

Labour Party

The following motions were passed at the February 2020 rs21 members' national meeting

Developments in the Labour leadership election mean that we need to reassess our approach to membership of the Labour Party.

The result of the December 2019 election was a serious defeat for the left. The centre and right of the Labour Party – most of the PLP, the vast majority of local councillors, former ministers and Labour lords as well as publications like the Guardian and New Statesman – are seeking to take advantage of that defeat and return the Labour Party to what it was before 2015, a party uninhabitable by most socialists.

One of the main ways that they will attack the left is by making claims about antisemitism. It is, therefore, disastrous that all the leadership candidates, including Rebecca Long-Bailey, have accepted the ten demands made by the Board of Deputies. We can expect that these proposals will be used to expel thousands of Labour members – this will happen even if Long-Bailey is elected leader, and will be worse if she isn't. Labour members should call on Long-Bailey to change her position, and must be supported in resisting the attacks we expect. But no one in the party is putting forward any viable strategy to defeat them.

The risk is that Labour members respond in two ways: first, by accommodating over issues such as Palestine so as to stay in the party, or second, leaving, or being expelled, and becoming inactive and demoralised. Instead, we want as many of these people as possible to remain politically active and part of socialist networks. It is not yet clear what form those networks will take – certainly there is no sign of any meaningful breakaway organisation being formed.

rs21 therefore advises its members who have joined the Labour Party to begin considering, in discussion with other rs21 comrades, their strategy over the next few months. They should accept that they may not be able to remain Labour members, and may want to identify what "red lines" would mean they had to leave. They should identify what political activity, such as union or campaign work, they will be involved in outside the Labour Party if they do. They should discuss these issues with Labour members outside rs21, with a view to remaining in contact with them, and if possible politically active with them.

This strategy aims to help rs21 members make a retreat in a difficult situation, with the aim of keeping as many individuals and networks as possible active, so that we can fight another day. No one becomes a revolutionary socialist to retreat – doing so is tactically difficult and emotionally painful. But it is clear that, given the election defeat and the attacks from the Labour right we can expect to face, it is the only realistic way forward.

The World Transformed (TWT) is a fringe political festival taking place annually around the Labour Party Conference, attracting 6000 visitors in 2019 from a local and international background as speakers and attendees. The politics during the sessions was radical, pushing beyond the policy proposals found inside the conference and with a view to building policy ideas from the bottom up. Regardless of what takes place within the Labour Party in 2020 it seems likely that rs21's revolutionary socialist ideas would find a warm reception from attendees to TWT and would therefore be a valuable use of our efforts to participate to share our ideas, widen our reach and establish new connections and recruit members.

Therefore:

1. A volunteer committee will be set up to co-ordinate members of rs21 who wish to attend TWT in September 2020 in Liverpool and to encourage attendance by the membership.
2. The committee and the rs21 Organiser will discuss logistics of rs21 intervening as an organisation up to and including fringe meetings if so desired.