthwhile effort that has succeeded in providing a voice for the left in Scotland and a much-needed theoretical platform. I would like to add my voice to the independence debate as a grassroots activist who has been keenly involved in the independence campaign over a couple of decades.

I mention the 'couple of decades' because, like many others, it has taken me a while to detach myself from the position of supporting the Labour Party and to define for myself what I think is progressive politics. Through this process, I have had to work out how I see a future for the left in Scotland. This is no easy process because we are all of us bound by loyalties to our political roots, in my case, communist, and as such tied to the idea of a mass labour movement across Britain linking us in strength and solidarity.

I have come to see this view as skewed and inaccurate, disguising as it does the centuries' long machinations of the English ruling class to dominate and rule the smaller nations of the United Kingdom and the English working class. The monarchy and deep-rooted class system that is centred in Westminster will do whatever it takes to maintain its privileged position. To define Westminster as a democracy is at best, inaccurate, at worst, political obfuscation. Linguistic terms to blur and obscure the reality of material conditions have always been a favoured ruling class mechanism.

In my view, the progressive forces in all the various parts of Britain must take up the struggle at the level appropriate to their local circumstances. 'One size fits all' doesn't cut it. Political development across the separate parts of Britain has been uneven and different.

The call for a united working class movement conceals this and fails to recognise the specific character of different nations and regions.

What I find disappointing in the present debates in *SLR* and among the left in general is the depth of anti-SNP sectarianism and the refusal to acknowledge its competence and the progressive nature of many of its key policies. If, indeed, we are keen to move the SNP more to the left, the best way to do this is to work closely and cooperatively with them in comradeship as the majority Scottish party.

Much has been written about the hubris of the Labour Party in Scotland and its sense of having the right to lead Scotland politically. If we are to learn useful lessons from history, we must never forget that the one constant in life is change and it happens whether we are watching carefully or not.

Sectarianism takes many forms and I have become aware of another form of political sectarianism in the yearlong Scottish centenary commemorations of the 1916 Easter Rising. I welcomed the support of the STUC and the May Day Rising events committee but it is remarkable how few left activists have come forward to assist in taking the message of history and reconciliation into communities.

This is especially surprising when you consider that a major organiser of the Rising was James Connolly, Scottish born, Edinburgh raised and a close friend of Marxist and communist, John MacLean. Connolly's analysis of the links between nationalism, socialism and empire provides useful pointers to us now at this stage of our political journey.

All of us carry strands of thinking that perhaps we inherited when very

young and were not very aware. But we have a duty to modernise our thinking and check that we are not carrying bits of prejudice from the past. This is particularly crucial at this point when there will be many urgent factors of change to consider in Scotland.

I would say lastly that the way to win political support is by presenting optimistic and positive ideas and by giving people at the grassroots the sense that the future is ours for the taking. The 'yes' campaign was a marvelous demonstration of this and the best thing we can do is to use its example and begin to build a springboard for the next independence bid.

The success of Women for Independence in mobilising women was an exciting development- a reminder of the powerful women activists of a century ago that included Mary Barbour, Helen Crawford and Margaret Skinnider, the Scottish heroine of the Easter Rising.

I hope these comments are taken in the spirit of comradeship and sisterhood in which they are offered!

SCOTTISH SOCIALISTS
FOR
INDEPENDENCE

Maggie Chetty is Chair of the Communist Party of Scotland and was Secretary of Scottish Socialists for Independence during the referendum campaign. She is currently the treasurer of Glasgow Central Citizens Advice Bureau and a member of Unite.

A better way for Scotland and Britain

Jeremy Corbyn lays out his wares

I stand in this leadership election saying that there is a different way, a better way, of organising our economy - one that can create decent well-paid jobs which improve living standards. We need to challenge not just austerity but the failed economic model that has undermined treasured public services and created a more unequal and more brutal society.

Over the past thirty odd years, there has been a flawed consensus that has submitted to market rules rather than those of democratic government. My leadership is challenging that consensus, aiming to redistribute wealth and power in order to transform our society so that no one, and nowhere, is left behind.

I understand, and fully support, devolution. It has deepened our democracy and it is absolutely right that the responsibilities and powers to take decisions about Scotland's future should lie with the Scottish people and the Scottish Parliament. I have laid out an ambitious programme for democratic reform across the whole of Britain since I believe that we can achieve so much more once ordinary people are given an effective voice.

It's Labour's commitment to making that difference that means that while we will welcome support for all or any of our policies from any other political groups or parties we are not looking for an alliance with the SNP. I've always been willing to work with others where I can because that's how change happens. But I'm well aware that Labour and the SNP come from different traditions and have different goals.



The SNP's purpose is to achieve independence. Labour's purpose has always been to shift the balance of power and wealth in favour of working people.

I stand, on an unashamedly anti-austerity platform. I want to see a Labour government applying progressive taxation policies and tackling the scandalously aggressive and systematic tax avoidance and tax evasion that exists and scars our country. As well as this, Scotland as much as the rest of Britain, needs an active industrial policy to grow our economy and increase our tax receipts. This will close the deficit created by the Tories and help provide the resources that Scotland needs to invest in its people.

Our £500bn investment commitment means at least a £23bn investment boost for Scotland, doubling the current level of investment expenditure over a decade. This will involve support for those areas where we know the future potential, particularly in Scotland, is so great, like renewables and advanced manufacturing.

I fully support Scottish Labour's plans to accelerate the transition

to a low-carbon economy, and drive the expansion of the green industries and the green jobs of the future. The Scottish National Bank will help provide the means to drive that expansion. We will expand community renewables and build in democratic control of our energy sector.

Promoting public ownership and control of our energy stands proudly alongside the vision of Tom Johnston who helped create the publicly owned North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board that sought to harness Scotland's natural resources to generate affordable and publicly controlled energy.

We will build a new generation of council housing in Scotland, addressing the pressing need for housing by committing to building at least 60,000 council houses. We will create a Scottish National Bank, under Scottish control and backed by the National Investment Bank, with £20bn of lending power to deliver the funds to local projects and Scotland's small businesses. Just 8% of lending to small businesses in Britain goes to Scotland, compared to one-third that goes to London and the south-east. The Scottish National Bank will redress that imbalance and unlock the potential of Scotland's small businesses.

Austerity was always a political choice, not an economic necessity. The Conservatives' targets for reducing the government deficit were always determined by their



- Following consultation with the senior members of the respective parties (Tommy Kane, Bill Ramsay) on our editorial committee, we set the two sets of leadership contenders a set of questions to answer. Readers will be able to form their own views on to what extent and how well each candidate answered these questions. The questions are reproduced where they were answered on a question-by-question basis.

political choices, not by the needs of the economy. Labour's alternative will, instead, make sure the proceeds of growth are more fairly distributed. These economic policies will pay for the anti-austerity pledges made by Scottish Labour in May as well as providing the means by which our economy and our society can be transformed.

My Labour government will also seek to support, sustain and increase our investment in our public services. This will also see greater public and democratic control over the services we depend on. We will support co-ops and employee ownership and bringing back under local, public control services like local buses and railways.

I will support and help in any way I can the ability of councillors to do their job. We will increase the spending available allocated to local government. This will benefit Scotland, which like elsewhere across the country has seen austerity decimate local government funding. The outcome is 30,000 fewer Scottish local government workers with many, many more jobs under threat as the financial squeeze on local government continues. A Labour government that I lead will rectify the intolerable pressure on our vital local services and the staff who provide them.

We need to enable and promote local councils bringing bus services back under their control, and support Scottish Labour in its attempts to challenge the poor record of the SNP on bus travel. I will take train services back under public control once franchises run out, and why also I fully support the Scottish Labour manifesto commitment to create a 'Peoples Railway'.

By returning public transport to the

care of the public, we will free up the resources needed to put in place bus services across the country. For buses, that efficiency saving means at least £300m freed up to restore lost local bus routes. For railways, it is a potential 10% off rail fares across the whole country.

I have committed to a National Education Service that will deliver the best possible education to all, from the youngest to the oldest. We should consider education as we treat the National Health Service, as a valuable public good and a shared inheritance. By providing the best education system in the world, we can make sure all of our people are able to better themselves and share in future prosperity.

This investment in education will not just protect Scottish education spending but significantly increase resources available for Scottish education. How the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament spend that additional resource is, of course, a matter for them.

Additional resources will also allow Scottish Labour to reinvest in colleges and fill the huge cut in further education presided over by the SNP. This has, as has recently been confirmed by Audit Scotland, excluded far too many Scots, particularly women from going to college.

Working with businesses and unions, we will make sure high-quality training and apprenticeships are available to all those who want to take them. We will commit to providing a system of free Universal Childcare, removing a burden that falls heaviest on women and making sure all our children have the best possible start in life.

We must tackle the insecurity that blights so many people's

lives. We will give people stronger employment rights from day one in a job. We will end exploitative zero hours contracts and create new rights at work meaning employers have to negotiate on wages, not impose them.

Key to this is our pledge that collective bargaining will be mandatory in companies with over 250 employees. We will strengthen people's representation at work and the ability of unions to organise and giving people a real voice at work. What I am setting out is a programme to transform Scotland and the rest of Britain. I know that it is for Scotland to decide its own priorities on how to make the spending decisions in the best interests of the people of Scotland. But, by changing the way our economic model operates, we can rebuild and transform our society so that no-one and nowhere is left behind.

Jeremy Corbyn is the Labour MP for Islington North and current leader of the Labour Party.

How did the unions line up?

For Corbyn:

ASLEF, BFAWU, CWU, FBU, POA, RMT, TSSA, UCATT and UNISON.

For Smith:

Community, GMB, Musicians' Union and USDAW.

Why I want to be Labour leader

Owen Smith sets out his pitch in response to our questions

What is your political ideology?

I'm a pragmatic socialist. I want to make a practical difference for working people, for those unable to work through no fault of their own and for those who cannot find a job. For me, it is not about romanticism or ideology. It is about making a difference as quickly as possible. It is about creating a much fairer society in which everyone has a chance to make something of themselves.

I grew up in South Wales during the miners' strike. I know about socialism. For me, it's a gut feeling as well as the only rational way of running a fair society. I want a radical Labour Party, but a clear-headed one; a party that is able to convince electors that we should form the next government.

Each generation of Labour men and women that have claimed power in Parliament have transformed the lives of working people for the better. Attlee's government built our NHS and rebuilt our country from the rubble of war, Wilson's governments gave us the *Equal Pay Act* and comprehensive education, and the last Labour government introduced the national minimum wage and civil partnerships. None of these achievements things would have happened under the Tories. That's why we always have to fight for power.

What are your key policies?

The Tory austerity experiment has left our social and physical infrastructure in a state of disrepair, delivered sclerotic growth and forced ordinary people to pay of a financial crisis for which they bear no responsibility. I'd bring austerity to an end with a British 'New Deal' - a £200bn investment in Britain's future which takes advantage of the historically low cost of borrowing.

I believe that at least £20bn

should be committed immediately on shovel-ready projects: rail electrification, renewable energy schemes, and plans for new FE colleges. These are vital infrastructure projects that are ready to go but simply lack the necessary finance to get started.



We urgently need to deal with the housing crisis, so I've set out plans to build 300,000 homes a year, half of them social homes. And, we need to tackle the crisis in our health service, so I would increase NHS funding by 4% a year, over £60bn over five years, funded by new taxes on the wealthy.

I would introduce a real 'Living Wage' of £8.25 an hour, rising above £10 by 2020, restore collective bargaining in the public sector and strengthen union recognition throughout the economy, and bring forward a new *Equal Pay Act* to tackle wage discrimination against women.

I think that leaving the EU will be disaster for the British economy. It will threaten worker's rights and leave us less able to deal with security challenges. That's why I campaigned with every sinew in my body to keep us in Europe. As a

party, we now have to do everything we can to ensure that the Tories do not use Brexit as an opportunity to isolate Britain from our European partners and strike down rights at home. If we give Liam Fox, Boris Johnson and David Davis a blank cheque, saying that we will sign off on any Brexit deal they secure, a right-wing Brexit deal is precisely what we'll get. That's why I am proposing to offer the British people the ability to approve or reject the terms of Brexit through a second referendum or General Election.

What is your strategy for delivering upon them?

The only way of delivering these policies is by winning over the electorate - not preaching to the converted. It is about winning elections. We should cherish our traditional support and ensure it is translated into an effective organisation come election time. But it not just about galvanising our members and supporters - it is about reaching out to floating voters in marginal constituencies. General elections are won or lost by electors with no party political affiliation. That does not mean compromising on our basic principles, but it does mean effective organisation at grassroots level and it does mean effective communication.

During the last election, we were too timid in our defence of the record of the last Labour governments,

OWEN SMITH

LABOUR'S FUTURE

which lifted a million pensioners out of poverty, introduced the national minimum wage, brought in civil partnerships and rescued the NHS from a state of disrepair. We didn't defend that proud record vociferously enough and that meant too few people could see the real benefits of a Labour government.

We were also too timid in expressing the differences between ourselves and the Tories. The truth is that a Labour government under Ed Miliband would have brought an end to the disastrous austerity experiment and reversed the damage brought by Iain Duncan Smith's punitive regime at the Department of Work and Pensions.

Principled electoral failure is no good to the people who really need a Labour government. That is why I will make it a priority to hold together and use all of the talent within our party, and to work with every bone in my body to persuade and convince every voter, no matter how they have voted in the past, of the merits of a Labour government.

What are the critical tasks for Labour in Scotland given the dynamic is different here?

The problems that have affected Labour in Scotland weren't created overnight and they won't be solved overnight. That's why I'm pleased that, in Kezia Dugdale we have a leader who has a long term plan for rebuilding our fortunes.

There are three areas we need to focus on. The first is holding the SNP government to account. We need to be better at exposing the fact that the SNP may have left-wing rhetoric, but don't govern as a left-wing party. In our colleges, schools and hospitals, the SNP's record hasn't been bold or radical. The gap between the richest and the poorest students have grown, 140,000 college places in working class communities have been lost, and the NHS is relying more and more on private nurses while the number of

full time paid nurses has decreased. That is primarily a job for Kezia and her team in Holyrood, but I'll do all I can to support her.

Second, we need to show that being part of Britain can make life better for people in Scotland. Under this Tory Government, people in Scotland haven't done well. The economy has suffered and the poorest and most vulnerable have been most at risk. And the Tories' approach at the election pitted people in England against people in Scotland. It has divided people when what we need more than ever is to unite people across Britain. We also badly need investment. My British 'New Deal' will deliver £20bn of investment to Scotland. That's money to spend on critical infrastructure and invest in our public services.

Finally, I'll make sure we give the party in Scotland the autonomy it needs to be successful. The path to victory for Scottish Labour has to run through Holyrood, and so it's right that our Scottish leader has the power over the party to make decisions affecting Scotland and the Scottish party in Scotland. There should never be any doubt about that. As a united Labour Party across Britain, we will always be there providing the support the party in Scotland needs, but as I know from Wales, we need a strong Scottish party standing up for the people of Scotland.

How can you as an individual, with your particular qualities and talents, use these to take these matters forward?

Labour members and supporters can be assured that, with me, they will have a

leader prepared to work day in day out to win and to put our values into action. I've taken on the Tories over their cruel and arbitrary cuts to society security, and forced a number of concessions, but I know that Opposition leaves us powerless to truly help the men and women our party was founded to represent. I won't rest until we have a Labour Government putting our socialist principles in practice.

Owen Smith is the Labour MP for Pontypridd

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The Corbyn effect in Scotland

Liam Gleeson says Corbyn's victory will be insufficient to turn Scottish Labour's fortunes around

The result of the Labour leadership election will have limited immediate impact on the Scottish Labour Party. While British members face a choice between Labour remaining a force concentrated at Westminster, or continuing on the current trajectory in becoming a mass membership party, active in extra-parliamentary politics, Scottish members are not offered this choice. If Corbyn retains his position as expected this September, the autonomous Scottish party will do all it can to limit this shift. This defence of the *status quo* will not salvage Scottish Labour.

Endorsing Owen Smith, Kezia Dugdale stated that the challenger to Corbyn can appeal to enough voters to lead us to government; a trait that nobody in Scottish Labour evidently possesses. Smith's alleged 'credible plans' to win power at the next election are far removed from the reality of Labour in Scotland, where the party is hardly an opposition-in-waiting, let alone a government. The parliamentary efficiency and smooth leadership promised by Smith is not enough to save Labour from our unmanaged decline; British Labour leaders are viewed at a distance and relying purely on what talent is left in Labour's disconnected group at Holyrood could not possibly improve our standing.

What Corbyn represents is likewise divorced from Scottish Labour. While membership has increased considerably, under an apparatus hostile to its ambitions, it has remained largely detached. Scotland's closest comparison to the forces driving the contemporary transformation of the Labour Party was the surge in support for Scottish Independence. Anger at a political system removed from the concerns of day-to-day life was channelled into support for constitutional change, and then materially into mass SNP membership. Any radical

potential this anger possessed has now been absorbed into the parliamentary management of the Scottish state. Labour has been left as neither the political establishment nor the insurgents. Drifting purposelessly into the fringes, the party led by Dugdale finds itself with little else to offer apart from a slightly nicer and fairer way of managing the society they used to maintain.

Yet the root causes of this anger and disenfranchisement which led hundreds of thousands to support for independence have not been resolved; there is an opportunity for a Labour and union voice to offer an explanation of, and a solution to, the fundamental problems within the structure of our economy and institutions. For Scottish Labour to have any chance of recovery, it must seize this chance.



But the party is clueless on how to do so; the narrative we should be expressing is alien to those in the machine, most of our MSPs, and especially to Dugdale. Responding to the crisis in the North Sea, Dugdale stated the government has a responsibility to re-skill the most skilled workers in the country, oblivious to the idea that an economy is largely the result of decisions made by governments and firms. Upon hearing the recent GERS figures stating Scotland has the largest budget deficit in Europe - predominantly because we are too reliant on natural resources and financial services - all Scottish Labour had to offer was self-vindication for their position on independence. At the Scottish Parliament elections earlier this year, the party aimed to

outflank the SNP from the left; and whilst the manifestos represented this shift, we were stranded, simply saying we'd increase taxes and printing the word "socialism" on our leaflets.

The further cuts to public services which will be forced by the Scottish Government, and approved by their official opposition, will be felt across Scotland. If Labour is not there making the case for their cessation, voters cannot expect a solution through a Labour administration. Activists on the ground have been making the case for a radical shift in the narrative and the purpose of Scottish Labour, but those in office are afflicted by a deep rooted inertia. MSPs and staffers who have served throughout 'new' Labour are not equipped to comprehend, let alone turn around our decline. If Corbyn wins this September, Dugdale and her team will spend even greater effort undermining and resisting the direction the party is travelling, further accelerating our decay. Yet this change is essential to retaining a Labour Party in Scotland.

Neither victory for Corbyn or Smith will transform Scottish Labour and its standing with the public. Activists and members in Scottish Labour must be empowered if we are to turn our situation around. However, Smith and a return to parliamentary manoeuvring as the sole activity of Labour at Westminster, and the subsequent reforms limiting the powers of members and unions, will block any chance of this empowerment. A victory for Corbyn, whilst facilitating this shift, will not guarantee it. Only members organising within the party, dedicated to socialist politics, can.

Liam Gleeson is the Vice-chair of Scottish Young Labour

From basic to advanced

Allan Grogan says Corbyn gives us the opportunity to flesh out our radical ideas

I'm writing this after attending a Jeremy Corbyn rally in Dundee. Yes, Jeremy was inspiring, delving into a great many issues which are desperate needing addressing. Yet in another way, this rally served to highlight the purpose of the event, which is another election to determine what the leadership will look like instead of finding the solutions we so very badly need in our society today.

For such a long time now, politics has been about personality. One of the reasons I greatly admire Jeremy Corbyn is that he has tried to change this. Instead, he has focussed on the manifest issues that need addressed, be they environmental issues, health and mental health stigmas, pay gaps between genders and generations and ever growing inequality. What we need now is to get away from election cycles, leadership battles and personality politics and create avenues for the public to debate and hone policy initiatives which will bring about a radical change in the way we live our lives.

So much is needed to be done to counter the affliction that this austerity obsessed Westminster Government has imposed on us. Infrastructure and manufacturing are badly in need of whole scale investment. The simple act of creating mass social housing will create a ripple effect. New jobs will be created, manufacturing industry will be reborn. In the past, Scotland had over 200 businesses that made bricks alone. Today there are just two and a shortage of bricks. This one policy would create thousands of well paid jobs which would rejuvenate the economy, personal and business taxes would help to fund the next round of building and infrastructure helping to grow Britain and Scotland out of debt rather than saddle it with more.

Taking the National Grid back into

public hands would allow us to renegotiate contracts with the energy suppliers to make them expand and maintain the grid for a reasonable rate rather than at the expense of the public, so many of whom are already dreading the onset of winter and rising fuel costs. The creation of local energy initiatives including micro-hydro commissions would put local energy back into the communities who know best how to use it.

All of this could be achieved and so much more if we are prepared to come together to create the space to allow ourselves to take our future into our own hands.

Perhaps the greatest achievement we could reach would be to deal with the oncoming technological revolution, which the Bank of England project up to 50% of jobs could be lost. How do we deal with 50% unemployment when the current British mind-set is one of low wages and reducing social security? It seems clear that there must be serious consideration given to a basic income to ensure a permanent safety net for all and end desperate poverty in our society.

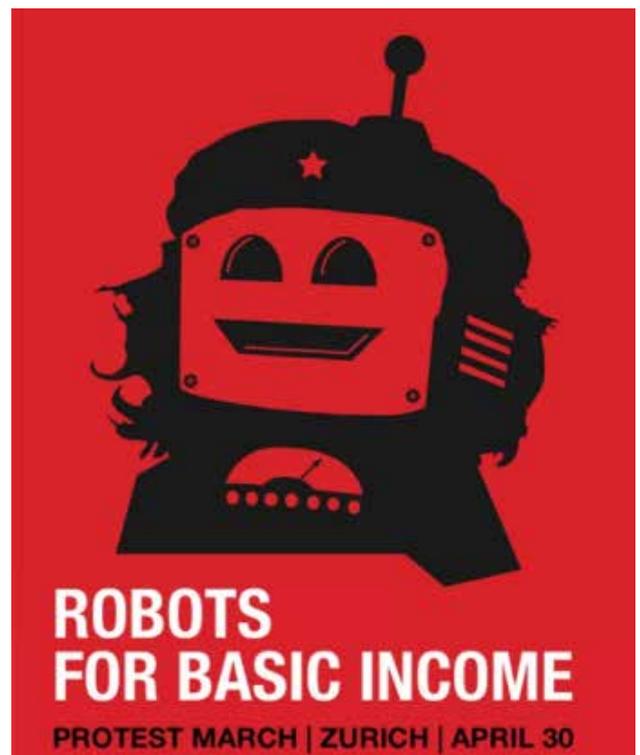
At present, a yearly basic income of £10,000 to every resident of Britain over the age of 16 would cost £400bn. This is double the current social security budget. However, it does not take into consideration the increased tax revenues from those currently on lower tax brackets and more importantly what the dramatic increase in social security spending will be once the autonomous

machines take a greater share of employment opportunities. Nor the recent announcement from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation that poverty costs Britain £78bn a year.

A basic income has the potential to have a transformative effect on society. Yes there are issues to be ironed out, but it is a nettle we on the left must grasp before the right use it as a tool to further destroy our health service and social security.

Jeremy Corbyn has fired a starting pistol to a different kind of politics, one where austerity should no longer be accepted as unavoidable, and where poverty and inequality should no longer be seen as the price we pay. Now is the time to create a better society, one which is created and shared by all without prejudice. As he himself said: 'It has never been about me ... it's about we!' We have an opportunity to fundamentally change how we live as a society. Now is the time to seize it.

Allan Grogan was the founder of Labour for Independence and is an activist within the labour movement



Labour leadership contestants promise workplace revolution?

Gregor Gall assesses what is on offer from Smith and Corbyn

As the contest heats up with ballots papers now out ahead of the end of the voting period on 21 September, and the announcement of the result on 24 September, it is clear that Owen Smith has had to tack left to have any hope of credibly competing with Jeremy Corbyn. This is evident particularly in regard of his policy on reforming workers' rights in the workplace. This short article looks at the policies of both candidates and critiques them.

Smith's 'Workplace Manifesto' in his own words, promises a 'revolution in workers' rights ... [making] Britain the envy of the world for employment rights'. Amongst these are strengthening union recognition rights, providing mandatory access arrangements to workplaces for unions, removing unfair obstacles to industrial action, modernising balloting with e-balloting to increase participation, creating worker representation on all remuneration committees, and repealing the *Trade Union Act 2016* immediately on taking office.

The strength of his manifesto is that it seems to cover almost all areas of concern with something said about each. In that sense, it is more joined up. Yet it also reads like a rather overly long and quickly drawn up shopping list and there is considerable inexactitude in a number of his key proposals. For example, in calling for the strengthening of union recognition rights to provide for recognition where majority support exists, it is not clear how this is an advance on the current arrangements embodied in the *Employment Relations Act 1999*. What needs to be offered instead are means to prevent employers working to stop union members

becoming a majority. Another case is that in providing mandatory access arrangements to workplaces for unions 'where requested by workers' this could allow employers to influence workers so that they are convinced not to request it. It would be far simpler and better to have a universal right to access. Two further examples are that in a) suggesting worker representation on remuneration committee, just like with Theresa May's proposal on worker directors, the critical issue of the balance of numbers and power between workers and managers is not spelt out; and b) providing 'a legal framework for voluntary sectoral collective bargaining' shows the ineptitude of not understanding the distinction between statutory and voluntary mechanisms to the effect that this undermines the potency of the former by the latter.

But more important than these points is that Smith's pledges lack credibility because it is Smith that is making them. His voting record since entering Parliament in 2010 and his previous career suggest (working for drug company, Pfizer, as a lobbyist) that, as alluded to earlier, he is only proffering them in order to necessarily compete with Corbyn on the ground that is now the centre of gravity within the extra-Westminster Labour Party, namely, the left. The suspicion might then arise amongst voters that Smith is a 'Johnny come lately' and would then unceremoniously drop such pledges once the contest is over. By contrast, Corbyn has long advocated the kind of views that he does in this contest so his credibility in doing so is the reverse of that of Smith.

Corbyn's proposals on workplace rights are to be found as one of the ten pledges of his manifesto. The pledge in full reads:

We will give people stronger employment rights from day one in a job, end exploitative zero hours contracts and create new sectoral collective bargaining rights, including mandatory collective bargaining for companies with 250 or more employees. We will create new employment and trade union rights to bring security to the workplace and win better pay and conditions for everyone. We will strengthen working people's representation at work and the ability of trade unions to organise so that working people have a real voice at work. And we will put the defence of social and employment rights, as well as action against undercutting of pay and conditions through the exploitation of migrant labour, at the centre of the Brexit negotiations agenda for a new relationship with Europe.

His commitment to utilise the law to create new rights rather than suggest voluntary codes is to be welcomed, especially on the issue of the legal right to sectoral collective bargaining for if bargaining rights only exist at the enterprise or company level, the terms and conditions of workers in different companies in the same sector would still be the subject of downward pressure in a 'race to the bottom' as companies compete against each other on the basis of labour costs. But the absence of any further detail is still noticeable and of concern. In particular the statement that: 'We will strengthen working people's representation at work and the ability of trade unions to organise so that working people have a real voice at work' is woefully inadequate. Another example of the lack of thought out proposals concerns Corbyn's pledge of mandatory union recognition in companies of over 250 employees

(which is the standard definition of a SME (Small and Medium Enterprise). This pledge ignores that:

- i) Companies will reorganise themselves into units of less than 250 employees to avoid such a new law if they so wish;
- ii) The majority of employees (in 2015, 15.6m or 60% of those in the private sector) work in companies of less than 250 employees;
- iii) Guaranteeing the right of the process of collective bargaining does not mean the outcomes of collective bargaining are any good – cuts to jobs as well as terms and conditions (pay, pensions etc) happen in unionised workplaces as well as non-unionised ones.

So this pledge needs to be rethought in order to see, *inter alia*, i) the creation of a 'duty to bargain' obligation where outcomes can be broadly specified; ii) the introduction of a United States style but stronger 'unfair labour practices' offence so that employers are barred from undermining the ability of unions to organise so that they can exert the necessary leverage over

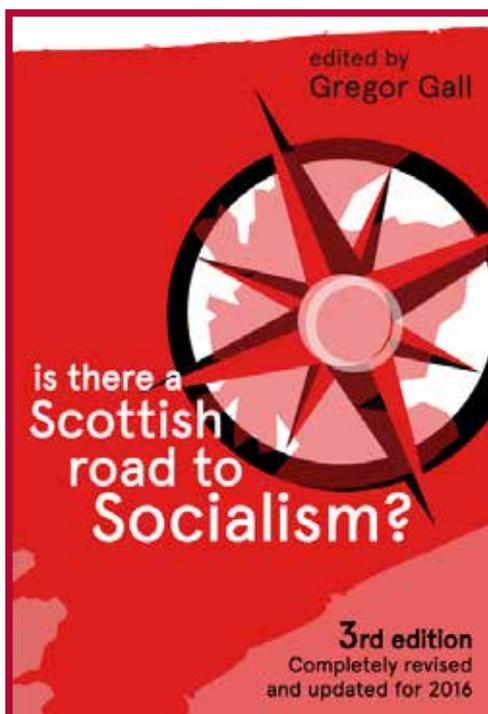
employers in collective bargaining; and iii) obstacles placed in the way of employers circumventing any size threshold by re-organising and configuring their operations.

Sympathetic commentators have noted similar problems with Corbyn's pledges here. Writing in the *Morning Star* (3 August 2016), Keith Ewing, John Hendy and Carolyn Jones from the Institute of Employment Rights noted that 'Most employment is with small and medium-sized employers (SMEs). To get the economic benefits, especially by the avoidance of undercutting, it is essential that all businesses in an industrial sector are bound by the same conditions ... Enterprise level agreements, even with the biggest firms, simply cannot either prevent bad employers undercutting or raise income across the working population'. This is a precursor to their promotion of their *Manifesto for Labour Law: towards a comprehensive revision of workers' rights* which is a worked out and thought through set of proposals.

The sets of proposals from Smith and Corbyn are to be welcomed. Notwithstanding their weaknesses (Corbyn, Smith) and doubts over the degree of commitment to them (Smith), they present an opportunity

to re-open a public debate on a long marginalised subject, namely, levelling up workers' rights and asserting the rights of labour over capital. They open the door to the ability to advocate truly radical demands like maximum wages, where the highest remunerated (that is, not just pay) is paid no more than a set ratio of what the lowest remunerated are paid. This could be one-to-ten or one-to-five. It must be the job of the left-led unions and their activists to seize the opportunities presented by these proposals in order to develop more concrete and effective iterations of these so that the potential represented by the bald proposals can be fully realised. And within the confines of the Labour Party, such proposals must pass through the Workplace2020 consultation form the basis on which Labour fights the next general election.

Gregor Gall is professor of industrial relations at the University of Bradford and editor of the Scottish Left Review



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Designed to be depute?

Tommy Sheppard explains why should be elected SNP depute leader

What is your political ideology?

I'm a socialist. I believe in what we used to call the mixed economy. Private enterprise must operate within a public interest framework and be subject to democratic regulation to protect both workers and the environment. The public sector should take strategic ownership in key industrial sectors to ensure that necessary investment is not stymied by the need for short term return.

I believe that key community services including transport should be publicly owned and delivered and that in this way we can provide collectively what few of us can afford individually. I believe in universal services funded through fair taxation. I am a republican and argue for an elected head of state. And, I am committed to Scottish independence as a means of getting these social and economic reforms, achieving a more equal and democratic society at home, and allowing us to be a force for progressive change in these islands and in the world.

What are your key policies and what will you seek to do with the depute leader post?

We do not make policy by electing a depute leader and, if elected, my role would be to uphold the decisions of our delegate conference. But my priority is to give this party an organisational upgrade.

The last few years have been ones of great change in Scottish politics – new ideas have emerged and old allegiances have died. The road to independence is now a cause of the left and the opposition to it is firmly rooted in the conservative unionist tradition.

Tens of thousands of people have joined the SNP in recent years to fight for progressive change. This is

a different SNP from the one which existed a few short years ago. Our mass membership is our strength and whether they have been in for a few months or a lifetime I want to see many more people active in the party. That means changing how we do things - making our meetings better, communicating better. It also means building up a network of full-time organisers who can back up the efforts of volunteers at branch level. We also need to change how we make policy, involving many more members in local, regional and national forums.

How do you see the road map towards indyref2 panning out?

Scotland voted to stay in the EU and the SNP will fight for that to happen. The question here, by the way, is not whether the EU is a good or bad thing, but who should decide if Scotland remains a member. It's possible that options might emerge which allow Scotland to retain a different relationship with the EU than the rest of Britain. If this happens, it will require not just constitutional theory but political will. It would almost certainly require a new Scotland Act and additional powers being transferred to the Scottish parliament.

But if all such options are rejected then we may well be left with only one: to become an independent European country ourselves. So, sometime next year we will know if we are going to have a second referendum much sooner than any of us might have imagined. Given that this is certainly an option we should now be preparing the ground. Getting 'the band back together', reaching out to 'no' voters, and making sure the engine works without putting the motor in gear.

What does the SNP need to do in order to deliver upon progressive and radical outcomes as the Scottish Government?

I believe that the manifesto on which the SNP government has just been elected is progressive and radical. But there are areas of unfinished business to which we will return. New powers on their way give us the opportunity to shape a new Scottish welfare system and a taxation system and we can ensure that the ambition of fairness and equality infuse the character of both. But without independence the Scottish government will always be constrained in what it can achieve and we must never give up arguing for the full powers of government to be at our disposal if we are to change the world in which we live.

How can you as an individual, with your particular qualities and talents, use these to take these matters forward?

I left the Labour Party – or more accurately it left me – in 2001. I joined the SNP after the referendum in 2014. In between, I built up my small business (*The Stand* comedy clubs) and served on the boards of *Scottish Left Review* and the Scottish Independence Convention. I have nearly four decades of experience in politics as an organiser and an elected representative. I've picked up a few skills along the way which put me in good shape to play a role in the leadership of my party. SNP members have an opportunity to expand rather than stretch our leadership and I can bring a fresh perspective to the team.

Tommy Sheppard is the SNP MP for Edinburgh East

Dying to be depute?

Answering the same questions, Chris McEleny explains why should be elected SNP depute leader

Over the years many people have identified themselves with a particular type of socialism; Marxism; Leninism; Libertarianism; Trotskyism; Stalinism and so on. For me, we must have a united front to achieve greater outcomes for everyone in society. Martin Luther King said:

You can't talk about ending the slums without first saying profit must be taken out of slums. You're really tampering and getting on dangerous ground because you are messing with folk then. You are messing with captains of industry. Now this means that we are treading in difficult water, because it really means that we are saying that something is wrong with capitalism. There must be a better distribution of wealth, and maybe America must move toward a democratic socialism.

To achieve socialism, we must first promote the ideals of socialism within our democratic system. I believe that we will win the next independence referendum by appealing to what I see as an overwhelming majority of people in Scotland who have a contemporary, cultural or historic connection to the aims and values of socialism.

Therefore, we must do more now to promote socialist policies at the heart of the SNP because as the party of government, people look to us and look at what we are doing with a view to whether or not they would support independence in the future.

Key policies on issues: a democratically elected head of state; more progressive taxation; a living wage for all as a bare minimum; fairer workers' rights and the most progressive labour laws in Europe are just some of the key areas I wish to see us debate in the near future.

As a party we have moved from in the region of 24,000 members to well over 120,000 members in under two years. I think it is naïve to assume automatically that the policies of old truly reflect the hopes and aspirations of the membership of today. Therefore that is just one mandate I am asking members to give to me, to use their vote to make it clear that the mass membership of our party that should set our political direction, not follow it.

The greatest change we can make to our country is by supporting and improving communities across Scotland for the better. As a local councillor – the only councillor – in this contest we have a unique opportunity to show that we want to do politics differently in Scotland. The next step in the march to independence is not winning a UK election, or a Scottish parliament election or an EU referendum across Scotland as we have done that.

The next step on the march to independence is winning control of local authorities in town halls across Scotland. The SNP depute leadership election allows us as a party to show to Scotland just how important that is to us by electing a member of local government as the next depute leader of the SNP.

James Connolly once questioned the whole point of independence if you simply wished to mirror the institutions you wished to gain independence from. Independence allows us to set our own destiny. Granted, there may be things that stay the same but that will be our own choice. However, I want Scotland to become an independent country because I believe there is a better way and we can reject the neoliberal *raison d'être* of Britain.

Some people warn that higher

taxation for better public services is radical. That involving unions in shaping better working relationships between workers and employers is radical. That pursuing a socially just and progressive *modus operandi* is radical. That is the legacy that successive Thatcher and Blair governments left.

The gap between the richest and the poorest has increased regardless of the colour of Westminster governments. That is the reason people say that policies that aim to make the country a fairer and more equal society are radical, because those at the top don't want to pay to help make it that way.

Next year we have an opportunity to change town halls across Scotland for the better. For too long they've been old boys' networks. We can and we must change this. The 2011 SNP Scottish Parliament landslide was not replicated in the 2012 local elections. The time to put local government front and centre of everything we do is now. Local councils are on the frontier of delivering the services people in Scotland rely on.

I don't want to see power devolved to the Scottish Government just to stay there. I want to see it devolved to councils across Scotland. Then on the back of success in next year's election we can get on with the job of delivering more progress policies in communities across the country.

Chris McEleny is a councillor for Inverclyde

Left pews in broad kirk

Rory Steel explains what the SNP Socialist group is about

The SNP has always been known to be a broad kirk, taking in members from across the political spectrum united behind the cause of independence. A political revolution inspiring a massive growth of the SNP membership has made our broad kirk even broader.

Many members of the SNP identify as socialists and have done since the party's formation in 1936. We naturally have our own views and interests, as do all members, and are seeking to form a unified voice to raise issues important to us and many other members within the party.

There are already several internal interest groups, each seeking to influence policy, including SNP Youth and Students, CND, Friends of Palestine, Out for Indy, and the Trade Union Group. Our membership is what makes our party: a tapestry of individuals and collectives each with their own viewpoints. We want to organise so that we can be a part of the internal and wider discourse and contribute to our diversity of voices.

During our recent inaugural meeting, a member asked if we would be seeking to mimic the '79 Group – a socialist internal group made up of SNP members such as Alex Salmond and Jim Sillars. A second internal group called the Campaign for Nationalism in Scotland was set up in response to the '79 Group which opposed the party appearing to adopt an ideology other than nationalism.

For many members, in particular our recent intake, independence is the gateway to a socialist Scotland. But our objectives are not to split the party. What had widespread agreement at our inaugural meeting was that we need to be a credible voice from within the SNP; to be a pragmatic, democratic and constructive collective to discuss and influence policy. We are not political purists.

We understand that the SNP is a

social democratic party. However, that doesn't mean to say that there is no common ground between socialism and social democracy or that they are necessarily antagonist to one another. We want to work together with all members. After all, we are in the SNP because we believe that it is the best party to deliver independence – the gateway to socialism in Scotland – and provide a competent and effective government that benefits Scotland and its people.

Our meeting was followed by depute hustings with self-proclaimed socialists, Tommy Sheppard MP and Councillor Chris McEleny, speaking, with Alyn Smith MEP and Angus Robertson MP speaking to members via video. The fact that two socialists are standing for leadership exemplifies the strong socialist voice already present in the SNP and the diversity of our membership. The depute leadership contest has been a lesson in democracy to the Tories and Labour representatives of the civil political culture that binds the party.

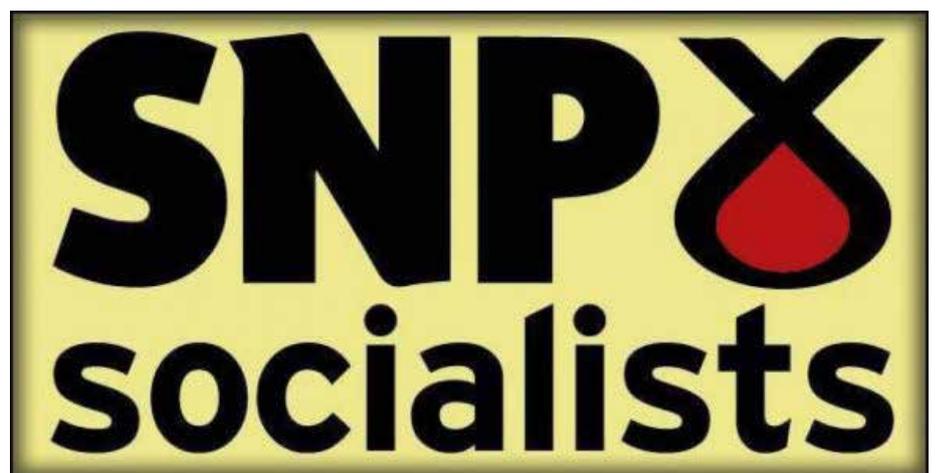
Naturally, discussion was a core part of our first meeting and will continue be at the centre of our agenda. We debated upcoming conference motions such as Chris Stephens MP's motion for under 25s. Chris was present to speak on the UK Government's exploitation of young workers. We also adopted our first motion on the re-nationalisation of

Scotland's public transport. As a hot issue at the moment with vast public support, we hope this policy will underpin our work for the future.

Another key aim will be to grow our membership. Since the independence referendum, the new uptake of members who have joined are more left wing than the general membership before. It was the message of self-empowerment, self-determination and hope for something better than the *status quo* that caused so many people to join. There is great potential for the growth of our movement.

Socialist values are at the heart of Scottish society and have especially deep roots in Red Clydeside. Nationalist heroes such as Burns – who in '*a Man's a Man's*' wrote about a classless society and international brotherhood and cooperation – are not so different from socialist heroes such as Keir Hardie – a Lanarkshire-born trade unionist who led the failed Ayrshire miners' strike and attempted to organise a pacifist general strike at the start of World War One. Scottish nationalism and socialism are entwined. We want to be that voice within the SNP to stand for these ideals and do our part to take Scotland and the SNP forward to independence.

Rory Steel is the SNP Socialists Convener (see <https://snpsocialists.wordpress.com/>) and SNP Youth Vice-Convener



Education and inequality two sides of the same coin

New Green MSP, Ross Greer, sets out his political priorities

The Holyrood election campaign of 2016 was exceptionally boring. The winner was a foregone conclusion and gimmicky photo-opportunities dominated substantial policy debate. Despite this, it produced pretty interesting results. The SNP is in a minority, but not as dramatically far short of majority as they were in 2007-11. This session, any opposition party can hold the balance of power on an issue of their choosing and if the opposition combines, we can defeat the government. The first example of this is likely to be on the *Offensive Behaviour at Football Act*, an exceptionally poorly written piece of legislation which has eroded trust between fans and the police and is opposed by everyone from Liberty to Nil By Mouth.

The SNP government, however, has decided to be judged this term on closing the attainment gap between our most and least privileged young people. Their approach to education so far though hasn't been entirely reassuring and it points to a wider concern about their moderate, *status-quo* approach. Despite guidance for teachers in August of this year, which encourages the shedding of 'unnecessary assessments', the SNP remains committed to a model of standardised testing whose apparent educational benefit is not backed up by the evidence here or elsewhere.

It is obvious though that the attainment gap cannot be solved by education policy alone however. It is not failures in this area which cause it in the first place - it's the entrenched inequality of our society as a whole. Improving children's experience at school can only go so far when they arrive hungry, from an unstable home environment or

aren't sure if they'll have a home to return to at the end of the day.

And we know the first step towards tackling that inequality, something which will define this session of parliament – redistribution of wealth through a fair tax system. It's not the sexiest of topics but the reality is quite plain: there is no way to tackle inequality in Scotland without reforming the tax system, one where those who can afford to pay more do and those, who cannot, do not.



The consequence of leaving the system as it is is simple: services which working class people rely on will continue to be decimated. The early morning breakfast clubs and after-school activities, the supported study classes leading up to exams and the additional support needs staff are all of far more value to the most deprived communities than to the least.

And, there is absolutely no need to cut them (or more accurately, to pass on cuts to local councils and have them do it for you), not when a modest tax rise on higher earners would make this unnecessary and

when a bold approach to taxation would allow us to really bring to bear the resources needed to start tackling inequality.

Greens will be making this case every day until the argument is won and the SNP government must make a choice: will they join with ourselves, or the Labour or Liberal Democrat proposals and take a stand against austerity or will it rely on Conservative support to pass cuts budgets which hurt those who can least afford it?

Scotland does not yet have the full powers of other nations and without them we cannot truly transform society. Without the ability to implement an ambitious reindustrialisation strategy, create a coherent social security system or even guarantee every worker a decent wage, we'll always be playing with one hand tied behind our back but that is no excuse for waving the other in surrender to austerity politics.

The powers of the Scottish Parliament, whilst incomplete, are considerable and the choice to use them to their fullest is ours. This session of parliament will be defined by those choices. Green MSPs are in the unprecedented position of holding the balance of power, if the SNP government chooses to work with us. That will require more than just the bland politics of the centre but looking at the world around us from the USA to Greece and Spain it's clear the centre cannot hold. It's time to for the Scottish Government to decide who they stand with.

Ross Greer is a Green MSP for the West of Scotland and the Scottish Greens' spokesperson on Education & Skills

Named Persons: project to casework the nation

Maggie Mellon makes the case against the scheme

Supporters of the Named Person (NP) scheme, who relied mainly on assurances given by the Government and NP's architects and supporters, might have been surprised by the Supreme Court's unanimous ruling that the law needed to be dropped or substantially revised. It was, however, not the assurances that were the subject of the challenge and the Supreme Court ruling. Why the Government and its supporters chose not to refer themselves and us to the wording of the Act is for them to explain, but anyone who remains in any doubt that they have been misled should read the relevant parts of the Act, the Guidance and the Supreme Court judgement.

To start, here are the relevant extracts from the *Children and Young People Act (Scotland) 2014* (CYP(S)2014):

That all children under the age of 18 years in Scotland, apart from those in the armed forces, are to have a 'Named Person' appointed by 'service providers' (emphasis in italics added below)

Part 4

19 The Named Person

(5) The functions (of the Named Person)

(a).... doing such of the following *where the named person considers it to be appropriate* in order to promote, support or safeguard the *wellbeing* of the child or young person—

(i) advising, informing or supporting the child or young person, or a parent of the child or young person,

(ii) helping the child or young

person, or a parent of the child or young person, to access a service or support, or

(iii) discussing, or raising, a matter about the child or young person with a service provider or relevant authority....

(26) Information sharing

(1) A service provider or relevant authority *must provide to the service provider in relation to a child or young person any information* which the person holds which falls within subsection (2).

(2) Information falls within this subsection if the information holder considers that—

(a) it is likely to be *relevant to the exercise of the named person functions in relation to the child or young person*

The information-sharing duties and powers and the accompanying Draft Statutory Guidance on parts 4 and 5 were at the heart of the Court's ruling. The duties and powers were about 'any concern' about 'any aspect' of the life of any child in Scotland. The potential dangers of the power of information-sharing on this scale about the private lives of children and families in Scotland should be clear to anyone reading the Act. Prior to the ruling, the public was categorically assured by the First Minister, the Deputy First Minister, MSPs of Green, Labour and SNP parties, and assorted charity leaders, directors, other cheerleaders that the NP scheme was voluntary and benevolent, and posed no risk at all to private and family life.

The Scottish Parliament and then two Scottish courts had failed to give any weight to the advice by

the Faculty of Advocates, the Law Society, the Scottish Parent and Teacher Council, several leading law professors, and of the No2NP campaign and others, that the scheme would breach ECHR Article 8 rights to private and family life and the consequent provisions of the *Data Protection Act*.

Even now, supporters of the scheme still insist that the Court ruling is merely a technical glitch. John Swinney and others claim that the Supreme Court declared the NP scheme benevolent. The Supreme Court did comment that Parliament's intentions were benevolent and legitimate. However, intentions were not part of the legal challenge. In court, the Government's representatives argued that the information sharing powers and duties were 'essential' to implementation. On the basis of its own case, the ruling means that the NP scheme cannot be implemented.

The Supreme Court spelled out the dangers of the unlimited duty to share information without consent, or without the justification of necessity and criticised the lack of definition of 'wellbeing'. Their judgement warned of the dangers of the legislation:

The first thing that a totalitarian regime tries to do is to get to the children, to distance them from the subversive, varied influences of their families, and indoctrinate them in their rulers' view of the world. Within limits, families must be left to bring up their children in their own way.

The court wasn't describing Scotland today as totalitarian, but warning of the dangers of legislation that encourages compulsory, unfettered intrusion into family and private lives

by public officials as they or others 'consider to be appropriate'.

This is not a technical issue at all, but a fundamental human rights breach. Councils which were operating the NP scheme have been doing so on the basis of the Draft Guidance that information should be shared with or without consent. Many children already have records that may act as millstones round their necks for the rest of their lives. That in itself makes the judgement a victory for human rights and a vindication of the ECHR. It's a pity that so many guardians of liberty in Scotland failed to oppose the Act. It is for them to explain why.

There are wider objections to 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC). A direct line can be drawn from GIRFEC to the English 'Every Child Matters' policy and to the USA's 'No Child Left Behind'. They share a common understanding that the child is a 'product' in which the state has a vested interest. Parents can be partners in the state's efforts to dictate the desired outcomes for a child, or an obstacle. This is described as 'prevention'.

GIRFEC and the *CYP(Scotland) Act 2014* which put it on a statutory footing establish a direct relationship between children and 'services providers', and the local and national agencies of the state. The connection between child welfare and family welfare is evaded or denied. A family where parents have to choose between food and fuel, rent or shoes, is a family in need. However, GIRFEC identifies such needs solely as pointers to 'risk'.

The introduction to National Risk Framework to Support the Assessment of Children and Young People explains that:

The Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) approach

is the key thread running through policy and practice affecting children, young people and their families in Scotland. At its heart is the National Practice Model, which provides the foundation for identifying concerns, assessing needs and initial risks and making plans for children in ALL situations.

And later that: 'At all points in a child's/young person's life there are identified needs and when such needs go unmet, are partially met or inappropriately met, risks may arise'.

A search of terms within the Framework finds: 45 mentions of abuse; 21 of neglect; 2 of poverty;

1 of homelessness; zero mentions of malnutrition, hunger, clothing, cold; and zero mention of unemployment or working hours or conditions of parents. Parents, and not services, are assessed and found wanting. Named persons

have no power to offer resources, only 'interventions' in family life. This kind of 'prevention' is driving up, rather than down, the rate of referrals and 'investigations' of mainly poor families and the rate of children coming into care.

The latest Scottish Government statistics show that Scotland has the highest rate of children becoming 'looked after and accommodated' (coming into care) in Britain. This is 'child rescue' not social change.

Casework on an industrial scale is not the answer. Instead of named persons assessing and writing individual plans for every child in the country, we need a massive redirection of power and resources out of bureaucracy, assessment and 'interventions'. The government aspires for Scotland to be 'the best place for children to grow up'. The gap between rhetoric, benevolent intentions and hard reality will not be bridged by schemes such as the 'Named Person' or any other such alibis for inaction on poverty.

Maggie Mellon is an independent social worker and consultant. She writes and campaigns for social justice. An elected member of the Women for Independence (WfI) national committee, she organises WfI Justice Watch.

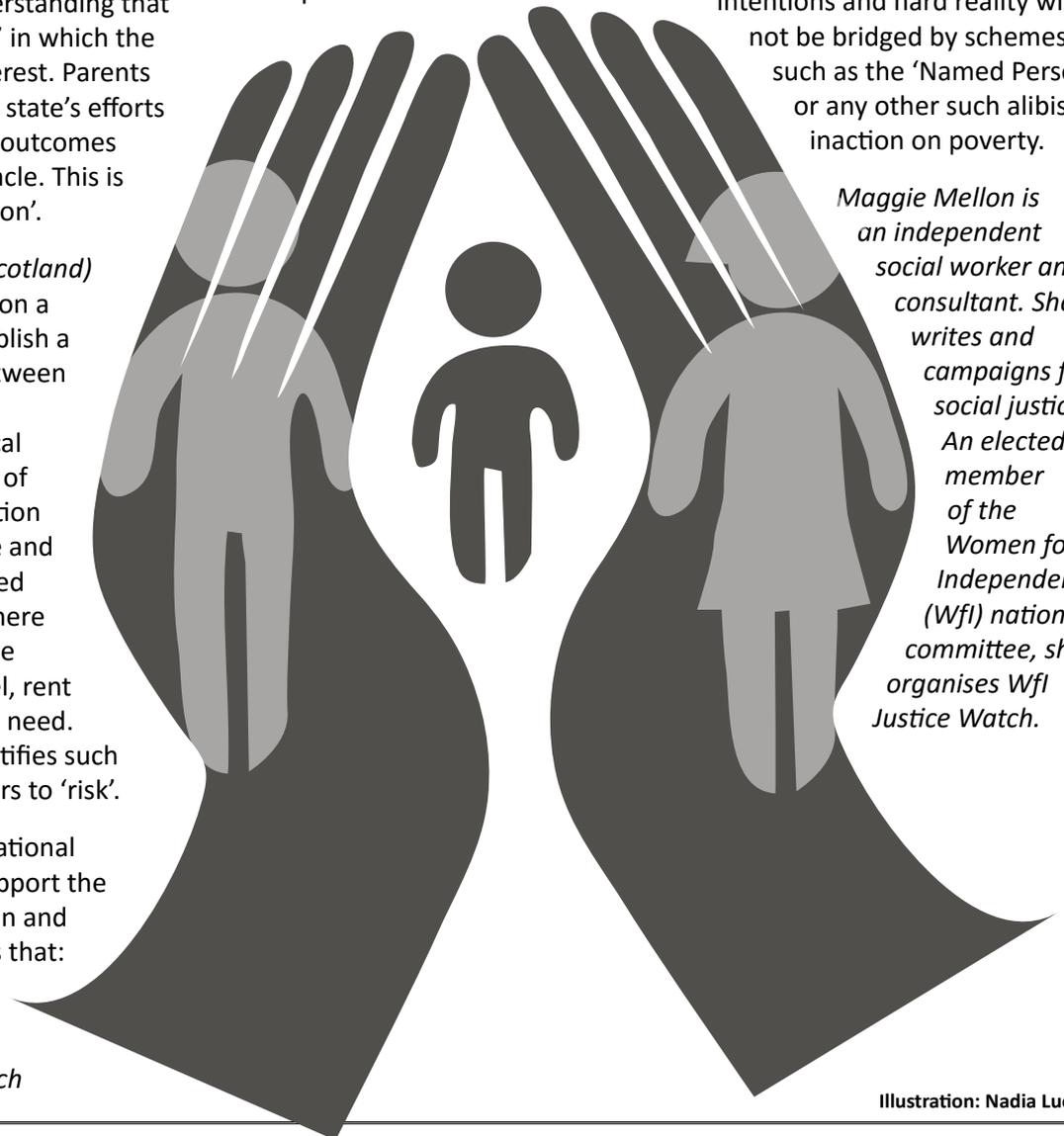


Illustration: Nadia Lucchesi

Standing up to racism

Dave Sherry explains the importance of the conference

Saturday 17 September sees the first all-Scotland *Stand Up to Racism* conference called 'Confronting the Rise in Racism'. It is open to all who want to combat this key problem that disfigures our society. As austerity intensifies racism is being used to divide us and scapegoat innocent and often vulnerable people.

Since the EU referendum there has been a significant surge in reported hate crimes in Scotland and across the rest of Britain. At the same time we see racism and xenophobia on the increase elsewhere – with the populist, anti-immigrant presidential campaign of Donald Trump, the widespread police racism in the US inner cities and in the appalling mistreatment of refugees and asylum seekers here and across Fortress Europe. The latest outrage sees racist French politicians seek to deny Muslim women the right to wear the 'burkini' on Mediterranean beaches.

Here, the government 'Prevent' strategy and its *Extremism Bill* threaten our human rights and civil liberties. Yet there is growing opposition to these draconian measures – especially in the EIS teaching union. We have also seen growing resistance to the rise of racism and incredible outbursts of solidarity as hundreds of thousands of ordinary people stand with those fleeing war, terror and famine by initiating local aid and food collections.

Some leaders on both sides of the EU referendum campaign peddled racism and nationalism to create fear and division. There were also people on both sides who stood out against them. However people voted in the referendum, we now need to unite and fight austerity, stand up to anti-immigrant racism and show our solidarity with refugees and migrants.

In March this year, thousands demonstrated in Glasgow, London

and Cardiff to mark UN anti-racism day and say 'refugees are welcome here'. Similar events took place across Europe. Here we urgently need to build upon those successes. One way to do that is to campaign for both the Westminster and Holyrood governments to welcome more refugees to Scotland.

The Glasgow conference will bring together organisations, campaigns, community groups and individuals from across Scotland to discuss how together we tackle racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism; and how we defend civil liberties. The conference will be about building local organisation, practical activity and delivering solidarity and will elect a steering group to help assist in that. Racism can only be driven back by anti-racists standing up and confronting it.

Dave Sherry is a retired public sector housing worker. Still active in the Unite union, he is a long standing SWP member.

SCOTTISH STAND UP TO RACISM CONFERENCE

CONFRONTING THE RISE IN RACISM



**Saturday
17 September,
1-5pm**

Unison Glasgow
City Branch,
84 Bell Street,
Glasgow, G1 1LQ
(Registration 12 to 1pm)

Speakers include:

Aamer Anwar
human rights lawyer

Sandra White
MSP Glasgow Kelvin (SNP)

Amal Azzudin
Glasgow Girls campaigner and
community worker

Ade Johnson
Sheku Bayoh campaign

Helen Martin
STUC assistant secretary

Nicola Fisher
EIS vice president

Jock Morris
Glasgow Campaign to Welcome
Refugees

Richard Haley
Scotland Against Criminalising
Communities

**Charlotte
Ahmed**
Unite Against Fascism Scotland

Kimon Bukas
Real Democracy Now

Penny Gower
Edinburgh College EIS

Plus others from the
Scottish Refugee Council and
Trade Unionists for Calais Convoy

Securing a decent deal for workers

Jim Sheridan says Sweden can give Theresa May some pointers on worker directors

On the face of it, Theresa May's warm words on workers on company boards is encouraging. We need to defer judgement until we see the precise detail. What will not suffice, if offered, is the discredited works council approach, which has proven to be a charter for careerists. Drawing upon interviews conducted in Sweden (see link to report below), I make this argument by examining the practice of workers on boards that has existed there since the 1970s. Thus, I examine the concept of workplace democracy, and focus in particular on the inclusion of elected employee representatives on company boards.

My starting point is two-fold. In Britain, it is clear that employees must be given a stronger voice in the strategic direction of our businesses, and no one can deny there has been a significant decline in democracy in the workplace, itself brought about by decades of decimation of the union movement, the employment rights of the people it represents, and the collective bargaining structures established to ensure a collective voice at work. Indeed, I believe we have reached a decisive moment, with public opinion turning against companies that grossly exploit their workers. For example, BHS is just one of the many accused of the sharp practices of asset stripping and effectively raiding workers' pension funds.

With some cross-party consensus on the inclusion of employee representatives on company boards, there is now scope to re-open some of the discussions around this issue that took place in the 1970s.

As a proud trade unionist, I do not want to see another generation believing that zero hour contracts and poor workplace rights are the norm of working life. We need a change, and I believe this Swedish

experience of a more transparent and cooperative approach between management and employees is the way forward.

I have been an active trade unionist for decades and have lived through some of the darkest times. But I have been truly saddened over the recent past by the distrust that continues to exist between management and employees. The 2013 Grangemouth dispute, at the most important manufacturing site in Scotland, was a true dark mark on industrial relations in this country. Employees were held to ransom over decisions that were made by those who had nothing to lose.

The confrontational approach taken by Grangemouth's Ineos chairman, Jim Ratcliffe, towards employees left no room for negotiation. Workers were eventually forced to accept a pay freeze, a reduction in their pensions and agree not to hold strikes for three years. There were very few concessions on the part of the employer. The attitude of the company towards employees and unions, rather than seeking collaborative solutions for a sustainable future in the interests of all, created a crisis where the only beneficiary would be Ratcliffe.

Most countries in the EU have mandatory systems in place to give employee representatives a place on company boards. It is a system that is, in principle, good for business, good for consumers and most of all, fair for employees – and it could help to avoid behaviour like that experienced at Grangemouth. Even Ratcliffe has said that what happened there would not have happened in Germany, praising the good working relationship between unions and management because, like Sweden, in Germany decisions would have been made in consultation with union elected worker directors right from the

very beginning. He neglected to mention that the better relations are imposed on him in other countries by legislation.

Board-level decisions have a huge impact on employees. It is obvious that they should have a say in the decision-making process. This, in turn, would help employers to make good decisions that work for everyone. Negotiations would take place before it is too late, and profit-obsessed directors may stop to think about employees as well as shareholders when signing on the dotted line.

Turning to Sweden, there is a lot to learn. Sweden has had a law in place since 1973 which promotes employee representatives on boards. Aspects from its system can be taken and applied to Britain. To test the most appropriate system for the UK ahead of legislation, a pilot, whereby representatives were elected by trade unions in each workplace, would ensure the most effective methods could be introduced. If this works for companies in the pilot, it could be rolled out to companies across Britain. However none of this is achievable if we are to continue discriminating against those who choose to speak up, whether it be on health and safety issues or any other employment issue for that matter. In order to foster such a system, union representative need legal protection from victimisation.

Jim Sheridan is a former MP and chair of the Unite union parliamentary group. He is author of 'Securing a decent deal for workers: Employee representatives on boards' (<http://classonline.org.uk/pubs/item/securing-a-decent-deal-for-workers>)

No time for misplaced optimism

Craig Lewis cautions against the hope of progressive change via Brexit

Many on the radical left in Britain have characterised the Brexit referendum result as a 'working class revolt' which has thrown the political elite into deep crisis, opening possibilities for socialists and an intensification of class struggle. It is worth looking critically to see if the emerging evidence justifies such optimism.

Firstly, has there been a working class revolt or is it more complex than that? Polling by Tory peer, Lord Aschroft, is much cited as proof of a 'revolt from below'. It shows two thirds of C2DE social strata of voters supported 'leave'; a vote that was concentrated in the most deprived communities in England and Wales. In contrast 57% of ABC1 strata voted 'remain'. However, struggle is always contradictory and dynamic. Using static social categories to determine the class nature of the Brexit vote simply emphasises inherent divisions within the working class produced by capitalism. It does not tell us much about the political trajectory of those voting. Were those from the lower social groups more militantly anti-establishment than 'remain' voting ABC1s? This latter group after all includes teachers, nurses, doctors and public sector workers who have recently taken industrial action and are arguably in the forefront of resistance to austerity and privatisation.

Undeniably, the 'leave' vote was a revolt against years of neglect. Nevertheless, it was clearly a revolt led by reactionary populists under the banner of xenophobia and narrow right-wing nationalism. This was not a revolt of a conscious self-acting working class. Increasingly

forecasts predict a sharp post-Brexit economic downturn. A study by the Resolution Foundation suggests only tiny gains for the lowest paid, if government immigration targets are met. And these will be dwarfed in the short to medium term by an average fall of at least 2% in real wages as inflation and lower growth bites. When this happens and opportunistically hyped expectations are dashed, the result is likely to be apathy and impotence - not intensified struggle.

Secondly, has the ruling class really been thrown into crisis? The immediate post-referendum period certainly felt like it. Within 48 hours the pound and stock market crashed, Cameron resigned, the Brexit leaders stabbed each other in the back and the Blairites launched their coup attempt against Corbyn. Britain's political elite seemed to flounder as it became clear there was no EU exit strategy. The only person with a plan seemed to be Nicola Sturgeon, and her plan did not involve rescuing Westminster.

Six weeks later things look less febrile. The ruthless speed with which the Tory party ousted the Cameron/Osborne clique and regrouped around Theresa May was an object lesson in the class consciousness of the political establishment. A number of recent events suggest that, to the extent there is a political crisis, it is one that the ruling elite are swiftly moving to control and use to their advantage.

Theresa May's government represents a triumph for the Tory Party's hard nationalist right. May herself is from the authoritarian wing despite her lukewarm 'remain'

support. Proponents of a 'hard Brexit' (sacrificing single market access in order to 'regain control' over immigration) will dominate EU negotiations along with future foreign and trade relations. Despite crocodile tears for those 'left behind', the early signals suggest a government intent on deepening its neoliberal offensive against working people. Cuts in Corporation tax, relaxing bank regulations and restarting quantitative easing all benefit the wealthy at the expense of working class living standards - as does pushing ahead with the *Trade Union Act*. Keeping Jeremy Hunt in charge of the NHS is the best indication that the assault on public services will continue with renewed vigour.

It's early days yet, but on balance the radical left should not anticipate a ruling class crisis or an upsurge in class struggle. Basing a strategy on misplaced optimism is a recipe for irrelevance and risks demoralising activists. There are, however, a number of issues around which the radical left can unite immediately. Defending Corbyn is vital to prevent a generational defeat for socialists and a major setback to the prospect for a genuinely transformational alternative. Resisting the upsurge in racism and racial violence of recent weeks is vital in countering the growing influence of right-wing populism in our most deprived communities. In Scotland, the clamour for indyref2 is growing. The pro-independence left will be divided this time over Scotland's EU membership. Consequently, it will be a challenge to articulate a coherent radical vision for an independent Scotland.

Craig Lewis is the former Co-ordinator of Trade Union Education at Coleg Harlech, Wales, an ex-member of UCU's NEC, ex Chair of UCU Wales FE Committee, and currently a Member of Unite Community, now living in Glasgow.



Demanding more than nothing

Sarah Collins analyses the Better than Zero campaign

Launched last year, the 'Better than Zero' (BtZ) campaign is in its infancy. Despite the success and recognition which it has had within the Scottish labour movement, there remains a lot of work to be done in order to institute the aims of the campaign more broadly in workplaces.

The campaign began in August 2015, funded initially by the STUC as an attempt to address the decreasing youth membership across all unions and increasing precarity in the workplace and lives of young workers. Inspired by the Fight for \$15 campaign, which was resourced by the SEIU union in the USA and employed grassroots greenfield social movement organising tactics, as well as attempting to capitalise on the increased political consciousness which sprang from the Scottish referendum debate, BtZ is a construct of its time in that it is very much part of the union movement but is more akin to the global social movementism which has been a feature of the past decade.

With the aims of eradicating zero hours contracts (ZHCs) in workplace in order to stabilise young workers' livelihoods and lives, including ensuring young workers know their rights in work and how to enforce them, the campaign's overall objective is to increase union membership in under-30s, create workplace leaders, and concretise a political industrial consciousness within precarious non-unionised workplaces.

The campaign uses stunts and flash mobs to highlight the use of ZHCs, workers on less than minimum wage, discriminatory national living wage, safety at work and discriminatory practices. Targeting G1, Scotland's largest hospitality employer, the

campaign has gathered a plethora of anecdotal evidence of young workers across Scotland in various workplaces who have been left unpaid for an hour at the end of their shift, told that they need to pay for their own uniforms and staff training, sacked at whim for having one sick day, young women told they need to dress more seductively for customers and no transport home arranged for those workers serving drinks in nightclubs until 4am.

As well as highlighting these issues in mainstream media in order to publicise BtZ to those in non-unionised workplaces, recently leading to one employer at a famous Scottish festival getting in touch to



organise a meeting with us about the issues highlighted, formal union campaigns and disputes have also called upon the campaign to send support. This is important because it provides a cross generational visualisation of industrial democracy which helps to counter the (sometimes self-fulfilling) narrative that young people are not interested in workplace struggles.

At the end of July, BtZ held its first birthday party with workshops on how to create political pressure with your campaign, using creative methods of campaigning and forum theatre as a tool for encouraging people to think about and act out what they would do in certain situations. Around 100 young people from a variety of backgrounds attended the event. Looking around the room at 10:30pm on a Friday night and hearing silence as

everyone listened to an interview style Q&A with a young union organiser from Ireland, it is clear that this is one of the youngest and most organised social movement campaigns across Europe right now.

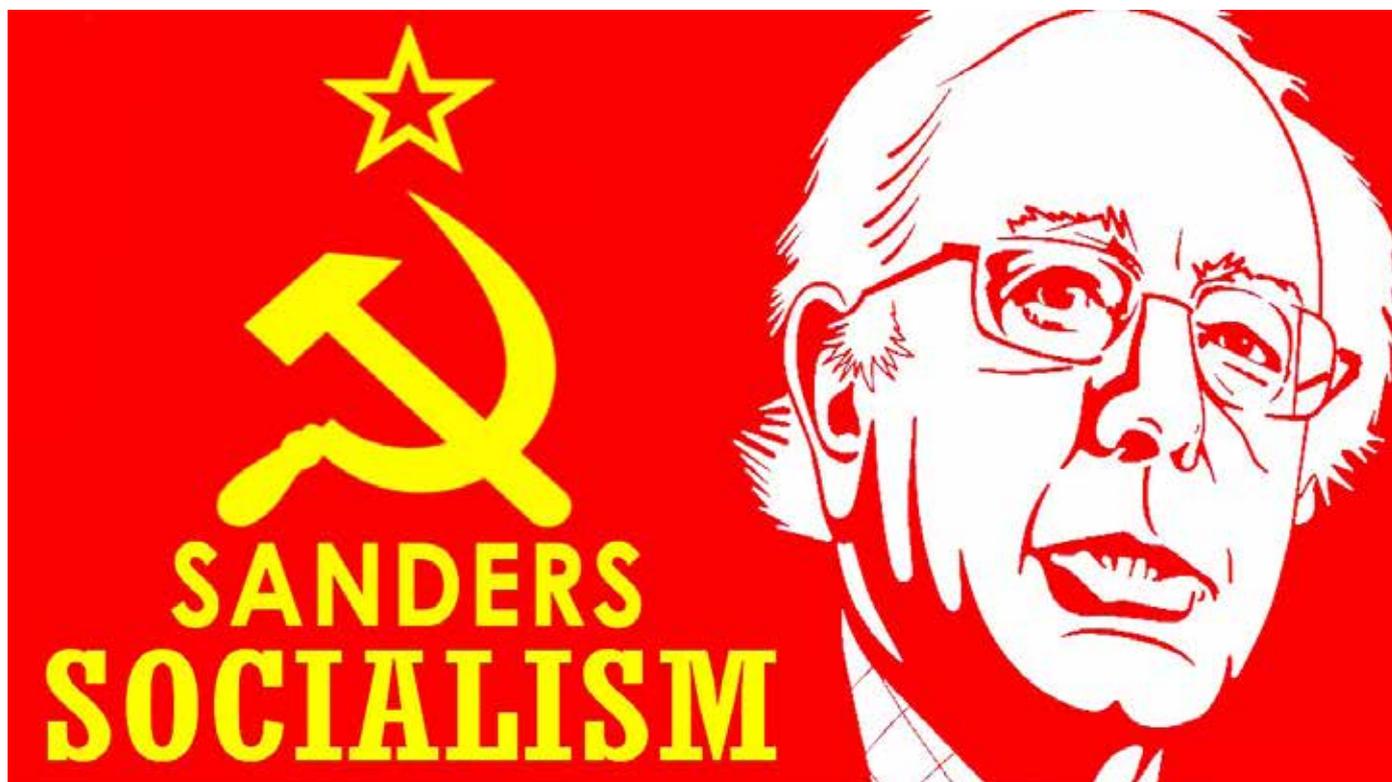
Social movementism, parliamentary campaigns and labour disputes don't always appear in tandem. In fact, they hardly ever do. Nor do they always appear organically. This is why, before one part of that three pronged spear of struggle is blunted, it is important to be sharpening the others. We have seen the mass social movement of independence in Scotland, translated to a return to party politics, but for this generation we need a union model which resonates.

As well as upping the ante for the actions which BtZ undertakes this year, institutionalising the campaign across unions, making a mark on civic and political society, the campaign will also

be working with the Unions into Schools project and the STUC youth committee via Scottish Union Learning to host workshops, a zero hours literary event and a leadership course fit for this generation of activists to lead our unions in the future.

So to end, I would like to make an appeal to all current union activists. You will know a young person, or know of a young person, who is in a precarious non-unionised working environment but who would not necessarily join a union if you waved a recruitment form under their nose. BtZ is the place for that young person to learn about workplace organising and power dynamics at a grassroots level. Please make sure to get them involved.

Sarah Collins works with Scottish Union Learning to support BtZ (<http://www.betterthanzero.org>).



What Sanders did and what remains to be done

Gerry Friedman analyses a campaign like no other

Bernie Sanders ran the most unusual political campaign, and one of the most successful. Running for the presidential nomination of a political party to which he did not belong, the junior senator from one of America's smallest states almost toppled a political dynasty. He carried 23 states, won 43% of the popular vote, and he finished within sight of victory - and, all as an avowed socialist.

In the end, he failed to win the Democratic Party's nomination. But like the Occupy movement of 2011, his impact is much greater than any count of legislation enacted or programmes created. Occupy brought new attention to problems of economic and political inequality, and bequeathed the phrase 'we are the 99%' to later movements. But as a political campaign, Occupy was less successful than its ideologically incoherent rightist counterpart, the Tea Party movement. While the Tea

Party has taken over the Republican Party and blocked much of Obama's programme, Occupy has elected no one to Congress.

Occupy anticipated Sanders and he corrected some of its failings, its lack of organization or leadership, and its conscious refusal to craft a coherent political program. Sanders built an organization that lives on ready to continue the political struggle. And, unlike Occupy, he put forward an explicit program. But the Sanders program bore little relation to his campaign for a new American revolution, and did little to help his campaign reach beyond the young, white, affluent, base that he shared with Occupy.

Rather than campaigning for socialism or economic democracy, Sanders campaigned for a return to the economic policies of the 'New Deal' era, and to those of conservative New Dealers like the Republican President Eisenhower rather than more radical ones like

Democrat Rexford Tugwell, or even Presidents Kennedy or Johnson. His programme's 'ambition' appeared only in comparison with the modesty of proposals coming from others. Seen in this way, the reaction to his program was a measure of how far to the right American politics has gone.

Sanders proposed total spending over ten years of about \$14.5 trillion, but after taking account of \$10.7 trillion for his one genuinely radical program, single-payer national health insurance, he wanted \$3.8 trillion for other programs. Impressive as this may appear, it represents a gross increase in government spending outside of the Medicare-for-All program of only 1.6% of GDP over ten years. Obama, Johnson, Kennedy, and, especially, Roosevelt all came into office with larger ambitions.

Sanders's modesty was also reflected in the nature of his spending proposals. Other than single payer

health insurance, his largest initiative was a five-year investment of \$1 trillion in infrastructure. Nothing here to promote a transfer in control over the means of production to the working class; and even the scale hardly matches socialist demands for massive federally funded public works program to put millions to work'. While Sanders called for more than Hillary Clinton has proposed, many moderate and conservative economists and business leaders have called such a large programme long overdue. Indeed, Sanders would only return to the infrastructure spending levels of the 1950s and 1960s. Hardly revolutionary - and the work of a pragmatic liberal, even a conservative, not a socialist.

The rest of the Sanders economic programme was similarly moderate. Perhaps, the most popular with his youthful base, free tuition at public colleges and universities, marked a return to long-standing policy, in effect before the 1980s in most states. His proposal to raise social security minimum benefits and to improve the indexation of benefits echoed similar measures adopted under Democratic Presidents and Republicans, including Nixon, who established the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and the minimum benefit for the needy and disabled. Raising the minimum wage (to \$15 over 3 years) *appears* to be a dramatic change, but it only partially adjusts the minimum wage to economic changes since the 1980s. Relative to the growth in national income, a \$15 minimum is lower than its value in the 1970s, or even its value when first introduced in 1938. Sanders' proposed carbon tax is an excellent idea to reduce the production of global warming gasses. It is such a good idea that it has the support of prominent capitalists and Republicans.

Sanders offered even less to unions, women, or racial minorities. His proposed *Workplace Democracy Act* was previously known as the *Employee Free Choice Act*. It would make it easier to form unions by

providing for card-check union recognition and first-contract arbitration. These measures are familiar to Canadian unions and, based on their experience, there is little reason to expect that this would do more than slow the decline in union organization. Sanders promised women and minorities tougher enforcement of legislation against wage discrimination, but nothing specific to address poverty among African Americans or to compensate for the history of slavery and discrimination. He offered nothing like the ambitious anti-poverty programs and affirmative-action measures or the minimum income proposals of the Johnson Administration, or those of Richard Nixon.

If Sanders's programme appears lifeless after his soaring rhetoric, it is. And, here we have a source of his failure, and an opportunity for future success. By not moving beyond the 'New Deal' to democracy and socialism, the Sanders campaign failed to inspire those same constituencies who had in the 1960s and 1970s rejected the 'New Deal' politics as inadequate. He lost the votes of African Americans, feminists, Hispanics, and working-class voters because he failed to offer them democracy and socialism. So long as these voters find progressive *economic* messages of return to the New Deal uninspiring, they will either vote for those offering right-wing and xenophobic responses to economic distress, or will vote on the basis of other issues such as social policy or attitudes towards guns. To win these votes, to deserve them, progressive campaigns need a revolutionary program to match their rhetoric.

Occupy failed to find a working-class or minority constituency because it lacked political credibility and an inspiring program; the Sanders campaign established credibility: now it is time for a programme. The Washington establishment criticised Sanders for being too ambitious, for proposing too radical

a programme. Instead, the lesson of his campaign is that he needed to be more ambitious, to go beyond warmed-over and diluted 'New Deal' liberalism to offer a vision of economic and political democracy.

To build a winning progressive alliance, we need a programme ambitious enough to win over the elements of the Obama Coalition while adding those working-class voters and young voters who have grown so disenchanted with the political system that they either don't vote or vote desperately for Trump or some other neo-fascist as a protest. We need a programme that will do more than go back to the economic conditions of the 1960s, but will move beyond these to genuinely empower workers and citizens. This means more jobs, higher wages, progressive taxation, and improved access to higher education as promised by Sanders. It also means transferring power to working people and to communities through universal collective bargaining with independent unions, works councils where workers would have a direct say in the management of their work, and the extension of civil liberties to the workplace.

And to make meaningful these demands for democratic power and voice, there needs to be material security, a guaranteed income with family benefits recognising the work done by mothers, fathers, and other care givers, and public control over investment. Bernie Sanders proved that there is space in American politics for the Left. The next step is to build in that space a movement to change American politics.

Gerald Friedman is Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. He is the author of Reigniting the Labor Movement: Restoring means to ends in a democratic Labor Movement (Routledge, 2007) and was active in the Sanders campaign. He will provide a further article early in 2017 on how the left is developing after the Sanders campaign.

Europe turns right

John Fullerton says there's an unmistakable sense of déjà vu hanging over Europe.

The Polish government attacks democratic institutions on a broad front; Russia brings in its own snooper's charter, which Edward Snowden dubbed the Big Brother Law; and France faces yet more turmoil, not least a threat to the so-called 'socialist' government (it isn't socialist) from the Republican right and the far right, National Front. Meanwhile, in Spain, the established two-party system is dead but the right-wing, Popular Party, emerged twice as the biggest single party. In Germany, the hardline anti-immigration Alternative is the most popular right-wing party since World War Two. And, in Greece, the Left is crushed by the twin neo-con hammers of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

As for Little England, there is an attempt to eviscerate the left by an anti-democratic putsch, carried out within the Labour Party by the right (the so-called Blairites) funded by millionaires. Meantime, the anti-immigration, anti-democratic Conservative government has swerved to the far right since Brexit, a process marked with threats to dismantle human rights while hinting at halting all immigration and holding EU nationals hostage. The result? The latest polls (at the time of writing) predict an unassailable Tory lead of 17 points, with pundits predicting a 20-year-long rule for the Tories at Westminster, a point not lost on Scots living in the dead zone of the Trident replacement.

Looming over this is the nightmarish emergence across the Atlantic of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, presidential nominees of the almost indistinguishable Democrats and Republicans respectively, both parties corporate, xenophobic, pro-Zionist, Islamophobic and

anti-immigration. Two halves of the same neo-con imperium, in effect.

In the wake of World War One (more than 8m dead, more than 21m wounded), there was a new spirit abroad. Four, multi-ethnic empires had been swept away. Emperors, kings, dukes, pashas vanished. Thirteen republics were established. Jurists formulated constitutions forming liberal democracies and civil freedoms as well as social benefits. This new, liberal democratic experiment was short-lived.

Europe was pulled three ways. US President Woodrow Wilson urged a world safe for democracy. Lenin promised a communal society free of want and authoritarian hierarchies. Hitler pushed his vision of an imperial warrior race, purged of impurities, bent on fulfilling its Teutonic destiny. The new constitutions were suspicious of executive authority. Power was centred on the legislatures. Parliamentary committees had oversight of the executive. Proportional representation was adopted. The new laws covered health, welfare and social security. The new order attempted to bridge 19th century liberalism and popular demands for social democracy. In Russia, the left was split between a 'bourgeois democratic revolution' and a 'proletarian socialist' one. When the Bolsheviks gained less than a quarter of the votes cast for the new Constituent Assembly, Lenin closed it down by force. Mark Mazower, in his masterful work *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (Penguin, 1999) suggests that Lenin's triumph, like that of Mussolini's from the right, was a consequence of liberalism's failure in mistakenly assuming a profound social crisis could be solved by offering people constitutional

liberties.

The people - especially 15m Russian peasant conscripts along with the urban working class - wanted peace. They wanted land. 'Kerensky's provisional Government had become an empty shell well before Trotsky's Red Guards seized power in Petrograd' Mazower wrote. Increasingly, democrats were squeezed between fascism and communism.

The Russian Revolution resonated in areas of rural discontent - in Bulgaria, in Spain, in Hungary and in Italy. So it was in Italy where agrarian civil war opened the way for Mussolini. In 1922, he was invited to form a government, not because his fascist movement was large, but because of the establishment's fear of socialism - the reason too why broad swathes of police, military, civil servants and royal court sympathised with the fascists. Mussolini's first government was, after all, a coalition of three parties. Without the support of Liberals and Socialists, he would have been unable to dominate the Chamber of Deputies.

In Germany, no fewer than 16 parties secured seats in the Reichstag in 1930, 19 in the 1929 Czech elections, while in Latvia, Estonia and Poland there were sometimes even more. It wasn't only the electoral system - parties were highly organised, often with educational, cultural, welfare and paramilitary wings. Society was polarised, and forming governments became increasingly difficult. 'There were hardly any countries in Europe after 1918 where the average Cabinet last more than a year; in Germany and Austria the average was eight months,' Mazower says.

With the Great Depression, one

country after another moved to the right. Parliaments were rarely abolished entirely; they lingered on 'in a shadowy half-life' in Hitler's Germany, fascist Italy and many other authoritarian states - a sign that these regimes still craved popular legitimacy.

Has Westminster reached this stage today, dominated by far right English Tories and a right-wing, Blairite Labour? May we be forgiven for thinking that only the 56 SNP MPs seem to act as a real, democratic opposition to the English government?

Mazower maintains that in the inter-war years Europe's democratic roots were shallow. In contrast, anti-liberal and anti-democratic creeds had been gaining ground since the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Reared on war, extremist ideologues preferred violence to reason, action to rhetoric, especially in the wake of mass unemployment.

Woodrow Wilson's liberalism was cut short by American isolationism. Britain and France were more concerned about communism than dictatorships. The European left was weakened by the split between social democrats and communists, the latter opposing parliamentary democracy ('bourgeois formalism') without being able to destroy it.

'The fact is that in most of Europe by the mid-1930s - outside the northern fringe - liberalism looked tired, the organised left had been smashed and the sole struggles over ideology and governance were taking place *within* the right - among authoritarians, traditional conservatives, technocrats and radical right-wing extremists' Mazower argued.

The new radical right rose to power in Italy and Germany through elections and parliamentary process. Its instrument was the party, allowing it to outflank old-style conservatives unused to the

new game of mass politics. Austria followed Portugal with a Christian nationalism which would affect Slovakia, Spain, Greece, Croatia and Vichy France as well as right-wing politics in Poland, Hungary and Romania. 'Violent anti-Semitism was the corollary' according to Mazower.

The difference between, on the one hand, Dollfuss's Austria, Franco's Spain and Antonescu's Romania, all of which acknowledged and coexisted with traditional bases of authority, and on the other the Third Reich was this: one kind of right defended the old order against the forces of mass politics; the other exploited those very forces to seek to reshape society itself. And today?

The 1989 collapse of the Soviet empire was not a victory of democracy, but of global capitalism. Capitalism does not create feelings of belonging, but heightens insecurity by destroying class solidarity and a sense of community. The individual is cast adrift, forced to fend for themselves on the semi-slavery of workfare, the hand-to-mouth subsistence of contract work, the minimum wage and punitive unemployment 'benefit'.

Europe has again shifted to the right, not least because people are tired of politics. They perceive a game being played out over their heads. They feel powerless, ignored, without a voice. Brexit was surely a symptom of that sense of disenfranchisement on the part of the working class in England's former industrial cities - neglected, disempowered, impoverished and deserted by an elitist Labour Party of professional politicians.

Politicians across Europe have not hesitated to stoke fears of 'The Other' by playing the immigration card - the contemporary Islamophobic version of 1930s anti-Semitism. The Hungarian prime

minister described refugees fleeing the Middle East's violence as a 'poison' while busloads of refugees were greeted by a German mob chanting 'go home'.

Mainstream media has deepened public anxiety by enthusiastically building an image of Putin's Russia as a predatory, militarist state that poses an existential threat to European democracy - one can't help suspect this is 'punishment' on the part of Washington and London for Moscow's robust and effective air campaign against US and Israeli-backed Daesh in Syria.

For sure, some of the so-called terror attacks, notably in France and Germany, are indeed the work of vengeful Islamists. Others seem to be the work of the deranged. Many posts on social media suspect deliberate 'false flag' attacks to justify draconian police powers and rule by decree - indeed, to encourage a flight to safety in the embrace of the neo-conservative right.

The price for whipping up ethnic and religious enmity has been a sharp spike in racist attacks, especially in England. We should not forget, as Westminster plans to repeal European Union human rights law, that Hitler removed legal protections for minorities in 1937. If we look back, as Mazower has done so ably, we see that democracy is still a frail and delicate plant, and that the totalitarian tradition, irrational as it may seem, runs deep. Too deep.

John Fullerton is a journalist, correspondent and editor covering foreign affairs. He is the author of five novels and one work of non-fiction, and is a member of Scottish CND, the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Global Justice Now and the SNP.

Poets' page

Every so often we carry a number of poems on political matters. Here is a current selection.

Blues?

By Thom Cross

We got the blues!
Blue on blue
black n blue
Tory-boyz
Eton-boyz blues
We all lose.

Bad news
for folk like me and you
trying to get through
the lies and the hate
from the blue Tory state
and their chums in the press
spewing a shitty news-mess
paid for and sold
by corrupt-Tory gold.

By the inches watch them buy
Lie after lie;
Read the Tory-life of lies
In a state where all truth dies
'Create hate mate!'
Say the pompous and the great
Create red n blue frustration
Demonize immigration
If you don't look like me
There's leaky boats on the sea
Vote Brexit & be proud
Watch the dip in the pound
Join the Eton chorus
Of Bullington Boris
Follow me! Follow me!
Brexit is for us and ME!
T'hell with the economy
Fk- the pols and the frogs
The jocks and the Calais nogs

In Engerland's blue
and unpleasant land!
Democracy is a mirage!
With Boris, Gove n Farage!

Don't dance to that band
Let's have jazz in our land
The drum beat o fraternity
Horns give us dignity
Wi the bass-strum o solidarity
An the pipes o sovereignty
Give us stramach 'n rock n roll
With an honest Celtic soul
Give us Euro-romance
We'll hooch n we'll dance
Across Europe n France
A great Ceilidh of joy
So dance Greek kore n boy
With garcon n lassie
With zolkie and brahzie
Dance across the Rhone n Rhine
In soul n prance n reel-time
and through our heather
Oh how we'll dance!
We will dance; dance the gither!

Post-Script
Oh what a nonsense
that we cannie dance
Ideas leap & whirl
in this wee country
In reels of thought and dreams
And in the progress
of the steps it seems
That in our dance
we hope, for in that glance
We choreograph a future.
Justice is our destiny:
for this we dance.

What I like about Brexit

By Peter Lomas

What I like about Brexit is its cheery,
decisive, it's-a-new-day sound.
Like the ring of a steely old
alarm-clock
(made in Britain, of course).
Br-r-ring!

Or like breakfast.
Look at the clever toast,
jumping up in the toaster all by itself.
Get your sovereignty back!
Pour some milk on your Breksits!

What I like about
Brexit is its Br-r-itishness.
We're not Europeans!
Or Americans either
(they're all Europeans anyway,
more Poles in Chicago, etc.).
We're eXceptional!
We've got the X-factor,
the je-ne-sais-quoi (oops).
Let them speak English!

Bring back the imperial measures,
the funky pounds,
shillings and pence!
We're different -
not logical, like the Krauts,
or snooty, like the French,
or wimpish, like the Eyeties,
or show-offs, like the Spics.
Let them eat paella!

What I like about Brexit is its rough,
gritty, liberating feel.

Like thumbing a flame from your
Zippo in front of all those
gasbags in Brussels.
Don't you just love being in control?
Boom!

If you can't fix it, Brex it.
Sometimes you've got to hex it.
George Eliot said humankind can't
bear too much reality.
And he was right.
I'm going to pray to Saint Theresa.

Heritage

By James Aitchison

Memories spontaneously
repeat themselves
I often think of Wallace Street.

I never knew the landlord
who got the rent
For our two rooms
in his slum tenement.
'Landlord', 'slum tenement'
- I didn't know

What these words meant
seventy years ago.

We moved to a new house
when I was eight
But Wallace Street is still
an essential state
Of mind and spirit.
The enduring creed
Of my proletarian heritage
Has given me the lasting title-deed
To slum-land innocence in my old age.



Corbyn: The Strange Rebirth of Radical Politics

by Richard Seymour, Verso, £12.99,
9781784785314

Corbyn: Against All Odds

by Richard Seymour, Verso, free
e-book, 9781786632357

Given the current unrest in the Labour party, any book that offers Jeremy Corbyn as its subject will be battling against the news cycle in its efforts to stay relevant. It is to Richard Seymour's credit that *Corbyn: The Strange Rebirth of Radical Politics* (Verso) remains so.

This relevance owes itself less to the Seymour's follow-up essay and free e-book *Corbyn: Against All Odds* (though this update is welcome) than it does to Seymour's approach. *Corbyn* is not, as the title suggests, a biographical re-telling of one man's rise to the Labour leadership. Rather, it is a robust account of how Labour's internal organisation combined with a broader political crisis in such a way as to make Corbyn's rise – or, at least, the rise of someone like him – inevitable.

Like Lewis Minkin, Seymour makes much of how 'the locus of governance in the party shifted from the union leadership to the Parliamentary Labour Party and the electoral-professional caste that

works alongside the leadership.' Depending on perspective, this was either a modernisation or betrayal of core Labour values. Seymour's perspective is

firmly the latter and his reasoning is frequently persuasive.

Out of the 1918 party constitution there emerged, he argues, 'an organisation that depended upon the mobilisation of socialists to achieve political power, but which ensured their sidelining in effective decision-making, the better to enable a potential governing elite to emerge.' Blair and his allies consolidated this power until Labour became 'a party in which the power is overwhelmingly concentrated at the top.' How, then, to explain Corbyn? The answer, according to Seymour, is, at least in part, the Collins Review.

Initially intended, Seymour maintains, to anchor the party 'firmly in the political centre' the reforms prior to the 2015 leadership election meant it was the first in which a true 'One Member One Vote' system was used. The result, contrary to the intention of the 'governing elites,' was an overwhelming victory for the MP for Islington North. This imposition of a leader from the radical left upon a more centrist PLP was, Seymour contends, 'an immense frustration to the party's traditional management.' The current leadership contest and bitter infighting suggest that he is correct.

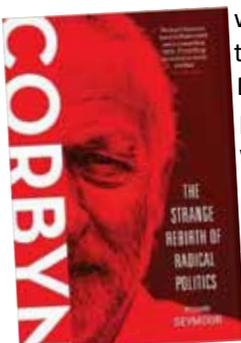
Though only rarely dealing directly with Corbyn, Seymour's chapter on the broader political situation in Britain, 'The Crisis of British Politics,' is one of the standout sections of the book and Seymour's argument that Labour's shortcomings are symptomatic of a broader malaise of democratic decline is convincing. Citing voter apathy, the decline in popular engagement, low electoral turnouts ('in both 2001 and 2005, non-voters constituted a larger share

of the electorate than the vote for the winning party'), Seymour sees reason for concern. British electoral participation is, he argues, in poor health, though '(p)recisely what level of participation counts as healthy,' he concedes, 'is a value judgement.' Of the following, however, he is convinced: 'where there is a significant decline in voting turnout and party membership, there is a prima facie reason to begin asking questions.' This section is an effective starting point for anyone interested in answering them.

The final chapter of the book looks to Corbyn's future, a future which, for Seymour, will be measured by four benchmarks: the first is organisational – Corbyn must rebuild the membership, revitalise the constituency branches and address the 'top-heavy distribution of power within the party; the second is ideological – Corbyn will be judged by his success in attacking the neo-liberal legacy of 'new' Labour; the third is electoral – Corbyn's success will be decided at the ballot box; the fourth is policy – Corbyn must develop a plausible programme for office.

Seymour, despite writing the book 'in sympathy' with Corbyn, is not entirely sanguine about the Labour leader's chances. 'This is a long game,' he says, 'ideological territories are shaped over generations, not in time for electoral cycles.' He is right in this. Electoral cycles do, however, shape Labour leaderships and, regardless of Corbyn's ideological legacy, it is in this timeframe that he will first be judged.

Robin Jones lives in Paris where he works as an English teacher. His fiction, articles and reviews have appeared in the Edinburgh Review, Gutter, Jacobin, the Dark Mountain Project and Huffington Post.



Kick up the Tabloids

As Labour prepares for its second leadership election within a year, it strikes me that the party is having a leadership election on the wrong side of the border. Owen Smith and the Blairite wing of the party accuse Jeremy Corbyn of being 'unelectable'. Whether Corbyn is unelectable or not is pure speculation as his electability has yet to be put to the test.

Kezia Dugdale, on the other hand, has already proved herself to be spectacularly unelectable, yet remains unchallenged in her job. Dugdale, let us not forget, not only lost the 2016 Scottish parliamentary election, but led it to its worst-ever result at Holyrood. Scottish Labour's vote plummeted way below its previous all-time-low of 2011. So, not content with being merely unelectable, Kezia Dugdale managed this May to be more unelectable than Iain Gray, which a truly remarkable achievement in the history of political mediocrity.

Furthermore, no-one knows whether Theresa May is electable or not, as she has never had to face an election, not even for the Conservative leadership. At least, Jeremy Corbyn has won a leadership contest in his own party, rather than sat back and watched everybody else to drop out of the running.

Owen Smith and his supporters accuse Jezza of being 'lukewarm' in his support for the 'remain' campaign. I don't recall Theresa May herself being a particularly enthusiastic supporter of 'remain'. To blame the result of the referendum on Corbyn's campaigning is a smokescreen to hide the myriad tactical errors made by those in charge of the campaign.

For example, if they had a run a television advertisement or campaign broadcast that featured film footage of Portobello beach,

Saltcoats, Whitley Bay, Burntisland and Blackpool with the slogan: 'This is where we went on summer holiday before we joined Europe' the 'leave' campaign would have been dead in the water and Brexit would never have happened.

Incidentally, in case you are one of the many people who are still confused as to what Brexit actually means, the Prime Minister was able to offer clarification. According to her, 'Brexit means Brexit'. Well, I'm glad we've got that one sorted out.

Very little is known about Owen Smith, other than that he has been described as 'Tony Blair Light', which presumably means that if he were to become Prime Minister he would start a partially-legal war.

It is on the issue of national security that I think Corbyn would be the safest person to be Prime Minister. Theresa May showed absolutely no hesitation in Parliament when the SNP's George Kerevan asked if she would be prepared to push a button and kill 100,000 innocent men, women and children. 'Yes!' she answered, barely pausing for breath, let alone thought. That said the entire country breathed a sigh of relief when she returned from holiday at the end of August, having left Boris Johnson in temporary charge of the country for a week. For a full seven days, sixty million people lived with the genuine fear that he might sit on the nuclear button by accident.

Corbyn, on the other hand, has long campaigned against Trident, unlike Kezia Dugdale who was a staunch supporter of the nuclear deterrent until her own party conference voted to scrap Trident. This is only one of many issues on which she has changed her mind. She has also changed her mind twice about Jeremy Crobyn, and has also changed her mind about whether Brexit would be a just reason to hold indyref2.

Indeed, she recently even managed to change her mind in the course of a sentence, saying that the Labour Party had to bring an end to its in-fighting which was why she was supporting Owen Smith.

While Corbyn may have made a ham-fisted mess of the PR stunt that led to Traingate, let us not lose sight of the fact that he was making a valid point. Under re-nationalisation, we would not be looking at the possibility of trains without guards. Early this summer, the RMT's strike action only just failed to bring the ScotRail network to a standstill, mainly because ScotRail themselves had already brought the ScotRail network to a standstill.

This autumn the SNP is, of course, also holding its election for depute leader. I am not going to make any comment on this matter, as many readers will be aware that I am a close personal friend of Tommy Sheppard. Were I to make jokes at the expense of any of the other candidates, that would obviously be construed as personal bias. Conversely, were I to poke fun at Tommy in this column, he might never speak to me again. Suffice it to say, all four candidates are of an exceedingly high calibre, and all would bring gravitas and charisma to the job. That the SNP are so spoiled for choice for depute Leader must make supporters of Scottish Labour must look on in awe at such an embarrassment of riches, when comparing all four candidates to their own leader who is merely an embarrassment.

Vladimir McTavish will be appearing at YesBar, Glasgow on Friday 30 September and Saturday 1 October and at The Stand Comedy Club, Glasgow on Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 October.



Scottish Rank & File

Unity is Power



The Rank & File was born out of an attack on the skills of electricians in 2011 by eight of the major mechanical and electrical construction companies in the UK. We have also been in the forefront in the fight against blacklisting with our partners, the Blacklist Support Group. We seek the adherence of collective agreements on all construction sites and recognition of all elected shop stewards and safety reps. The Rank & File, who is made up mostly of Unite members but also count members of GMB and Ucat among our ranks, are determined to change the face of construction for the benefit of working people by transforming the attitudes of companies in the industry to realise the benefits of having an organised workforce. To do this we need the assistance of clients such as the Scottish government, local authorities, NHS and Scotland's Universities and Colleges through their procurement processes, in line with the Scottish government's Fair Work Framework.

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- No Bogus self employment or umbrella schemes
- Protect skills
- Proper apprenticeships
- Health & Safety

Contact:

Email: scottishrankandfile@gmail.com



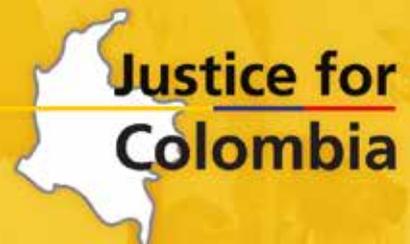
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Foundation**

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leader of the Labour Party, will give the lecture on
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on Thursday 6 October 2016.**

The venue is Govan Old Parish Church, 866 Govan Road, Glasgow G51 3UU
(adjacent to Govan Cross Underground).

Tickets, priced £10 and £6, are available from <http://reidfoundation.org/>

Doors open at 6.00pm when tea and coffee will be available.

Entry is by ticket only and the audience should be seated for 6.45pm.

The Lecture will start at 7pm, will be followed
by Q & A and the proceedings will end at 8.30pm.

