

## LABOUR, THE ANTI-SEMITISM CRISIS AND THE DESTROYING OF AN MP

BY LEE GARRATT | THINKWELL BOOKS, £10

# An anatomy of a perfidious character assassination

A must-read on how anti-semitism was weaponised against the Labour Party left, writes **ROBERT BROWN**



**ORCHESTRATED:** Campaign Against Antisemitism protest outside the Labour Party HQ on April 18 2018

WITH this book, Lee Garratt has produced a comprehensive analysis of the way in which the issue of anti-semitism was used against the Jeremy Corbyn project.

The author highlights how former Labour MP Chris Williamson became a victim of the assault, with the vitriol growing ever stronger the more he sought to defend himself.

The complicity of the mainstream media in the weaponisation of anti-semitism is evident in the reporting of Williamson's having lost the court case that he actually won against the Labour Party, with the media leading on a second suspension of Williamson that remained in place.

Garratt is critical of a Labour Party continually



apologising for things it hadn't done rather than robustly challenging the accusers. He also has some sharp words for the failure of the Socialist Campaign

Group to stand up, particularly in solidarity with Williamson.

He likens the witch hunt to McCarthyism. It possibly reached its nadir when last December it was declared that simply challenging accusations of anti-semitism was being anti-semitic. Unsurprisingly, the text has liberal references to Orwell and Kafka.

The different elements of the crisis are chronicled from the treatment of Williamson,

through the case of Luciana Berger and on to the sacking of Rebecca Long Bailey, the Panorama programme and finally the furore around the Equality and Human Rights Commission report.

In summing up, Garratt asks if the issue of anti-semitism was such a problem in the party, how come there is so little sign of police prosecutions, given the practice is a crime?

The author urges that the left learn from the experience for the future and this gripping account, well backed up as it needs to be, has sources and evidence that will prove invaluable.

It's a book that is unlikely to receive much coverage in the mainstream media but that is kind of the point.



## SANDCASTLE

BY PIERRE OSCAR LEVY AND FREDERICK PEETERS | SELF-MADE HERO, £14.99

## Unsettling sci-fi graphic novel on the transitoriness of life

A SLOW zoom in to a cragged coast, a cave, a subaquatic tunnel leading into a mysterious inland beach. A dark-haired, bearded man in sandals appears from behind the rocks, yawns and packs away his sleeping bag

into his rucksack.

He suddenly sees a young blonde girl undress down at the beach before getting into the water. He grabs his bag and escapes through the rocks.

So begins Sandcastle, the

first graphic novel written by documentary film-maker Pierre Oscar Levy. It's beautifully drawn by Frederick Peeters, an award-winning Swiss comic-book artist best known for his autobiographical graphic novel Blue Pills.

Sandcastle inspired the recently released American thriller film Old (2021), the story of a group of people who travel to a secluded beach somewhere in Europe, where time seems to be going faster than normal.

There is a married couple with their young children, a man and a female companion, a surgeon, his wife, their young daughter and the doctor's mother and a close-knit husband and wife. Everything seems normal until tragedy strikes.

One of the children in the group discovers the drowned body of a young



girl floating in the water, followed by the doctor's mother suddenly dying of old age. From then on, stranger things begin to occur,

including the three children suddenly becoming teenagers and the whole group realising that not only they cannot escape the beach but that the place itself is rapidly ageing them.

It is a superb and unsettling graphic novel about our relationship to time, getting older and the death of our loved ones. It's also a stark allegory of the fleetingness of life and our relationship with the people we love, one that has strong resonance with our ruminations in these pandemic times.

As Levy explains in the introduction of the book: "I often feel that we don't pay attention to what is truly important in our lives."

Both he and Peeters have done a superb job in creating a story that, while achingly current, seems timeless.

Peeters's illustrations are highly effective, in part due to his impressionistic sketches and bold renderings of dramatic situations, intense emotions and mysterious landscapes.

Highly recommended, not only for graphic novel enthusiasts but also for the general readership.

LEO BOIX