

## 2016: the death of the left

By **Ronda Daniel** – @rondaemily\_

2016 is notoriously regarded as a year of death and sadness. Donald Trump became the President-elect of the United States of America, Britain voted to leave the EU, and the government signed off social housing and called for further benefit cuts.

Who is to blame for these events? I argue that the failure of the left led to these events.

Donald Trump won because, unfortunately, the far right is on the rise, and his racist rhetoric won people over. But in order to explore why this stupid person is going to be the President of the United States, we should look to *why Hillary lost* – this is the real question that needs to be answered. There was no actual decision for the American voter to make, it was all about the lesser of two evils: a conservative rich white woman or an ultra-conservative rich orange man. This should *not* have been the case. Why should the lesser of two evils be the only choice? A choice between Hillary's pretence (I haven't seen her in the news fighting for women, working class people, ethnic minorities or any other group since the election), or Donald's stupidity? The left, even those that did not support her, were convinced that Hillary would win. Let's be honest, complacency is the best way to describe the way the left behaved during this campaign.



Source: *Business Insider*

Brexit is slightly harder to analyse; there were legitimate left-wing reasons to remain, and legitimate left-wing reasons to leave, just as there were probably right-wing reasons to remain and right-wing reasons to leave. One thing is clear: the debate was dominated by **rich white people**. Working class Leave voters were branded as racist without actually asking them about their fears (even though the Leave campaign was run by elites), and working class people were also told to vote remain if they wanted to keep their rights. Brexit is not an issue which is so clear it cannot be called a 'left' or 'right' issue. However, the left did not do enough to challenge any tactics on either side, such as fear mongering or racism.



Source: *BBC*.

In the UK, one early morning, the government also signed off social housing. When the average house prices are shooting up in the poorest communities, and wages not rising to meet these, something is clearly wrong with the system. Not one political party has done enough to stop the **Housing and Planning Act** being passed. Whilst there were a handful of politicians who spoke against initiatives tied to this Act, and some attended events and rallies against it, political parties, including those on the left, have failed to protect society's most vulnerable people from this Act. The unanimously passed Homelessness Reduction Bill is, rightfully put by Helen Foster, **a token piece of legislation**. Homelessness is not something that should be *reduced* in a so-called modern society; it should be eradicated. Temporary accommodation should not be seen as *normal*; it should be regarded as a symbol of a system which has failed vulnerable families. Did the left really do enough to oppose any bills? We will see when the government launches the biggest attack on the poor and disabled in April 2017 when new welfare cuts will shake the country.



Source: *British Film Council*

We \*\*\*\*ed up last year. A new year's resolution for the left is to stop the infighting, and not be complacent. We are losing a battle to the right under possibly the most dangerous government Britain has had and the most dangerous government America will have.

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**About the author:** Ronda is a final year undergraduate at LSE studying for a BSc in Sociology. She is currently researching for her dissertation.

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