

LEADING BY EXAMPLE: BUILDING THE UK'S NEW LEFT PARTY IN WALES

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AND HILARY WAINWRIGHT

‘Your Party’ is the provisional name of a new political party which saw its founding conference organized in late 2025. The party was formed under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn, the former British Labour Party leader who was expelled from that party but subsequently re-elected as an independent MP, and Zarah Sultana, an MP formerly of the Labour Party but now sitting as an independent.

Wales is one of the poorest parts of the United Kingdom, not least since Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s decimation of the coal mining industry and the decline in manufacturing more generally. It has its own devolved Assembly – the Senedd – and has historically been a major heartland of the Labour Party. A launch statement in support of Your Party in Wales was signed by Mark Serwotka, the recently retired General Secretary of the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS), and Beth Winter, Labour MP for Cynon Valley between 2019-2024 and previously an official for the University and College Union.

Mark and Beth spoke to Michael Calderbank and Hilary Wainwright in September 2025.

Michael Calderbank (MC): At the last general election Labour pretty much swept the board in Wales, winning 27 out of 32 seats in the Westminster Parliament. You can say that the electoral system might have distorted the degree of popularity, but there was clearly a mood for change. So, over 12 months on, do you think people believe that change is happening? Can they see any sign of it?

Mark Serwotka (MS): The most straightforward answer to your question, Michael, is to look at the polls, and I think you can judge the catastrophe of the Labour government by the fact that its actions are directly enabling the growth of Reform [the new, rapidly rising party of the far-right with 5 MPs at the time of publication].

I think, in many ways, it's worse than the Blair government. If you just look at it objectively, it's the Blair government without the charismatic leader. Starmer is now a figure of fun and ridicule. I think he is seen as dishonest to his core. He does not stand for anything that I can see in the way others do stand for something, which is why they have buffeted around so much.

The Blair project based itself on a central belief: that the working class had nowhere else to go. Therefore, no matter how bad they were, people would stick with them in the [Welsh regions of] Rhondda, Aberdare, Merthyr and in the English cities. But of course, now people do have somewhere to go since the polarization caused by Brexit, with the rising rate by which working class people – for terribly misguided reasons – are going for Reform. And in that sense, I think this is a truly calamitous government, and we're at a very dangerous moment. Do I think people see change? I don't think the average woman or man in the street sees change.

Beth Winter (BW): I wrote an article, prior to the 2024 General Election, saying that the manifesto lacked ambition. And it was quite evident that the UK Labour government would be primarily concerned with retaining the status quo – a neoliberal orthodoxy and protecting the interests of corporations and the ruling class. I think that's exactly what has come to fruition: taking a winter fuel payment from older people (one of the first actions that they took), refusing to cut the two-child benefits cap,* continuing to ride roughshod over the devolved nations and regions, and subsequently cutting benefits for some of the most vulnerable in society. People have completely lost trust in the Labour government at the national level. The vast vacuum that has opened up is horrifying. In London on the weekend [13 September] there was over 150,000 people marching in a far-right demonstration. People have lost all trust in Labour, and the vacuum is being filled by the far right who are peddling hate, scapegoating and sowing division in our society.

MS: I agree with Beth. I think we're almost in a crisis moment. There were 150,000 far right supporters in London, but I think we had 500 people in Newtown in Mid Wales, parading in that little town with the cross of St. George. It is a really worrying moment, and I don't think it's a matter of changing the Labour leader, either. We saw collapse of the centre in parts of Europe and people thought 'that can't happen here', but my view is that we are witnessing the centre collapsing with Labour and the Tories. The need for an organized left is now critical.

THE YOUR PARTY PROJECT

* The government has now announced that the two-child benefit cap will be scrapped from April 2026.

Hilary Wainwright (HW): So, the decision to create the new party, Your Party as it is currently called, is born from your reckoning that Labour had come to a dead end and, therefore, that you should break with Labour and create an alternative. More particularly, out of a feeling that unless there was a progressive left challenge to Reform, things could go really badly?

MS: For me, I think it was twofold. Firstly, I do not believe that there is now any route whatsoever to change the Labour Party from within. As you know, I've been involved in various attempts to see left alternatives to Labour over the years. They were all fatally flawed. When I look at what people like John McDonnell, who I've got a lot of time for, and others say, I think the articles they're writing could have been written in the 1980s, the 1990s or the 2000s. I think they're ignoring the reality of the seizure of power in the Labour Party. For example, when Rachael Maskell MP was suspended for saying things that Starmer had said himself in the past, something was going wrong.[†] It tells me there is no scope to change things from within. But personally, I think that this new project absolutely has the potential to not fail. I say potential because there are some real worries. Attempts to have a left alternative in the past, I think, were rooted in small left organizations and around some charismatic individuals, as they were seen.

But Hilary, I do agree with you. I think that this moment is of critical importance because of the rise of Reform. My take is you can't defeat Reform through the centre, because I think there is a disillusionment with the Labour establishment's centrist politics.

Where the difference between Labour and the Tories is less and less [clear] on many questions, Reform is purporting to be the anti-establishment party. We know that's nonsense. But a lot of people will go for that. So, I think if you haven't got an anti-establishment radical party of the left to make socialist arguments, the game's up. For me, it is the critical task of our time, to confront what's happening with Reform. But I think it is also a more longer-term thing for me, now that Labour has become ever more in the centre. Something more is needed, born of a mass involvement, not of just some left-wing groups coming together. That, to me, is the absolute difference between what's happening here and what happened in the recent past. I think they go hand in hand.

BW: For 5 years, I've been in the bubble of Parliament. It is quite clear to me that the political establishment in its entirety – and I wouldn't differentiate much at all between Labour and the Conservatives within the parliamentary establishment – is defunct and failing 99 per cent of the people of this country.

[†] This suspension of the Labour Party whip was ended in November 2025.

We need fundamental change. The threat Reform poses, which is itself part of the political establishment if you look at the people behind the Reform Party, places a greater urgency on an alternative way of doing politics.

This is what really drew me to the Your Party project – a different way of doing politics. This is not about trying to tinker around the edges or bringing about change from within. From my own experience of being in Parliament, it has to come from the grassroots, it has to be about embedding ourselves within our communities. Reaching out to those people who are not politically engaged, sadly at the moment a majority of the population, because people have lost trust in the political establishment. I wholeheartedly agree with them. It is about getting involved in local campaigns, volunteering at food banks and so on, and bringing about change from the grassroots up. That is the only way that change is going to happen. I would add that, yes, Reform is far right and racist. But a lot of the people in the valleys of South Wales, a large proportion of those people who are turning to Reform, would be horrified if they were described in those terms. They want change. But they've lost trust, they're completely disillusioned with the political establishment. Reform has been allowed to pose as the only alternative up until now. With the work that we're now doing with Your Party and the meetings that we've started to have, we're having an impact. Mark went to one in Ceredigion in West Wales, and I'm going to one tonight in the South Wales Valleys. This is an opportunity to provide a genuine socialist alternative, that can mobilize the mass of the population and offer an alternative to the political establishment (including Reform).

MC: Even if you accept that Labour is finished and are looking for an alternative, it's not clear that Your Party is the only game in town. At an English level in particular, we've got the Greens, who have just elected a new leader, Zack Polanski, saying a number of left-sounding things. And in Wales there's Plaid Cymru (Welsh Nationalists), who might have played a role in the past in supporting Labour in the Senedd, but are now showing up in the polls as a third factor along with Labour and Reform. So how do you navigate this? Do you see Plaid as a rival or a potential ally?

BW: Well, I'm currently doing some work with Leanne Wood, the former leader of Plaid Cymru, around community wealth building across the South Wales Valleys, and we work very well together, we're both socialist, and we've got far more in common than divides us. I have historically worked cross-party on certain issues. At this point, we are having discussions within the Welsh people who are involved with Your Party around exactly what Mark and Michael just touched on. From my personal perspective, where

there is a possibility to build alliances at the local level, then we do. Zack has only recently been elected as Green Party leader, and we're watching quite closely. We're having those discussions in Wales, and I know that that's happening at the UK level as well.

CONNECTING WITH THE GRASSROOTS AND THE WORKING CLASS

HW: Mark, you made that important distinction between initiatives of the past, which have tended to be small groups based around the charismatic leader trying to build a mass base, whereas now you're starting with a mass base. But then Beth talks about the importance of rooting it in grassroots campaigns and so on. So, it's really a question about that mass support. In terms of its existing form, the 800,000 sign-ups are lots of individuals. But do you think, from the Welsh experience, that there are signs of a kind of mass space at a grassroots level. Obviously, it hasn't been yet expressed politically, but maybe it is there amongst the base of the unions, or in campaigns around land and community? Are you seeing the growth of collective activity, of people coming together to protest, to develop alternatives? Or are we talking about a very atomized mass of support?

MS: I'm just going to be honest, and Beth and I may not agree on everything. But that's the beauty of the party we want to develop, I think, is one where people can have proper comradely discussion to iron out differences. I think to really answer your question honestly, the jury's out on whether this is going to be a success. I want to say something that may sound startling. But I think that the problem the left has to overcome is, I would argue, that much of it is more removed from the working class now than it is at any time in my lifetime. And that is also part of the problem. We see it in America, we see it in Britain, we see it everywhere. Many working-class people think that the left has become an academic, middle-class thing that often looks down at them, and tells them what's good for them. And the left has retreated, in my view, from class-based analysis and class struggle to the bonfire of radicalism around predominantly identity, certainly a removal from the idea of collective and class. I think we have to have that discussion, because if we don't get that right it's a gift to our opponents. You know, Donald Trump on the right in America, and Farage does it in Britain very skilfully in weaponizing what they think most people think about social differences in background. That undermines the fight that the left must have to protect minorities, to stop discrimination and to ensure that there is no one who faces the brunt of the mob or the right-wing ideologues. If we recognize differential identities to the extent that has been done on the left recently, you can make a gulf

between yourself and many people in the working class when we want to be building bridges of common experiences.

Now, my take is that for this party to be successful, it must start on the things that we can all agree radically unite us. I think that's the economy. It is redistribution of wealth. It is nationalization. It is arguing against the drive to militarism and increasing arms spending by talking about our infrastructure. It is about truly embracing the fight against climate change and radicalizing how we can make the necessary transitions about jobs and a better society. To me, those are the core things that will tackle this rise of racism and migrant-bashing.

You know, if your answer to that is something that doesn't really seem to be rooted in people's problems, I don't think you'll get a hearing. You reduce yourself to moral arguments, which are important, but they're not always going to be the thing that will win the day if someone hasn't got a job, can't get a house or they're living in poverty. My view of the new party should be that we unite around a program of 5 or 10 key things that are economically radical in the ways that I describe.

The next thing we should do to make a total break with the way the left's operated. I think we say that within this unity program that differences are accepted and welcomed. I was brought up in a tradition of the working class where debate was expected. Imagine going to miners' clubs in the 60s and 70s and people thinking they're just going to be told what's what, that there wasn't to be a debate! We should welcome difference and relearn the technique of comradely debate. Sometimes we're going to end up in different places, and it doesn't necessarily matter. If we don't do that, the danger becomes being a party of the left and left activists that isn't rooted in the working class.

That's why I think we centre those things that we agree on. I made this point at the Ceredigion launch of Your Party in September. I want the party to accept that we should have a core that we believe in – no discrimination, everybody free to live the life that they want. For example, women activists and trans people need to recognize common experiences and bridge differences over contentious issues without suffering abusive accusations. This went down well. Most people there are thinking – 'yeah, I can have my own opinion on stuff. But why should we fall out over it?' It is the collective thing that binds us. And must bind us.

This is also Beth's point about community activism and fighting against local government cuts, fighting over the environment, for example, pollution of our rivers, the need to bring the water companies back into public ownership. These local grassroots campaigns do exist. But they're often seen

as separate from the big national struggle, and I think we're trying to join the dots. You need community activism to get people involved and active.

At the international level, the obvious thing is clearly the genocide in Gaza, the outrage and mobilization of demonstrations involving hundreds of thousands across the UK. The organizing around that is spilling into Your Party, and we know there are five independent MPs elected on the back of that conflict, including Corbyn. I think our job is to collectivize other struggles on the issue. I think at the moment, my observation of the trade unions is they're far too quiet for my liking.

We're also not really seeing vociferous criticism and organizing against Keir Starmer's Labour government cuts. This should give a credible opportunity for Your Party to mobilize struggles around them. All will not be like the Birmingham bin workers [strike], but many more struggles are likely to break out. I think it is important that as soon as the strikes occur, Your Party has to gravitate towards them, be supporting them on the picket line and explaining the demands of the strikers. Fighting against public sector cuts is just, and we have to be where those struggles are taking place. I'll cut to the chase: that's why this party could be very different.

In terms of the question about other parties, all I would say is that if we're only seen as an anti-Reform alliance there are dangers in that. We would fall into the Reform trap – we're just another establishment group who says, 'all we care about is "not you"'. Your Party needs to be much more than that. We should also recognize that, in Europe, we have seen very successful red-green alliances that are uniting people on the left who are socialists and people in the green movement. So, I think we do have to have those conversations. I agree with Beth very much. But remember what our founding principles are as we go into those discussions. What you can't ignore – whether it's the Greens, or whether it's Plaid Cymru, or anyone else – is that those parties often have some fantastic people in them, but they've also got politicians in them who've made cuts and are deeply unpopular in their communities. So, what we've got to get over thinking is that we will have an alliance of progressives at the start. But if someone's in the Greens or Plaid Cymru, and they're anti-austerity and anti-cuts, I think we want to work with them. But if they're in the Greens and they're in Plaid Cymru and they're closing local services, then obviously we want to stand against them. That's the sort of way we've got to navigate.

BW: What has been so refreshing is that even though Mark and I don't agree on everything, we really do work really well together. It is about finding issues of unity which we know very well. In Wales, this is around the cost of living, retention of public services – all the stuff that Mark said. The Welsh

working class has historically been at the forefront of working-class socialist movements and change. I really think that there is an opportunity in Wales for us to be at the forefront again via the Your Party project. We've got 14 plus local groups already set up, and we're organizing a meeting for the end of October. We are getting on with it here in Wales.

For me, one of the other reasons I got involved with this whole project was to make sure that Wales isn't – as it has been in the past – an afterthought. Mark and I have been very, very vocal in all the meetings that we've attended at the UK level. To advocate that the regions and nations are treated on an equal level as the 'Westminster-London bubble', which hasn't always been the case. So, along with the redistribution of wealth, we've got to ensure that there's a redistribution of power to the regions and nations. This includes things like access to resources and data at the local level, and systems and structures that respect that we've got our own government here in Wales.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES IN WALES

MC: Without trying to reduce everything to the electoral level, elections to the Welsh Senedd are happening in May next year. This leaves a relatively short space of time for a new party to get organized in time. Do you think it's likely that you'll be in a position to contest these elections? On a UK-wide level, there seems to be a frustration among supporters of Your Party, that they've signed up to an email list, but there's now an organizational lag before any structures are in place. How are you managing the tension between timetables?

BW: We've got a meeting planned where this very issue will be discussed. This is a different kind of politics though. It would be good to be in a position to stand candidates. But the priority is to get out there and mobilize at a grassroots level and build a socialist movement from the ground up. And, for me, I passionately believe our future leaders are all around us within our communities.

HW: As a follow up, what Michael was maybe driving at is the instinct of getting on with things, combined with a redistribution of power away from the centre. Is Your Party developing a structure in which the regions have significant autonomy? Is it that you're not so much wanting to argue a big constitutional issue, but you're just wanting to get on with experimenting and you're not sure exactly how it'll end up in terms of structures? By going ahead now, by getting on with further developing your own local structures you are de facto creating a basis for autonomy within the new party, or giving a character to the party that recognizes the autonomy of different regions.

BW: Everybody who's been involved, and Jeremy and Zara themselves, have made public statements about the importance of self-determination and autonomy. We've got a parliament in Wales, Scotland has a parliament, and to an extent there are the regional authorities of England. So, it's a given for me that we have to have systems and structures that not only respect but allow that to continue and grow. We have had quite in-depth discussions about federalist structures of affiliation, and how that might look to ensure that the nations and regions are treated as equal. This is of fundamental importance to me.

MS: I completely agree, and I think that what we're doing here is making it a reality on the ground, trying to lead by example. If we can have a launch that's free from the sectarian, inward-looking stuff, it'll show it can be done. It's true that there's an urgency here in Wales that doesn't necessarily exist for people who are looking through the lens of [Westminster] parliamentary elections in 2029. There is a big election next year, and Reform could be the biggest party in Wales, as the polls warn.

For all those reasons, we are cracking on and, of course, we are going to very quickly brush up against whether when people say they're for autonomy, they mean it. Making a request to have the data of the 23,000 people who signed up in Wales shouldn't be hard if you believe in it. So we are currently going to try to ensure we have a successful event at the end of October, and we need the data to contact these people. We're trying to engage with Jeremy and Zara, and I'm optimistic, because I can't believe that anyone would get in the way of the potential this project has over internal issues.

There is a discussion clearly going on amongst people in Your Party about, is this a one-member, one-vote project? Is it just a coming together of lots of different groups done on some kind of federal basis? How are decisions going to be made? And everybody's rehearsing the problems with Syriza, and Podemos. So, we've got to get down into the detail. But as Beth keeps saying whenever she speaks, and I couldn't agree with her more, if we only look at the detail and don't lift our heads up and engage with the real world and the need to campaign in the grassroots, then we're not going to be what we need to be.

MC: In terms of the unions, you were critical of their passivity under Labour. Is your strategy based on recruiting individual trade unions over to the new party? Or how feasible is it to think about a structure where local branches or regions or even national affiliations become possible? Is this something that is being discussed or is it more about building the mass membership?

MS: For me at the moment, it's about building a mass membership, and

having a discussion about the structure of a party moving forward. I'm certainly not in favour of recreating a trade union block vote or recreating the Labour Party because the block vote was traditionally always wheeled out to stop the left when the Constituency Labour Parties were taken over by loads of left-wingers. It has never been democratic in terms of the way it's operated.

But we need to be gravitating to real-life community struggles around the environment, and trade union struggles in particular. You would hope that if the unions got a little bit more out there, as disputes break out about the leadership of Starmer and Reeves and public sector cuts, Your Party will be there on the picket lines, making the argument for an alternative to austerity and cuts. And trying to get those trade union members to join. Longer term, I think, the relationship with unions is something that should be discussed.

MORE ACTIVIST UNIONS?

HW: Do you think that there's a way in which the new party could help to stimulate the unions to be more active by being in a position to support those forces in the unions who are wanting to act and who, at the moment, don't really have any kind of political voice, as everything is done through national structures? But through Your Party, working at different levels and closely with workers in struggle, do you think it could help to stimulate greater resistance and self-confidence?

MS: I'm very wary as an ex-General Secretary of a union of being too critical of what I've now retired from. But if I could put it this way, there is no doubt Your Party could stimulate the unions, because I think a lot of union activists and young people in particular will gravitate to this.

What would show the unions at their worst would be if the union leadership's response to that was to see it through the prism of their own internal politics, rather than lifting their head up and seeing it through the excitement that this is raising outside the union. What has surprised me is the lack of more vociferous criticism from the unions collectively to Starmer. When I look back to my time as General Secretary, coming in at a time when people were getting fed up with the Blair government, there was a turn in the unions to the left, and the election of lots of left-wingers. And it was all based on unions recognizing that we are the opposition now. I think the unions will inevitably have to move in that direction, because it seems that the government has an economic problem. It's not prepared to tax the rich or corporations, so it's going to increasingly look for the poorest and the public sector to pay that price. Union members will have to kick up about it, as jobs go and pay is restrained. I think that this could be an exciting moment for unions.

When I was General-Secretary at PCS, one of the things we didn't quite get right was that the Corbyn phenomenon was exciting everyone. But I don't think we were successful enough at tapping a lot of the excitement of young people into union activity. And if I could go back, we would have tried a bit more than we did to embrace the Corbyn project in PCS. But we couldn't move quicker, and you fast-forward to now and learn those lessons.

If there's close to 800,000 signups to Your Party, you know that many of them would be in unions and many of them will be young. I bet a lot of them are not active in their union, so there is a real chance, I think, to help radicalize people and get them involved politically, and also through the trade union movement. I think that's something the unions should embrace. We know, however, how the world works. The leaders of many unions are far more conservative. They're often fearful of some of their rank and file, and particularly their activists. Some unions are Labour-affiliated. This isn't going to pan out in a straight line but, I think, have ebbs and flows. There are radical, unaffiliated unions like PCS, the Bakers, the RMT and some others. But even in the big, affiliated unions, we know they've got thousands of activists who are churning and really wanting to do things. This could be an exciting development both politically and industrially.

But being radical counts for nothing if you are too far ahead of working people, because you won't deliver anything. The other side of the coin is if you're always behind where people want to be, then you play a reactionary role, knowingly or unknowingly. The key is always to tap your radicalism into the opportunities that exist, and organize. Our approach, and Beth's approach, as she's advocated everywhere, is grassroots organizing, local campaigning and connecting to political change. I think that's what we want to do, and that will involve the unions.

BW: Just to add to what Mark has said, in terms of Wales. Again, I think there are slightly different opportunities. We've still got quite a few local trade union councils, who are embedded at the grassroots in their communities. Your Party is an opportunity to solidify that. There are opportunities to have those conversations about how they can get more involved in some of the work that we're doing, because unions have lost their way, even in Wales, where trade union activism and membership have plummeted. Like Mark says, I see this as an opportunity. There are nuanced differences in Wales, in terms of the relationships and the ways that the leadership of the unions might view the new party.

CHALLENGES FOR PARTY BUILDING

HW: You're saying Your Party is an exciting prospect, but there's a slight sense of trepidation, sometimes dismay, when you see all the divisions that are very public. What do you see as the challenges and traps you'll need to avoid?

MS: Personally, I would start with, 'what do we end up wanting to be?' I think it is a mass party of the left, with hundreds of thousands, even millions, of people signed up. That has to be a democratic organization on the ground, in the communities, the length and breadth of Britain, connecting local struggles to political change. Grassroots campaigning is key to building the party, but it's not enough, because you ultimately have to contest the levers of power.

We need to do that from where we are in the most challenging of political times. This requires, I think, a simplicity and clarity about what it is we want to achieve and avoid getting waylaid by individual issues that are not our core mission. For me this has to be foremost about economic radicalism, leading to political change. There has to be, at the core, wealth redistribution. Nationalization, huge investment in our public services. Arguing against the drive to militarism and war and the huge arms spending. Any form of society that we want is one that challenges discrimination and racism wherever it raises its head.

Then, we should define policies. So, that must mean a massive council house building program; it must mean stopping being ripped off by the utility companies; it must mean proper investment in our public services; and it must mean intervening dramatically into the debate around immigration and saying we stand for humanity, something different, and a proper process that treats people properly. To bring about these changes requires mass engagement and organization at the grassroots level. That means a democracy must be built, based on developing our own form of democracy that takes the best of what we've had historically, but doesn't repeat some of the mistakes. That's the vision.

What are the challenges that we face? First of all, I would say at the moment there is a concern to resist the drive for power and central control, but also to avoid that terrible thing you see on the left, where your comrade is actually a motivated enemy. You know, when you do not lift your head up and actually see, we've got 9 things out of 10 in common, yet we're spending all our time undermining and manoeuvring against each other. It's what the left has done in the past, and there are signs that it could repeat itself.

The best control over authoritarianism and undemocratic means has to

be mass participation and engagement. The sooner we open that door, the better. It's to accept that if you have 800,000 people expressing interest, let's just take it as a figure, and you convert that to fee-paying party membership of one in four, transparency, openness, and democratic accountability are fundamental. Unlike unions and other political parties who've taken decades to develop their political structures and democratic structures, we don't have any of that at the moment. It isn't as easy to have a democratic founding that is as democratic as you'd like the party to be in 5 years. So, I think the route to a democratic party is to scale down what you're trying to do in the early doors that are opened – to involve the mass on the key things that matter. That gets you up and running as soon as possible. I fear at the moment that one of the challenges to overcome is the people putting poor form of democracy above everything in a sense of urgency. It's a very hard thing to kick off and do. If the party initially becomes so internalized about a perfect internal democracy, then we're not looking at 150,000 marching against the far right.

That's why I come back to Beth's mantra when she speaks – 'grassroots, grassroots, grassroots'. Some people might say, 'well, that's not enough', and nobody says 'that's enough'. But local political activism is the key thing to focus on whilst doing the other stuff. So, the challenge, for me, has to be getting to the founding event sooner rather than later. It is to massively increase communications, which are dire for Your Party at the moment – I think I've had one email, maybe two. In Wales, we've had more than that, but not as many as we would like. Coming from a trade union movement, we know the organizational lifeblood is communicating with members to keep them informed and participating.

The challenge of getting to a founding event that won't be perfect, but will be as democratic as it can be. That one of its founding decisions should be, we all agree, for the next stage to be setting up branch structures. Based on everyone being able to participate, so that you can develop your representative democracy, because representative democracy means that if you haven't got a structure, you're not representing anyone. The 'one member, one vote debate' is a big challenge. It's got to be better for everyone to have a vote. We all know representative democracy must play a part in a thriving organization, but it's got to be built. These are the challenges to overcome, but that is entirely possible, in my opinion.

I would like to inject an urgency that let's get there and take these challenges on, and retreat a bit from competing camps. And if you wanted to ask me, what camp I'm in, I'm not in either camp. I am actually in the camp that says, 'can we please build at the grassroots and get on with the real

struggle?’ Having a leadership battle going on before there’s even a founding conference, I think that is damaging. Jeremy and Zara have immense strengths and skills. And I think they’re both really important people. But this has to be about mass engagement and involvement; and those are some of the challenges that, I think, we’ve got to overcome.

BW: Mark said it all, really. We’ve just made the decision to go and do stuff in Wales, although it can suck up energy as well, ending up in internal wrangling, with different camps. As Mark said, we’re not in these camps, and we need debate. The infrastructure is wanting at the moment. There is a concern that there is a creeping into a London-centric and top-down approach. This is the complete opposite of what the intention of the new party was at the outset. It is exactly against what we are doing in Wales – which is bottom-up, building grassroots, mobilizing, and leading by example.

FURTHER READING ON BRITISH LABOURISM AND A NEW PARTY

Michael Calderbank and Hilary Wainwright, ‘Losing Momentum: Strategic Dilemmas for Socialists in Britain’, in Greg Albo and Stephen Maher, eds, *Socialist Register 2025: Openings and Closures. Socialist Strategy at a Crossroads*, Merlin Press, 2025, pp. 48–67.

Madeleine Davis, ‘Leo Panitch on British Labourism and the Prospects for a “Labour New Left”’, in Greg Albo, Nicole Aschoff and Alfredo Saad-Filho, eds, *Socialist Register 2023: Capital and Politics*, 2022, pp. 289–312.

Andrew Murray, ‘Force of Opposition’, *New Left Review Sidecar*, 6 August 2025, available at: www.newleftreview.org/sidecar

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