

York Young Fabian Meeting 11/10/18

Attendees:

- Jack Mason
- James Strong
- Conrad Whitcroft-White
- Michaela Tharby
- Tom Burke
- Jack Galea
- Sean Price-Regan
- Connor Drake

Official apologies

- Aobh Sharvin
- Daniel Jordan
- Joe Williscroft

Matters arising

1. **Introduction from Jack M, the chair, explaining the plan for the year and advertising the launch event**
2. **An open debate about a recent report published by the Fabian society named: *For the Many? Understanding and uniting Labour's core supporters* by Olivia Bailey and Lewis Baston (2018)**

JM: Jack Mason (Chair), CWW: Conrad Whitcroft-White (Treasurer), TB: Thomas Burke, MT: Michaela Tharby, CD: Connor Drake, SPR: Sean Price-Regan, JG: Jack Galea.

JM: an interesting point is the impact of Brexit on the voter intention, this report believed it to be negligible. A lot of the remain seats that have seen a concentration of the labour vote post vote were already seeing this trend suggesting that the Brexit vote wasn't the main factor in this swing. The trend is indicative of a move from labour's voters being working class to middle class

CWW: a lot is about perception, in order to boost labour voters now instead of creating policy and dropping old policy in order to be more attractive, we need to have a better social media policy

TB: some of the people in the report don't vote about policy, they vote based on values

MT: backs up TB point, in own experience people have voted more on how the parties are seen and the values they stand for

CD: believes that Brexit is discussed far too much and issues such as social justice are being ignored. References welfare reform, foodbank, and homelessness as issues which are being side-lined in favour of Brexit when they are actually much more pressing issues

CWW: backs up the previous point, most people are now just sick of Brexit and don't want to talk about it anymore. The discussions have already been done before

MT: having an attractive policy program that differs from Brexit will be good

TB: big gripe with what will happen to these pressing issues post Brexit

MT: references that since the introduction of universal credit suicide has doubled and a link between the two has been shown suggesting these pressing issues are a place where Labour can get involved

CD: continues the point on universal credit, mentions the lack of any response related to these big issues. He moves on to comment on the lack of any ideas about how to bring the discussion to the Tories. Moves on to refer to a recent report by a statistical body that seems to have cooked the numbers in order to conclude how they do

CD: there is a frequent perception that local councillors are complacent, they are often suspected of not canvassing the local people. In some council there is the belief that the councillors don't actually have any idea about what the local people actually want/need – the consultation processes used by most councils are very poor. Moves onto say that in his opinion momentum is not a grass root/working class movement but is actually a middle class bourgeois movement

JM: one flaw of the labour party he found, moving him to join, was the lack of any attempt to explain to the working classes why labour is beneficial to them

CD: mentions that a lot of the literature/speeches which are published by the labour party treat the poor like they are alien or an other

JM: asks CD what he would do to change this

CD: there are some charities which put people who live in and experience poverty day to day which try to bring people's experiences and life stories into the centre of the process when people try to help them. Mentions the uselessness of shows like Benefit street

MT: these shows almost fetishize poverty

CD: would like to see a change which brings activism back to the local level and to the community

MT: would disagree, argues that a central organism that can coordinate a media campaign/infrastructure is necessary to win across a nation

TB: however, the older generation and others don't get their news from social media, they get it from their neighbours and friends or the local paper suggesting that the grass roots local campaign system is necessary

JM: has seen that most people vote to each party based on emotion and reputation and this is affected by the social media campaigns and the perceptions of each party

JG: when referring to trying to engage people who aren't already engaged it is difficult to change the conversation and thoughts of these discussion/focus groups into effective policy. The practice of central parties is to appoint a manager who does this however this normally leads to a loss of pure

meaning. The other issue is that from this you frequently get a minority of people managing and representing a majority of groups/policy areas. This leads to oligarchy

MT: consolidates the point about how there becomes an overreliance on a smaller group of people

JM: asks SPR whether he has met a lot of working class Tories in his role as the working class PTO

SPR: he has a lot of Tory family members in London and the south

JM: asks SPR what he would do as a policy coordinator

SPR: would change the policy/social media policy in order to become more inclusive

MT: the impressions held by the working classes are that Labour is weak and full of crap

JM: mentions the SPD in Germany as they have a very well organised youth arm/movement which has enabled them to instil a sense of politics within the younger generations. He also hoped that after the growth in energy after Corbyn's rise would be put into growing the youth arms of Labour

MT: mentions that whilst they are a member of Momentum they disagree with some parts as there is a split between the younger and older generations with the older generations often shooting down the younger's points

JG: it is interesting to look into the relationships between the splinter groups within Labour. The relationships between Labour first and young Labour for example is very interesting. Are young voices being silenced by the older generations who can pull on their experiences?

MT: the political education in state schools is utter crap, in many schools there is no political education

TB: pulling on their teacher training they reference the poor political education rulings about the ban on bringing politics into the classroom. They also bemoan this fact as it is damaging however expressed his sadness as they cannot make any changes

JM: mentions that after moving to uni they have completely dropped out of contact with the people in their year who failed to pass their year

TB: can teach about political movements as long as it refers to the curriculum. Therefore, if one is being sneaky there are ways of drawing it into the school

JM: the education on trade unions is far too poor. It is a no brainer to be in a trade union meaning the shrinking participation in trade unions is shocking

MT: there are systemic problems in companies which don't allow people to unionise or get around the full rights of work

CWW: backs up the previous point with anecdote about the situation within York

TB: asks why these issues are not being addressed?

MT: the middle classes don't care

CWW: points out that economic policy has not been mentioned in the discussion so far... seems to be not as important as it is made out

JM: is under the impression that Jeremy Corbyn fails to raise these issues as he embodies Islington and the middle class

TB: mentions that John McDonald is from Liverpool

JM: however, he has been caught of reading from Marx in the HoC

TB: points out that most people have not heard of McDonald, let alone whether he is a communist

CWW: also points out that the media has been slating the past labour leaders as communist for years

MT: sees Corbyn as setting up a movement for the future as if can pass on this movement onto a fresh faced youthful individual who doesn't have the past of Corbyn then labour will bloom

JM: disagrees as he is under the impression that this movement is too linked to Corbyn and therefore will decline with Corbyn

CD: after bringing up a graph about the change in share of labour vote in UK polls points out the importance of Corbyn's campaigning to the voter turnout for labour

JM: mentions practical radicalism. The marriage of the ideology and passion with the pragmatic campaign and policy

TB: we need to draw away from painting the Tories as evil

JM: Draws discussion to a close.

3. Discussion of what is coming up with the next term

- We plan on rotating between a debate, a talk, a social, and going to the York Fabian society meeting. The meetings held on campus shall be on a Thursday evening but the York Fabian meeting will be on a Friday.

Any Other Business

No other business