

Britain: Labour's election winning manifesto

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Labour's 2019 election manifesto could very well be the set of ideas that wins the election writes Andy Stowe.

One of the things that tells you it's very different from every manifesto of the last forty years, apart from Labour's last one, is that it talks about abolishing Universal Credit, the Tory policy that drives people to food banks, and replacing it with a system that treats people with dignity and respect. New Labour and the Tories shared common rhetoric about scroungers and the undeserving poor. Corbyn, Abbott and McDonnell are bringing dignity and respect back into politics.

The main line of attack from its opponents is that it will hurt the very rich quite a lot and the super-rich even more – to which most people's response will be "Good! They've had it far too easy for far too long". Anyway, a 45% tax rate on salaries over £80 000 and 50% on those over £125 000 isn't going to see anyone forced into genteel poverty.

The manifesto will very rapidly improve the lives of most people who live in England, Scotland and Wales.

Labour is now committed to offering free dental care, prescriptions and broadband; it will protect the rights of migrants and refugees as well as extending the vote to EU citizens and people under 16; it will introduce a living wage of a minimum of £10 an hour and end zero hours contracts; rail, mail, water and energy will return to public ownership; it will ensure rape crisis centres are properly funded; it will build 100,000 council houses a year; it will permit people on ordinary salaries to buy their own homes and it will create a million climate jobs.

Of course there are things in there that the left will not be happy with. The commitment to renewing the Trident nuclear weapons system will have been in equal part due to pressure from UNITE and an acknowledgement of the fact that a large number of Labour MPs and a fair number of their voters still think the British state should have weapons capable of killing tens of millions of people.

The backsliding on the conference decision to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030 was probably due to similar considerations. The aim is now net zero sometime in the 2030s. Nevertheless, there has never been a major party in Europe make a serious bid for election on such a bold ecosocialist programme. The intention is to generate 90% of electricity and 50% of heat from renewable and low-carbon sources by 2030. Public transport will promote environmental sustainability and contribute to decarbonisation and 3000 bus routes will be re-opened.

Only Labour can stop Brexit

Labour is offering the electorate a second referendum. The manifesto says [\[1\]](#)&:

"Within three months of coming to power, a Labour government will secure a sensible deal. And within six months, we will put that deal to a public vote alongside the option to remain."

That is an elegantly simple position and one which should satisfy some of Labour's English nationalist Brexiteers. It also completely undermines the increasingly irrelevant Liberal Democrats. Their stated position is that they will not work with a Corbyn government. That means that they can only be part of another Tory coalition, the difference being this time that it's essentially the same as being in bed with Farage and the far right.

No one seriously believes that the next Labour government is planning a major assault on British capitalism. In fact, much of the time John McDonnell frames his arguments for infrastructure and research spending as being good for business. The proposed tax rises on the richest are very modest and lower than they were for many of the Thatcher years. Labour is instead aiming to build an electoral coalition of all the public sector workers who've had a decade of pay cuts, the parents who see that their children's schools are short staffed and crumbling, everyone who has to use a hospital or has an elderly relative in need of care. By the standards of 21st century British politics, which will be the measure for most people on polling day, this is a bold exciting transformative manifesto.

There is no Santa. Let's work our socks off in the next three weeks to make sure we get a Labour government for Christmas.

Andy Stowe

P.S.

- <http://socialistresistance.org/labours-election-winning-manifesto/18650>

Footnotes

- [1] <https://labour.org.uk/manifesto/the-final-say-on-brexit/>