

class

Centre for Labour
and Social Studies

Annual Report

Year End March 2017

128 Theobalds Road,
London WC1X 8TN
E: info@classonline.org.uk
P: 020 7611 2569

CLASS is a company limited by guaranteed 8153706

Introduction

This report outlines the activities of the Centre for Labour and Social Studies (CLASS) from April 2016 to the end of March 2017.

2016-17 was a break-out year for CLASS - with over 70 TV, radio and speaking appearances by the Director, and multiple mentions of CLASS in mainstream print and TV media on the day of the CLASS conference and 'Race and Class' report launch. As a consequence, the public profile of the organisation has grown considerably - as clear from the surge in Twitter and Facebook followers. This has elevated the think tank considerably – we are now considered a 'major' and 'leading' left think tank.

We received more funding from our core supporting unions than in 2015/16, and continue to have strong support from a cross-section of unions. The importance of a strong foundation across the labour movement is vital to ensuring the focus of CLASS is grounded in the experiences of working people. In 2016-17, CLASS engaged with many more trade unionists, politicians, academics, journalists, opinion formers and activists, raising the profile of the organisation as a major resource for progressive thinking.

This year we held another successful national conference, attracting nearly 500 delegates and some of the most high-profile speakers from across the labour movement, academia and the media. Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the Labour party, opened the conference, with other shadow front bench speakers including Keir Starmer MP who provided useful insight on Labour's position on Brexit.

CLASS published a total of 13 publications last year, which ranged from the high-level series on the impact of the EU on the working class, to our 'facts and fixes' series distributed in hard copy form to activists across the country. This year we updated our website to ensure the function and look is in keeping with current standards. The CLASS website continues to be an important source of progressive policy analysis. We published nearly 80 blogs addressing developments including the Spring Budget, housing policy, Brexit and immigration. Our new 'Labour Market Realities' blog series, with video interviews with workers alongside key statistics, ensures that our thinking and analysis is connected to the lived experiences of everyday people.

Going forward, CLASS will continue to engage and promote big ideas, ensuring the voice of working people is taken seriously in policy formulation. CLASS will continue to stress the role of organised labour and trade unions in the economy and how we begin to reverse growing income inequality. Our research and briefing papers need to be bolder and more innovative, our media operation much wider, our events bigger and better, our connection with policymakers greater, our influence on political parties stronger, but above all, we need to include activists much more in this battle of ideas to shift the debate. Over the next important period CLASS will work tirelessly to this end. The snap General Election called in April 2017 meant we started the 2017/18 financial year with renewed energy and determination, and we plan to build on this momentum in the coming year.

Organisation and Administration

CLASS now has four permanent members of staff – Dr Faiza Shaheen (Director), Dan Durcan (Senior Research Officer), Clare Hymer (Communications Officer) and Bridie O’Shea (Policy Officer). CLASS is an independent organisation supported by a number of trade unions. While the day-to-day activities of CLASS are run by the staff and overseen by the elected Officers, strategy, policy priorities and the overall management of CLASS are the responsibility of the Management Committee. At the end of March 2017, CLASS had the support of 15 trade unions.

Supporting Unions 2014-2015



Management Committee

The Management Committee is made up of representatives of supporting unions, Officers of the Institute of Employment Rights and nominated parliamentary advisors from the CLASS National Advisory Panel. Nominated officers from the Management Committee act as Directors of CLASS for financial purposes. The 2016-17 Management Committee and Officers were:

- **President:** Tim Roache – GMB
- **Vice-President:** Isabelle Gutierrez – MU
- **Vice-President:** Geoff Shears – IER
- Kevin Courtney – NUT
- Manuel Cortes – TSSA
- Ian Hodson - BFAWU
- Keith Ewing – IER/Kings College London
- Andrew Towers – CWU
- John Hendy QC - IER
- Carolyn Jones – IER
- Chris Kitchen – NUM
- James McGowan – ASLEF
- Steve Murphy – UCATT
- Andrew Murray – Unite
- Doug Nicholls – GFTU
- Gerry Morrissey – FEU
- Matt Waddup - UCU
- Dave Watson – PCS

Parliamentary Advisors

- Jack Dromey MP
- Jon Trickett MP

CLASS National Advisory Panel

CLASS has an extensive National Advisory Panel of experts who offer policy guidance on their specific areas of expertise and assist in whatever capacity they are able to.

More information: <http://classonline.org.uk/about/panel>

Events

CLASS has held a number of very successful and well attended public events including our annual national conference in November with an attendance of over 400 people. Other events include:

Launch of CLASS paper: ‘Does the EU work for working class people?’ 1 June 2016

CLASS set out to make a balanced contribution to the debate, focusing on the areas and issues being overlooked and of most significance to working class people and communities in the UK. We asked key figures from across the labour movement and academic institutions- and with differing attitudes to the EU- the same question – “Does the European Union work for working class people?” – and launched the compiled responses at an event in June 2016. The event was chaired by Faiza, with panelists including Journalist Dawn Foster, ASLEF General Secretary Mick Whelan and Dr Oliver Sykes of Liverpool University.

A year of Tory rule: Taking stock of public services, Fringe event at TUC Congress, 12 September 2016

This panel discussion organised by CLASS addressed the impact of a year of Conservative policy on public services, and what our vision should be for the future of public services. Speakers included Anne Swift, President of the NUT, Sharon Holder, GMB National Officer for the NHS, and Cat Hobbs, Director of We Own It.

CLASS Review of the Year with Paul Mason and Ellie O’Hagan, Fringe event at Labour Party Conference, 25 September 2016

This was a more informal reception on the eve of Labour Party Conference and a chance to reflect on a very eventful year for the UK and the left. The event was standing room only, and people were turned away at the door due to overcrowding.

Brexit and a New PM: What Next for Inequality? Fringe event at Labour party conference, 27 September 2016

This session addressed what the Brexit vote and new PM Theresa May could mean for the fight against inequality. Speakers included Frances O’Grady, Owen Jones, Lisa Nandy MP and Steve Cavalier. This was a very well attended session, with standing room only.

CLASS Conference: Britain at a Crossroads, 5 November 2016

The 2016 CLASS conference was a great success, with tickets sold out, packed sessions and various media in attendance (including Channel 4, ITV and the BBC). This all-day event featured a great line up of high profile speakers from the Labour movement, media and academia, including Jeremy Corbyn MP, Frances O’Grady, Len McCluskey, Tim Roache, Lisa Nandy MP, Owen Jones, Prof Özlem Onaran, Frances Ryan, Keir Starmer MP, Prof Danny Dorling and many more.

Brexit: The Future of Our Economy, 28 February 2017

Presented by CLASS in partnership with Verso Books, Faiza chaired this panel discussion addressing the economic impact of Brexit. Speakers included Ann Pettifor, Richard Murphy and Gracie Mae Bradley of the Migrants’ Rights Network.

Website and Social Media

Website and Social Media

CLASS has significantly increased its web and social media presence over the past year.

Website relaunch

The biggest event of the year has been the website redesign and relaunch in February 2017. The website redesign has significantly improved the appearance of our online content – a goal we've also pursued by using a wider variety of images.

Blogs

This year we've really made an effort to build the profile of our blog series and give it more prominence on our website. This year, we published almost 100 blogs, with authors including Danny Dorling, Sally Hunt, Richard Murphy, Maya Goodfellow and many more, plus a very successful video blog by Ann Pettifor. This is alongside regular blogs from Faiza Shaheen and all three members of staff. Subjects covered in blogs included zero hours contracts, banking, fair pay, inequality, immigration, higher education, living standards, housing, race and class, and austerity.

Social media

We currently have over **14.4K Twitter followers**, up 1.6K followers from 12.8K in April 2016. In November 2016 alone – the month of the conference – we gained just under 300 new followers. We now receive an average of 8,000 impressions a day on Twitter, and in November 2016 we received a total of 417K impressions. Our top tweet of the year was viewed over **81,900 times**.

CLASS has **4,368 likes on Facebook**, up from 3,601 in April last year. We now post our blogs and Faiza's media appearances from the Facebook page much more regularly.

Press and Media

CLASS has enjoyed a significant growth in publicity over the year following the appointment of Faiza Shaheen, with articles across numerous newspapers and TV channels, including the BBC, Channel 4, Sky News, the Guardian, the Independent, and LBC. Below is a selected sample of appearances.

April 2016

- BBC Newsnight, Minimum wage
- Channel 4 News, Panama Papers
- Channel 4 News, Panama Papers

July 2016

- Channel 4 News, Cameron's last PMQs
- Sky News, Cameron's legacy
- Channel 5 News, Cameron's legacy
- Sky News, Press Review
- BBC Newsnight, Social mobility

August 2016

- BBC Newsnight, Interest rate cuts
- Channel 4 News, Grammar schools
- Channel 4 News, Deliveroo
- Sky News Press Review
- BBC Debate, Does Britain need a pay rise?

September 2016

- BBC Newsnight, Social mobility
- NEF Podcast, Zero hours contracts and Sports Direct
- Sky News, McDonnell speech and policies
- Sky News, Generational wealth gap

October 2016

- Sky News Press Preview

November 2016

- BBC 2, Will Britain Ever Have a Black Prime Minister? Around 20 radio interviews off the back of this.
- BBC Business Live, Autumn Statement
- Guardian CIF piece, Recruitment agencies, the gig economy and zero hours contracts
- Sky News, Inflation

January 2017

- Guardian, Rising stars of 2017: Campaigner Faiza Shaheen, 01/01/17
- Sky News, Press Review

March 2017

- LBC, Spring Budget
- Channel4 News, Spring Budget
- Guardian, Budget response
- Sky News, race and class
- Guardian, CIF race and class

Director speaking events

Alongside media appearances our Director spoke at over 30 events, including alongside Ann Pettifor, Danny Dorling and Clive Lewis MP, on issues ranging from the drivers of economic inequality to populism and housing policy.

Finance Report 2016-2017

1 April 2016 - 31 March 2017

Income	(£) Actual	(£) Budget	2015-16
2015 Donations¹	143,500	144,000	97,500
Unite the Union	50,000		
GMB	40,000		
TSSA	5,000		
NUT	5,000		
Musicians Union	7,500		
UCU	5,000		
CWU	20,000		
PCS	5,000		
ASLEF	2,500		
NUM	1,000		
Sales	100	-	100
Events	4,546	5,000	1,500
Tickets	1,746	3,000	
Sponsorship	2,500	2,000	
Food		500	
Stalls	300	200	
Grants	-	-	
Interest receivable			113
Total	148,898	152,700	99,213

Expense	(£) Actual	(£) Budget	2015-16
Salaries, wages and training	123,602	140,600	112,527
Events	21,138	15,050	7,491
Website and publicity	6,560	5,500	5,014
Travel and subsistence	2,449	1,550	2,029
Office expenses and printing	2,951	3,450	1,055
Professional Fees	5,200	5,000	1,275
Bank Charges and Interest	36	22	36
General Expenses / Contingency	-	-	-
Total	162,206	152,716	129,427

Taxation		22	22
-----------------	--	----	----

Net Surplus/Deficit after tax:	-13,308		-30,236
Cash in bank:	10,692		
Reserves:	20,704		