

# Socialist Labour North West

## **Infantile Disorder? Why the Left Must Let Go of Trump!**

Most Americans who voted for Donald Trump are Republicans. On average they are richer than those who voted for Clinton and better off than the average American by \$17,000 per annum. Mostly, they are pro business, pro war and hostile to civil rights.

According to a Huffington Post poll conducted at the end of 2016, a great majority believe racial minorities are advantaged over the white folks they see as 'ordinary' Americans. In failing to empathise with the struggles of others they are rather detached from the idea of 'the people' and certainly from the concept of society and the idea that we must unite to change it. In fact they are rather if not exactly like those who voted for George Bush.

In its rise to 'orthodoxy', the 'alternative fact' that Trump is an outsider, a man of the people challenging the establishment has been assisted by the left.

In our haste to build a progressive 'consensus' we accept the idea there is a 'decent' politics to which we can speak. In this, we fuel only the consensus that no alternative exists to capitalism, at least not on the left.

In legitimising the mother of all 'alternative facts'... the idea of a benevolent social democracy under 'threat'... the left has abandoned its prime directive to challenge the ideological deceptions of western 'democracy'.

Left populism is marked by the fear driven idea that before we fight capitalism we must first secure the benefits of the system against 'fascism'.

The motives are noble. It is entirely reasonable to seek to defend rights won often through struggle. It is natural to fear for the fate of the vulnerable when the system appears to veer towards its extremes.

Yet, if we never manage to reach beyond the limited posture imposed on us by the requirement to 'defend' what we have been allowed, is the strategy really making sense?

With the election of Jeremy Corbyn, many on the left have been persuaded to return to supporting a Labour Party detested by its traditional working class supporters of all races and entrenched in its support for the global war project.

The progressive alliance built around Corbynism has fuelled the further rightward drift by Greens, Trades Unionists, equality activists and even some on the 'far left' into support for the free market European Union.

Joining the 'Stop Trump' bandwagon, an idea driven by a startling extension of the regime change narrative to 'home', does nothing other than fuel the impression that we have no values and nothing to offer, beyond whatever is necessary to get rid of the 'bogeyman'.

It matters less that left opposition is ignored by mainstream media than it matters when we are too easily misrepresented and mistaken for the Clinton hugging establishment.

Trump's travel ban is not anti Muslim. Nor is it illegal. It is an extension of an existing policy aimed at destabilising poor countries earmarked for regime change. Neither as a policy for controlling 'immigration' or 'stopping terror' does the travel ban stack up. As an expression of the long standing policy of global financial hegemony, imposed by force, it makes perfect sense.

Adopting the fake memes of liberal capitalism, in particular the 'free movement', 'diversity' and 'tolerance' cosmetic used to promote the new financial colonialism, suggests we are forgetting once again our mission to unite with those millions around the world who are actively resisting the desecration of their communities by the multi national corpocracy.

We must regain our self belief and the confidence to challenge the hegemonic ideology of the free market. We must reclaim our natural territory, the land of real politics where the reasons why people are poor or persecuted are understood. This means recognising and addressing the pervasive condition that has given birth to Trump, Farage and Le Pen; the pain inflicted on ordinary people by the neo liberal 'global' idea.

If we submerge the issues in favour of talking 'Trump', playing to the idea that he is different instead of focusing on what is most dangerous, the direction of policy which is the same, we risk being perceived by some as nothing more than quislings.

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## Response from Bill Ball

You raise a few interesting points that have been overlooked in the current debate. I hope that your piece attracts plenty of healthy responses.

I will just pick up a few things.

1. "Trump`s ban is not anti-Muslim. Nor is it illegal". Every US court that has looked at it to date, have decided that it is illegal. Given Trump`s remarks in the election, it is also anti-Muslim. That was precisely its selling point. It may well be a step toward regime change as you suggest, but stoking the fires of Islamophobia was a significant aspect of Trump`s pitch to the red neck Republicans & the Bible belt fundamentalists who back the gun lobby - and the anti-abortion lobby, because they claim to be pro-life.

2. "Left populism is marked by the fear driven idea that before we fight capitalism, we must first secure the benefits of the system against fascism". The two things are not mutually exclusive. In defending what we have, we build the platform to extend our gains. Capitalism, in this country at least, will make whatever concessions it needs to survive. But it will always try to claw them back. So defending what we have is a concomitant with fighting for a society built on different lines.

3. "Joining the Stop Trump bandwagon...fuels the impression that we have no values & nothing to offer, beyond what is necessary to get rid of the bogeyman". I suggest that it indicates the very opposite. And it certainly suggests that we have values. And those values are far different from those of Trump.

I`ll leave it there for now, resisting the temptation to open the Corbyn can of worms. But suffice to say that this exactly the sort of debate that we should be having on the left, in the current climate

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