

Connections. ✖



Issue 3 15 May 2026 (Nakba Day)

The tectonic plates are shifting.

The two party system is dead. The government is in turmoil, and in the near future we'll have a new prime minister. Meanwhile the shadow of a prospective far right government in the UK looms ominously over us all.

The now inevitable Labour Leadership election will be a sideshow. Any new leader will just bring more of the same: more cosying up to big corporations, more money for war, more attacks on immigrants, and no strategy that can defeat Reform. It remains just as vital as it was before that the socialist Left get organised and take to the streets to show people that there's an alternative to the politics of division and hate.

We've had a shedload of reports following last week's local elections. Thanks a million to all those whose reports are published here. **Anyone reading this is welcome to submit reports for future issues. The deadline for all submissions for the next issue is Wednesday 10th June. Please send all contributions to media@connections-network.com.**

If you're reading this but aren't already on our mailing list, or if you want to invite people to it, [here's the link](#).

Islington Community Independents (DK Renton)

There are many things ICI did of which we should feel proud. We raised the profile of issues which other parties in Islington neglected, Peter Bedford Housing Association's attempt to evict 69 tenants, the 43 redundancies at Capital City College. Amu Gib's candidacy received positive media coverage. This is probably the single best thing we achieved, breaking the press silence around the Brize Norton case.

ICI candidates signed up to a manifesto which covered an extraordinary range of topics – from access to water to justice in Sudan. Over the five weeks of the extended campaign, and adding up everyone who participated, something like 200 people took part in our leafleting or canvassing. On Saturday, when we met up to debrief, there was an incredible feeling of collectivity.

Our worst-performing candidate secured 4.7 percent of the vote in her ward. Our best-performing candidate Amu secured 18.9 percent (569 votes in an election where 3016 voters cast three votes). For a new political party, which had never before stood in an election under the banner of ICI, these were satisfying results.

Canvassing made a difference. The votes obtained in our most-canvassed ward – Finsbury Park – tallied almost exactly with the pledges we received in advance. Those came from door-to-door conversations. We found several hundred people who were both angered with Labour and unsure what candidate best suited them. When we told them about Amu's history, the Brize Norton protest, Prisoners for Palestine – voters were willing to put their trust in us. Our best chance of a breakthrough would have been an even larger group of canvassers.

In Finsbury Park, Amu's achievement has been overshadowed by the success that the Greens had in getting two paper candidates elected in a congested election where 9 candidates secured between 500 and 1300 votes. We negotiated an election pact with the Greens, which that party's local leadership was unable to deliver. Short of negotiating next time in public, signing it publicly, holding the Green leadership to a deal from which they couldn't be overturned without securing great personal loss of face; I don't know what else we could have done differently.

We had a decision to make in late January when we learned Amu was interested in standing for election, and after our AGM had approved them as a candidate. We were told: "Muslims won't vote for a non-binary candidate", that voters in Finsbury Park were only interested in "talking about potholes". Unfortunately, the decision to be principled and choose Amu cost us the support of the self-appointed Corbyn organiser in Islington, and then Corbyn himself. None of our 9 candidates were supported by Your Party (although YP backed 3 candidates who were urged to leave ICI and stand against us). Just two of our candidates were allowed to use Corbyn's images in our material. Our candidates in Islington North had no access to the voter data gathered by Corbyn when he ran in 2024.

None of us, when we chose to join ICI, expected the negativity we faced from the Corbyn camp. The obstacles we faced in Islington weren't any different from the national machinations. The only thing which marks them out is how incredibly self-defeating they've been, even from the perspective of standing Corbyn as a candidate again. Corbyn's closest allies alienated dozens of people who've learned how to campaign and could have used those skills to help him.

Haringey Socialist Alliance (Doug Thorpe)

Haringey Socialist Alliance (HSA) stood 2 candidates in each of 3 wards (6 in all), endorsed by Your Party. We averaged 22.23% across those wards, 29% our top vote. 1 candidate got 880 votes.

These are impressive results for an overtly socialist, local party standing in its first election.

However the Green Party took 28 seats from Labour (1 short of an overall majority). They benefited from being a nationally recognised party, outpolling HSA even where they did not campaign.

This shows the value of national branding and name recognition. YP endorsement and a visit from Jeremy Corbyn, whilst welcome, made little impact.

HSA will now turn its efforts to community campaigning and building a local movement to hold to account whoever forms the new Council administration (currently likely to be a minority Green administration), as well as mobilising community support for opposing cuts.

Waltham Forest Independent Socialists (Connor Rosoman)

The Green Party are now in overall control of Waltham Forest council in north London, despite never having had any councillors there before. The Greens had initially agreed not to stand against the left independents in Cathall ward, but they ended up standing paper candidates, one of whom was duly elected.

Waltham Forest Independent Socialists would like to thank everyone who voted for us in Cathall ward on 7 May.

While we are naturally disappointed not to have been elected, to finish in fourth place on our first outing as an independent grassroots campaign is something to be proud of. For us, this is only the beginning.

Most of all we want to thank the dozens of activists whose tireless campaigning work made our stand possible. Every leaflet delivered and door knocked has helped to put us on the map, and will be built upon in the months and years ahead.

We ran an amazing campaign. In a very short period, we created canvassing software, a logo, and a media strategy that included a professional website, clear and punchy flyers, and a canvassing operation that covered the ward several times. Across our borough, working class people voted for change, and created a political earthquake, electing the first ever Green-led WF council, without delivering a single Reform councillor. We offer our congratulations to Waltham Forest Green Party for an historic victory.

In the coming years, Independent Socialists, trade unionists, housing, antiracist and antiwar campaigners will have an important role to play in our borough. A decade and a half of cuts must come to a definitive end. Waltham Forest must divest from companies complicit in genocide. And action to address the housing crisis needs to be urgently set in motion.

With that in mind, we will support the new council in any and all measures which further the interests of working-class people – and stand ready to hold the new administration to account where necessary.

YP Brum (Jenny Nolan)

The Local elections in Birmingham have been grueling but educational for us. We supported eight YP endorsed candidates in six wards and of those two candidates were successful, Harris Khalid in Ward End and Nosheen Khaliq in Alum Rock. Two others in the Small Heath ward found themselves only 30 votes away from victory. Small Heath suffered from a split vote on the left and this let in the LibDems. The most successful candidates were those that had been campaigning for a length of time and knocked every door.

In two other wards we supported independents who weren't YP endorsed, and two were elected. In one of these wards (a Reform target) we got involved in the Stand up to Racism 'Stop Reform' campaign and we did this by targeting undecided households. The candidate we supported here had a track record as an effective ward councillor. They held their seat, on a shoestring budget, and the second seat went to Reform by a relatively small margin. There are lessons to be learned here and we will be meeting with the councillor to consider what we can do in the ward in order to stop Reform winning again.

Finally, we have seen local division (and not just driven by Reform) intimidation and harassment on an unprecedented scale in Birmingham and this is largely due to an organisation that has backed some of the Indys and seems to be attempting to claim all the Birmingham Independents as their own. This is something we foresaw and we are currently attempting to address this in our city alongside our allies.

Sandwell (Jay Singh)

Jay stood as a Socialist and Trade Union Candidate in St Paul's ward.

The Left candidate in this case was myself lol.

I had the help of a small but key group of several mostly young people who helped me with canvassing though admittedly due to time and scheduling constraints I ultimately did still end up doing 90% of the door knocking.

I also got help both in terms of donations and graphic design from YP people.

I have personally canvassed before but this was the first campaign I had to conduct in the safest Labour seat in Sandwell. Against a party machine that had significantly more resources and manpower as well having been campaigning since 2025 whilst I only started properly in March 2026.

I received 214 votes and 6.7% of the vote, which was more than the Tory candidates and only just behind Reform. I think that I'll try again next year with more lead time to campaign.

The left of labour vote including both myself and the greens underperformed in Sandwell relative to expectations. I attribute this to tactical voting. The Labour Party sent out addressed mail, saying it was Labour vs Reform, even in wards like mine where Reform had no chance.

To get 214 votes was really impressive given the various factors.

North Derbyshire Left Network (Callum Salfield)

Following recent changes in Your Party, particularly the decision to effectively ban dual membership, our local group in Chesterfield and North Derbyshire reached a turning point.

Our proto branch had been built by a broad mix of activists from different political traditions, and that openness was key to growing a strong, active local presence. The new restrictions meant that a number of people central to that work were no longer able to remain members of Your Party, raising both political and practical questions about how we could continue.

In response, we held an open meeting of members and supporters on 22nd April to decide what to do next. The discussion reflected a clear and widely shared view: that we should remain active, stay inclusive, and continue organising locally without excluding those who had helped build the group. As a result, we agreed to transition from a Your Party proto branch into a new, independent formation, the North Derbyshire Left Network.

The network is an open space for socialists and campaigners across North Derbyshire, focused on keeping people connected, supporting local campaigns, and providing a platform for collaboration. While no longer tied to a single party structure, it reflects one of the main ways our group had already been operating.

We will continue to engage with wider initiatives on the left, including maintaining our involvement in the Connections Network. Delegates from North Derbyshire Left Network will continue to attend Connections meetings and contribute to building broader cooperation.

This change allows us to preserve the relationships, activity and momentum built locally, while adapting to the current situation. We hope it offers one example of how groups can continue organising in an open and collaborative way during a period of political change.

Wirral (Linda Wall)

On May 13th, 20 people from Your Party Wirral proto branch met to talk about the election results from around the country, and to consider proposals on the group's future. A proposal to rename our public channels as Wirral Socialists and to open our email list and WhatsApp Community to others on the left living in the Wirral Council area who wish to participate was passed. This will enable our group to keep going indefinitely as a semi-formal network which organises events from time to time. A second motion, which called more explicitly to set ourselves up as an independent socialist body in the Wirral which could potentially stand in elections, fell.

Reading (Callum)

As we have no ability to determine whether anybody is an official member of Your Party or not and we have been successful in our actions despite officialdom, we will welcome attendants regardless of membership. Your Party Reading is henceforth an open community activist party that all are welcome to with no restrictions. We are not an independent group. We continue to uphold the principles of the party.

CEC News

At Sunday's CEC meeting an update was provided on plans for branch formation. It's expected that around 300 branches will be created along varying geographical boundaries. The timescale for this to be completed remains unclear, but work has been done to identify priority areas, and members in some of these places will shortly be getting emails inviting them to meetings. The inaugural meetings will be for the purpose of forming the branch and electing branch roles.

Meanwhile, the new dual membership rules under which seven socialist organisations have been proscribed will start to be enforced. Members found to be in breach of the rule will be given an ultimatum: resign from the other organisation within 14 days, or your membership will be "administratively terminated" (meaning that you're given the boot).

Grace Lewis has resigned from the CEC after losing her council seat.

Connections News

We hope to see many of you at our Convention in Sheffield in three weeks time !

✓ **Where: Sheffield SADACCA, 48 The Wicker, S3 8JB**

✓ **When: Saturday 6 June 11am - 6pm**

✓ **Who can come: socialists of any political affiliation**

✓ **Tickets available from [Eventbrite](#)**

So where do we go now?

This is a question none of us can answer on our own.

☞*We need to come together, discuss together, build our networks, deepen solidarity, and collectively consider how we go forward as a movement.*

That's what Connections Convention is all about.

During the day there'll be a range of workshops and self-organised spaces. We can now announce some of the workshop topics:

- **Socialists in the local elections**
- **The General Strike**
- **The weaponisation of antisemitism**
- **Including neurodivergent people in activism**
- **Who benefits from transphobia?**