Chair’s Report
JAMES GRAYSON

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Nationally • The crisis within the Parliamentary Labour Party continues; there was a referendum and a coup in the Conservative Party. On the face of it there was a vacuum on the policy front which the Co-op party was well placed to fill. To be fair some attempts were made but the context was not conducive to success. The party has opened up to ideas from members to a greater extent than has previously been the case.

London • There was widespread support for the Mayday celebration and the Cable Street anniversary. The Co-op Group made opportunities available for local charities to benefit from percentages of the amounts spent on Co-op goods by members who make the appropriate arrangements. The branch added a further charity.

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May I thank colleagues for their support throughout our endeavours?

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Secretary’s Report 2017
ROBBIE SCOTT

A Year of Political Campaigning Ahead of the Council Elections Next Year

The New Year has already revealed further outrageous attempts by the Conservative government to make ordinary people pay for the collapse of casino capitalism. The coming months will see the Council facing further extraordinary cuts in expenditure. Let’s hope that 2017 will present opportunities for us to unite the progressive forces of Tower Hamlets to defend ordinary working people against the Tories’ ideological cuts agenda.

Robbie Scott

Treasurer & Membership Report
MICK LOATES

The Financial Report will be tabled at our AGM and members can access the accounts on request. I have recently audited the Branch membership for 2017. The standard annual membership subscription is £33, reduced subscriptions £20, Youth varies between £10pa and £1pa. There are a number of opportunities to increase our membership by holding or participating in events especially during ‘Co-op Fortnight’ in 2017.

Mick Loates

Tower Hamlets Co-op Party

CO-OP PARTY • The political wing of the British Co-operative Movement

Co-operative Party London Council
Jenni Boswell-Jones • Robert Scott • Cate Tutt

Since the AGM of the Co-operative Party London Regional Council TH Co-op Party delegates have attended both the EC and bi-monthly Council meetings; that were held either in Portcullis House or in the “Palace of Westminster”.

Reports from all these meetings have been presented at the TH Co-op Party’s monthly meetings. Key events during the year were the Co-op Group’s support to the Co-op Party and a new Co-op logo which brought back the iconic “co-operative” logo of the 1960s. There were also the London GLA + Mayor’s elections, Co-op Party’s and Labour Party’s Annual Conferences. There was also active input into the London Mayoral elections and the Labour Party’s manifesto.

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Also WE have lost some people too from the Co-op & Labour movement

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Political education

This has been a hugely eventful and tumultuous year with the EU referendum, leading to the 52%-48% Brexit vote in June, the PLP vote of no-confidence in Jeremy Corbyn, the resignation of Prime Minister David Cameron, and the relatively rapid coronation of Theresa May as his successor. Then the leadership challenge to Corbyn and the second election campaign in August/September with the re-election of Corbyn by an increased majority (62%) of vote against Owen Smith. Then we had the election of Donald Trump in November. In May Sadiq Khan was successfully elected as London Labour mayor, alongside several other Labour mayoral candidates. The party did not meet in April and encouraged members to campaign in the election. In what was a nasty and racist campaign from the Tony candidate Zac Goldsmith, Khan gained a significant majority to win. We discussed the issues and campaigned on the Mayoral elections.

At the start of the year Puru Miah talked about Momentum and its role as a mobilising forum for the left and the many new members that had joined Labour, largely as a result of Jeremy Corbyn’s election.

In May we discussed the forthcoming European Referendum in June. Mike Davis outlined the case for a vote to remain: two key arguments were that with globalisation regional powers like the EU were necessary to help combat the power of the multi-national corporations and environmental despoliation. Internationalism and combating narrow nationalism, often accompanied by anti-migrant rhetoric, was also a vital reason to work within the EU with other socialist and left parties.

Acknowledging problems with the EU, not least the dominance of a neo-liberal economic policy and TTIP, the meeting broadly endorsed the need for ‘remain’. This backed up a previously strongly supported pro-EU TH Labour policy. Many members campaigned hard during the referendum campaign and helped secure a 65% pro-EU vote in TH.

In October we discussed Labour Party conference and the re-election of Jeremy Corbyn. Members said it was important for the Labour Party, especially the PLP, to rally round the leadership, work to develop policy in tune with the new politics and focus on challenging the Tories led by Theresa May and her phoney pledges to Corbyn. Members said it was important for the Labour Party, especially the PLP, to rally round the leadership, work to develop policy in tune with the new politics and focus on challenging the Tories led by Theresa May and her phoney pledges to Corbyn.

In November Mike Davis reported on the October Greece Solidarity Campaign delegation to Athens. The ex General Secretary and now international secretary of the National Union of Teachers Christine Blower, the deputy leader of Green Party, Amelia Womack, several Labour councillors and teacher union activists were part of the delegation. Delegates met the Environment minister, the SYRIZA (government) international secretary, education trade union leaders, social solidarity clinic volunteers and anti-neo-campainers. Over 6000 Euros, raised by Medical Aid for Palestine solidarity activists, was donated to the clinics supporting the unemployed, poor and refugees. Greece faced a double whammy: the continuing economic crisis sustained by the EU and the IMF, and combating narrow nationalism, often accompanied by anti-migrant rhetoric, was also a vital reason to work within the EU with other socialist and left parties.

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