

# OUT OF THE EU MEANS

## **OUT** of the single market and **NO** free movement of labour

There is an overwhelming desire among the British people to end the economics of austerity and build an economy based on high-skill industry and manufacture. This desire was reflected in Labour's 2017 election manifesto. However, most of the promises and policies in that manifesto could not be met if the UK stays in the EU's single market. Calling for the UK to remain in the single market with total free movement of labour is not consistent with the stated manifesto policy.

Economists who find the inability

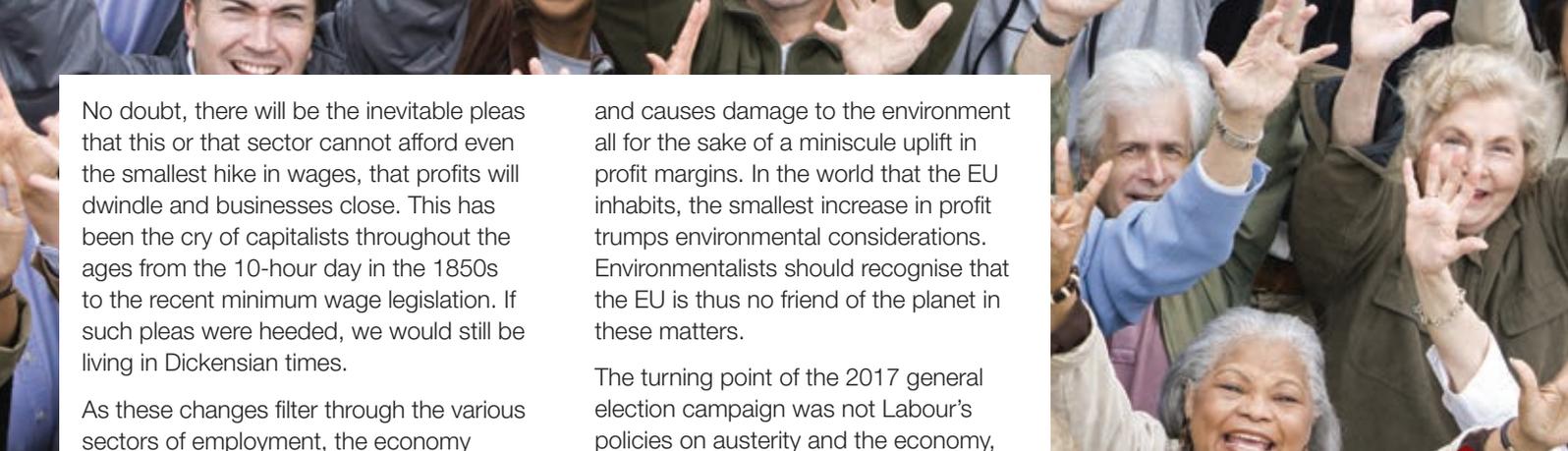
of wages to keep pace with inflation mystifying, need look no further than the large pool of labour from an EU plagued with high levels of unemployment (always around 10%, that is 22 million people) for an explanation. Such a dampening effect on wages and conditions will be removed once we are out of the single market.

As we exit the single market and end the freedom of movement, the supply of cheap labour from the EU will dry up, the price of labour will rise, workers, if organised and bargaining collectively, will be properly rewarded and their skills

recognised. This will in turn provide the incentive for business to invest in advanced machinery and improve productivity.

Agriculture, a sector predicted to face doom in a Brexit Britain is a case in point. When questioned at the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee in June this year, Batters from the National Farmers Union, and Swales from the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board accepted that the ease with which cheap labour can be sourced from Eastern Europe has diminished the incentive to invest in state-of-the-art robotic machines anywhere near the level of, say, the mechanisation in Australia, where migrant labour is highly controlled.





No doubt, there will be the inevitable pleas that this or that sector cannot afford even the smallest hike in wages, that profits will dwindle and businesses close. This has been the cry of capitalists throughout the ages from the 10-hour day in the 1850s to the recent minimum wage legislation. If such pleas were heeded, we would still be living in Dickensian times.

As these changes filter through the various sectors of employment, the economy will begin to move towards the high-productivity, high-wage, high-skill economy that the labour and trade union movement has been calling for. The prospects of moving towards such an economy have never been more achievable than with Brexit. In fact, it is made possible only by the UK leaving the EU.

In the process we can bring to an end the grotesque situation in which manufacturing parts and components that could be easily resourced locally, criss-cross the Channel before they are finally assembled into a complete product, a process, which, with excessive road transportation of components with vehicle emissions is unnecessarily wasteful of resources,

and causes damage to the environment all for the sake of a miniscule uplift in profit margins. In the world that the EU inhabits, the smallest increase in profit trumps environmental considerations. Environmentalists should recognise that the EU is thus no friend of the planet in these matters.

The turning point of the 2017 general election campaign was not Labour's policies on austerity and the economy, popular as these were, but the late inclusion of the bold statement 'the freedom of movement will end as we leave the European Union' to the election manifesto. That was the moment when workers began to see Labour as a serious and viable alternative government and was rewarded with increased support. The majority of the population know that promises of re-nationalisation and borrowing-to-invest are not possible if we remain inside the single market. Nor will state aid be permitted and public procurement be permitted.

**Labour should honour its manifesto pledge to end the freedom of movement of labour.**



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