

Labour Affairs

Incorporating the Labour and Trade Union Review

No. 362 - October 2025

Price £2.00 (€ 3.00)

The Onward March of the 'Deplorables' Does the Left understand what is going on?

The 'Unite the Kingdom' Freedom of Speech Rally in London on Saturday the 13th September was significant. While official estimates from the BBC and law enforcement placed attendance at around 150,000, some participants and observers have suggested, based on aerial footage, that the actual number of attendees could have been considerably higher. This event comes on the heels of many smaller scale protests in the country over the past year. A key feature of these protests is a hostility to unrestricted immigration. Traditionally the Left has dismissed such events as 'fascism' but the numbers at the recent march would make too much of the UK population 'fascist' for this to be a plausible account. Instead, 'austerity' is taken to be a plausible alternative explanation. The British Left favours immigration, even though there is ample evidence that most of the population, including of immigrant origin, is ambivalent or downright hostile. In fact most of the British Left has signed up to the neoliberal dream of a completely open global labour market.

Why should this be? Eamon Dyas, in this issue of 'Labour Affairs' makes out a

case that the Left's image of the working class is at odds with the reality and that they are unwilling to make their image conform with the reality. This is true, but there is a darker side to the Left's attitude to the British working class. Some in progressive circles simply don't like what they see when they look at today's working class: the tastes, the opinions, the way of life. Immigration can feel like a way to change that reality, to make Britain look and feel a little more like the cosmopolitan world they want to live in. In addition immigration provides a ready source of cheap labour to carry out their domestic labour, serve in their restaurants, care for their frail and elderly etc. Sahra Wagenknecht has pointed this out, writing about the 'Self-Righteous' leftists and Greens of Germany.

Working class people are not stupid and are well aware that much of the Left regards them as 'deplorables' even though the Left would never admit it. They thus turn to alternatives such as Reform and, most recently, to 'Unite the Kingdom' to express their frustration. So long as the British Left continue with this attitude they will be

rejected by much of the population. What makes it even worse is the Left's refusal to recognise that racism is not the same thing as having a negative attitude to unlimited immigration. Thus those who do not like mass immigration are insulted as racists, bigots and even fascists. Eventually that population will turn to alternatives and the Left will be marginalised. Those who insult the marchers may feel good about themselves, but they are unlikely to win over working class people and will only make themselves irrelevant.

So what is at stake here? The main British parties (Labour, Conservative, Liberal) and even Reform have policies that depend on 'essential immigration'. But how much of immigration is essential? On a narrow economic analysis the claim is highly doubtful. According to research carried out by parliament, immigration has a broadly neutral effect on per capita GDP. Furthermore it seems to have a negative effect on the earnings of working class people:

"The available evidence suggests that immigration has had a small negative impact on the lowest-paid workers in the UK, and a small positive impact on the earnings of higher-paid workers. Resident workers whose wages have been adversely affected by immigration are likely to include a significant proportion of previous immigrants and workers from ethnic minority groups." (House of Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs).

When you put this together with neighbourhood changes, waiting lists at GP surgeries and pressure on the housing stock, it cannot be surprising that not all UK residents are enthusiastic about mass immigration. However, it is easy to see why employers might be enthusiastic. Increasing the stock of available labour exerts a downward pressure on wages; there is a ready supply of low-skilled labour which fits the business model of many employers in the UK; training costs are minimised in the case of skilled and semi-skilled labour. There is thus a distinct element of class

Labour Affairs

Contents

No. 362 - October 2025 ISSN 2050-6031
ISSN 0953-3494

Editorial	
The Onward March of the 'Deplorables'	1
London's Anti-Immigration Rally	4
Notes on the news	6
Palestine Links	11
Trotskyism - a Century of Failure	12
Immigration in Ireland and Britain	17
Immigration - a German Left-Wing View	18
The Sahra Wagenknecht Newsletter	21
An Unhealthy Relationship - the Labour Party and the Unions	22
Freedom of Speech	24

Labour Affairs

Published by the Ernest Bevin Society
Editorial Board: Christopher Winch,
Jack Lane and Gwydion Williams

LabourAffairs@virginmedia.com
Websites: <http://labouraffairsmagazine.com/>
and <https://labouraffairs.com/>

Subscription: £20 for one year (10 issues)

Distribution: Dave Fennell
Editorial Addresses:
No. 2 Newington Green Mansions
Green Lanes, London N16 9BT
33 Athol St., Belfast, BT12 4GX

struggle in the attitudes of different groups to the issue of mass immigration.

However, the available research does not tell us what would happen to the British economy were mass immigration to cease. The consequences, we are told, would be dire. But the evidence quoted above does not bear out this claim. What would happen to per capita GDP if immigration were restricted to a significant degree? We can't supply figures, but certain factors stand out as worthy of consideration. First, there would likely be a positive effect on workers' wages, holding overall demand for labour steady. This follows the evidence given to parliament. Second, employers would have an incentive to make their employees more productive through higher investment and more training. In the case of skilled work, they would no longer have a 'free lunch' of ready trained workers at the expense of other countries. Third, a general labour shortage would have the effect of encouraging innovation to make the most of the labour available. This is not to say that immigration should be eliminated where there

is simply no substitute domestically. Even here we should try to avoid poaching skilled labour from countries that can ill afford to lose the skilled workers they have trained. As things stand, a highly liberal labour market, with poor regulation and a large informal sector is an important 'pull' factor for economic migrants but does no service for the working class.

A final point is the Left's ambivalence about Britain's imperialist foreign policy. With their 'human rights' agenda, it is all too easy to co-opt the British Left into supporting the destruction of other countries such as Yugoslavia, Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria. The dismemberment of these countries under imperialist interference and attack is a powerful 'push' factor driving

international migration. The Left should always oppose these imperialist adventures which are usually directed at plundering the resources of the victim countries under the guise of 'humanitarian intervention' or other excuses.

At this stage it is impossible to say whether the discontent evidenced by 'Unite the Kingdom' or Farage's Reform UK will develop into mass right wing parties with a working class support base. But if it does, the Left will have itself to blame as it sinks into irrelevance. This would leave British politics in uncharted territory making it difficult for socialism to survive as a recognisable force.

Editorials and articles at our website, by subject, at

<http://labouraffairsmagazine.com/>

Also <https://labouraffairs.com/>

Check what we were saying in the late 1980s and early 1990s, which still reads well. Web pages and PDFs at

<https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/very-old-issues-images/>

Or by subject at <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/very-old-issues-images/m-articles-by-topic/>

The significance of the “Unite the Kingdom” rally

By Eamon Dyas

I recently watched a video on YouTube made by someone who attended the “Unite the Kingdom” rally on Saturday, 13 September. He claimed he attended not because he supported the cause but because he was curious about the people who were attending. His video was shot from within parts of the rally and it depicted the overwhelming majority as ordinary folk. There were indeed some “football hooligan” types present but they only constituting a small minority. There were also some Israeli flags and Irish tricolours on display amongst the sea of St. George and Union flags.

It was the video maker’s first political rally and he described the experience as more like a pop concert than what he thought a political rally would be. As far as the footage goes of course I’ve no idea how accurate it is but it did show a small group of around fifty people with Israeli flags repeatedly and aggressively shouting “You can shove Palestine up your arse”. That was the only hate-filled aspect of the rally that the video showed. It struck me that the lack of police response to such hate-filled behaviour stands in marked contrast to what the police would do if the chant was directed at those currently committing genocide in Gaza.

As far as I could see, although this demonstration was organised by the far right the sentiment that it tapped into wasn’t necessarily representative of a coherent

far right position. In the vast majority of cases what seemed to “Unite the Kingdom” was not racism as such but the growing belief among the participants that established politics had been ignoring them for too long. But then again established politics, if by which we mean parliamentary electoral politics, by its nature is not equipped to reflect the concerns of the majority. It is not even designed to reflect the majority that vote let alone the majority of the electorate when that includes a significant component that do not use their vote.

In that situation parliament can only wholly reflect the thinking and concerns of the minority that has succeeded in getting their party into government. In the meantime, what happens the majority of ordinary folk trying to make sense of their daily lives? Normally those people have no interest in politics or only a fleeting interest. This has been called apathy by those with a stronger interest in politics. But it’s always been dangerous to dismiss apathy as somehow representative of ignorance and a permanent incapacity to engage in politics. This apathetic element will - and we now know do - engage in politics when they believe that decisions taken by central government negatively impacts on what they consider to be important to their own lives and that of their communities.

Despite the Left’s traditional dismissal of a segment of such

people as “lumpen proletariat” when it came to the majority of them the Left was considered better placed to offer them a political perspective that defied traditional politics. The Left held that position because it wasn’t purely focused on Parliament. Through its links with the trade unions and community groups it was better placed to keep its finger on society’s pulse and understand the emerging sentiments of the wider society. But it has long since lost that ability. It lost that ability because the society with which it had that relationship has changed and the Left has catastrophically failed to adjust to that change.

The core reason for this is that it has lost the ability to operate to the basic fact that in order to improve society it was necessary to work with what society provided. What society previously provided as the means to bring about that improvement was an organised working class in the form of the trade union movement. As long as the trade union movement existed as an alternative power base it was the means by which the Left could operate on behalf of, and reflect, the society that existed beyond the reach of parliamentary politics. This was so because the working class, organised within the trade union movement, embraced those who voted for both sides of the parliamentary divide as well as those who never bothered to vote. What united them was their shared

experience in the struggles of their daily lives.

While the Left always sought to bring improvements to society those improvements were framed by, and reflected, the material needs of this actual functioning component of society. But with the world changing through deindustrialisation in the West, the diminution of the trade union movement and the demise of the Soviet Union the Left has failed to make sense of itself and its relationship with the wider society. The gradual dissolution of a trade union movement with the capacity of operating as a power base for exerting extra-parliamentary pressure to bring about social change presented the Left with an existential challenge.

The fact is that despite the dissolution of the trade union movement society and the working class still exist and if the Left was to continue to have any influence over it the first thing it needed to do was to adjust to this new reality in a way which acknowledged the fact that the working class primary now manifested itself no longer through the trade union movement (though such a manifestation still existed) but through the communities within which it lived its daily life. In other words, it needed to make a real effort at understanding what the main concerns of these working class communities were without viewing them through an ideological framework that was no longer capable of making useable sense of the situation.

retaining its core perspective along lines that are grounded in the changed condition of the working class the Left has succumbed to the liberal strand that always existed within its political outlook. This in turn has meant that it no longer retains its historical link to society and as a result it has been compelled to search out alternative means by which its improving instincts can find expression. Unfortunately, that search did not radiate from the interests of the working class but instead has been guided by liberal impulses which have survived the loss of the Left's real link to society.

The result has been the adoption of causes like identity politics and transgenderism which demands that ordinary working class people abandon their understanding of the basic components of the communities within which they live and which gives their lives meaning. The negative impact of this has in turn been compounded by the Left's advocacy of uncontrolled immigration - something that has led the Left to castigate those opposed to it as racist!

These have been the battle lines that the Left has now constructed to redefine itself. However, in reconstructing itself along these battle lines and defining the enemy as those who express opinions on the other side of those battle lines the Left has ensured its increasing irrelevance to the people who now feel alienated from the political machinery which the Left has helped to create.

in a situation where the Left increasingly sees itself as an agency by which society is to be improved by the imposition of its new core values of identity politics, transgenderism and open immigration. But these "improvements" are not anchored to any real forces that exist within society. They exist purely within the spheres of human "feelings" and a sense of mistaken righteousness and are purely "cultural" in their appeal. Insofar as society itself has expressed its verdict on these "improvement" we can say that they are not seen as such by the vast majority. And yet such is the arrogance of the Left that it persists in its endeavours.

In the meantime, the Right - not being as sensitive to transient social and economic shifts to the same extent - has never abandoned what has proved to be a more resilient political sentiment (in the form of nationalism) and is free to give direction to the inevitable social reaction to the contempt which the political establishment has been expressing towards the ordinary electorate. Unfortunately, the Left, through its advocacy of policies that are just as contemptuous, is now lumped into the same camp and for that reason is incapable of understanding what the "Unite the Kingdom" rally represents let alone providing leadership to the social forces which underpin it.

However, instead of Inevitably, this has resulted

Notes on the News

By Gwydion M. Williams

Immigration – Giving Away the Lives of Others

Feed-The-Rich Privatisation

Hungary – the Wounds of 1956

Snippets

Structureless Protests are Fun, but Failures

USA Resenting Indian Success

Hindu Home-Grown Racism

Poland Replacing Coal With Nuclear.

Sunlight for Power and Food

Robots – Dangers and Hopes

Still Fighting to the Last Ukrainian

Did Russia Invade Poland in 1939?

Give Me Liberty, and I Will Morosely
Shoot Myself

Corbyn, the Man Who Would Not Be King

Immigration –

Giving Away the Lives of Others

Remove all barriers to immigration, and maybe a couple of hundred million needy people move to Great Britain. Not a solution for anyone.

The main problem in Britain is multi-millionaires taking an unfair share of the national wealth. Doing nothing extra to justify it. But to convince people of this, it's best to admit that continuing new arrivals are a lesser but entirely genuine problem.

The recent supposed mass outbreak of fascism was nothing of the sort. Right-wing racists organised it, but it was ordinary British-born people offended that their needs were being neglected,

"I'm angry. My son can't get a house, but they're housing these first. It's not right, this is our country,' says Mandy, as she stares at the Holiday Inn on the edge of Warrington that is now being used as an asylum hotel.

"Mandy lives in a street across from the hotel, and is one of dozens of locals who have joined weekly peaceful protests to get the hotel shut.

"A short drive up the M6, there are different concerns in Wigan, a town without any asylum hotels but 900 homes in multiple occupation - HMOs - some of which now house asylum seekers.

"I've had intimidation, confrontations in the street, illegal working,' says local Adrian, anxiously pointing to several redbrick terraced homes in his neighbourhood that he says are such homes. One is next door to his.

"I was never asked. My voice has never been heard,' he says in frustration.

"Hundreds of people have got in touch with Your Voice Your BBC News about the issue of small boat crossings, illegal immigration and asylum-seeker accommodation." (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c07vn1y2jz2o>).

Until the 1950s, Britain as the core of the British Empire / British Commonwealth put no limits on where its subjects could live. We were all known as subjects then, until the legalities were tidied up in 1981. The newly-defined British citizenship intentionally excluded some people, notably the people of Hong Kong.

New laws all over the world recognised that cheap mass transit made economic migration an option for maybe half the human race, if there were no legal barriers. So Britain got legal barriers.

The USA had them far earlier, when they started getting unfamiliar immigrants from Italy and from the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe and the Tsarist Empire. Jews before then had not been much targeted, because they had arrived with other West European immigrants and knew the culture.

Controls in Britain allowed the existing immigrants to be integrated. The 1958 White-Racist riots at Notting Hill were never repeated. And when Black Britons rioted in Brixton in 1987, I went against most other views and said that these were 'Reformist Riots'. (<https://gwydionwilliams.com/40-britain/the-brixton-riots-of-1987/>). *Trickles of Blood*, rather than the *rivers of blood* that Enoch Powell had warned of.

I didn't go so far as to predict an Asian as Tory Prime Minister, followed as party leader by a very black lady brought up in Nigeria and the USA. But broadly I got it right.

And now I suspect that continuing issues with asylum seekers are being carefully calculated to irritate the portion of the abused 90% who still define themselves as English. But that does not mean the issue does not exist.

It's not just economics. The culture has changed,

and I myself have always been comfortable with it. But with a Welsh father and a left-wing family, I always felt somewhat outside of it. And being part of the 'Next Nine' who have not been economically damaged by the rise of the super-rich 1%, I was never hurt personally. Yet I still recognise that it is not only minorities that are suffering.

One of the Trade Union research departments should do an 'economic cake' showing how much of the national wealth has gone to the 1%, the Next Nine and the 90% between 1979 and 2025. The 1% have got almost all of it.

Contrast this with the modest wealth of all those who arrived in Britain since 1979. It would be much smaller, quite apart from having been honestly earned.

Feed-The-Rich Privatisation

We'd have a very different Britain if Margaret Thatcher had been a genuine conservative, as Stanley Baldwin was in the 1920s and 1930s.

Baldwin reduced trade union power after facing down the 1926 General Strike. But he did not then rip up the country's economic norms. Nor trust to unlimited market forces, even before they caused the 1929 crash.

With hindsight, we can see he should have opted for something like the USA's New Deal, and which after 1945 came to be called Keynesianism. But he avoided destroying anything.

Thatcher won her 1980s confrontation, but then started ripping up the system that in the 1950s and 1960s had delivered

the fastest continuous growth that Britain ever had. She believed right-wing dogmas that the market would always get things right.

"The public has paid almost £200bn to the shareholders who own key British industries since they were privatised, research reveals.

"The transfer of tens of billions of pounds to the owners of the privatised water, rail, bus, energy and mail services comes as families face soaring bills, polluted rivers and seas, and expensive and unreliable trains and buses.

"As a result, citizens have been paying a 'privatisation premium' of £250 per household per year since 2010 alone, the analysis found.

"Recent focus has been on the privatised water industry, which has run up long-term debts of £73bn and paid out dividends of £88.4bn in the past 34 years at the same time as overseeing record sewage spills, according to the latest figures." (<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/sep/16/uk-public-paid-200bn-to-shareholders-of-key-industries-since-privatisation-study>)

With the loss of secure jobs, the social conservatism that Thatcher cherished declined even faster than before. Life got rougher and less trusting: the very reverse of her hopes.

But why did New Labour embrace it? Why treat Thatcherism as a necessity, even though British growth is no better than it was in the 'disastrous' 1970s?

You have to look at MPs as individuals. They are securely in the 'Next Nine', with salaries of nearly £94,000. With many ways to legally make more. And all sorts of extra temptations:

"Newly unearthed emails

last week shone light on Epstein's role as freelance client development officer, acting as a channel between political figures and business titans, greasing up the former with lifestyles they could not afford and the latter with avenues of political influence." (<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/sep/13/jeffrey-epstein-emails-wealth>)

Hungary – the Wounds of 1956

While rejecting anti-Russian hysteria, Hungary's government still believes a lot of the New Right nonsense.

"Sell-offs of public housing and the right's promotion of home ownership has left too many unable to afford accommodation...

"Only about 10% of all housing-related government spending has targeted lower-income groups. Meanwhile, Hungary's public housing sector has shrunk dramatically, from covering 20% of the housing stock in 1990 to a mere 2% today.

"The government's longstanding neglect of the housing issue is no accident. It stems from a deeply rooted ideological narrative. In 2014, the prime minister, Viktor Orbán, declared in an interview: 'My basic principle is that my house is my castle – I am a believer in owner-occupancy and family homes.' This narrative – common across former eastern bloc countries – paints home ownership as a kind of cultural destiny, portraying the state socialist era's large-scale public housing programmes as historical aberrations.

"But this view is neither historically accurate nor economically realistic. In fact, socialist-era housing policies bore strong similarities to public housing systems in western Europe. Affordable

housing developments helped the upward social mobility of millions, creating opportunities that had previously been unimaginable. Yet after 1990, anti-communist sentiment combined with 'shock therapy' reforms – including the rapid privatisation of half a million dwellings – forged a political imagination that has sidelined rental and public housing, replacing it with the dream of universal home ownership.” (<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jul/04/hungary-budapest-renting-housing-crisis>.)

In Britain and most of Western Europe, Moderate Socialists in the 1970s took for granted the shift that happened after 1945. That happened when the elite feared public sympathy for the Soviet example as a strong alternative. But when the Soviet model failed, they lost faith in themselves. Under Blair, they treated Thatcherism as an unavoidable truth.

Thatcher as a conventional conservative took advantage of the Hard Left in Britain sabotaging the Moderate Socialist ideas of Workers Control and Incomes Policy. But they then accepted her notion that privatisation, less government control and lighter taxes for the rich were economic necessities.

They stick rigidly to this belief even now that four decades of real-life experience have shown that 'trickle-down' was always nonsense.

We've always seen it differently. The post-Stalin leadership was foolish and self-harming when it refused to let Hungary make its own sort of socialism in 1956. That was a contrast with Stalin forgiving Finland for being part of Hitler's coalition, and then not trying to invade Yugoslavia.

Snippets

Structureless Protests are Fun, but Failures

Is the main point of protest to separate yourself from a wicked world? Increasing numbers of leftists are seeing it so.

“Young, politicised, far left: Who are France's 'Block Everything' protesters?...

“Launched on social media in July, the campaign has drawn early comparisons to the 2018-2019 Yellow Vest ('Gilets jaunes') protests – a grassroots revolt that began over fuel taxes and ballooned into a nationwide uprising against inequality, economic hardship and a political establishment seen as out of touch.” (<https://www.france24.com/en/france/20250906-young-politicised-far-left-who-are-france-block-everything-protesters>.)

The Yellow Vests petered out without gains. An irritated electorate chose Macron. So now let's get Macron as well!

Just the way you get actual fascism. Make ordinary life impossible. Then be utterly astonished when a majority choose functional authoritarianism instead of endless fun protesting.

*

USA Resenting Indian Success

“India Was the Economic Alternative to China. Trump Ended That.

“A lurch in policy has shaken the India-U.S. economic alliance against China, leaving India little choice but to consider reversing its own strategy.” (<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/09/01/business/india-china-trump-tariffs.html>)

Trump is moving the USA away from cosmopolitan culture. He might not reject splitting the USA, even. And would sooner

partner with Putin's Russia, seeing it as a bastion of the White Race.

Hindus in the USA have been outstandingly successful. And maintain their own culture, while able to work very efficiently within US power structures.

Also true of Chinese, but that was Biden-Harris as much as Trump. Ethnic Chinese, many of them emigre anti-Communists, were never defended when scapegoated in the Covid crisis.

*

Hindu Home-Grown Racism

Mahatma Gandhi would not attack the Caste System. He just wanted it to become 'nice'.

Not a realistic hope.

“Death penalty for Indian man who burnt alive wife over skin colour

“Lakshmi's murder eight years back and the judgement, delivered at the weekend, have made headlines in a country where public obsession with colourism is well documented...

“Girls and women with darker skin tones are called derogatory names and face discrimination; and skin lightening products make for big business, earning billions of dollars in profits.

“In matrimonial columns, skin colour is almost always emphasised and lighter-skinned brides are more in demand.” (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/clyrwwdj7o>)

*

Poland Replacing Coal With Nuclear.

“Poland will build Europe's first BWRX-300 small modular nuclear reactor (SMR), marking a major step in its shift away from coal and toward cleaner energy, state-run energy giant Orlen announced Thursday.” (<https://www.euronews.com/green/2025/08/28/poland-to->

[build-europes-first-of-its-kind-small-scale-nuclear-power-plant-in-wloclawek](#)).

Western Europe retains a terror of nuclear power. This has proved unalterable, even where the establishment accepts global warming as a much bigger threat.

Poland knows better. And similar things are happening in China. New technology allows for small safe reactors that can use the boilers etc. of existing coal-burners. (<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3325263/china-mulls-converting-coal-fired-power-plants-nuclear-facilities>)

Western Europe is dominated by fears and obsessions. The rest of the world is going its own way.

*

Sunlight for Power and Food

Solar power is a threat to farming, we are told. But that's just not true.

China, with vast semi-desert regions in its west, is using much of it for power. But are also world leaders in re-foresting.

India has little spare land. But is trying dual-function farming:

"Not all crops will grow under solar panels. Depending on the layout, the panels reduce the light getting through by between 15% and 30%. Some denser layouts will block too much sun for staple crops including wheat, rice, soybeans or pulses.

"What works well are high-value crops with moderate or low-light needs, like green leafy vegetables, spices such as turmeric and ginger, and some flowers'...

"To allow farming underneath, the solar panels need to be at least 11ft (3.5m) off the ground. That makes them between 20% and 30%

more expensive to install than panels on a regular solar farm, where they are much closer to the ground." (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c2en1yyp4d9o>.)

*

Robots – Dangers and Hopes

"Rented Robots Get the Worst Jobs and Help Factories Keep the Humans..."

"When they adopt robots to do some of the most dull, dirty, dangerous, repetitive, backbreaking tasks, people stay, right? Because you're not lifting heavy boxes 12 hours a day" (www.nytimes.com/2025/08/25/business/factories-robot-rentals.html?unlocked_article_code=1.hE8.Ur4T.oZAlTXHVnNe&smid=bs-share)

That's how it could be. But without regulation, big business mostly prefers to replace expensive humans with automated systems that lack flexibility. Like all of the 'help' and complaint options that are not quite bad enough to lose a majority of customers.

I've written about how it all went wrong in the early 19th century. (<https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/articles-by-topic/40-britain/arkwright-and-the-rise-of-the-factory-system/>). This time round, things could be different.

*

Still Fighting to the Last Ukrainian

In 2022, Russia called their support of pro-Russian Ukrainians a *Special Military Operation*. Support for a majority in the east and south of Ukraine that no longer wanted a separate Ukraine that hated everything Russian. And where the economy remained the corrupt mess that Putin

had fixed for the Russian Federation.

It was never about restoring the wider hegemony that Gorbachev and Yeltsin gave up. They had seen what the USA and Western Europe failed to grasp in the 1990s: *you can't hold a man down without staying down with him*.

But you still have an obligation to help friends. Ethnic Russians and Russia-speaking Ukrainians, after Kiev from 2014 demanded complete submission to hatred. And in the 'aggression' against Georgia, they protected South Ossetians who feared Ethnic Cleansing after conflicts with the Georgian majority.

Most commentators either want to keep their nice interesting and well-paid jobs, or else genuinely fail to see through the deceptions:

"Why Haven't Sanctions on Russia Stopped the War? The Money Is Still Flowing.

"For decades, companies feared being on the wrong side of U.S. sanctions. That's not always true anymore." (https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/24/business/russia-sanctions-ukraine-war.html?unlocked_article_code=1.hE8.7Wy_.htsQG3Gh1RvH&smid=bs-share)

It's true that the balance of power has shifted. But the USA hasn't given up anything they seriously needed. And gained by bullying Western Europe to take their expensive Liquified Natural Gas instead of cheap Russian natural gas.

*

Did Russia Invade Poland in 1939?

In 1919, the Western powers tried to define what an independent Poland should be:

"The Allied victors agreed that an independent Polish state should be recreated from territories previously part of the Russian, the Austro-Hungarian and the German empires...

"The Supreme War Council tasked the Commission on Polish Affairs with recommending Poland's eastern border, based on spoken language majority, which became later known as the Curzon Line... Instead, the final Peace of Riga ... provided Poland with almost 135,000 square kilometres (52,000 sq mi) of land that was, on average, about 250 kilometres (160 mi) east of the Curzon Line." (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curzon_Line#Early_history).

In as far as international law was real, this was land illegally occupied by Poland. It should have been part of Belarus or Ukraine, but the Soviet Union did not make an issue of it. Instead Stalin sought a pact with the British Empire and French Empire to force Hitler to keep the peace.

He could not get an agreement. But then Poland unexpectedly rejected a modest offer from Hitler to accept Poland as it was, in exchange for majority-German Danzig. Stalin took the opportunity to get Hitler fighting Poland and the West while he built up strength.

No one at all was expecting the sudden collapse of Poland – Serbia in World War One had lasted more than a year in a worse position. But it was still a sensible choice.

And a mere reclaiming of land that Poland had illegally occupied.

*

Give Me Liberty, and I Will Morosely Shoot Myself

US culture makes life not worth living:

"Global suicide rates fell 30 per cent since 1990 – but not in the US

"While most countries have seen a steady decline in suicide rates, the United States has witnessed the opposite, with suicides jumping almost 30 per cent since 2000" (<https://www.newscientist.com/article/2496424-global-suicide-rates-fell-30-per-cent-since-1990-but-not-in-the-us/> - pay site)

I had long ago concluded that US culture had emerged from the crisis of the 1960s to 1980s in an unworkable form. People who had all the material means to live very nicely, but their culture had given them bloated expectations. A feeling that either the world had let them down, or they themselves were unfit to live. Or maybe both – see <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/very-old-issues-images/1994-to-1999-magazine/>

[the-world-as-a-global-night-club/](https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/past-issues/isolated-labour-affairs-pages-before-2015/money-and-gun-power-globalisation-as-it-is/) and <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/past-issues/isolated-labour-affairs-pages-before-2015/money-and-gun-power-globalisation-as-it-is/>.

The original 'Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death' man was a slave-owner who hoped slavery would end eventually. Who could not translate this into politics. His great-grandson, Colonel William Aylett, fought for the Confederacy in the American Civil War.

*

Corbyn, the Man Who Would Not Be King

I won't say much about the fast-moving crisis in 'Your Party'. But I had always seen Jeremy Corbyn as having failed when he accidentally became Labour Leader. He should have let his supporters in constituency parties purge the MPs who were clearly determined to ignore him and return to Blairite policies.

He let Kier Starmer oversee the road to Brexit. Given the bad terms that were the best the European Union were offering, he *should* have pushed for a second vote. A crucial 5% would have shifted when promises of an easy exit had proved false. Instead they let Labour contribute to a Parliament that systematically rejected all possible solutions. Let Boris Johnson scoop up habitual Labour voters with a promise of Brexit at any cost.

It was not a rejection of leftism – Corbyn in 2017 had won more votes than anyone since Blair's first victory. 2019 was special, see <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/editorials-from-labour-affairs/the-brexit-defeat/labours-lost-seats-causes/>.

Corbyn had to be pushed into launching a new party, and now backs away from making it real.

Zarah Sultana shows a real will to be a leader. Facing real party politics, she might get flexible about views from the fashionable left that most working-class voters won't accept.

*

Old newsnotes at the magazine websites. I also write regular blogs - <https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwilliams>

PALESTINE LINKS

[UN OCHA snapshot on Gaza Strip \(24 September 2025\)](#)

[Trump promises Arab, Muslim leaders he won't let Israel annex the West Bank \(Politico, 24 September 2025\)](#)

[UN General Assembly 2025: Day two brings further condemnation of Israel's war on Gaza \(Yasmine El-Sabawi, Middle East Eye, 24 September 2025\)](#)

[Final goodbye: MEE reporters on the pain of being forced out of Gaza City \(Lubna Masarwa in Jerusalem & Huthifa Fayyad, Middle East Eye, 24 September 2025\)](#)

[From Sykes-Picot to Gaza, Israel redraws borders to impose regional hegemony \(Sami Al-Arian, Middle East Eye, 24 September 2025\)](#)

[UN General Assembly 2025: Palestine and Gaza dominate day one \(Sean Mathews & Shaheryar Mirza, Middle East Eye, 23 September 2025\)](#)

[Ten things US Ambassador Tom Barrack said in wild interview on Israel, Lebanon and Muslims \(Rayhan Uddin, Middle East Eye, 23 September 2025\)](#)

[The recognition of Palestine as a state is more of a symbolic gesture than a meaningful act, like imposing sanctions on Israel would be \(Qassam Muaddi, Mondoweiss, 22 September 2025\)](#)

[Israel decries Hollywood boycott — while silencing its own critical filmmakers \(Roy Cohen, +972, 22 September 2025\)](#)

[Britain's recognition of Palestine is overshadowed by Israeli genocide \(Peter Osborne, Middle East Eye, 22 September 2025\)](#)

[Syria's Sharaa distances himself from Abraham Accords in surreal interview with former CIA foe \(Sean Mathews, Middle East Eye, 22 September 2025\)](#)

[Fetterman denies Gaza genocide, claims it's a "just war" \(Michael F Brown. Electronic Intifada, 20 September 2025\)](#)

[Swimming into the sea for aid \(Khaled Al-Qershali, Electronic Intifada, 18 September 2025\)](#)

[Israel is waging a holocaust in Gaza \(Orly Noy, +972, 18 September 2025\)](#)

[Israel destroys Gaza high-rises as it slaughters hundreds \(Nora Barrows-Friedman, Electronic Intifada, 12 September 2025\)](#)

[As the world recognizes a Palestinian state, Israel's E1 plan moves to bury it \(Shatha Yaish, +972, 12 September 2025\)](#)

[I'm in Gaza City, my bag is packed, but I refuse to leave my home \(Ahmed Ahmed, +972, 9 September 2025\)](#)

[Israeli army refusers defy harsher backlash to protest genocide \(Oren Ziv, +972, 8 September 2025\)](#)

[The new Israeli map proposing to annex 80% of the West Bank, explained \(Qassam Muaddi, Mondoweiss, 4 September 2025\)](#)

[Israeli intelligence data: Militants account for only 1 in 4 Gaza detainees \(Yuval Abraham, +972, 4 September 2025\)](#)

[Israeli army, settlers unite in collective punishment of Al-Mughayyir \(Oren Ziv & Shatha Yaish, +972, 27 August 2025\)](#)

Trotskyism – a Century of Failures

By Gwydion M. Williams

The Problem of Political Compromise Lenin's Militarised Socialism Trotsky In The Middle, With Egoism Making Soviet Democracy Unworkable Trotsky as an Obstructive Opposition Further Reading

The Problem of Political Compromise

Trotskyists imagine themselves as leaders of World Revolution, and it is sheer fantasy. But it means that they confidently oppose and undermine both Democratic Socialism and functional Revolutionary Socialism. Makes them hostile to two movements that both have had many positive achievements.

Two movements that would have done better had they agreed that they should not try to disrupt the other in nation-states where each had its own very real achievements.

For Trotskyists, all of these must have been failures. A foolish or treacherous diversion from something much better. But since the diverse Trotskyist fragments have zero positive achievements, they paved the way for a confident New Right to put a right-wing spin on the same slur.

Sometimes the same people. A lot of ex-Trotskyists among the New Right, especially in the USA.

The New Right also got the leavings of the pro-Moscow crowd: for instance Jon Halliday. He went smoothly from unconditional praise for North Korea in *Korea: The Unknown War* to malice against the vast achievements of Chinese Communism. Co-author with his wife Juan Chang of *Mao: The Unknown Story*. That book also avoids dealing with the significantly different line they took in

their earlier biography of Madame Sun Yat-sen. Madame Sun was Mao's most notable and significant non-Communist supporter, taking a sensible attitude that no one with power was entirely on her side, but Mao was the best prospect. I detail later how she may have changed history thanks to this sensible compromising view.

Trotskyists in the West were not and are not the only people rejecting a compromise or a useful advance from a false belief you can do better. Pro-Moscow Communists did the same and with far more power in the 1970s. And currently there are many radicals who insist that there can be no pragmatic compromises when it comes to their definitions of Human Rights. But Trotskyists are the main source. And this lies in the Deep History of Leninism.

Lenin's Militarised Socialism

Lenin in 1903 split what was then the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. His faction became known as Bolsheviks, **Majority**, because they were a majority of what had been the dominant *Iskra* faction. The rest became Mensheviks, **Minority**, because they still had more in common with Lenin than with other factions within the party.

Lenin invented what could be called **Militarised Socialism**. His term was **Democratic Centralism** – the Central Committee decided what was allowed. Only at a Party Congress could this be changed and top leaders replaced. Members were expected to be committed and to accept party discipline.

Lenin assumed that a violent revolution would be needed to establish proper capitalism and bourgeois values in the backward Tsarist Empire. This would then gradually undermine tradition and small production. It would gradually create a large working class that could take power and build socialism a few decades later. And might even do so by Western-style parliaments, but this was never

going to happen until the Tsars had been violently overthrown.

But in 1917, he realised that everything was in chaos. He was also well aware of the immediate defeats suffered by the three previous waves of European revolutions – early 1830s, late 1840s and early 1870s. Of a pattern of failure of popular revolutions that had no strong leadership to keep them alive. That tended to end with the left being slaughtered and a strong right-wing authoritarian leader emerging, though in France the Third Republic got stuck after the brutal suppression of the Paris Commune. It emerged as a collection of weak leaders who could not decide which of three alternative French dynasties should be restored.

Lenin in 1917 did a deal with Germany, arranging for a sealed train officially outside of German authority to get back to Russia. Trotsky, incidentally, was less practical. He took a ship from the USA, still neutral, but overlooked that it would stop in Canada, where he was promptly arrested. It took protests from liberals and moderate socialists within Russia to get him free, and I don't suppose he showed them gratitude when he was the boss.

In the deal between Lenin and Imperial Germany neither side supposed they were friends, but each could expect power-political advantages. And Lenin won massively: but if Imperial Germany had been more modest in the chunks of the former Tsarist Empire they wanted Lenin's government to give them, they might have taken Paris and probably won the war before vast numbers of

US troops arrived.

The Soviet Union might have been something vastly different, milder and more successful, had Imperial Germany understood its own self-interest rather better. Lenin dispersed the Constituent Assembly, which had given the Bolsheviks 24% and the Social Revolutionaries 40%. Another 13.7% to a mix of other socialists. A mere 7.5% to the Constitutional Democrats and other liberal parties, so the claim that Lenin undemocratically denied the Russian people the liberalism they had yearned for is sheer nonsense. A majority wanted some sort of socialism, but were not clear what.

Lenin had a Bolshevik majority in the Soviets. Basic democracy that was an inherently better design, and which matched what Marx had praised in the short-lived Paris Commune. I'll go into this in a future article.

Incidentally, though there were many people of Jewish origin in the leadership of the Bolsheviks, there were even more among the anti-revolutionary Mensheviks. And most ordinary Jewish voters were part of the liberal minority. Some emigrated, including the family of Isaac Asimov. Also the family of Alisa Zinovyevna Rosenbaum, who became Alice O'Connor in the USA but wrote under the pen-name Ayn Rand. Who concealed her Jewish origins, and entirely ignored the plight of Europe's Jews.

For Russia in 1917, given that there was also a continuing war with Imperial Germany, Lenin was justified in forming

a coherent government to negotiate a peace. Sadly, the best terms he could get were unacceptable to his main allies, the Left Social Revolutionaries. They staged an armed revolt, and there was little choice except to crush them. Make a one-party dictatorship that was able to survive and flourish in a disintegrating Europe. A place where fascism and similar creeds were spreading, and would spread further.

Trotsky In The Middle, With Egoism

The Bolshevik / Menshevik split was at first labelled Hard versus Soft. And Trotsky was left wandering between them. He reacted to this by imagining Revolutionary Marxists shoving aside the middle class and going straight to socialism if the Tsarist order broke down. Yet also denounced Lenin as dictatorial, when Lenin insisted on making a paramilitary organisation that might actually be tough enough to thrive in such chaos.

In the run-up to the October Revolution, most socialists including some of the Bolshevik leaders were content to be left-wing critics of a bad government. A government based on a parliament elected in 1912 on a highly undemocratic franchise: which continued the war with further disastrous losses. But meantime ordinary people had elected unofficial and unauthorized councils, known to the wider world as Soviets, though this was merely the Russian word for council. Still, they had a radical concern with power. And a Bolshevik majority on several of them agreed to push aside the official

government and take command.

Trotsky became a Bolshevik in order to be part of it. He'd otherwise have been a footnote in history, like other men and women who were notable socialists within the Tsarist Empire, and who found no significant place in what became the Soviet Union. He had hardly any followers: most people mistrusted him.

Lenin accepted Trotsky as a talented man. In his *Testament*, he called him one of the two most talented men in the leadership. And the other was Stalin: an awkward detail that Trotskyists prefer to ignore.

Lenin could hold them together, but he died aged 53 as a result of wounds from an assassin from the Left Social Revolutionaries. After failing to take power, they sent an assassin to remove the most effective socialist leader: a fitting end to the broadly futile tradition of heroic assassinations from which they had come.

Making Soviet Democracy Unworkable

Stalin had built a political machine out of the muddle of early Soviet power. And he tried to make a collective leadership workable. First partnered with Zinoviev and Kamenev, and then switching to partnership with Bukharin. But Bukharin's efforts to work with a rising class of prosperous farmers proved unworkable, so Stalin took command and forced collectivisation.

All of this was done within the framework of Democratic Centralism that Lenin had defined. Trotskyists and others could protest at Party Congresses, but were expected to live with that in the hope of convincing their comrades next time round. But Trotsky was not modest enough to do so. And while it's hard to define an exact moment, the year 1925 could qualify:

"1925 was a difficult year for Trotsky. After the Literary Discussion and losing his Red Army posts, he was effectively unemployed through winter and spring." ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leon_Trotsky#A_year_in_the_wilderness_\(1925\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leon_Trotsky#A_year_in_the_wilderness_(1925)))

That's why I speak of a century of Trotskyist failure.

Trotsky makes an interesting contrast with Mao, who accepted the authority of China's Central Committee when they moved in on his Liberated Area. Stayed silent in public when they lost it with an over-ambitious military strategy. He talked quietly with other leaders and got given back his military command in 1935. Proceeded by stages to re-unite the scattered fragments of the Red Army under his growing authority, but kept a lesser man as Party General Secretary till 1943. Interestingly, the switch from General Secretaries to Mao as dominant Party Chairman happened in March, and Stalin formally dissolved the Comintern a couple of months later. Mao probably knew it was coming, and that Moscow would not be arguing.

I also think Mao learned stuff from Trotsky, maybe via Madam Sun Yat-sen, who was impressed by Trotsky's malicious autobiography. She definitely arranged for left-liberal journalist Edgar Snow to visit Mao in 1936, at his capital of Baoan. (Not Yennan, which Mao got given as a gift when he later made an alliance with anti-Communist warlords as part of a broad alliance against Japan.)

Snow did a lot of interviews, but Mao chose rather to give him an entire autobiography: one extending across four chapters of *Red Star Over China*. In my study of this I suspected a set-up, and one Snow may have been more involved in than he admits:

"The leader [of a Leninist party] is usually the party's General Secretary. In 1938 this was Chang Wen-t'ien (Zhang Wentian), about whom Snow says remarkable little, even though the man spoke fluent English. This omission interested me – as did the relatively small amount said about Zhou Enlai, who also spoke English fairly well." (China: Nurturing Red Stars, <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/china-nurturing-red-stars/>.)

Zhou Enlai – Chou Enlai in older books – was already known, though absurdly misrepresented by André Malraux in *La Condition Humaine* (Man's Fate). Among other goofs, the Chinese Communists never did assassinations. Snow ought to have known of this and might have been expected to correct it. Instead he focuses his main attention on Mao.

It did a lot to boost Mao's reputation among Chinese. And was translated back into Chinese, aiding his growing stature. If Mao kept his original notes from which the English was translated, they remain unpublished.

Mao achieved a lot, some of it against Stalin's wishes. Though Stalin was almost certainly correct when he insisted that the captive Chiang Kai-shek be released and accepted as leader of the entire nation. Mao and the anti-Chiang warlords wanted a trial and condemnation, but Stalin threatened to cast the Chinese Communists out of World Leninism if they did so. Mao presumably disliked it, though I'd not rule out the possibility that he privately realised that Stalin was correct. It happened well before he became an undisputed authority within China.

I also see the Cultural Revolution in China as a practical expression of what Trotsky meant when he

protested at party bureaucracy. But Mao did it with caution, and only after he had entrenched his power.

A measure of that power is that Mainland China seems not to have had a single visible political movement that declared itself anti-Mao. Which may have convinced Nixon of the utter hopelessness of placing any hope in the Taiwan exiles. And since modern Western studies mostly prefer not to mention it, let me remind everyone that the USA claimed that Taiwan was the real China till Nixon ended it in the early 1970s. Let Chiang Kai-shek keep the Chinese seat as a Permanent Member of the Security Council, and gave themselves a legal pretext for an invasion of China with Taiwan as a front. Chiang Kai-shek never stopped promising to retake the mainland, and in Britain in the early 1960s I encountered people who were generally sensible and who actually believed it.

Critics of Mao tend to overlook what he was up against. The Vietnamese anti-Communists also dreamed of retaking the north. Only the clear failure of the USA to control even their own half of Vietnam ended such fantasies.

Trotsky as an Obstructive Opposition

Mao was radical, but also realistic about what he might hope to achieve. Trotsky by contrast fell into a pattern of grand claims and no real achievements.

Lenin's idea when he took power was for a single militant party for the entire world. He revived the name *Communist*, which had fallen out of use among militant socialists since the late 1840s and the *Communist Manifesto*. Under Lenin's scheme for a Third International, the various sovereign states would each have their own party, but they were all supposed to obey the Comintern.

The aim was a World Socialist State – one that would presumably manage the colonies of the various European states on an equal basis to their former rulers. Much what the Soviet Union did for those Tsarist possessions they kept when their Civil War was over, and there was a real desire to have Central Asians as equals, which had not been the case under the Tsars.

People of Black African origin often looked to Moscow for liberation, at a time when most Western governments saw White Racism as legitimate. The USA accepted Civil Rights when they feared losing the Cold War. And when they needed the votes in the UN of newly independent African countries.

With hindsight, it would have been wise for Moscow to adjust to something more modest in the early 1960s. An immediate World Socialist State should certainly have been recognised as impractical by the 1970s. People's China implicitly abandoned it when Mao made peace with Nixon: he must have worked out that a wave of Chinese-inspired uprisings were not going to succeed any time soon. There were serious movements – in South Arabia, in Peru, and maybe other places. In Nepal one such movement forced the abandonment of royal government and now shares power in a Western-style republic.

The various small Maoist parties in the West mostly stayed small, but one transformed into the Socialist Party (Netherlands), with modest electoral success. And though the various pro-Moscow Communist parties have shrunk, many remain significant forces.

By contrast, a plethora of Trotskyist parties have learned nothing and forgotten nothing. After about a century of claiming to be the real Leninists, Trotskyists

have done no more than waste the time of some gifted individuals. Ken Loach might have publicised the forgotten truths of Spain, including that the mainstream Communists had no intention of trying to rule and simply wanted a win for a government led by non-socialist Radicals. Instead his 'Land and Freedom' makes heroes of the ineffective half-Trotskyist POUM, whose share of the front was noticeably quiet until Franco had disposed of much more dangerous enemies.

The grand achievement of Trotskyist journalist Paul Foot was to end the career of Reginald Maudling over minor corruption. Who might otherwise have been a moderate successor to Edward Heath. Instead Thatcher won out against the much less impressive William Whitelaw.

Their best results for socialist aspirations may have been the defectors from Trotskyism, who brought their plausible misunderstandings to the political Right in the USA. . In my view they have done far more damage to the West while trying to serve it than they ever did as enemies. Had the same unrealistic notions of what was politically possible, but were able to have the US military play out their errors across the suffering flesh of people in the Global South.

There's an old joke about there being one reliable way to go gambling in Las Vegas and return with a small fortune. You go there with a *large* fortune.

Given amazingly lucky circumstances in the 1980s and 1990s, the entire New Right has been very weak in its achievements. The authentic conservatives who accepted the Mixed Economy in the 1940s won over former enemies Italy and Japan and West Germany. Made them firm friends, and then also won Spain after Franco died. By contrast this lot have had very mixed results in Middle-Europe, and made a committed foe out of once-friendly

Russia. And have confirmed Chinese suspicions rather than easing them.

Apart from that, what does Trotskyist militancy mean? From a ruling class point of view: with enemies like that, there is no pressing need for friends.

The newly-emerging 'Your Party' includes Trotskyists, as has been true for successful new left parties and alliances in Continental Europe. But I very much hope it keeps them under control.

Further Reading

How the Mixed Economy won the Cold War, and then was denounced when the rich felt safe. <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/the-mixed-economy-won-the-cold-war/>

The Left Redefined 'The Normal'. <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/m99-topic-menus-from-long-revolution-website/998-from-labour-affairs/the-french-revolution-and-its-unstable-politics/against-globalisation/the-left-redefined-the-normal/>

Adam Smith Had Alien Social Values. <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/very-old-issues-images/magazines-010-to-019/magazine-021-xx/adam-smith-had-alien-social-values/>

Adam Smith Faked His Most Famous Claim. <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/48-economics/037-adam-smith-misleading/adam-smith-faked-his-most-famous-claim/>

Arkwright – How Money Conquered Work. The birth of the factory system. <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/40-britain/arkwright-and-the-rise-of-the-factory-system/>

Slavery in the British Empire. Most account concentrate on Britain's role in ending it, ignoring how vital it was to 18th century success. <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/past-issues/isolated-labour-affairs-pages-before-2015/slavery-in-the-british-empire/>

labouraffairsmagazine.com/past-issues/isolated-labour-affairs-pages-before-2015/slavery-in-the-british-empire/

The Original Conspiracy Theory (Which Didn't Include Jews). <https://gwydionwilliams.com/40-britain/the-original-conspiracy-theory/>

Real Economic Growth Was Not Based on Adam Smith's Ideas. (Friedrich List's alternative was much more like what actually happened.) <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/48-economics/037-adam-smith-misleading/how-real-economic-growth-was-not-based-on-adam-smiths-ideas/>

Marx and Engels Didn't want Parliamentary Democracy. <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/very-old-issues-images/magazines-010-to-019/magazine-018-xx/democracy-and-the-communist-manifesto/>. <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/very-old-issues-images/magazines-010-to-019/magazine-020-xx/marx-and-engels-excluded-parliamentary-democracy-from-the-communist-manifesto/>

Hitler: the 13th Chancellor. <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/hitler-the-13th-chancellor/>

Nazism and the Guilt of Upper London. <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/d-nazism-and-the-guilt-of-upper-london/>

Union Jackery. Mainstream British sympathy for fascism in the 1920s and 1930s. <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/unionjackery.88pp.pdf>

Why the Left lost the Spanish Civil War <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/past-issues/isolated-labour-affairs-pages-before-2015/why-the-left-lost-the-spanish-civil-war/>

Brendan Clifford on the Russian Revolution. <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/russian-rev-pts-1-10ipr.pdf>

[content/uploads/2018/10/russian-rev-pts-1-10ipr.pdf](https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/russian-rev-pts-1-10ipr.pdf)

Market Socialism in the Soviet Union. <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/the-soviet-past/market-socialism-in-the-soviet-union/>

Why Trotsky's politics achieved nothing solid. <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/past-issues/labour-affairs-before-2014/why-trotsky-s-politics-achieved-nothing-solid/>

Khrushchev Had a Little Known Trotskyist Past. <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/m99-topic-menus-from-long-revolution-website/history-and-philosophy/khrushchev-influenced-by-trotskyism/>

Remembering in 1988 the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia (which with hindsight doomed the Soviet Bloc to stagnation and death). <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/very-old-issues-images/magazine-001-to-010/magazine-007-july-1988-2/the-1968-invasion-of-czechoslovakia-doomed-the-soviet-union/>

Sociocide – Liberalism's True History. <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/past-issues/isolated-labour-affairs-pages-before-2015/sociocide-liberalisms-true-history/>

The Trotskyist Origins of US Neo-Conservatives. <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/past-issues/isolated-labour-affairs-pages-before-2015/the-trotskyist-origins-of-us-neo-cons/>

For those bothered by claims that reality can be whatever we want, as shown by particle physics, The Muon and the Green Great Dragon. <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/in-a-hole-in-a-hole-dwelt-a-nothingness/>

Immigration policy By Eamon Dyas

This addresses the question of immigration in Ireland, but the same situation exists in Britain.

What began as a genuine outbreak of resistance in local communities to the results of EU immigration policies has become synonymous with the right. There was always an inevitability about all of this as the left, with its ideological affinity to an abstract internationalism, was never capable of transcending that perspective in a way which enabled it to identify with this resistance. At the same time, the liberal sentiment, with its pro-European bias, could never bring itself to view this resistance as anything other than a challenge to “European values”.

At some point, local community resistance, if it has a basis in actual community experience, will assume a more organised form in opposition to government policies that have caused that experience. With both the left and liberal sentiment not only recoiling from the initial manifestation of that resistance, but dishonestly and self-indulgently castigating it as racist, the only political path remaining for that resistance to traverse was going to be defined by the right.

This has resulted in a situation where the first real manifestation of unity between the northern and southern working class since the tenant right movement is taking place in the face

of opposition to it by the left and the liberals of the Republic.

At its core there should be a lesson from all of this. That lesson should be that real leadership does not consist of enticing the working class with a cornucopia of nicely crafted abstract positions which have been fashioned by an ideologically sanitised understanding of the working class interest.

If there is a working class it exists beyond the factory floor. In fact in modern times it could be argued that it now mostly exists beyond the factory floor. It exists in the communities which provide the commonality of experience that transcends the one lived on the factory floor. So when that sense of community feels threatened, its reaction to that threat should not be dismissed as something that has no bearing on the working class interest. It can only be seen in such terms if what is understood as working class interest is a template for an abstract working class and not the actual working class.

Tragically, there is little chance of that lesson being learned by the left and that will ensure that the ideologically unwashed real working class will continue to see its interests best served by identifying with the right.

Unite The Kingdom's London March and the case of Germany

Some 150,000 people attended the Unite the Kingdom march in London on 13th September 2025. The typical response of many on the left is to see the march as indicative of the rise of fascism and racism. Racists may indeed have participated in that march, but we believe the majority of participants were people who feel they have been completely abandoned by the main political parties and who chose to give vent to their frustration.

In this context we are reprinting below an article first printed in this magazine in 2018, almost 8 years ago. The bulk of the article is a translation of a piece by Sigmar Gabriel who had been chairman of the German Social Democratic party (SPD) from November 2009 to March 2017. Gabriel attempts to explain the electoral decline of the SPD in that period.

The article is prefaced by a brief account of German electoral politics up to 2018. Since then we have seen further electoral developments like the rise of the Alternative for Germany party on the right and the BSW on the left.

We think Gabriel's attempt to explain the electoral rejection of the SPD still has much relevance to any attempt to understand why some 150,000 people participated in the Unite the Kingdom march on that Saturday.

The German SPD and the crisis of Social Democracy

Sigmar Gabriel, chairman of the German Social Democratic party (SPD) from November 2009 to March 2017, has written an article in a recent edition of 'Der Spiegel'. The article addresses an ongoing discussion in the SPD about whether it should enter into yet another coalition with the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) given the electoral losses it suffered after its two previous coalitions with the CDU.

In the federal elections after the 2005-2009 coalition with the CDU the SPD lost some 30% of its vote and 76 seats. In the federal elections after the 2013-2017 coalition with the CDU the SPD lost some 10% of its vote and 42 seats. However, Gabriel thinks that being in or out of government is not the critical issue for the SPD. More fundamental is the fact that the SPD has lost contact with its electorate as it drifted into a casual acceptance of many neoliberal ideas at the expense of the social democratic gains it had made for the working class in the period 1950-2000.

While Gabriel's article is interesting it is also very general. He conducts his argument by introducing two themes – 'modernism' and 'post-modernism'. He identifies modernism with the gains made by social democratic politics in the period 1950-2000 and post-modernism with the identity politics that has come to dominate politics since then and with which the SPD has become associated. He sees the recent rise of populism as a rejection of this post-modern politics and society and not a rejection of the original core modern values of the SPD – social security and solidarity. The implication is clear. The SPD needs to return to these core values.

But Gabriel provides little detail of what specifically they could or should have done. Rather he suggests that the main problem is the power of financial capital and that the SPD can only really be effective in Germany by participating in a European and world social democratic struggle to tame neoliberal capitalism. This seems very weak. Furthermore, in this context one might have expected him to make reference to one of the most important

victories scored by the anti-neoliberal camp in 2017 namely Jeremy Corbyn's huge gain of the votes of the young in the English general election in June 2017. But nothing is said about that.

Gabriel may well have deliberately decided in this article to just make the one central point – that the SPD has lost touch with its normal electorate. It's an important point to make but until we know how exactly he proposes to re-engage that electorate we cannot know if things are going to significantly change in Germany. Certainly, Gabriel's statement that "the nation state can no longer fulfil its social welfare commitments" does not fill one with confidence.

An SPD team was set up to have exploratory talks with the CDU/CSU on whether a coalition was possible. Sigmar Gabriel was not included on the SPD team which did recommend that the SPD enter into formal talks with the CDU/CSU on for another coalition. At a conference in Bonn on 21st January the SPD voted to accept this recommendation; 362 for and 279 against. So without much enthusiasm for another coalition.

We reproduce an English version of much of Gabriel's article below.

Article by German foreign minister Sigmar Gabriel

How the SPD should react to right-wing populism.

The German Social Democrats are wrestling with the question whether they should risk entering a renewed coalition with the CDU and CSU or turn down the opportunity. Not an easy question to answer in the light of their losses in the Federal elections after two similar coalitions in 2009 and 2017. There are arguments on both sides for

and against yet another role in government under the leadership of Angela Merkel – important arguments. But this difficult issue should not obscure the fact that the problems lie deeper. For, in the light of many social democratic electoral losses in our neighbouring European states – equally whether in power or in opposition, the explanation that it is simply due to a couple of government coalitions is inadequate.

Actually it's about much more fundamental questions that have to do with the huge changes that have taken place in the context of globalization and information technology. The idea of Social Democracy has been based for more than 150 years on a shared representation of interests, on collective action and on a society that values solidarity. Little is left of that. Individual lifestyles shape society much more than before. And the nation state can no longer fulfil its social welfare commitments. In short: almost all the conditions for the success of social democracy in the 2nd half of the last century have disappeared. If we do not find convincing answers to these questions and challenges, then the decline in social democracy in Germany will continue – whether in a renewed coalition government with the CDU and CSU or in opposition.

The increase in left and right populism is often interpreted as a reaction to the achievements of modern society. It is seen as an anti-modern revolt against the status quo. I propose a different interpretation which may at first appear odd: The populism is not a movement against this modern society but on the contrary the effect of a desire for exactly this modern society.

It is more accurately a movement against the post-modern society that developed at the end of the last century.

The modern national welfare state had already come under pressure by the end of the last century. At

the same time, the family and the hitherto socially dominant order of gender relations lost their power and relevance through individualization and emancipation. In my own family history I learned how that had such a liberating effect. But this freedom had a double effect: Not only did the authoritarians disappear but also the authorities disappeared- from teachers to policemen, from business leaders to union leaders, from sports to the media to the church. The battle cry of this post-modern society "Anything goes" did not just equalize. It also removed security and a sense of direction. The replacement of the modern society that had developed after the 2nd world war by the post-modern society happened on a wider scale and with a dynamic that would never have occurred to its French proponents. It became a reality at the same time as the radical liberalization of economic and living conditions which has characterized the last 30 years. Keynesianism lost ground to Neoliberalism. "Shareholder Value" replaced "Rhinisch Capitalism". Commitments and obligations appeared suddenly as hindrances to the development of the flexibility and mobility that is necessary to be competitive in a globalized world.

Actual modern society had, however, characterized itself after the end of the 2nd world war above all through social rules. For instance in Germany through the social market. The social democratic promise of prosperity was throughout the world one of the most important characteristics of this modern society. Particularly here in Europe. And in fact it has indeed been possible to create national conditions which tame capitalism and force it in a direction which serves the public good. And it is exactly to this time that people want to return. So, in a curious way, to a time which was above all shaped by social democracy and its national successes. Were there not the racist and anti-European tendencies of right populism one

could with irony claim: Anti-post-modern populism yearns to go back to the good old social democratic times.

But it is always less and less possible to tame global capitalism with national legislation. It blackmails national states with its flexibility. It is always looking for inexpensive locations with low wages, low taxes and easy social and environmental rules. And if necessary it will head for tax havens which are quite simply areas with little rule of law. Seen in this way the increase in right-wing populism is a revolt against a Liberalism that is perceived as excessive and dangerous for society. For this reason this populism is also quite attractive to the followers of progressive and social democratic politics.

The breakup of families, communities and other societies through the atomization of the world of work and living conditions is in no small part of our society understood as the traumatic farewell to modern society and not as its climax as many thinkers from the Green and Liberal parties see it. The open borders of 2015 are for many people a symbol of extreme multi-culturalism, diversity and the loss of any sense of order. Among them are many one-time social democratic voters. Diversity, inclusion, equality, political correctness - all these are therefore now the targets of the new right populism. At heart they are not the products of modern society but rather of a post-modern society which has embarked on the radical destruction of modern society, in the course of which it has had some amazing successes but now becomes the victim of its own success. Modern society also promised to people individuality, diversity, freedom and welfare – but regulated and in moderation. It is the excess and radicalism of post-modern society that creates so much unease.

In the past all Europe's social democratic parties have made the same mistake in responding

to global post-modern society. Likewise us in Germany. We have in our economic debates simply adapted ourselves to the competitive pressures of this post-modern globalization. Although the SPD did a lot in the last legislative period to counteract this development, the ability to compete was more important to us than were the wages and pensions with which people can not only live but live well. It comes to this: culturally we find ourselves as social democrats and progressives comfortable in post-modern liberal debates. The environment and climate protection were sometimes more important to us than the preservation of our industrial jobs. Data protection was more important than internal security, and we almost considered marriage for all as the greatest success of the last government rather than our other successes in laying down the minimum wage, increasing pensions or securing thousands of fairly paid jobs at one of the major retail chains. A look at the development of the Democrats in the U.S. shows how dangerous this focus on the themes of post-modernism can be. If you lose the workers of the rust belt states, the hipsters of California won't be of much help.

I appreciate that this is all very blunt and provocative. And I know very well how important environment and climate protection, data protection and equal rights are for all kinds of lifestyles. Nevertheless we in the social democratic and progressive movement must ask if we are close enough, culturally, to that part of our society who do not agree with the "Anything goes" battle cry of post-modernism. These see themselves uncomfortable, often no longer at ease in the society they once knew and sometimes even threatened.

In any case one thing is clear: the majority of us have advanced in society and for the most part no longer live in those parts of the cities in which our electorate live. We are more likely there to be confronted with other themes – more middle-

class, more cultivated and even post-modern. To put it rather crudely: We are often too green and liberal and not red enough.

If I want more 'red' then I don't mean by that in the first instance the somewhat fairy-tale debate about whether the SPD should be more 'left-wing'. That exhausts itself quickly in classical questions of policy about redistribution which of course are significant. But at heart it's more about a cultural appreciation and about issues of identity. In a world that has become confusing it is exactly this desire for identity that preoccupies a large segment of our electorate. With whom or more particularly with what can they identify? Is the desire for a more secure existence which unites them here in Germany behind the idea of 'homeland' something that we Social Democrats understand? Or do we see in it a backward looking and reactionary picture which we no longer find attractive? Is the longing for a 'guiding culture' in the face of the far more diverse composition of our society actually only an instrument of conservative propaganda, or does it hide the wish of our electorate for some sense of direction in the apparently permanently uncommitted world of postmodern society?

It is no accident that the thinkers of the extreme right-wing in Europe frequently describe themselves as an "identity movement". Because it is about identity and identification.

In any case, we Social Democrats are now being associated more with a postmodernism with which many do not identify. In part, this is because we have not so far succeeded in having the achievements of modernity – social security, participation, and solidarity – accepted as being sustainable and as being tangible aspects of everyday life, even in times of globalization.

Once again should all social democrats in Europe lead in essentially national election campaigns?

Once again are national agreements more important for us than international meetings and once again do we allow ourselves to be blackmailed by the power of financial capitalism in our tax legislation?

I am convinced that the crisis of German Social democracy has less to do with a governing coalition with the conservatives in Germany than with the completely changed general conditions for social democratic politics. If we in the first place accept these changes and therefore also grasp the consequences, then our election results will improve. Seen from this perspective the question of the survival of Social democracy in this land is relatively indifferent to whether we do or don't go into government. There are good arguments for both opinions and the SPD must have no anxiety about either of them.

In short we must – equally whether in or out of government – propose a completely different platform. And this other platform means above all: the Europeanization and internationalization of our political ideas. Together with our very traditional values of freedom, solidarity, equality and justice the recognizable difference to all our other political competitors can be clarified. The SPD party chairman Martin Schulz is therefore right: More international collaboration, more European collaboration, for only in that way will we again honour the central promise of social democracy, namely to tame capitalism and realise social and solidarity oriented market economies. We were successful in that in the last hundred years, now we must be successful in Europe and if possible abroad. The Social Democrats know better than any party in Germany that the way forward is exhausting. But we know also that a better land in a better Europe does not come by itself.

The Sahra Wagenknecht Newsletter

It is striking how much the situation in Germany mirrors that of England, in particular the race to armaments at the expense of the welfare state, and the increase in the price of energy due to sanctions against Russian oil and gas. The situation created would be intolerable to the population in England if they knew the real causes.

Violations of NATO airspace, drone attacks, GPS attacks, incendiary devices, destroyed undersea cables – whenever there is an explosion or a foul smell somewhere, German politicians and the mainstream media immediately conclude: it was the Russians! The fact that there is often no evidence, and that the suspicion is sometimes even explicitly refuted afterwards, is no problem – they simply stop reporting on it. What sticks in the public consciousness is the feeling that Putin is waging war against us, that we absolutely must rearm and become ‘fit for war’. What all these ‘attacks’ by Russia are about and why we must be careful not to be lied into a major war – that’s what my new weekly review is about.

Armament destroys the welfare state

During budget discussions, Chancellor Merz announced his intention to implement far-reaching cuts in the welfare state – in other words, further deterioration in pensions, healthcare, nursing care and unemployment benefits. While there is supposedly no money for ‘social promises’, the financial resources for weapons and war preparations are apparently unlimited: Next year, military spending is set to be increased to a total of 108 billion euros. And while there is already a funding gap of 30 billion euros in the budget plan for 2027, a further significant increase in military spending to 136 billion euros, or 136,000,000,000 euros, is planned for 2028. Of course, no welfare state can withstand such an arms build-up. If Merz and Klingbeil manage to push through four years of this, our social systems will be in ruins. This makes it all the more important to keep up the pressure to clear the way for a proper recount of the federal election. Because then the BSW would very likely enter the Bundestag – and the unspeakable Merz coalition would no longer be able to run our country into the ground, as it would no longer have a parliamentary majority.

Inflation eats away at wages

Germans have become significantly poorer in recent years. Although incomes rose slightly by an average of 9.5 per cent between 2021 and 2024, this is far from enough to offset the 15.7 per cent inflation rate. Rising prices for heating, electricity and food are eating away at wages – the bottom line is a big minus in citizens’ wallets! When the Chancellor says that citizens have been living beyond their means for years, it is a real insult in view of these figures! Income losses are likely to become even greater under Merz if pensions, healthcare and social benefits are cut in the ‘autumn of reforms’ to pay for rearmament loans. And the Black-Red coalition has no solution for the enormously high energy prices that are making citizens poorer and driving more and more companies into ruin. According to a recent calculation, heating costs are set to rise significantly again this year. For an average flat that uses natural gas, the increase will be a full 15 per cent. We finally need a policy that improves people’s standard of living instead of reaching deeper and deeper into their pockets. Affordable energy from Russia instead of self-defeating sanctions! Diplomacy and détente instead of rearmament and social cuts!

Behind the scenes at our peace rally

Our peace rally was a complete success: 20,000 people took to the streets in Berlin to send a message of peace and listen to powerful speeches by Dieter Hallervorden, Massiv, Bausa, Daniel Aminati and Gabriele Krone-Schmalz. Watch the video to see how this great day unfolded and what went on behind the scenes.

Why does the German government not recognise Palestine?

In a speech at the United Nations, Foreign Minister Wadehul described Gaza as ‘hell on earth’. So why does the German government continue to supply weapons to Israel? And why does the German government

not recognise Palestine as a state? This double standard is intolerable! While France, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, Portugal, Belgium and Monaco recognised Palestine at the UN General Assembly, Wadehul speaks of a ‘process’ in which the recognition of a Palestinian state must be ‘at the end’. How hypocritical is that?! Does the German government want to wait until Netanyahu has created a fait accompli with the complete destruction and expulsion of the Palestinians in Gaza and the annexation of the illegally occupied territories in the West Bank? Recognition now would send an important signal to Israel that peace in the Middle East conflict can only be achieved with a two-state solution! The German government must finally abandon its unconditional loyalty to the extreme right-wing Israeli government.

Press reports on BSW election appeal

For months, the media tried to silence the BSW’s election appeal. After the two renowned political scientists Eckhard Jesse and Uwe Wagschal explained in an essay in the [Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung \(FAZ\)](https://www.faz.net) why a nationwide recount is urgently needed in view of the close result and many inconsistencies, two other media outlets have now followed suit and reported on the status of the review of our appeal by the Bundestag’s election review committee. The articles can be found at <https://903q3.r.sp1-brevo.net/mk/cl/f/sh/1t6Af4OiGsF30hUz45vAKeQgKh7qP/tj-yAxQ6Www9> and https://903q3.r.sp1-brevo.net/mk/cl/f/sh/1t6Af4OiGsFVLPhPSS15UuUViWdrYT/GCAw0N_dK81d.

FAZ essay at https://903q3.r.sp1-brevo.net/mk/cl/f/sh/1t6Af4OiGsEafziYfjpFAOMqwgsgO8L/7DY_51xfP8QG.

An Unhealthy Relationship—the Labour Party and the Unions

By Pete Whitelegg

It will hardly come as a surprise to anyone who has followed politics over the past few years that Parliament plays an almost secondary role in determining the political agenda, at least in terms of domestic politics. Although Labour won an unprecedented number of seats at the last election, that agenda has been determined by external actors. Starmer and Badenoch may do battle over the dispatch box, but their target is elsewhere in Parliament, a party with only a handful of parliamentary seats to its name.

Within this maelstrom of dysfunctional politics elements of the left have attempted to form a new political party. Within a short space of time, they appeared to have gathered a considerable number of supporters, 800,000 by all accounts. A founding conference was announced to which delegates would be able to set the policies and direction of the party. But, with almost inevitable speed the whole thing began to fall apart. It may yet materialise.

The left in general, and particularly within the labour party, are dominated by the symbols of inequality, the rights agenda and identity politics, but these are symptoms of a much greater inequality. The analysis of the left is generally based upon highlighting these instances rather than proposing solutions to the underlying engine of those inequalities. The political left emerges largely as a voyeur rather than an active participant proposing solutions. It lacks a deep and radical critique of the existing order.

If the left no longer appears to be in a position to advance

solutions to an ever longer list of problems, the Labour Party itself exhibits an almost pathological determination to make life worse for most people. All this begs the question, is there any possibility of a movement willing and able to perform this task. I think so, the unions.

Over the last three years the unions have not simply undertaken industrial action to improve pay and conditions but have sought to defend public services as public services and not profit centres. The national rail strikes in 2022, and the strikes by doctors and health workers, reached beyond the narrow confines of the workplace and garnered support from a much wider section of the public.

At the centre of this change has been the campaign around the Employment Rights Bill. This bill was originally to be a comprehensive reordering of the relationship between labour and capital. That is what was promised when Labour was in opposition. Once in office the government wasted no time in watering down the provisions of the bill. Instead, the bill centres on extending individual rights and echoes the Blairite agenda of viewing trade unions as providers of services to their members. Nowhere in the bill is there any commitment to the extension collective bargaining, sectorial or otherwise. In fact, the bill states explicitly that no part of the bill can be taken as an endorsement of collective bargaining.

What has been important within this context is the reaction of the trade union movement to this situation. Instead of accepting that the contents of the bill are

a move forward, providing union members and workers in general, with enhanced rights which is what largely happened in the Blair government, the unions, including the TUC are pushing the issue and proposing new legislation.

The unions, together with the Campaign for Trade Union Freedom and the Institute for Employment Rights, are in the process of writing a new bill putting collective bargaining at the centre of the campaign. This, together with a demand for the repeal of the anti-trade union acts of the 1990s appears to be galvanising the unions to act beyond the confines of the workplace.

This will extend the role of the unions far beyond the confines of the public sector which, currently, is their stronghold. With collective bargaining extending into the largely ununionized private sector, employees will be able to exercise far greater influence over their employers and their policies.

The unions have recognised that to achieve these demands they will have to step outside the normal confines of their relationship with the Labour party. For some trade unions this relationship is irrevocably broken. For others it is a severely strained relationship, to the point of breaking. The trade unions in one respect will continue to rely on the Labour Party, because for these changes to come about legislation needs to be passed. But it is becoming increasingly apparent that the relationship between the trade unions and the Labour Party is changing.

Continued From Page 24

the powerful, confrontational organisations of the past. Thatcher's government, aided by the press, demonised them, and the unions' own failure to coordinate wage demands weakened their position further. In some cases — notably the miners — they misjudged the situation entirely, taking “revolutionary” action that hastened their decline.

The Thatcher and Blair eras encouraged a different ethic: home ownership, personal upward mobility, and private enterprise were presented as the keys to success.

Employers also changed. As one recent book describes: “The neoliberal philosophy is to use consulting firms to target a company with a potential for wealth extraction, destroy workforce autonomy and union power, extract sources of value and turn the company into a soul-less, money-driven bureaucracy.”

Many employers today are investment funds that buy, strip, and sell companies. In some cases, large corporations are paradoxically popular — everyone uses Amazon despite its no-union stance — and consumers may accept low wages in exchange for cheaper goods.

Faced with these changes, the Left adapted — but in ways that left parts of its traditional base behind. Middle-class members became dominant, still seeking to champion the “less privileged.” But without strong working-class voices, the focus shifted toward causes unrelated to income or class: women, LGBT rights, ethnic minorities, and migrants. Immigration — legal or illegal — was increasingly

portrayed as an unquestionable good.

For many working-class people, this was alienating. These causes became central to the moral identity of the middle-class Left, who could not easily abandon them even as women, gays, and ethnic minorities achieved significant success. The Left even rejected reports that celebrated such progress. The 2021 Sewell Report, for instance, concluded that the “claim the country is still institutionally racist is not borne out by the evidence.” Rather than welcoming this, the Left disputed it.

Thus, racism had to be found elsewhere — and it was found among those who wanted to limit immigration.

This accusation, deeply resented by many, caused a rupture. A large section of the population that once supported the Left now views it as the enemy. Worse, the state itself — which seems to represent these values — is increasingly distrusted. The arrests of individuals for social media posts against immigration only deepen this resentment. The case of Lucy Connolly, sentenced to more than two years in prison for a post that was online for just three hours and was based on false information spread by others, became a tipping point.

Public anger has grown so intense that all political movements — not just Reform — will eventually need to allow open discussion of immigration's merits and limits. Even campaigns that focus on wealth inequality and taxation will have to address the immigration question.

A recent exchange with Gary Stevenson, the former trader

and now prominent advocate of a Wealth Tax, illustrates this. Stevenson argues for such a tax not out of moral outrage but economic pragmatism, saying that the concentration of wealth in very few hands is economically destructive and risks societal collapse. During a phone-in on LBC, a caller warned Stevenson that he would get nowhere because his supporters refused to put limits on immigration and resorted to insults against those who wanted them. Stevenson admitted that the caller was probably right and affirmed the caller's right to his opinion — though he stopped short of endorsing it.

If Stevenson or anyone else wishes to revive class politics and shift focus back to the social dimension, immigration must be part of the conversation. It is understandable that Stevenson seeks to keep his message simple and clear, but ignoring immigration leaves a crucial gap.

The Left should have investigated the wages and working conditions of new arrivals, as well as the role of the black economy and the dynamics of the UK's low-wage model. These may seem like “grubby” questions compared to lofty ideals, but they are essential. Britain needs a new Ernest Bevin — someone who can organise across fragmented sectors, reject the low-wage economy that depends on a constant inflow of migrants, and build a high-wage economy that trains and supports its existing population.

A Freedom of Speech Rally

By Catherine Dunlop

Public debate over immigration and freedom of expression has become one of the most divisive issues in British politics. For many, the question is no longer just about border policy but about who gets to speak, what can be said, and who is silenced. Against this backdrop, the Unite the Kingdom Freedom of Speech Rally on 13 September sought to make its mark.

The rally was directed as much against the Left — which for the marchers includes Starmer — as against immigration. The participants expressed frustration at being demonised whenever they tried to share their views on immigration. After all, this was, in their words, a Freedom of Speech Rally.

What was striking, however, was what was left unsaid. There was no mention of standards of living, the cost of living crisis, or the broader context of immigration — the push-and-pull factors that drive it, such as unending wars and military interference on the one hand, and the UK's low-wage, black economy on the other. Nor was there any distinction made between legal and illegal immigration. The European speakers invited to the platform offered little more in the way of nuance: the French far-right figure Eric Zemmour spoke only about cultural differences, while the representative from the German AfD framed the issue in terms of a two-thousand-year-long struggle against Islam.

Tommy Robinson summed up the sentiment from the stage, declaring that the majority of the country had been gagged on immigration and would no longer be silenced. He said:

"Today is the spark of a cultural revolution in Great Britain. This is our moment. The traitors in Westminster are watching right now. They are cowering, they are trembling. Keir Starmer, the Labour Party, the revolution has started.

"They managed to silence us for 20 years with labels. Racist, Islamophobe, far-right—they don't work anymore." "[politicians] targeted us, they slandered us, they demonised us, they attacked us and they imprisoned us. But they can see the people power, they can see the shift. Now, Keir Starmer was elected off of 9 million votes. He slithered into parliament with 9 million votes. 20 million British people didn't bother to vote. Who are those people? It's us. People like you, people like me, who have been told their voices do not matter."

At its core, the rally's main grievance was the suppression of anti-immigration speech as inherently racist.

But why be against immigration? The speakers pointed to examples of migrant criminality — grooming gangs and the Southport murders — as justification for their stance.

Yet these are not the only reasons.

Many feel that immigration has changed the face of Britain, and that this change is accelerating. Between 2022 and 2024, according to the ONS, two million new immigrants arrived — with no corresponding provision made for them. Instead of an increase in doctors' appointments, school places, housing (especially council housing), and hospital capacity, many argue that these services have become more strained.

Adding to the frustration is the

perception that immigrants are treated as the "darlings of the Left." Critics claim that even when immigrant beliefs do not align with progressive values, the Left turns a blind eye, unwilling to confront contradictions in its own positions.

Resentment may also have a personal dimension. The men marching could well be the fathers of white working-class children who, according to league tables, are performing worse in school than any other group, including immigrant children. Immigrant communities often have ambition, stable extended families, religious faith, and tend to live in economically active areas such as London and other major cities. For some, this could fuel a sense of grievance — leading to attempts to undermine the good character of these groups as a form of retaliation.

Meanwhile, what has the Left been doing? The Labour Party once included industrial workers alongside middle-class advocates speaking on their behalf. But Britain has shed much of its industrial base — coal, steel, textiles, car manufacturing — and with it the strong unions that once gave the working class a voice. Today, retail and wholesale trade, along with health and social care, make up 26% of jobs, followed by professional and technical work, business administration, education, and hospitality. Together, these sectors account for around 60% of all employment.

This shift has transformed the unions themselves. Gone are

Continued On Page 23