

Editorial

Spaces of resistance

We went to press the day after the referendum, which gave us little time for thinking about a response. This will be something we address in the next issue. In the mean time we hope that some of the articles in this issue offer ideas that can help us in the difficult days ahead.

This issue was already very hard for us to put together, as we are still coming to terms with the loss of Doreen Massey. Doreen was one of the three founding editors of *Soundings*, and it is difficult to imagine a future in which her comments, suggestions and strategic interventions will not be part of the daily life of our journal. Her interventions ranged from major theoretical projects such as the conceptualisation and commissioning of the *Kilburn Manifesto* to extremely detailed points about split infinitives or the mysteries of punctuation.

Doreen's brilliance in exploring the connections between space, place and politics would have been invaluable in the post-referendum discussion, in which it is clear that regional inequality within Britain played a major part. In Dave Featherstone's article - which was initially a joint project with Doreen, and reflects on the insights that geography can bring to bear on discussions of hegemony - he shows how Doreen was able to make a very specific contribution to discussions about the politics of a given moment (the conjuncture) through her insistence on including the specificities of place into the many overlapping levels that constitute a political moment. As he comments, this can be seen in her work on London, in which she drew attention to its role as a city in shaping the emergence of neoliberalism, or her work on de-industrialisation, which showed how unequal regional development is driven by specific interest groups - as seen in the strikingly different kind of help offered by successive governments to the bankers of the City as compared with the steel workers of the de-industrialised regions.

As well as Dave's article, which pays tribute to Doreen through an engagement with her ideas in the working out of a specific argument, we also have in this

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issue an appreciation of Doreen's work from Joe Painter, and an article by Marina Prentoulis on left populism in Europe, which was also planned as a joint article with Doreen. Joe outlines how Doreen's ideas affected theory in geography more widely as well as left theory, and is a fitting tribute to her wide influence. But in some ways the articles by Marina and Dave are the best way of honouring her work, since they do what Doreen would have wanted most: they carry on discussions begun with her. This is something we plan to do as a journal for the foreseeable future.

Both Dave Featherstone and Joe Painter point to the ways in which Doreen's academic and intellectual work was inseparable from her political preoccupations. As Dave writes, her interventions were never concerned with thinking about geography as an academic exercise. Her aim was to understand 'the ways in which struggles over geography were integral to the making of particular kinds of political strategies and identities'. And she saw thinking geographically as providing 'indispensable tools for thinking about politics'. In this she was an exemplary left intellectual. Her theorising was always connected to wider concerns. And she also always made the effort to be accessible. As Ben Little wrote in the tribute we included at the last minute in issue 62, she made complex ideas accessible and made transparent the 'murk of ideology in our culture'.¹ Joe Painter also draws attention to this aspect of Doreen as a teacher, in describing how she helped him to understand the importance of Althusser's conception of over-determination - not as dry theory but as a way into thinking about multiple possibilities, and 'how the world could be otherwise'. It was for these qualities that Doreen was loved by her students and by many other young people. As well as her clarity, they appreciated the generosity of her approach - she really did want everyone to join in the debate, and she loved attending meetings large and small, whether as an inspirational speaker or as a listener.

Doreen's widely ranging commitments included a lifelong engagement with Latin America, as well as a desire that we should learn from the left there, and resist the overwhelming demonisation of Latin American populism so prevalent in the western press.² This was why she began working with Marina Prentoulis on an article that looked at alternative kinds of regional development, drawing on the Latin American experience with regional associations such as Petrocaribe, CELAC and UNASUR. Doreen and Marina saw that regional associations in Latin America work co-operatively rather than through competition, and that this was assisted by the left

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populist framework within which they had developed - strongly reinforced by the sense of an international opponent, the USA. This led them to a discussion about what kind of left populism could be forged at a European level, given that in the EU the enemy is internal (the *casta*, the banks, the Troika) rather than external. This in turn opened up a number of suggestive lines of enquiry about the relationship between national popular movements and international regions - a classic case of thinking creatively about space and politics. Though we will no longer be able to participate in internal EU debates, this is an issue that remains of great importance in Britain, since right-wing populism has thrived on its depiction of the EU itself, and the international, as the enemy.

This issue also includes roundtable discussions on Wales and Scotland, each of which draws attention to the difference of political life in those two countries, and to the growth of this difference since devolution. As Gideon Calder points out, support for Labour more or less held up in the May elections, but this support is fragile - as emerged in yesterday's referendum; as in many de-industrialised areas, it is susceptible to a populist appeal to a sense of disenfranchisement and lack of control. In Scotland, there is a social democratic alternative to Labour, and one which has successfully linked national identity with social justice, and it is notable that this politics delivered a resounding pro-European vote. The contributors to our discussion mainly focus on the absences within the independence campaign, and point to the SNP's inability to mount any real challenge to neoliberalism. But perhaps yesterday's results will give rise to more thinking on the importance of people's sense of empowerment in Scotland, rather than focusing on the more narrow question of for or against austerity.³ Dave Featherstone makes this point slightly differently when he argues that actual existing regional alternatives have more potential to open up a political space for a dynamic regional strategy than does a simple anti-austerity agenda.

Other contributors to this issue offer further ideas on how we might recover from the current disaster. Anandi Ramamurthy reminds us of the history of the Asian Youth Movements of the 1970s and 1980s, and urges us to learn from the way they campaigned successfully in what were very difficult times. Khadijah White reports on Black Lives Matter campaigning in US campuses, and she too draws on past activists and scholars for inspiration, though she also understands the key role of social media in mobilising today's activist networks. Marisol Sandoval looks at what

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co-operatives have to offer the left, and shows that, although the kinds of co-ops she is discussing tend to operate at the small-scale prefigurative level, they help open up the political spaces on which bigger political action can build - although this requires making connections both between individual co-ops and between co-ops and the wider left. John Chowcat looks at two key areas where Labour can contribute to cultural change - by drawing on its currently expanding resources through the greater involvement of its own membership, and by campaigning to make the changes that are needed to tackle poverty and insecurity, thus changing the reality on the ground for those whose anger is currently being channelled by the populist right. Phillip Cole offers a less commonly seen perspective on immigration controls, in considering the issue from an ethical standpoint. This opens up ways of thinking about the issue that will help in the debates that are bound to lie ahead.

The issue concludes with Michael Rustin's article on alternatives for higher education, the second in our series exploring programmatic alternatives to neoliberalism, which follows on from *The Kilburn Manifesto* series.⁴ This identification of alternatives is a further crucial part of the task of constructing a left challenge to the dominant consensus. Michael notes in his article the great encouragement he received from Doreen in writing this contribution, as well as her inspiring enthusiasm for the whole project. Like all of us, he will continue to feel the loss of a rigorous interlocutor and a wonderful friend.

Notes

1. See www.lwbooks.co.uk/doreen-massey-in-memoriam - where you can also see other tributes.
2. See Doreen Massey, 'Learning from Latin America', *Soundings* 50, 2012.
3. See Jeremy Gilbert's commentary at: www.opendemocracy.net/uk/jeremy-gilbert/this-vote-shows-people-do-care-about-democracy.
4. The first in this series, on housing and land, by Michael Edwards, was published in *Soundings* 62 in the spring 2015, the third, on health care and the NHS, by Colin Leys, will appear in *Soundings* 64.