

CALL MR. ROBESON: A life, with songs.

Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko,

With Michael Conliffe, Piano

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Greetings and welcome. I believe that even though counting in your local elections is taking longer than usual, it is clear that the usual suspects are largely back in power, with little success for the smaller parties. One of the smallest I am aware of having put up candidates here in Northern Ireland was the "People Before Profit" campaign. I am not aware of them having scored any success, which is a shame, because the name alone suggests that it is an organisation worthy of as much support as possible. I think Paul Robeson would have been intrigued by them and might have gone out of his way to champion them. He actually is someone that was sidelined and shunned for much of his life. It is therefore remarkable that someone who openly confessed to being a big fan of his, and went as far as choosing Robeson's rendition of Joe Hill as his favourite Desert Island Disc has turned out to be the most successful politician to come out of these elections. Alex Salmond's success in Scotland certainly cannot be said to have been due to his championing of socialism, but it is pleasing to have him shine a little more light on the great man, because his story has so much to teach us today. May more and more of our politicians (right up to Mr. Obama) be inspired and guided by him, but while we wait for them to do so, we can all take a leaf from his book, and of brave fighters for peace, freedom and justice worldwide. I hope you enjoy the show.