

How the grass-roots did it

Richard Price reviews *Corbyn's Campaign*, ed. Tom Unterrainer, Spokesman Books, £7.95, pp148.

If journalism is the first draft of history, this is a very good first draft of the history and significance of Jeremy Corbyn's remarkable leadership victory. Its contributors are mainly rank and file members, many of them from the Midlands, and each of them offers a perspective on different aspects of the campaign.

Ben Sellers from Red Labour highlights the role played by social media – how activists, initially acting alone or in small groups, linked up to completely outgun the opposition and transform the landscape, particularly among younger members and supporters. Chris Williamson, who lost Derby North by only 41 votes, gives an excellent summary of why Labour lost and what happened in the immediate aftermath. *Briefing's* Christine Shawcroft stresses the importance of democratically reforming the party structures.

Adele Williams and Abi Rhodes concentrate on how the grassroots campaign intersected with social movements and anti-austerity outside the Party, while Tony Simpson and Tom Unterrainer emphasise the importance for Corbynism of rehabilitating internationalism and workplace democracy. Umaar Kazmi, 18, told a rally in Nottingham: "This is Labour's time to reclaim its stake in those communities that have been damaged, violated and beaten down by successive governments that have failed them."

A useful series of appendices set out key Corbyn policy statements on key areas such as the economy, tax justice, housing, social security, defence and the environment. A further draft would need to examine why the Corbynista appeal has been higher among white, middle class, and weaker among working class and non-white supporters, and why only a fairly small proportion of the wave of recruits have become active within the Party, but in the meantime, this is a good start.