



**REPORT FROM PANEL SESSIONS AND EVENTS WITHIN THE  
FRAMEWORK OF [THE WORLD TRANSFORMED](#) FESTIVAL IN  
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**“Where next for the European Left”**

Opening by Ronan Burtenshaw, as the editor of Tribune Magazine.

Idoia Villanueva, Senator for Podemos, a member of the party's executive and a spokesperson on foreign affairs, focused on the women's movement that is standing at the front of our struggles today. A movement crucial in order to stop the dynamic of the far right (see women's voting pattern) as well as to build a radical, democratic space in Europe. She

highlighted the importance and the topicality of a political and ideological revolution that can emerge through a “popular democratic project” of the left.

The political elites in the EU, especially in Germany are not willing to change course, despite the overwhelming will of the people, Fabio de Masi, MP of Die Linke, pointed out. The social democracy is trapped in neoliberalism and cannot escape, this is the reason why the Red-Red-Green majority never materialized. A popular strategy of the Left is more than necessary. The reason of the far right’s rise and our fail is that we never created an actual popular strategy. However, a broad space for the left in Germany is available. 150.000 have already registered for “Aufstehen” (“Stand up”!). His response on the proposal of “a Left united under the EU flag against the Far Right”: Internationalism and cooperation are unquestionably essential in our political struggle, but the EU is not about these. The EU has the same genetic code with the evil TTIP. According to De Masi the Left should not advocate for a “more” Europe. On the contrary, we should wish for less Europe. The municipalities to guarantee the access of the citizens to the healthcare system, for instance. On the proposal of the “minimum corporate taxes”, we should be clear that is not possible in the actual EU, because of the Treaties, EU’s cornerstones. The critique towards the EU should not be seen as a debate between the EU and the nation states. The critique is about democracy and the fact that we are leaving the space of critique of the EU to the Far Right has already cost us a lot. The European left needs a popular strategy that develops away from the labyrinth of all the debates on migration that divide the people to migrants and “the others”. On a question came from the audience regarding the anti-migrant stance of “Aufstehen”, he replied that Aufstehen actually wishes the asylum too be broaden in order to apply in the cases of war, climate, and hunger. “But we will not camp with Angela Merkel against the Far Right, who is the one who sells weapons in these countries where people try to escape from.” *Open borders for all* means no differentiation between those in need who migrate because this is their only choice and those who migrate only to seek for better living conditions.

Djordje Kuzmanovic, National spokesperson for La France Insoumise and a foreign affairs advisor to Jean-Luc Mélenchon spoke mostly about the antidemocratic nature of the Europe Union and its political deadends. Being far more euroscepticist than the official stance of France Insoumise he stated that the EU is a capitalist organization and that all European people are against it.

Pernille Skipper, Red-Green Alliance's spokesperson appeared quite optimistic as the times they are a-changin'. "We are winning...It is a matter of time" because of the people's disappointment from the EU and the political establishment. She couldn't but mention also the populist right in Denmark that has 17% of the votes. It is an established political party, not a violent, extremist one and has also started taking a "social" turn on issues regarding the welfare state for example. It's true that in Denmark many leftists think that the EU "will save us" from the Far Right, she mocked, while it is the EU who fuels the Far Right years now. ***She stated that the social democrats are copying EU's migration policy, while we should be clear on the fact that the most authoritarian and xenophobic policies coming from Austria and Hungary are absolutely national choices and not EU's orders.***

### **New Internationalist Magazine: "An Internationalist Labour Party?"**

A very interesting and thorough discussion with theoretical background and careful consideration of the political and ideological framework of the terms used, especially the one of nationness. Defending the nation state takes a certain meaning depending on the certain period such a demand is being articulated. Nation states are also oppressive apparatuses even if they come after an anti-colonial struggle for independence. Historically, we have seen anti-nation movements struggling for nations. As a "crazy colonial imagination" was described the very concept of Lexit. It completely ignores Britain's position in the world. Corbyn should weaken Britain's position and role in sustaining apparatuses that produce international policy (WTO etc). At the same time, Corbyn and the Labour government should 1. Act towards the climate change and the migrants' deaths in the Mediterranean, 2. Sustain the NHS, 3. Decolonize Britain in education, history, culture etc.

The speakers (Charlotte Lydia Riley, Lecturer in British history at the University of Southampton, Kehinde Andrews, Associate Professor of Sociology leading the development of the Black Studies Degree at Birmingham City University, Richard Seymour, author and Karma Nabulsi, teacher at the Oxford and winner of the Guardian's Higher Education *Inspiring Leader* Award in 2017 and *Arab Woman of the Year* in 2018) agreed that part of the Left makes concessions on the people's freedom of movement, the question of migration etc.

This is a cultural and ideological war the Left should win for the people, but also for its very identity and principles.

In parallel, we should rethink the notion of working class, working class's areas etc. Urban, multicultural areas, like Islington, is where the working class also lives nowadays. Not in this construction of the white working class that lives only Manchester, voted for Brexit, etc. We should rethink it in its relation with the realities of race, especially in a world where its political economy is fundamentally racist, and nationhood.

### **Tribune Magazine relaunching**

Tribune is a historic democratic socialist magazine, founded in 1937 and published in London. In May 2018 the Tribune was sold to the American magazine Jacobin and the relaunching of the magazine took place in the festival in an event with David Harvey, Owen Jones, Grace Blakeley, Research Fellow on IPPR's Commission on Economic Justice, Dawn Foster, Guardian's columnist and Ronan Burtenshaw as the editor.

Within the framework the intellectual renaissance of the Labor left in Britain has shaped Tribune wishes to build organic links with the movements. It aims to be part of the alternative media the British left needs that will cope with the media network of the establishment. Owen Jones describes:

“What do the media tell to us “Don't be angry with your boss or with your government, be envious of the one next to you!” Envious with the neighbor, the colleague etc that owns a better TV, that has a better salary, envious with the civil servant that will get a better pension than you will. While the old social consensus is dying, we are struggling to form a new one, based on solidarity, fraternity, trust amongst us.

Neoliberalism promised freedom and it only delivered insecurity. People are captivated in their despair and they are even deprived of their pre-existing freedom.

The British left is not fighting just to replace a government with another one, but to replace this broken social order with a new democratic, socialist society. Tribune should contribute to the ideological strengthen of this movement

### **The Brexit bind: What Labor's Brexit Policy should be?**

Another Europe is Possible staged a panel discussion upon one of the “hot potatoes” of the current public debate, the Brexit and how the Labour Party should proceed. For Mary Kaldor, Professor of Global Governance at the London School of Economics, the Labour Party will meet a moment of global responsibility to reflect upon if Brexit be delivered. There is no such thing as a good Brexit, we will either get a soft Brexit or a hard one, that will totally be a break up of England and will transform the country to a paradise for the capital and for corruption. In China, the USA, Russia and India we are witnessing the rise of authoritarianism. The only way we can tackle these big problems is in the European and the global level. The EU is indeed neoliberal, but so does England. There is also the other side of the coin. The Europe of peace and social justice. Spinelli was right when telling that “we lack a European political consciousness” and this lack is also part of what we are experiencing nowadays.

Paul Mason, journalist, author and film-maker, underlined that the real threat is “Thatcherism in one country”, though we cannot fight it back by defending the existing EU. EU is the continent of the absence of the rule of law, of tax havens. Even if we examine it in comparison with the USA we will end up to the fact that in the USA someone at least finds justice being delivered in some cases. However, we are obliged to be close to Europe because of the new era we are entering in. The era that Trumps wants to disrupt the global order, also by dividing Europe.

The Labour Party should fuel the upcoming civil war in the Tory Party and be prepared to bring down Theresa May before March 2019. This should be one of our main political goals in the short term.

Costas Lapavistas, Professor of Economics at the SOAS, bitterly objected Mason upon the stance of the Labour towards the Single Market. According to Lapavistas, the Maastricht Treaty and the Single Market are the critical elements that transformed EU to a neoliberal machinery. The Single Market is exactly the space of capital, therefore the Labour Party should not advocate for the Britain to remain in the Single Market after the Brexit. What is the EU at a glance? A machinery where the common currency made the member states to become the domestic market of Germany. The countries of the Southern Europe are the periphery of the German capital and Central and Eastern European countries are one more periphery of Germany that functions basically through direct investments. The only answer is rupture. Lapavistas made perfunctory comparisons between the Greek case and the UK, especially between the two referendums aiming to produce a holistic theory upon the EU and the stance of the Left. What was Brexit? Lapavistas seemed quite confident stating that was the anger of the British working class concentrated that found the moment, where the ruling class was divided, to express itself and say “enough”. Brexit is a unique opportunity of the Left. He concluding advised the Labour “firstly, the radical transformation of the country and then the whichever deal with the EU for the trade”.

Ann Pettifor, Economist and director of PRIME (Policy Research in Macroeconomics) tried to open the spectrum to the global order. The enemy is the financial globalisation. The rise of the far right and the authoritarianism you not only find it in Europe, but all across the world. We live in a horrifying era, where Trump, an almost fascist, is the most weaponized leader of the world. The Labour Party should lead the society, that’s why the argument “People still want the Brexit, see the polls” is a non-leftist argument. The logic of “do what the polls tell you to do” is a right wing and conservative logic. Politics is all about making political change, being a leader means proposing progressive plans that actually change the society. Apart from getting rid of the EU’s financial elites, the Labour Party should get rid off the very domestic enemy. The City of London, the leading force of the global financial capital.

### **A new Populism: Chantal Mouffe’s and Jon Trickett’s debate**

An exchange of views upon the left populism between Chantal Mouffe, distinguished political theorist and Jon Trickett, MP of the Labour Party and Shadow Minister for the Cabinet Office

started with the assumption that nowadays there is an inflation of the term “populism”, while in Europe we only have a negative perception of the term and its connotations. The term has been stigmatized to describe all those who are against the status quo. Populism is actually, according to Mouffe, a strategy of construction of a political frontier. A frontier can be constructed in different ways, in a populist strategy it goes through the division between the people and the establishment. Therefore populism is not an ideology. An interesting parenthetical point was also made when Mouffe criticized all those who claim that “people are not interested in party politics anymore”. She characterized such statement as obsolete and far away from being true. If there is a party that really defends people’s interests then people are there. The Labour Party these days are the biggest party of the left in Europe. When it comes to Brexit, the assumption that the Brexit was the populist response and the Remain the technocratic, elitist one is not necessarily correct, since a populist strategy could also include the democratic refoundation of Europe as the core to recover democracy. On the question of sovereignty, we should always distinct between the concept of national sovereignty and the one of popular sovereignty. The “Front National” in France advocates for a national sovereignty that sees the people as the nation. In this concept, the immigrants, the refugees, the racial minority groups are excluded. This “kind” of sovereignty actually eliminates democracy and it is the opposite of what the “France Insoumise” of Jean-Luc Mélenchon asks for. In the concept of popular sovereignty, the people is an articulation of different social groups. Jon Trickett that the 71% of his constituency voted for leave wanted to describe his view upon the Brexit. The regions that were held back by the neoliberal capitalist accumulation in Britain voted clearly for leave. It was a vote geographically defined while Labour Party’s position was to remain. The Tories campaigned with fear as the main machinery, but the people being so fed-up for the past many years, didn’t listen to the sirens if the establishment. On the rise of the far right in Europe concluded by saying that “when the old is dying and the new is not yet born, it’s the time of monsters”.

### **In Conversation with Jean-Luc Mélenchon**

Jon Trickett was the one who introduced also Jean-Luc Mélenchon on the rally hosted by Jacobin magazine on Monday night. Trickett emphasized on Mélenchon’s courageous efforts to confront the far right in France and on his idea to build a new movement in France

supporting a new way for the Left. He called him the “next President of France”. Mélenchon started by saying we are the “global alternative and the struggle has just began to govern our countries together with our people.” The people must enter into a new age of ecological and social *reason* and the left should coordinate its efforts because without that, internationalism will be an empty word.

He referred to the “Now the people” initiative (Podemos in Spain, France Insoumise in France, the Bloco de Esquerda in Portugal, the Red-Green Alliance in Denmark, the Left Party in Sweden, the Left Alliance in Finland) and the European “Plan B” forum that serves as a platform for parties campaigning in their countries against the application of the Lisbon Treaty and the European Union’s budgetary treaties. ***His polemic towards Alexis Tsipras was once again central to his speech, since he –most probably- considers himself protected from all those conditions that led to Greece’s blackmail.*** “According to him Alexis Tsipras ended up doing the dirty work on behalf of the European troika and German right-wing government. We don’t want this kind of shameful surrender anymore.” Afterwards, he described his governmental plan towards the European question. “We will apply our program. We will negotiate to ensure that European regulations allow it (Plan A). If Europe refuses, we will apply our programme anyway, along with those who think like we do. This is what we call the Plan B.”

In his view, sovereignty of the people would be in juxtaposition with the current EU. Democracy would not be not possible within these treaties and that is why it would be necessary to dispose of a “a Plan B which would allow to apply a program and respect the democratic decisions of the peoples. Plan B would mean: ‘Our country’s democracy will be respected! It is us who represent political democracy.’

Regarding Brexit, he emphasized on the reality of the referendum’s result and warned of the dangers of not respecting people’s vote mentioning the French and Dutch referendums in 2015. ***Though he rhetorically didn’t express his personal view towards the “leave” or the “remain”, he actually presented what the Brexit vote is to him.*** “I think the British people wanted to increase their sovereignty over their situation. I believe that this will remains intact.”

He continued his speech with the presentation of his concept on the “citizens’ revolution” and the whole philosophical shield of his vision and political programme. ***It is important to see how he understands the political subject of nowadays since it reveals his relationship (the philosophical and ideological one) with the left tradition.***

“The *people* is an old word, but it has a new content, as a specific collective term. It refers to that mass of citizens who need access to collective networks in order to produce and reproduce their existence. The word *people* as we use it therefore refers to another reality: one socially defined by a community of concerns. It is neither the population of the eighteenth century nor an informal, formless multitude”

He then described the two key elements of our era:

1. “The possible destruction of the only ecosystem that makes human life possible. If we acknowledge that this is a real threat, then we must admit that there is a general human interest. And if this common interest exists, it must be placed above all other interests that may compromise it. This common interest is profoundly anticapitalist.” ***It is clear that the ecological question is a center piece of his programme and his campaigning with very well prepared response bound with the question of the productive model.***
2. “The form of political organization which corresponds to the *peoples’ era*. France Insoumise incarnates such a form of organizing that “it has become what I think we can call by far the largest activist organization in France [...] Everyone is free to decide the nature and the extent of their commitment to the movement and can change that at any time. We are not a classical political party that leads society, but rather a movement that is itself part of the life of society and totally porous to engagement with society.”

Furthermore, he clearly wants to take distance from the past of the socialist tradition while calling for a *citizen’s revolution* which “is not a euphemism for socialist revolution. The citizens’ revolution includes socialist tasks but also has a far wider horizon. It is intrinsically linked with each person’s objective of taking control of every compartment of their personal lives and of public life. It is a revolution that belongs to citizens, because it must allow each and every one of us to take control within a collective framework.”

Certainly his presence in The World Transform meant a lot to the Labor Party members and activists who wish their party to have stable alliances with affiliated parties and forces that are in a position to achieve left-wing majorities and create progressive governments.