

Motion on principles for just trade

We note:

- Modern trade deals are vast instruments that can affect many aspects of our lives – food standards, workers’ rights, government and corporate powers
- The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), a trade deal between the EU and US, was an example of one of these huge deals, and was defeated at the beginning of 2017, due to widespread public and political concern on both sides of the Atlantic
- Trade has become a prominent political issue because the UK government is expecting to sign many new trade deals after Brexit
- Among the most contentious aspects of trade deals are:
 - The investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS or ‘corporate court’) system which allows foreign investors to sue governments in secret arbitration panels for ‘unfair treatment’
 - The liberalisation of services (including public services) in trade deals
 - ‘Regulatory cooperation’ which is used to give business a bigger say over food standards and financial regulations, and threatens a ‘race to the bottom’ in our standards
 - Controls on government procurement, on protection of intellectual property and ‘investor protection’ which limits government’s ability to use taxpayers money to generate local jobs and value, and to regulate big corporations
- The Labour leadership has taken a position against TTIP and against any deal which includes ISDS, and is currently exploring a fairer trade system.
- Despite the importance of trade deals, and their vast scope, MPs have almost no power over trade negotiations, and no ability to stop a trade deal they don’t like. The Labour leadership has promised to introduce an accountable and democratic process for negotiating deals.

We believe:

- Trade should serve to make the world fairer, to prioritise well paid jobs and full employment, and not to damage the environment, public services or decent standards
- The position of the Labour Party leadership to oppose ISDS and TTIP-style deals is to be applauded and must be followed through in government.
- Labour in power should embed fundamentally different principles from the Conservative Party to guide our trade policy. This must include:
 - A thorough, watertight opt out for public services – nothing in a trade deal should make it harder for us to maintain or return services to public, democratic ownership and no service should be subject to liberalisation unless explicitly agreed in the deal (the so-called ‘negative list’)
 - A watertight guarantee that trade deals can never be used to push down standards, including by allowing products made to lower standards into our markets.
 - Clearly defined policy space setting out the right of governments to regulate and tax investment; to use government procurement to support local value creation;

and to break intellectual property protections when they defy the national interest

- Not using trade deals to force other countries – especially poorer countries – to liberalise services, to deregulate, or to give up any of the rights we define above.
- It is deplorable that the current government has not agreed to give parliament and the people more control over trade deals. In office, Labour must offer all parliamentarians the right to vote on a mandate or framework for trade negotiations; transparency to see all negotiating texts and an affirmative vote on a final deal.

We agree:

- To send this resolution to the Labour shadow secretary for international trade and encourage the elaboration of these principles in manifesto commitments.
- To sign up as a local ally of Global Justice Now, so we can receive campaign updates and invite speakers on this issue and other international issues, believing as we do that socialism cannot be achieved in one country or at the expense of other people around the world. [see www.globaljustice.org.uk/internationalist-network]
- To affiliate to Global Justice Now at a rate of £35/year.