

# Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2016 REVIEW – Ayesha Hazarika: Tales from the Pink Bus \*\*\*\*

☒ Awaiting the arrival of Ayesha Hazarika, the former political adviser to Harriet Harman and Ed Miliband, the 'Pink Bus' song filled the room with as much monotony as Bob, Tom or Simon in a Labour strategy meeting.

Thankfully it wasn't the shape of things to come as Hazarika was warmly welcomed onto stage by a boisterous entourage of Labour members, including the Labour Leader in Scotland Kezia Dugdale and sole survivor at Westminster, Ian Murray MP.

As well as her key roles working alongside Harman and Miliband ('a massive f\*\*king success story'), the self-deprecating Hazarika added that her 'hall of fame' also saw a role advising Remain in the recent EU Vote and Dugdale's very own Holyrood campaign in May. Still, the ensemble Labourites managed to laugh through the pain...

Anecdotes from a decade within the circle of trust of the Labour Party were insightful, humorous and at times simply 'hide behind the sofa' stuff as Hazarika, awarded an MBE for her services to politics earlier this year, posed questions such as 'Where did it all go wrong for Labour?' and 'Where are all the women?'

You got the impression an hour wasn't quite going to be enough to cover the subject matter. Very few top dogs escaped her crossfire, from Tom Watson pictured 'off his tits at Glasto' to Ed Miliband's 'Ed Stone' moment and her 'conscious uncoupling' decision to leaving the party post-Corbyn appointment.

Hazarika's reminiscing of the 2010 and 2015 General Election campaigns offer a sense of sheer frustration, "If you are doing a campaign relaunch in the middle of a campaign, you're f\*\*ked!" to the lighter side of the long, hard days on the election trail including doing Ed Miliband's make up. No, seriously.

Who knew how much a pink campaign bus, rolled out during the ill-fated 2015 campaign, could cause such division, derision and claims of disrepute?

It's all in Hazarika's depiction of a party that, whilst not exclusively I'm sure, is riddled with sexism and chauvinism within the political bubble, which sees her bring the curtain down on a highly entertaining show with her very own Jerry Springer moment with a simple message – "We need more women involved in politics."

Ayesha Hazarika: Tales from the Pink Bus was at the Gilded Balloon