

Labour's still got dinosaurs in its ranks

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There are days when I despair of the Labour Party. It is the official opposition in the UK. It has a constitution that even after Blair declares it to be committed to democratic socialism. [And it has Alan Johnson as a member.](#)

One can hope Johnson is part of the death throes of New Labour, but I know that for all the obvious failures of New Labour, the neoliberalism it embraced and the austerity its proponents have espoused since 2009 as part of the plan for diminishing the role of government whilst promoting the role of wealth that they share with the Tories, he is not alone.

Johnson's latest folly is threefold. First he has demanded Labour embrace Tory spending cuts when austerity is obviously failing. Johnson has admitted he knows nothing of economics, and it seems likely that is true of all who argue in similar fashion in Labour these days, certainly based on my experience. If they did know anything they'd know growth can only come in four ways: consumers must spend more, business must invest more, net exports must rise or government spending must increase. The first three are not happening and will not happen in an environment of austerity; that is guaranteed. Increased government spending, preferably on investment, is therefore the only way out of recession. But Johnson and his ilk demand otherwise: it's economic suicide they prescribe for all but the rich.

Second, when inequality is rising Johnson slams the unions who have done more to reduce inequality than any other organised grouping in the UK. Clearly the man wants to make divisions in society worse. His suggestion is completely contemptuous of 99% of people in this country and sure evidence that power can corrupt.

Third, Johnson wants to reduce the influence of 7 million people in Labour. What does he want to do instead? Increase the power of 1,000 company directors? It seems likely.

There are dinosaurs in Labour. I'm afraid Alan Johnson is one.