



the rise and fall of project corbyn

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The Rise and Fall of Project Corbyn

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On the level plain, simple mounds look like hills; and the imbecile flatness of the present bourgeoisie is to be measured by the altitude of its great intellects.

– Karl Marx (in reference to John Stuart Mill), *Capital*, 1867

If Karl Marx himself were the leader of the Labour party, it would still be an imperialist party.

– Harpal Brar, *Speech delivered to the Indian Workers Association (GB)*, August 2015

Foreword

Jeremy Corbyn's ascent from marginalised backbench MP, champion of lost causes and epitome of the 'loony left', to the post of 'Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition' blindsided the British establishment, much of the nation, and undoubtedly the Labour party itself.

Faced with a narrow range of homogenous production-line Blairite neoliberals, Corbyn's inclusion in the 2015 list of Labour leadership candidates was innocently intended to liven the grey and insipid debate, help the other candidates score some easy debating points, and inject a little entertainment value into what looked like becoming an uninspiring political sideshow.

Far from becoming the laughing stock, however, Jeremy Corbyn's insistence on championing the needs of workers and the marginalised proved to be a breath of fresh air in the stilted confines of acceptable bourgeois parliamentary debate, and generated a wave of youthful idealism and even socialist enthusiasm, leading to a mass influx of workers into the Labour party, whose membership had been flagging in the disillusioned wake of the Blair-Brown-Miliband years. That wave of 'Corbynmania', as it was dubbed by the press, swept him to a thumping victory in the Labour leadership election.

The mass of workers who flocked to Corbyn's banner took his evaluation of the Labour party at face value. They believed, as he told them, that Labour was socialist, that it would champion the

interests of the working class against the wealthy; that it could and would take on the British political establishment; that austerity was an 'ideological choice' of the Conservatives that simply didn't have to be taken; and that a better life could be won by simple electoral means using the Labour party and the British parliament – the 'British democratic system' – as a vehicle.

In flocking to Jeremy's standard, they not only propelled him to victory in his leadership bid, they also radically changed the composition of the Labour party's membership.

Initially struck dumb at the prospect that Corbyn would lead them into the next election – and even that he might rise to become prime minister of Great Britain and Northern Ireland – the Labour party grandees, hand in hand with the wider British political establishment, soon formulated a plan to contain and limit the influence of Corbyn and his supporters, and to neutralise his obvious and growing mass appeal. It was to be an assault on every front.

They would prevail on him to jettison his apparent principles, the source of conflict with the City financiers, and publicly capitulate to the needs of capitalism. It was made clear that if he was to enter Her Majesty's privy council and be party to state secrets, he must observe the code of conduct required of its members.

Moreover, he must maintain a united front with the other leaders of our 'multiparty democracy' and espouse the expected and accepted policies. To this end, the press and British political elite brought to bear concerted pressure on one issue after another.

Would Corbyn, as leader of Her Majesty's opposition, denounce the 'dictator' (elected president) Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela? Would he support an escalation of the proxy imperialist war, including cruise missile strikes, on Syria? Would he endorse the renewal of Trident nuclear weapons, despite having been the leader of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament?

Would he denounce socialist China, labeling it as the hostile agent responsible for British industrial decay and blaming its 'steel dump-

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ing' for the final closure and giveaway of British Steel? Would he support the use of extrajudicial drone execution, despite having been leader of the Stop the War Coalition until his election as party leader? Would he support US and British imperialist proxy Israel, given his well-known and often repeated support for the Palestinian people? Would he lead Labour in opposing Brexit – first in the referendum, and then in getting that referendum result overturned?

Corbyn would be lambasted for 'standing with terrorists' – from the Irish Republican Army to Hamas and Hezbollah; of standing with 'despots' – from President Nicolás Maduro of Venezuela to President Bashar al-Assad of Syria; of being a 'pacifist' who would disarm the country and concede to terrorists, and as such being unfit to command Her Majesty's armed forces.

On not one but several occasions, senior serving generals, field marshals, admirals and commodores were wheeled onto mainstream media platforms to state that if Corbyn became prime minister, there would be open rebellion in the army – there would be, in fact, *a very British coup!*

And, of course, Corbyn would be accused of being an antisemite, of giving succour to antisemitism, and of leading an increasingly antisemitic party. This most toxic campaign – laughable were it not so persistent, pernicious and all-pervasive – secured broad Zionist-British establishment cooperation, and we give special attention to this question, as well as to Labour's handling of Brexit, in this pamphlet.

Yet the masses were palpably with Corbyn. The establishment was rattled, unable as it was to capitulate to even the relatively minor demands of the anti-austerity working class, in the context of a decade of global capitalist recession and crisis.

When Corbyn appeared at packed rallies up and down the country; when in the 2017 election campaign entire football stadiums, and crowds at Glastonbury festival greeted him with the chant 'Oh, Jeremy Corbyn!', sung to the tune of the White Stripes' anthem

'Seven Nation Army', the press attempted to belittle the significance of the event.

But ask yourself: how many British politicians have achieved such mass popularity? Roman senators knew well enough that Caesar's rule rested on the consent of the plebeian masses – and you may rest assured that our ruling class is uncomfortably aware of this grim truth also. More so than is the working class itself, at present.

It now transpires that, despite the open warfare waged against Jeremy Corbyn by his 'own' Labour parliamentary colleagues, in cahoots with the press, the Tory government and the entire British imperialist state apparatus, were it not for the *direct sabotage* of Corbyn's 2017 campaign by the Labour party administrative machine and headquarters staff itself – detailed luridly in the leaked 'Labour antisemitism report'* – Jeremy Corbyn's Labour party would have won the 2017 general election. Theresa May's Tory party would have lost. The entire spectacle of her dead parliament, compounding austerity and playing the race card while frustrating Brexit would could have looked radically different . . . *If!*

But for that *if* to have transpired, the Labour party would have needed to have been that which it is not – a party that stood apart from and in opposition to British imperialism. But in fact *Labour is a tried and tested part of the British capitalist system*. It has earned its stripes repeatedly, and would allow no mere accident – the election of a leader, say, even one as genuine and sincere, as inspirational as Corbyn was perceived to be by his followers – to change its course.

Legion are the numbers of current and former Labour MPs who would rather have split and destroyed the Labour party than have seen it come to power on a policy of *real opposition* to British capitalism. This, to them, is the meaning of their often-repeated mantra of 'putting the nation ahead of their party-political interest'. Translated, it means 'putting the interests of the capitalists ahead

* Labour Party, *The Work of the Labour Party's Governance and Legal Unit in Relation to Antisemitism*, 2014-2019, March 2020.

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of those of the workers'. No more and no less.

As close students of the history of the British Labour movement – by which we mean British working-class history, which is a far broader question than the history of any single group or party – the authors of this pamphlet have never held the opinion that the Labour party is an organisation capable of bringing about socialism in Britain.

We acknowledge that this viewpoint, until recently, did not have widespread support. The experience of watching the Labour party battle against its own most left-leaning and avowedly socialist leader in living memory, however, has brought this truth home to thousands of Labour's formerly loyal supporters with crushing force.

Jeremy Corbyn's campaign for leadership and two general elections electrified large numbers of formerly politically apathetic workers. The spectacle of Corbyn's isolation, of the betrayal of his closest political allies, and of his desertion of long-held principles under the hammer blows of his own party and of the British capitalist ruling class has disillusioned many.

But that experience has awakened others to the true nature of the British state and of the Labour party's role in maintaining it. And it is to all those who lived and witnessed the rise and fall of the Corbyn project, first with hope and then with dismay, that we address this pamphlet, which consists of contemporaneous articles dealing with the rise of Jeremy Corbyn to leadership, the many attacks upon him, and his failure to grapple with his own party machinery or with the issue of Brexit, all of which led inexorably to his downfall.

The Labour party did not achieve socialism under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, and to those that hoped that this would come to pass, it is all too clear that Labour cannot achieve socialism under its newly elected leader, Sir Keir Starmer. Labour no longer sets itself that aim, even in words.

We do not celebrate Corbyn's fall, or the now obvious failure of his project to 'reclaim the Labour party' for socialism, but, without

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rubbing salt in the wounds of his supporters and followers, *we must together learn the hard lessons of the past five years*, if that experience is not to be repeated, and the movement that inspired so many foot soldiers is not to be squandered in its entirety.

As VI Lenin long ago pointed out:

In capitalist society we have a democracy that is curtailed, wretched, false, a democracy only for the rich, for the minority.*

A genuine socialist movement, by contrast, must seek to place economic and political power in the hands of the working people themselves, for only that

. . . will for the first time create democracy for the people, for the majority, along with the necessary suppression of the exploiters, of the minority.*

British socialism must contend with the realities of British imperialist society – the realities of the most profoundly iniquitous and unjust economic system of finance capitalism.

Only by understanding the true nature of our ruling class and its political system, which is in essence the most firm and tyrannical dictatorship of the wealthy, can we hope to replace it with a better, more just and equitable society, in which the majority will truly rule, and use their sway to create a happy, peaceful and cultured life for all.

Ranjeet Brar

Sheffield and London, June 2020

* VI Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, 1917, Chapter 5.

1. The Labour leadership contest and the rise of Jeremy Corbyn

A united establishment front is forming against him, but thousands of workers are drawn towards Corbyn's promise of a fairer Britain.¹

The Labour party leadership contest to elect a leader to succeed Ed Miliband following Labour's defeat in the May 2015 general election is in full swing. Four candidates have joined the fray – Yvette Cooper (shadow home secretary), Andy Burnham (shadow health secretary), Liz Kendall (the most Blairite of them all) and Jeremy Corbyn, member of parliament for Islington North since 1983.

Jeremy Corbyn was an outsider at the outset, who only made it on to the ballot paper at the last minute after a diverse group of Labour MPs, with no intention of voting for him, chose to nominate him in order to widen the range of views in the contest and promote debate about the party's future. It was a blunder that some of those who nominated him have come bitterly to regret – as, for instance, Margaret Beckett, who has said that she was a 'moron' to have done so. They had obviously expected the same outcome as in 2010, when they nominated Hackney North MP Diane Abbott to provide a little variety in an otherwise all-male centrist field.

Be that as it may, Mr Jeremy Corbyn, dubbed 'JC' by his followers, has become the favourite to win the leadership election. This turn of events has surprised everyone – including Corbyn himself. His entry has lit up the election campaign and sparked a social movement of activists, attracting mainly young people, but not the young alone.

His campaign has gained an apparently unstoppable momentum. He has spoken at more than seventy rallies, with another thirty to go. His meetings have attracted large crowds, with audiences of over a thousand in Glasgow and two thousand in Leeds, and he invariably has to leave the meetings to address supporters left out in the cold. His natural unspun approach and clear lack of media training is helping him to reach those who are tired of sound bites and perfect but wooden presentations by established political worthies.

'We are not doing celebrities, personality, abusive politics,' says JC, adding, Obama-style, 'This is about hope.'

A YouGov poll of 10 August 2015, conducted for the *Times* newspaper,* gave JC a convincing lead in the contest, showing him to have the support of 53 percent in the vote, which would make him an outright winner. His campaign has signed up *ten thousand volunteers* – more than his three rival campaigns put together. Yvette Cooper has signed up 4,300 volunteers, Andy Burnham 3,000 and Liz Kendall 1,800.

The same poll also showed Corbyn leading among all three groups of voters: members, affiliated members, and those who had paid £3 each to register to vote in the leadership election. And he has won more constituency party nominations than any of his rivals.

Corbyn's campaign picked up momentum in early July after he won the endorsement of big trade unions, including Unite, for his candidacy. Although Unite general secretary Len McCluskey had

* 'New poll has Corbyn on course for huge victory' by S Coates, *The Times*, 11 August 2015.

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argued for Andy Burnham, the union's executive committee voted overwhelmingly for Corbyn as an anti-austerity alternative. Since then, Unite has loaned Corbyn £50,000 interest free, to be repaid by 12 September, the date on which the election result is scheduled to be announced, and he has also gained the support of half a dozen other unions.

Over the course of the last parliament, more than two-thirds of the 180,000 Labour party members who received ballot papers for the last leadership contest have resigned, given up or died, to be replaced by younger and more radical activists. This leadership election will therefore see the participation of the largest number of people in several decades.

In the three months following the general election, Labour membership has soared to nearly 300,000, while a similar number of affiliated and registered supporters have also signed up. Of the latter, 121,000 are registered supporters, who joined by paying just £3, while another 189,000 have joined from trade unions as affiliated supporters. All these categories add up to a total electorate of 610,000. Fewer than one in ten of those was a member at the time of the last leadership contest – in fact, *160,000 people joined up to vote in the last twenty-four hours before registration closed* at the end of Wednesday 12 August.

Writing in the opinion column of the *Financial Times*, a certain Tom Baldwin offered this explanation for the membership explosion:

The surge in numbers is neither Trotskyite entryism – there are not that many of them – nor the consequence of some popular uprising against Blairite orthodoxy. It is more akin to crowd-sourcing, in a narrow online world where anyone associated with the last Labour government is denounced as a Tory or a war criminal.*

* 'I am not voting for Jeremy Corbyn but Labour must learn from him' by T Baldwin, *Financial Times*, 12 August 2015.

The result, says Mr Baldwin, is to make Labour 'unrepresentative of the country', and he adds a dire warning:

Idealistic, young, inspiring some of them may be, if they elect Corbyn, they will push Labour further away from the electorate that concluded three months ago we lacked economic credibility and were out of touch.

Ballot papers were sent to members on Friday 14 August and the deadline for voting is 10 September. About 1,200 rogue supporters were uncovered by party officials, including 150 who were expelled for standing as candidates for the Green party, 92 members and candidates with the Trade Union and Socialist Coalition,² and 18 senior figures from the Left Unity outfit.³

Labour's former leaders speak out against Corbyn

The prospect of Corbyn becoming the Labour leader has shocked not only his rivals but also the party grandees, including some Class A war criminals, who have come out of the woodwork to declare what a disaster such an outcome would be for the Labour party. *Former prime minister Tony Blair has gone on record to say that those whose heart was with JC should go and get a transplant.*

Apocalyptic warnings have been delivered by Blairites concerning the dreadful aftermath that would ensue if JC were to be elected. David Miliband, who lost the leadership to his brother Ed, says that electing JC would lead to one-party rule under the Tories. Alistair Campbell, Blair's former communications chief, and John McTernan, Blair's former secretary, have pronounced similarly.

Former prime minister Gordon Brown⁴ warned on 16 August that JC as party leader would leave Labour 'pure but impotent'. Laughably characterising him as a 'Marxist throwback', he said that JC would reduce the party to one of 'permanent protest' as the vot-

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ers would 'walk away from us for many years' if Labour lurched to the left, handing the next election to the Conservatives. He 'forgot' to say that similar electoral results were achieved under his watch, when the Labour party could hardly be accused of having moved to the left.

Showing a complete disconnect between language and thought, Brown accused Corbyn of wanting to introduce a Soviet-style command economy in Britain – a vision that he asserted was 'years out of date'. Delivering his 50-minute speech in the symbolic Royal Festival Hall, scene of the victory party for Labour's 1997 landslide electoral triumph under Tony Blair's leadership, he pleaded with Labour voters not to desert the political centre ground, saying that Labour had a 'moral duty' to the poor to make itself electable.

Labour, he said, would be annihilated at the next election if Corbyn became the Labour leader. Stressing his point he said:

'We find that the grouping in the party that Labour electors want to give the most votes to is the grouping they themselves say is least likely to be able to take Labour into power.'^{*}

He savaged what he perceives to be JC's foreign policy stance thus:

'If our global alliances are going to be alliances with Hezbollah and Hamas and Hugo Chávez's Venezuela and Vladimir Putin's Russia, there is no chance of building a worldwide alliance that would deal with poverty and inequality and climate change and financial instability.'[†]

A fitting response to Brown's ramble was given by Graham Allen

* 'Full text: Gordon Brown's speech on the Labour leadership', *Prospect magazine*, 16 August 2015.

† Quoted in 'Gordon Brown damns Jeremy Corbyn . . . without even mentioning his name' by M Deacon, *The Telegraph*, 16 August 2015.

MP, who said that Mr Brown should preface any foreign policy advice with 'his view of the Iraq war, the one million dead, and the release of the Isis virus'.^{*}

Jack Straw,⁵ another war criminal, stated on 13 August that he knew Jeremy and knew 'Jeremy simply could not do this job'.[†]

Yvette Cooper,⁶ the shadow home secretary and one of Corbyn's rival contestants for the Labour leadership, while admitting that she understood 'why many people have bought into what Jeremy is offering', said that he was 'not credible in the 21st century' and warned:

'Jeremy is offering old solutions to old problems, not new answers to the problems of today . . . his are the wrong answers for the future.'[‡]

Ms Cooper did not care to mention today's problems or their modern solution. Surely, the old problems – of poverty, inequality, destitution, homelessness, the exploitation of the masses by a tiny handful of the darlings of fortune, and the exploitation of the oppressed nations by a tiny handful of imperialist countries that are engaged in relentless predatory wars against them – are still with us, just as the old solutions – namely, the overthrow of imperialism and an end to the division of society into classes – are just as valid today as they have been since the beginning of the 20th century.

Ms Cooper did not mention these 'trifles', for she is not inclined to go down the road which would deprive her of the privileged existence to which she has become accustomed.

Having JC as a leader, she says, would 'keep us out of power and stop us changing the world'. Well, Labour was in office from 1997 to

^{*} Tweet cited in 'Gordon Brown's speech provokes scuffles amongst Labour MPs' by I Hardman, *The Spectator*, 15 August 2015.

[†] Quoted in "'Jeremy Corbyn lacks credibility in the 21st century,'" says Labour leader candidate Yvette Cooper' by B Glaze, *The Mirror*, 13 August 2013.

[‡] Ibid.

2010 and it changed the world all right – but only for the worse. It waged wars abroad, from Yugoslavia through Afghanistan to Iraq, slaughtering in the process over two million innocent men, women and children, and displacing over six million more. And it waged war on the poor at home. If this is how Ms Cooper wants to ‘change the world’, we thankfully decline her offer. As to whether JC can do any better, we shall come to this question later on.

Liz Kendall,⁷ an unrestructured Blairite, has denounced JC’s policy stance as ‘warmed up Bennism’.*

Andy Burnham,⁸ who was the favourite to win the leadership before the rise of Jeremy Corbyn, seeing the writing on the wall, is behaving with restraint and moderation. Speaking on BBC radio he said:

‘Attacks on Jeremy have misread the mood in the party . . . [which] wants something different, something more to say on the doorstep at election time.’†

He has expressed his common ground with JC on housing and transport, while expressing his disagreement with him on Europe and public services. He also attacked free schools, academies and private landlords and promised to increase the minimum wage for young people to the level for adults. He has promised to abolish tuition fees; to crack down on zero-hours employers; to oppose the welfare bill and its attack on child tax credits; to fight for affordable homes; and to take railways into public ownership.

He has even indicated that he might be willing to serve as a member in JC’s shadow cabinet. By taking the above stance, he has broken ranks with the anti-JC camp of Labour grandees, as well as with Ms Cooper and Ms Kendall, all of whom are agreed on one

* Quoted in ‘Corbyn attacked for signal on public ownership of industry’ by H Warrell, *Financial Times*, 9 August 2015.

† Quoted in ‘Choose anyone but Corbyn, Kendall tells supporters’ by K Stacey and E Rigby, *Financial Times*, 14 August 2015.

point – the ‘unelectability’ of Labour with JC in the leadership. All that matters to them is Labour getting office through grovelling to the City of London.

Is Corbyn a dangerous Marxist?

Jeremy Corbyn’s stance on domestic and foreign affairs may be summed up as follows:*

- An end to further private contracts in the NHS.
- Public ownership of the railways.
- Nationalisation of the big six energy companies.
- Higher taxation of high earners and wealthy people, including the restoration of the 50 percent tax rate on incomes over £150,000,

‘but we may need to review that in 2020, depending on whether the deficit is still there in 2020 and what levels of inequality there are’.[†]

- The right to buy their homes for private tenants.
- Printing money to invest in infrastructure.
- Higher council tax bands for the super-rich and a value tax on unused land or property.
- Revisiting the question of clause iv of the Labour party constitution, which called for the public ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, but was dropped

* See ‘What is Jeremy Corbyn’s programme for government?’, *BBC News*, 14 August 2015.

† Quoted in ‘Jeremy Corbyn backs nationalising “big six” energy suppliers’ by K Stacey, *Financial Times*, 6 August 2020.

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under Blair's leadership in 1994.

- More public spending, except on defence.
- Scrapping the Trident nuclear weapon missile system.
- Quitting Nato.

JC calls Nato an expansionist organisation and characterises its stance over Crimea as hypocritical:

Nato's attempt to encircle Russia is one of the big threats of our time,*

he wrote in an article for the *Guardian*. He says it was wrong to allow countries such as Poland, as a former member of the Warsaw Pact in the Soviet orbit, to join Nato, adding:

We should have gone down the road Ukraine went down in 1990, which was an informal agreement with Russia that Ukraine would be a non-nuclear state [and] would be non-aligned in its foreign policy.*

- Europe: JC's attitude towards Europe is somewhat ambivalent. He says that the European Central Bank has been 'brutal' towards Greece, adding that if prime minister David Cameron were to opt out of the EU-guaranteed workers' rights, he (JC) would campaign for Britain to leave the bloc altogether. In any case, he says, he will not give Cameron a blank cheque in his negotiations with EU leaders.
- On Syria, JC has ruled out voting for air strikes against Isis. If he wins the leadership election, that would in all probability scupper government plans in this regard.

* 'We are not doing celebrity, personality or abusive politics – this is about hope' by N Watt and J Corbyn, *The Guardian*, 7 August 2015.

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- Support for the two-state solution in Israel-Palestine. He has proposed sanctions on Israel and called for a ban on arms sales to it.
- He opposed the Iraq war and has said that, if elected, he would issue an apology for the war. In addition, he has called for Tony Blair, George Bush and other architects of the war to face criminal charges.
- He expressed support for Hugo Chávez's Venezuela; met Gerry Adams and other Sinn Féin leaders in the eighties during the IRA bombing campaign in England, inviting them to parliament shortly after the 1984 Brighton bombing;⁹ and has defended Mordechai Vanunu, the Israeli nuclear whistleblower.
- He campaigned against South African apartheid and was arrested in 1984 during a protest outside the South African embassy.

The above list is neither exhaustive nor unqualified, for there are lots of ifs and buts in JC's stances.

There is nothing in Corbyn's political and economic propositions, nothing in his foreign and internal policy stance, that could be described as truly socialistic, in the Marxist understanding of that term. *Corbyn is not a Marxist*. It is only others, composed in equal parts of his malicious enemies and starry-eyed supporters, who pin this label on him.

Asked in a television interview if he was a Marxist, he replied that Marx was 'a fascinating figure who observed a great deal and from whom we can learn a great deal'.* A Marxist would have replied simply in the affirmative.

Of course Marx was a fascinating character who observed a lot and, doubtless, we can learn a great deal from him. But that is not

* Quoted in 'Jeremy Corbyn: Britain can learn from Karl Marx' by Tim Ross, *The Telegraph*, 26 July 2015.

the important thing. What is most important about Marx is that he was above all a revolutionary who made a thorough analysis of capitalism and came to the scientific conclusion that, far from being the final destiny of humanity, it was merely a transitional stage in the long march of humanity from primitive communism to the higher stage of communism through the overthrow of capitalism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. On the assumption – and it is a big assumption – that JC knows this, he dares not utter this truth, since that would put paid to his chances of leadership of his party, let alone the leadership of Britain.

Let us frankly state that Jeremy Corbyn is a social democrat, albeit a radical one, of the 'old' Labour variety. *It is not that Corbyn is particularly radical; it is that the Labour party has moved so far to the right as to be indistinguishable from the Conservatives.* It is in this context that he is perceived as being almost a Marxist and a revolutionary. This being the case, it is hardly surprising that he is regarded as being the bearer of an 'anti-capitalist' programme.

If Corbyn is not a revolutionary Marxist, why is he singled out for abuse?

With both the main bourgeois parties – Tory and Labour – totally tied to imperialist wars abroad and attacks on the working class at home; with both of them tied hand and foot to the City financiers, armaments manufacturers and oil barons, a lot of people feel frustrated and angry.

It is this torrent of frustration and anger, rising by the day, which has given rise to the phenomenon of which Mr Corbyn is the beneficiary, for his rivals are sullied by their association with a system that looks after the robber barons of finance capital while piling misery, austerity and cuts on the vast masses of the working class. JC is offering, and says he embodies, 'hope'. His message is 'Yes we can!'

(Reader, have you heard this vague message of hope before from someone else in another country?)

JC appears to be offering something different from the 'decaffeinated Conservatives who describe themselves as New Labour', to use the apt words of Peter McKay in the *Daily Mail*.*

An editorial in the same paper published a week later correctly summed up the state of affairs that has led to the surge in Corbyn's popularity:

Anyone mystified by the rise of Jeremy Corbyn should look no further than today's survey of chief executives' rocketing pay,

says the opening sentence. Then it goes on to make a characteristic denunciation of the dreadful suffering caused by putting into effect Marx's theories in the former Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Having uttered these baseless assertions, the editorial nevertheless goes on to offer this explanation of Corbyn's surge in the leadership contest:

But no wonder Labour activists demand radical solutions, when the High Pay Centre finds the bosses of our top 100 firms earn almost £5m a year each.

That's a staggering 183 times the average worker's annual salary of £27,000.

You don't have to be a Bolshevik to find this huge disparity offensive. For in most cases, it owes nothing to merit – and everything to the greed of mutually back-scratching remuneration committees.

Even ardent champions of capitalism will be appalled that chief executives have helped themselves to an extra £800,000 each, over four years in which they've imposed minimal increases or pay freezes on their employees.

* 'Voters may love Corbyn's Real Labour' by P McKay, *Daily Mail*, 10 August 2015.

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As most Britons are intelligent enough to see, Corbynite socialism is no answer. But while the boardroom pay racket continues, the enemies of capitalism will never be starved of support.*

Peter McKay, in the *Daily Mail* article cited earlier, made this thoughtful observation:

There's public anger, even among those who do not vote Labour, about how we are fleeced by banks, cheated by big business and ruled by politicians who – whatever their party – seem to attract Big Money sponsorship.

Might back-to-the-future Corbyn be a sign that new generations of voters who have never heard of clause iv are ready to give Real Labour a chance?

Corbyn is decidedly the beneficiary of this rise in anti-establishment, and vaguely anti-capitalist activism.

A united establishment front against Corbyn takes shape

Labour party grandees, two of the other candidates for Labour leadership, the Zionist *Jewish Chronicle* and the Conservative *Telegraph* have joined hands in an effort to stop Corbyn from being elected Labour leader.

The *Jewish Chronicle* on 12 August published a front page article entitled 'These are the questions Jeremy Corbyn must answer'.[†] This article was then taken up by a certain Dan Hodges in the *Telegraph* of 25 August. In his piece, Mr Hodges concluded:

* Editorial, *Daily Mail*, 17 August 2015.

[†] 'These are the questions Jeremy Corbyn must answer', *The Jewish Chronicle*, 12 August 2015.

Jeremy does not personally indulge in prejudice. But he does indulge prejudice.*

The slur here is only too obvious.

Time and space does not allow us to refute this foul accusation. What is strange is that Mr Hodges, being ignorant of the history of the Labour party, or feigning ignorance, makes this bold claim:

The Labour party used to be clear on this stuff. Zero-tolerance of racism. Zero-tolerance of apologists of racism. No platform for racism. And now that's gone.

It would take little effort to prove that racism, while not a fault of Mr Corbyn personally, is far from being alien to the Labour party as a whole, which has practised it throughout its entire existence.

Meanwhile, five big Labour donors have threatened to cut off funding if JC wins. These include Assem Allam, the owner of Hull City football club, and Richard Brindle, the insurance magnate.

What are the consequences of a Corbyn victory?

Despite all these efforts, it appears that all attempts to stop the Corbyn juggernaut are failing, and he is well on the way to becoming the leader of the Labour party. What, we must ponder, would be the consequences of that? Consequences that reach far beyond the party whose leadership he looks set to assume.

There are several possibilities. First, Labour could splinter, just as it did in 1981 after the election to leadership of another Messiah of the Trotskyite-revisionist and left-social-democratic fraternity, namely, the late 'left-winger' Michael Foot.¹⁰ Following the latter's election,

* 'Jeremy Corbyn will be cheered by racists and terrorists' by D Hodges, *The Telegraph*, 25 August 2015.

several prominent leaders of the Labour party walked away to form the Social Democratic Party (SDP), which later on merged with the Liberal party to form what we now know as the Liberal Democratic party.

Leaving such a split aside, *Corbyn has a mere 15 declared supporters among the party's 232 MPs*. One of the remaining 217, who happened to bump into a *Financial Times* correspondent on his way to interviewing JC, said:

'It is a disaster. It's a return to the 1980s. We are going back to a time of purges, deselections and putsches.'*

With such a paucity of support among his fellow Labour MPs, JC is likely, notwithstanding his optimism, to encounter great difficulty in filling the opposition party's one hundred or so frontbench positions. In such a situation there might be a serious attempt to depose him.

The second possibility is that he somehow manages to keep his party together and leads it into the next general election in 2020 and to a disastrous defeat, as did Michael Foot in 1983, and as is predicted by his opponents within and beyond the Labour party.

Last, there is a very outside possibility that he leads Labour to victory at the next election. This could happen partly as a result of trouble in the Tory camp. *Contrary to appearances, the Conservatives are a very fractious party with a slim majority in Parliament*. The Tory 'outs' – the EU sceptics who want Britain out of Europe – will seek to harness the anti-establishment sentiments, the very sentiments of which JC is currently the beneficiary, to defeat Cameron in the planned referendum next year on EU membership.

With JC in the leadership, Cameron cannot be sure of getting Labour to support him in the referendum. This carries the real danger of a Tory split and the fall of the government. The idea, widely

* Quoted in 'Jeremy Corbyn says Labour will pull together if he becomes leader' by J Pickard, *Financial Times*, 24 August 2015.

floated, that with the election of JC happy days for the Tories will never cease, and that they will be the permanent party of government, may turn out to be a chimera.

This possibility may increase if Jeremy Corbyn is able to bring back to Labour a lot of Scottish voters who deserted the Labour party for the Scottish National Party. This is a real possibility in view of the fact that some of the policies he is advocating – eg, getting rid of Trident, abolition of tuition fees, etc – are very similar to those advocated by the SNP. If, however, he fails to woo the Scottish electorate successfully, the chances of Labour forming a government with him or anyone else in the leadership are very slim indeed.

Whichever of the above scenarios is realised, it will be good for the development of the working-class movement, for it will serve to disabuse supporters of JC of the notion that socialism can be established in Britain through the election of a left social democrat to the leadership of the Labour party.

Corbyn as prime minister?

Let us dwell briefly on the last scenario, with Labour in office and JC ensconced in 10 Downing Street. The euphoria will last a year or so, before, as happened with François Mitterrand in France, the reality of Britain's imperialist economy and state institutions take their toll and widespread disillusion sets in among his supporters.

The hard truth is that Jeremy is offering no more than hope *within* the system, not outside of it. He is offering the petty-bourgeois utopia of a *reformed, kinder and decent capitalism*, which he and his supporters christen 'socialism'.

Speaking at a packed meeting at Ealing town hall on Monday 17 August, this is the vague wishlist to which Corbyn treated his audience:

'This is an opportunity for the Labour party at one level to elect a

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leader, but at another level to change our ways, to be more democratic about how we go about things, and to be in tune with ordinary people standing up for the NHS and those who are victims of the very cruel system that the Tories and Liberal Democrats [only the Tories and LibDems?] have introduced . . . this campaign is about hope, it's about optimism, it's about decency.^{†*}

And there you have it – hope, optimism and decency! What more could anyone ask for?

Britain's imperialist wars

Much is made by Corbyn's supporters of his opposition to war, in Iraq in particular. On 18 March 2003, 140 Labour MPs voted for an amendment to the resolution in support of the government's war policy. The amendment stated:

This house believes that the case for war against Iraq has not yet been established, especially given the absence of specific UN authorisation, but in the event of hostilities to commence, *pledges its total support for the British forces engaged in the middle east, expresses its admiration for their courage, skill and devotion to duty, and hopes that their tasks will be swiftly concluded with minimal casualties on all sides.*[†]

One of the 'rebels' voting for this chauvinist and imperialist amendment was none other than Jeremy Corbyn.

* Quoted in "'Corbyn-mania' shows no signs of abating' by J Pickard, *Financial Times*, 18 August 2015.

† 'Iraq – Case for war not established – rejected – 18 Mar 2003 at 21:15', *The Public Whip* website, our emphasis.

The political essence of the British Labour party

No matter who leads this party, no matter how decent and well-intentioned such a leader may be, he could never change *the basic nature of the Labour party*, which has never been, is not now, and will never in the future be, a party of the British working class; which has always been, is now, and will always in the future be, a party of British imperialism.

The only thing to do with the Labour party, we contend, is to work towards its disintegration, *so as to rescue the working class from its deadly embrace*, and build a really socialist party that is capable of storming the citadels of British imperialism and replacing it with working-class rule, and so usher in an era of real prosperity for working people at home and an end to Britain's imperialist wars abroad.

Harpal Brar

London, August 2015

2. Jeremy Corbyn: ‘resurgence’ of left social democracy may be short-lived

Labour’s new leader is already succumbing to pressure to give up his long-held positions on Britain’s membership of Nato, the EU and more.¹¹

By the time 12 September arrived, it was not a surprise to most of us when Labour officially announced that Jeremy Corbyn was the new leader of the Labour party.

After scraping onto the ballot paper to play the role of the constantly outvoted minority (to paraphrase Engels),* Corbyn romped home in the first round, winning clear majorities in all the various sections of the voting process to gather 59.5 percent of the total and beat his main rivals by a country mile.

Calls for party unity from Ed Miliband and others quickly followed the resignations from shadow cabinet positions of key Labour parliamentarians, and, within days, a hodgepodge shadow cabinet had been formed featuring such well-known left luminaries as John McDonnell and Diane Abbott alongside an assortment of the usual disciples of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown.

* See quotation on p33.

Corbyn's position within the Labour party: principle vs pragmatism

It must be said that, despite everything, the election of Jeremy Corbyn was definitely not what the leaders of social democracy wanted. And yet, it is unfortunately not really a question of *if* Corbyn will betray his supposed proletarian class allegiances but *when*.

1. The European Union

Despite his 'left' credentials, Jeremy Corbyn is already declaring his support for the European Union, the imperialist character of which he doesn't mention, on the grounds that it offers 'protection' for European workers' rights, and also because, in his own words:

'I do not want barriers to British lorries driven by British workers and British products made by British workers springing up, which would be one of the consequences of Britain leaving the EU as so many Tory MPs believe should happen.'*

He prides himself on taking the same pro-EU stance as Pasok and Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain. After all, what does it matter if we belong to a bloodthirsty imperialist bloc so long as our workers can say 'I'm all right Jack'? Or even, it would seem, if they can't, but are at least better off than workers in oppressed countries?

2. Nato imperialism

Corbyn has always enjoyed the reputation of being a principled and lifelong opponent of the warmongering neo-nazi Nato alliance,

* Quoted in 'Leaked: Jeremy Corbyn's speech on the EU referendum', *Social Europe* website, 27 September 2015.

which is the minimum one would expect of one of Stop the War's star performers. And yet even on Nato he is backtracking fast:

When challenged by Andy Burnham on whether he would pull out of Nato, Mr Corbyn said he would have a 'serious debate about the powers of Nato', but abandoned previous calls for total withdrawal.

Having called in the past for Britain's withdrawal from Nato, he admitted there wasn't 'an appetite as a whole for people [which people does he mean?] to leave' and so would argue for Nato to 'restrict its role'.*

There are many well-meaning people in the working-class movement who wish that everybody on 'the left' would unite. But the problem with this nice idea is that *to unite with social democracy is to unite with defenders of the bourgeois system* – something which should only be done in very exceptional circumstances, and even then with one's eyes wide open as to the extreme dangers of such an alliance.

As long ago as the 1890s, one of the founding fathers of Marxism, Friedrich Engels, characterised the Fabians, who were so instrumental in the formation of the Labour party, as follows:

This crowd is only too finished: a clique of bourgeois-socialists of diverse calibres, from careerists to sentimental socialists and philanthropists, *united only by their fear of the threatening rule of the workers and doing all in their power to spike this danger by making their own leadership secure, the leadership exercised by the 'educated'*. If afterwards they admit a few workers into their central board in order that they may play there . . . the role of a constantly outvoted minority, this should not deceive anyone.†

* 'Jeremy Corbyn backtracks on calls for Britain to leave Nato' by L Hughes, *The Telegraph*, 28 August 2015.

† Letter to Kautsky by F Engels, 4 September 1892.

Many have played the role of the 'principled' yet constantly out-voted minority over the years for Labour. Jeremy Corbyn was expected by those who nominated him to 'take his turn' and perform it admirably. Unfortunately for them, in a spectacular miscalculation, all their plans have gone awry.

Right-wing zealots attack a 'national security threat'

So right-wing and reactionary has the British parliamentary scene become, that the election of a relatively liberal white, middle-class vegetarian (not an untypical sight in our capital city) sent many of our insufferable Etonian schoolboy politicians into a rage.

In the weeks that followed his election, Corbyn was labelled a 'threat to national security', was told that the military would stage a coup if he ever became prime minister, and was generally subjected to all manner of threats, criticisms and tantrums by Britain's corporate media (egged on by said Etonians) for not singing the national anthem.

On 13 September, just one day after Corbyn took over the leadership, David Cameron declared:

'Labour are now a serious risk to our nation's security, our economy's security and your family's security . . . Whether it's weakening our defences, raising taxes on jobs and earnings, racking up more debt and welfare or driving up the cost of living by printing money – Jeremy Corbyn's Labour party will hurt working people.'*

* Quoted in 'David Cameron claims Jeremy Corbyn is a "threat to national security"' by J Stone, *Independent*, 13 September 2015.

God save our gracious Queen?

Taking their cue from the prime minister, the press went into action as soon as the opportunities began to arise. At Corbyn's first ceremonial event, which happened to fall in the week he took up the leadership, he failed to sing 'God Save the Queen' at an event to mark the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Britain.

'Corbyn snubs Queen and country' (*Telegraph*); 'Veterans open fire after Corbyn snubs anthem' (*The Times*); 'Corb snubs the Queen' (*The Sun*); 'Not Save the Queen' (*Metro*); 'Shameful: Corbyn refuses to sing national anthem' (*Daily Express*); 'Fury as Corbyn refuses to sing national anthem at Battle of Britain memorial' (*Daily Mail*); 'Corby a zero: Leftie refuses to sing national anthem' (*Daily Star*) . . . what a wide range of views there are to be found in our corporate media!

Bourgeois war criminals queued up to attack him for offending the monarch. The *Guardian* reported MP Nicholas Soames (grandson of Winston Churchill) as saying that not singing the anthem was 'very rude and very disrespectful' to the Queen and 'the Battle of Britain pilots who gave their all'.

'It was an extremely disrespectful thing and I think he needs to make his mind up whether he is a grown-up or not.'^{*}

Privileged right-winger Allison Pearson writing in the *Telegraph* declared:

The event, Jeremy, wasn't about you and your 'reform agenda'. It was about the sacrifice of thousands upon thousands of British

^{*} Quoted in 'Corbyn stands silent for national anthem at Battle of Britain service' by C Davies, *The Guardian*, 15 September 2015.

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people who did their duty . . . Many of them were Labour voters who would expect their leader to show respect to *the Queen and country they died for*.*

Amongst all this insanity, it was surprising to see an article in the *New Statesman* (of all places) reflecting on the long tradition of opposition to Britain's national anthem:

Then as now, public voices sought to intimidate those who would not tow the official line.

In one Edinburgh theatre, a group of Irish medical students sung the 'Marseillaise' instead of 'God Save the King'. Outraged, the *young Walter Scott* armed a group of youths with clubs and attacked the opposition singers. Both factions were immediately banned from the theatre – but Scott and his friends were soon quietly readmitted.[†]

So much for one of the darlings of Scottish nationalism! But, sadly, rather than openly challenge the validity of Britain's feudal relic-adoring dirge of a national anthem, Corbyn chose to explain that he had 'spent the time reflecting upon his parents who had been in London during the Battle for Britain'.

Numerous Labour spokespeople were then quoted in the media reassuring us that Jeremy will be singing the national anthem in future, so . . . panic over, revolution averted, the next headline looms!

* 'Jeremy Corbyn's biggest problem with women? We see right through him' by A Pearson, *The Telegraph*, 15 September 2015, our emphasis.

† 'By refusing to sing the national anthem, Jeremy Corbyn joins a long tradition of respectful opposition' by OC Jensen, *New Statesman*, 16 September 2015, our emphasis.

John McDonnell – IRA terrorist sympathiser?

Hot on the heels of this 'scandal', on Friday 18 September, the press ran stories on Corbyn's newly-appointed shadow chancellor, John McDonnell – another long-term member of Labour's club of perennially 'principled' but (alas!) outvoted minority.

Speaking on BBC *Question Time*, McDonnell *apologised for having once expressed mild verbal support for the IRA*, and went on to give his blessings to the singing of the national anthem. The *Independent* reported:

Mr McDonnell said of his remarks about the IRA: 'If I gave offence, and I clearly have, from the bottom of my heart I apologise, I apologise.'

At a rally in London in 2003 to commemorate IRA hunger striker Bobby Sands, the MP said that it was 'about time we started honouring those people involved in the armed struggle'.

'It was bombs and bullets and sacrifice made by the likes of Bobby Sands that brought Britain to the negotiating table. The peace we have now is due to the action of the IRA,' he added.

On Thursday's *Question Time*, he said that at the time he had been trying to help the peace process.

'I accept it was a mistake to use those words, but actually if it contributed towards saving one life, or preventing someone else being maimed, it was worth doing because we did hold onto the peace process,' he said.

'There was a real risk of the republican movement splitting, and some continuing with the armed process. If I gave offence, and I

clearly have, from the bottom of my heart I apologise.”*

Actually John – you were right the first time. But thanks for openly admitting that you’re *a career politician whose alleged ‘principled stances’ are merely politically-expedient platitudes*; your candid admission is duly noted.

On the scandal over the singing of monarchist anthem ‘God Save the Queen’, McDonnell said ‘that Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn normally did sing the national anthem – despite not doing so at a recent ceremony to mark the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain.’

‘It was quite a moving event and he was casting his mind back to the war . . . *the national anthem isn’t just for those who are monarchists, it’s for everyone and it represents the whole country and that’s why people sing it.*”

Let us be the first to disassociate ourselves from such drivel and declare that for British workers ‘God Save the Queen’ is no more our song than the Butcher’s Apron is our flag!

Corbyn and the British military

Just two days later, keeping to the theme of Corbyn and his pals being dangerous subversives, an anonymous senior-serving general in the British army announced via the pages of the *Sunday Times* that any attempt to interfere with the British state’s military machine *would not be tolerated*.

‘The army just wouldn’t stand for it. The general staff would not allow a prime minister to jeopardise the security of this country,

* Quoted in ‘John McDonnell: shadow chancellor apologises for praising IRA and joke about murdering Margaret Thatcher’ by I Johnston, *Independent*, 18 September 2015, our emphasis.

and I think people would use whatever means possible, fair or foul to prevent that. You can't put a maverick in charge of a country's security.

'There would be mass resignations at all levels and you would face the very real prospect of an event which would effectively be a mutiny . . .

'Many soldiers are disgusted by the comments of Corbyn and John McDonnell [about] the IRA – men who have not only murdered British soldiers but also hundreds of members of their own community.'*

If it achieves nothing else, it is worth noting that by bringing forth such open and frank statements as these, Jeremy Corbyn's election is providing workers with many excellent lessons regarding the true nature of the capitalist state.

Trotskyite-revisionist alliance hails the second coming

Alas, whilst the corporate media were busy filling their pages with lies, nonsense and gibberish about the 'risk to national security' and the 'revolutionary potential' of Jeremy Corbyn, our friends in the Trotskyite and revisionist fraternity were doing the same.

One of the most welcome side-effects of Jeremy Corbyn's election will be the continued disintegration and destruction of the Trotskyite and revisionist rump in Britain.

With the election of a 'real left socialist' to the leadership to the Labour party, the wildest dreams of the Griffithses (Communist Party of Britain), Matgamnas (Workers Fight, Alliance for Workers Liberty), Reeses, Germans (Socialist Workers Party, Counterfire),

* Quoted in 'Corbyn hit by mutiny on airstrikes' by T Shipman, S Rayment, R Kerbaj and J Lyons, *The Sunday Times*, 20 September 2015.

Taaffes (Militant, Socialist Party) et al has come true.

Almost all the members of Britain's Trotskyist and revisionist fellowship have hailed the election of Corbyn and the increase of Labour party membership as a sign that *socialism is now the order of the day and that Labour has been transformed into an entirely new political party* nearly overnight by the arrival of so many £3 members.

The leading light of social-fascist misfits the AWL (Alliance for Workers Liberty), Sean Matgamna, wrote:

There is nothing timid, half-hearted, or half-strangled about Jeremy Corbyn and his politics, or about John McDonnell, whom he has appointed as Labour's shadow chancellor of the exchequer. *To an enormous degree this is a new political party.**

You see, dear reader, take a party – let's say Labour, a party of imperialism for over a hundred years and a party with a long and proud history of racism, chauvinism and servility to the bourgeoisie. What happens when you take said party and place Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell at the top? Hey presto, a new party! It's that easy.

The Socialist Party, another Trotskyite outfit, which, for the last ten years or so, has been campaigning for a 'new workers' party' has now decided that such a party has actually appeared, like Minerva from the head of Jupiter.

The lack of democracy in the Labour party and growing levels of working-class alienation from it meant a movement within the Labour party structures was not the most likely scenario. Nonetheless, we have no fetish about by what route the crisis of working-class political representation would be solved and have never excluded the possibility of Labour swinging left.

* 'After Jeremy Corbyn wins Labour leader, rebuild the Labour movement' by S Matgamna, *Solidarity*, 16 September 2015, our emphasis.

RESURGENCE OF LEFT SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

As long ago as 2002 we argued that, 'under the impact of great historic shocks – a serious economic crisis, mass social upheaval – the ex-social-democratic parties could move dramatically towards the left'.

However, the reality is that the Corbyn surge has mainly not come from within the Labour party but from 'outside' – new members and registered supporters who were attracted by the hope of something different. *This is a new party in the process of formation* which will face relentless attack from the 'old' pro-capitalist New Labour.*

Despite such assertions, however, this 'new party' appears to be dominated by many of the 'old' characters. The Socialist Party has no problem later in the same article relating this fact:

The shadow justice secretary, the Blairite Lord Falconer, has a record of introducing draconian anti-democratic legislation.

Heidi Alexander, the shadow health secretary, has previously supported privatisation and closure of hospitals. Andy Burnham, the shadow home secretary, showed how right-wing he is at the start of the leadership election campaign, supporting further benefit cuts and opposing the mansion tax as 'the politics of envy'.

So desperate are the Trotskyites to return to the social-democratic bosom from which they were torn in the early 1990s that they now openly advocate a return to entryism and factional struggle inside the Labour party, and, whilst it is still some way off, we can only look forward to the organisational liquidation of these renegades.

Call a conference of all anti-austerity forces which can elaborate a clear programme of no cuts, and the necessary action at local and

* 'Editorial: Corbyn's leadership victory a new era for the 99 percent', *The Socialist*, 16 September 2015, our emphasis.

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national level to implement this! *It is also necessary at the same time to create a parallel organised framework around Corbyn*, which could organise the campaign to involve all anti-austerity and socialist forces in a new mass movement.

The Socialist Party and TUSC will be part of such a movement . . . the conclusions to draw from Corbyn's victory should be: no prevarication, no retreats, no bending to the scheming splitters in the right-wing PLP [parliamentary Labour party] or to the 'constitutional requirements' of the current Labour party structures . . . We are now presented with a new opportunity which must not be lost!*

In harmony with the position of the Trotskyites are our old friends in the Communist Party of Britain (CPB). The revisionist clique running the *Morning Star* and the CPB are equally gleeful about the prospect of better relations with social democracy. *Morning Star* editor Ben Chacko, whilst reviewing the Sunday morning papers on the BBC's *Sunday Politics* show, was pleased to note that 'socialism' was now 'back on the agenda'!

In a 'political report' entitled 'Corbyn victory! – Rebuilding the force for change', the CPB's leadership declared enthusiastically:

Corbyn's campaign has enthused many thousands of people to see *new hope in the Labour party*.†

Rather than celebrating the strengthening of the ties of the workers to social democracy, however, true communists should be doing everything to expose social democrats (who want to keep us loyal to imperialism) and to show the way forward to socialism. But the CPB celebrates all that is backward in the labour movement and strives to further strengthen the illusions that keep workers tied to

* 'A political earthquake' by P Taaffe, *Socialist World*, 18 September 2015, our emphasis.

† 'Corbyn victory! – Rebuilding the force for change', CPB website, our emphasis.

the British ruling class's coat tails!

All of the Trotskyite-revisionist gang are now praying for a return to some form of federal Labour party – a structure within which they hope to carve out some cushy jobs helping to keep British workers on our own unique and neverending 'British Road to Socialism' – one where social-democratic parties can transform overnight into 'new forces for change', and where the march to socialism is exceedingly long!

In his article 'One of the fundamental questions of the revolution', written in September 1917, Lenin spoke about the role that is played by those social democrats and reformists who pretend to 'fight for socialism' *through parliamentary means alone*.

The entire history of the bourgeois-parliamentary, and also, to a considerable extent, of the bourgeois-constitutional, countries shows that a change of ministers means very little, *for the real work of administration is in the hands of an enormous army of officials*.

This army, however, is *undemocratic through and through*; it is connected by thousands and millions of threads with the landowners and the bourgeoisie and is completely dependent on them. This army is surrounded by an atmosphere of bourgeois relations, and breathes nothing but this atmosphere.

It is set in its ways, petrified, stagnant, and is *powerless to break free of this atmosphere*. It can only think, feel, or act in the old way. This army is bound by servility to rank, by certain privileges of 'civil' service; the upper ranks of this army are, through the medium of shares and banks, entirely enslaved by finance capital, being to a certain extent its agent and a vehicle of its interests and influence . . .

That is why it always happens, under all sorts of 'coalition' cabinets that include 'socialists', that these socialists, even when individuals among them are perfectly honest, in reality turn out to be *either a*

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useless ornament of or a screen for the bourgeois government, a sort of lightning conductor to divert the people's indignation from the government, a tool for the government to deceive the people.

This was the case with Louis Blanc in 1848, and dozens of times in Britain and France, when socialists participated in cabinets. This is also the case with the Chernovs and Tseretelis in 1917. *So it has been and so it will be as long as the bourgeois system exists and as long as the old bourgeois, bureaucratic state apparatus remains intact.**

We in Britain must learn from these wise words. Whilst Jeremy Corbyn is today merely the leader of the opposition, it is now quite possible that in the future he may become prime minister, and it is therefore the job of communists to help workers understand the painful truth: it is absolutely impossible that such a premiership could ever result in a socialist Britain.

Paul Cannon

Birmingham, September 2015

* 'One of the fundamental questions of the revolution' by VI Lenin, *Rabochy Put*, 14 September 1917, our emphasis.

3. 'Anti-zionism is not antisemitism'

Statement on 'Labour's problem with antisemitism' from the Jewish Socialists Group.¹²

Antisemitism exists and must be exposed and fought against in the same way as other forms of racism by all who are concerned with combating racism and fascism.

Antisemitism and anti-zionism are not the same. Zionism is a political ideology that has always been contested within jewish life since it emerged in 1897, and *it is entirely legitimate for non-jews as well as jews to express opinions about it*, whether positive or negative. Not all jews are zionists. Not all zionists are jews.

Criticism of Israeli government policy and Israeli state actions against the Palestinians is not antisemitism. Those who conflate criticism of Israeli policy with antisemitism, whether they are supporters or opponents of Israeli policy, are actually helping the antisemites. We reject any attempt, from whichever quarter, to place legitimate criticism of Israeli policy out of bounds.

Accusations of antisemitism are currently being weaponised to attack the Jeremy Corbyn-led Labour party with claims that Labour has a 'problem' with antisemitism. This is despite Corbyn's long-standing record of actively opposing fascism and all forms of racism, and being a firm supporter of the rights of refugees and of

human rights globally.

A very small number of such cases seem to be real instances of antisemitism. Others represent genuine criticism of Israeli policy and support for Palestinian rights, but expressed in clumsy and ambiguous language, which may unknowingly cross a line into antisemitism. Further cases are simply forthright expressions of support for Palestinian rights, which condemn Israeli government policy and aspects of Zionist ideology, and have nothing whatsoever to do with antisemitism.

The accusations do not refer to antisemitic actions but usually to comments, often made on social media, long before Jeremy Corbyn won the Labour leadership. Those making the charges now did not see fit to bring them up at the time, under previous Labour leaders, but are using them now, just before mayoral and local elections, *when they believe they can inflict most damage on the Labour party led by Jeremy Corbyn.*

The attack is coming from four main sources, who share agendas: to undermine Jeremy Corbyn as leader of Labour; to defend Israeli government policy from attack, however unjust, racist and harmful towards the Palestinian people; and to discredit those who make legitimate criticisms of Israeli policy or Zionism as a political ideology.

As antiracist and antifascist Jews who are also campaigning for peace with justice between Israelis and Palestinians, we entirely reject these cynical agendas that are being expressed by:

- The Conservative party
- Conservative-supporting media in Britain and pro-Zionist Israeli media sources
- Right-wing and pro-Zionist elements claiming to speak on behalf of the Jewish community
- Opponents of Jeremy Corbyn within the Labour party.

The Jewish Socialists Group recognises that ordinary Jewish people

are rightly concerned and fearful about instances of antisemitism. We share their concerns and have a proud and consistent record of challenging and campaigning against antisemitism. But we will not support those making false accusations for cynical political motives, including the Conservative party, which is running a racist campaign against Sadiq Khan, and whose leader, David Cameron, has referred to desperate refugees as 'a swarm' and 'a bunch of migrants'.

The Conservative party demonstrated its contempt for Lord Dubs, a Jewish refugee from Nazism, when it voted down en masse an amendment a few days ago to allow three thousand child refugees into Britain while Labour, led by Jeremy Corbyn, gave total support to Lord Dubs and his amendment.

The Jewish Socialists Group sees the current fearmongering about antisemitism in the Labour party for what it is – *a conscious and concerted effort by right-wing political forces to undermine the growing support among Jews and non-Jews alike for the Labour party leadership of Jeremy Corbyn*, and a measure of the desperation of his opponents.

We stand against antisemitism, against racism and fascism and in support of refugees. We stand for free speech and open debate on Israel, Palestine and Zionism.*

Jewish Socialists Group

June 2016

* All emphasis is ours – Ed.

4. Crisis in the Labour party – Corbyn's second leadership election

*With every day it is becoming more apparent that war criminals are eminently more acceptable to the imperialist Labour party than a mildly anti-war leader.*¹³

As we go to press, the gang of right social democrats who make up the majority of the parliamentary Labour party (PLP) have put forward a fresh candidate for a leadership challenge in a bid to unseat the present incumbent, Jeremy Corbyn.

As a justification, they are claiming to *hold Corbyn responsible for the outcome of the Brexit vote*, but the truth is that they have been desperate to ditch him ever since they slipped up and allowed him onto the ballot paper for the leadership contest that he went on to win by a landslide last September.

The previous leader, Ed Miliband, had overseen a big change within the party's electoral college, which had the effect of diminishing the power of both MPs and the trade union leaderships. Formerly, those two groups would have effectively decided between themselves who the new leader would be, but now the strength of the individual members and registered supporters has become paramount in leadership contests (notwithstanding the sway that the

bourgeois media holds over the thoughts and opinions of many of those individual members).

After huge media speculation, a vote of no confidence from his own MPs and an attempt by the right social democrats to misinterpret the party rules on leadership challenges (by which underhand means it was hoped that the popular Mr Corbyn would be excluded from the contest altogether), Angela Eagle MP meekly stepped forward – accompanied by pink banners, uninterested journalists and the howls of indignation from her own constituency party members – to proclaim her candidature, which seemed to last only a matter of minutes before she far more hastily stepped back into the media shadows (or, more properly, was ignored as being patently not up to the job of dethroning Corbyn).

Enter Owen Smith MP, talking like a leftist (when he was not boasting about his preparedness to unleash imperialist nuclear war), and using the excuse of his leader's lacklustre performance during the EU referendum campaign, during which Corbyn is accused of having failed to show sufficient enthusiasm for the imperialist exploiters' club.

Owen Smith's leftist facade is being heavily promoted by his fellow right social democrats because Corbyn's election proved that the majority of the party's supporters really are looking for a *left* alternative (whether Mr Corbyn deserves the title of leftist or not, he is certainly on the left of social democracy). This means that anybody who seriously hopes to replace him as leader through the process of a leadership election is forced to resort to some left phraseology.

The focus on the Brexit vote by the right social democrats takes into account the fact that the majority of Labour members voted to remain and Corbyn, who hitherto had always supported leaving the EU, abandoned that position – ostensibly to achieve 'unity' with those who hate him in the party, but also because *his former 'principles' are no longer available to him as the leader of one of Britain's two main imperialist parties.*

The result was not only *the delivering up of many of the Labour-voting working class to the campaign to stay in the EU bosses' club* but also the exposing of himself to the accusation of opportunism. In fact, his pro-remain performance really was poor and, taken together, the two things left him open to criticism from both sides.

Owen Smith

But what of this latest pretender, Owen Smith? Having spent ten years working at the BBC as a producer on Radio 4's *Today* programme and the Welsh political show *Dragon's Eye*, he moved on to a three-year spell as a special adviser to Paul Murphy, the former northern Ireland secretary.

Smith then transformed himself into a political lobbyist and public relations specialist for the pharmaceuticals industry. After working for the US giant Pfizer, Smith secured a job with controversial biotech firm Amgen in 2008. This was at the time when Amgen was battling an investigation into one of its most financially successful anaemia drugs, Aranesp. This parasitic company, which preys on the ill and dying, was fined \$762m for illegally promoting its drug to cancer patients in a way that *increased* the likelihood of their deaths!

Perhaps his conscience bothered him, or more likely his stint there was merely a stepping stone. Either way, two years after joining Amgen as a pusher of their drugs and apologist for their crimes (Smith was in charge of corporate affairs, corporate and internal communications and public affairs at the British division while the company was being investigated), he climbed aboard the parliamentary gravy train, getting himself elected as MP for the safe Labour seat of Pontypridd (south Wales) in 2010.

In the six years since then he has shot through the Labour party ranks at a vertiginous speed, serving as shadow Welsh secretary

under Ed Miliband from 2012-15 before moving on to become shadow work and pensions secretary in the first months of Corbyn's leadership. Along with many others in the PLP cabal, he resigned in the aftermath of the EU referendum, hoping to force Corbyn out.

Even among his 'friends', Smith is reckoned to have an ego bigger than Yorkshire and believes himself to be untouchable when it comes to saying and doing as he likes. (This belief is so prevalent in the House of Commons that for his ego and arrogance to be noticeable it must be truly titanic!)

Smith has been declaring to colleagues for months now – since long before the referendum, apparently – that he would replace Corbyn as party leader, and his arrogance was on public show again when he described himself as 'normal'.

'I am normal. I grew up in a normal household. I've got a wife and three children. My wife is a primary school teacher.'^{*}

This was interpreted as a dismissive swipe at Angela Eagle, who lives in a lesbian civil partnership, while he was obviously trying to bully her into standing aside to leave him as the single 'unity', 'soft-left' candidate.

A few salient facts are worth bearing in mind about the 'left' credentials of Mr Smith:

- In 2011, he *voted to support the establishment of the notorious 'no-fly zone' over Libya*, paving the way for a brutal Nato bombardment that wiped out the country's infrastructure, destroyed forty years of progress and set in motion racist pogroms and a bloody civil war that continues to this day.
- In 2014, he *voted for British air strikes in Iraq* – officially aimed at 'curtailing Islamic State', but in reality sending a warning to

* Quoted in 'Profile: the Owen Smith Story' by B Wheeler, *BBC News*, 21 July 2016.

the Iraqi government not to stray from western 'protection' and not to ally with Iran and Russia.

- In 2015, Smith *voted in favour of renewing Britain's Trident nuclear weapons programme.*

Knives out for Corbyn

The Labour party is still the same anti-working class, pro-imperialist gang of racists and warmongers it always was and nothing Jeremy Corbyn can do will make any significant difference to this.

However, to the extent that there is still widespread illusion in working-class political circles that Labour is the party of the working class and that it is capable of being 'reclaimed' to serve working-class interests, it is most important for workers to see *in practice* what happens when somebody actually does try to 'reclaim' the Labour party in order to promote at least some progressive policies.

We have already seen Corbyn backtrack on many of his long-held political beliefs, and yet still the long knives are out after him. *The party that lauded the arch war criminal Tony Blair cannot bear to let itself be led even for a short while by someone who opposes war*, even in the mildest of ways (ie, in words, not deeds) – not even when such a stance is popular with members and voters alike!

Imperialism means war, imperialism in crisis is driven to more and more war, and the Labour party serves imperialism above all. For all its ill-deserved reputation as 'the party of the working class', a look at its real history over the last hundred years reveals that it is as blood-soaked as the Conservatives.

Every day of Jeremy Corbyn's leadership can be expected to deliver lesson after lesson to drive home into the minds of even the most reluctant student of politics: that the Labour party is an imperialist party, which cannot be transformed into anything else; that it is a party *at the service of the British ruling class against the interests*

of the working class.

This is a lesson that the working class badly needs to learn and to learn well, and Corbyn's project to 'reclaim' the Labour party from its one hundred and twenty years of service to British imperialism is teaching the mass of his own supporters hard but vital home truths.

Zane Carpenter

Normanton, July 2016

5. June 2017: After the election, what now?

*Workers' salvation lies not with Saint Jeremy or Stern Theresa, but with the workers themselves.*¹⁴

To make sense of this election, the first thing that has to be understood is the context: *the deep capitalist crisis of overproduction is creating conditions of chaos and uncertainty in all spheres of life.*

Crisis breeds chaos

As in all the other capitalist countries of the world, the ruling class is thoroughly divided over the best way to deal with the crisis, and this is reflected in the rancorous polarisation in the media and within both the major parties, which are *split over fundamental questions of Britain's EU membership, of its wars abroad* and subservience in these wars to US imperialism, and over the implementation of (if not the necessity for) *austerity at home*.

Moreover, the working class is increasingly frustrated and angry at the burden that the ruling class has been shifting onto its back: the lack of decent jobs and housing; the privatisation and scrapping of public services, especially the health service; the rising cost of living alongside falling wages and conditions; rising unemployment

and falling benefits. The young, in particular, now face a situation where in order to get a job they must first acquire a crippling debt burden, and where living at home or becoming homeless seem to be the only options as far as housing is concerned.

As the crisis deepens, there are vocal sections within every capitalist class in the world who want to find a way out of their troubles by *protecting home markets and exporting more goods abroad*. But there's a catch: if everyone's home markets are glutted, there is not going to be much scope for increasing exports, and particularly not when everyone else is trying to do the same thing! On top of this, imperialist powers are also competing to control avenues of investment and sources of raw materials all over the world.

In truth, the ruling class has no answer to the crisis beyond austerity and war, and no answer to working-class anger than to try to divert it against whatever scapegoats can be found from amongst the workers themselves – 'benefit cheats', single mothers, immigrants, etc.

It is this division within the ruling class and its parties and its need to promote scapegoats (in the form of immigration and the EU) that pushed the Tories into holding the Brexit referendum in the first place, and the success of decades of poisonous propaganda in convincing workers that their fellows are to blame for their problems that caused the ruling class to lose control of the outcome of that vote – all of which has further added to the chaos now being witnessed.

An election of chaos

Faced with a non-stop barrage of criticism and sabotage from the section of the ruling class that is set on scuppering the Brexit negotiations (including rebels within her own party), prime minister Theresa May hoped to increase her majority so as to have a surer

base from which to outmanoeuvre her opponents. It would appear, too, that she had bought into the received Westminster wisdom that Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn was so unpopular and unelectable that the whole thing was bound to be a walkover; that she would triumph, much as in the Tory leadership contest,¹⁵ by doing nothing and allowing her opponent to shoot himself in the foot (or, rather, by leaving the media and his own party colleagues to destroy his electoral prospects on her behalf).

As far as the ruling class was concerned, *this was most certainly the Brexit election* (as, no doubt, the next one will be too). Ms May went into the election appealing to voters to strengthen her hand, and 'Should May's Tories be strengthened or weakened?' would indeed appear to have been the main question on voters' minds. Two major issues appear to have affected voting patterns: Brexit and austerity (including, most especially, the dismantling of the NHS, the housing crisis, unemployment, rising student debt and the general lack of prospects or opportunities for young people). In Scotland, added to these was the question of independence, and in the north of Ireland it was Irish reunification.

In general, it would seem that people voted in the way that they thought would be most likely to strengthen or weaken Ms May's government according to their views on the above. A surge in turnout by previously disengaged younger voters also proved decisive in delivering not only the highest overall turnout in twenty years (69 percent), but also in swinging many seats from Tory to Labour. As a result, Labour gained 40 percent of both votes and seats: an undoubted triumph for Jeremy Corbyn's platform of a move towards more traditional social democracy.

In actual fact, it was not all bad news for the Tories. Their stance on Brexit wiped out the UK Independence party (Ukip) and brought gains in Wales, while their stand against another independence referendum undermined the Scottish National party (SNP) and gained it seats in Scotland. But the governing party's seat numbers col-

lapsed catastrophically in England, particularly in university and anti-Brexit constituencies. So, despite *increasing* their share of the vote (from 37 to 42 percent), the Tories actually *lost* seats (318, down from 331).

The net result is that *May has gambled with what little majority the Tories had and has very publicly lost her bet.*

The battle of the manifestos

With an apparently safe twenty-point lead in the polls, May committed the cardinal sin of forgetting that while she *in fact* serves a tiny clique of the super-rich, she does at election time need to *appear* to be serving the masses if they are going to be persuaded to vote for her. The hubris with which she included such anti-worker items in her manifesto as the 'dementia tax'* and the scrapping of the triple lock on pensions[†] defied belief, and had even her own supporters reeling in shock.

These may well be *aims* of the ruling class, but what kind of politician believes they should actually be *printed* in a manifesto aimed at attracting working-class votes? The need to backtrack on these unnecessary attacks on her core voters¹⁶ fatally undermined her increasingly spurious 'strong and stable' mantra.

Meanwhile, Mr Corbyn's manifesto included a whole list of eminently reasonable demands appealing to a wide cross-section of society. More funding for the National Health Service, a programme of council house building and the scrapping of student debt and tuition fees spoke to all those who are suffering under austerity, especially the young; renationalisation of the railways and other key utilities

* See 'Theresa May ditches manifesto plan with "dementia tax" U-turn' by A Asthana and J Elgot, *The Guardian*, 22 May 2017.

† See 'Election 2017: State pension triple lock battle lines drawn' by K Peachey, *BBC News*, 18 May 2017.

spoke not only to workers who are sick of being ripped off by the privateers but also to significant sections of the ruling class, whose ability to run their businesses is undermined by the poor services that the private companies presently deliver.

And, of course, Corbyn's promise to renew Trident and to 'press the button' if need be allayed the worst fears of his detractors, while doing nothing to stunt the support of his former colleagues in CND¹⁷ and Stop the War.¹⁸

It is clear that Ms May, along with the entire bourgeois media, failed to appreciate not only the attractiveness of Mr Corbyn's platform to large sections of the working class, but also to foresee that *the liberal media's hatred of Brexit might ultimately trump their hatred of Corbyn*.

May might have had a huge lead while the media were united in singing the song of Corbyn's 'unelectability', but, when push came to shove and it was too late for Labour to ditch Corbyn; when it was a choice between Theresa May's declared intention of pushing Brexit through no matter what and the possibility of a coalition made up of members who are in the main opposed to Brexit (Jeremy himself notwithstanding), significant sections of the imperialist media and the parliamentary Labour party (PLP) knew what they had to do.

And so, at the last minute, Corbyn was transformed in much of the liberal media from a bumbling idiot whose subversive ideas would ruin the country if anyone was crazy enough to vote for him (which, of course, they wouldn't be) into a likeable, down-to-earth chap who was in touch with the common folk and not afraid to stand up for what he believes. Journalists stopped ignoring Corbyn's triumphal progress and rapturous reception in cities around Britain and started to acknowledge the reasons for it, even going so far as hypocritically to join the chorus against May's proposed new anti-terror legislation.

Tasks ahead

No stable majority government is possible with the present allocation of seats. With the need to please so many outside her own camp, many of May's manifesto promises will now be impossible to act on and, with divisions rife within her own party, she will likely find herself having to cobble together an alliance for every single bill she wants to pass through parliament. In all likelihood, the Tory/DUP alliance will quite quickly fall apart,* and there is every chance that May will be unceremoniously dumped and a new election called soon.

All in all, it is clear that the election has decided nothing: the splits within the ruling class and the bourgeois parties continue to deepen and the resulting political chaos continues to grow. And this is only to be expected, because no mere changing of the guard is capable of dealing with the root cause of society's problems: the deepening capitalist crisis of overproduction.

The quest for a 'strong and stable' government has led it to become *even more weak and unstable* than it was before. The challenge for workers is to organise to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the weakness and disarray in the enemy's camp.

It is a cause for optimism that increasing numbers of people, especially the young, are exercising their voting rights in their desire to promote working-class interests over those of the super-rich. *Lalkar* supports every struggle of the working class for improvements in their conditions, but this support seeks at the same time to convince workers of the need for a working-class revolution, not to lull them into the false but reassuring belief that their needs can be met within capitalism.

* See 'Not so strong and stable after all: May loses Brexit gamble', *Proletarian*, June 2017.

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No amount of tweaking at the edges of economic or foreign policy is going to make this parasitic and dying system serve the interests of the working class or cure the chaos now prevalent.

The programme of the Labour party is, at best, a prayer that the ills of capitalism can be solved within the capitalist system. But with the best will in the world, they can't: workers' salvation lies not with Saint Jeremy or Stern Theresa, but with the workers themselves.

Unpalatable as this truth may be, ultimately workers will not be able to vote their way out of the crisis. Either the crisis will lead the working class deeper into poverty and war, or workers will organise themselves to defeat the crisis by overthrowing capitalism and building a socialist society that is capable of meeting their needs.

Ella Rule

London, June 2017

6. The myth of Labour party antisemitism

On the zionist-backed campaign against Jeremy Corbyn's leadership of the Labour party.¹⁹

In the attempt to prevent a Jeremy Corbyn-led Labour party from ever forming a government, a hue and cry has been raised by the section of the bourgeoisie that most fears this, using its zionist and pro-zionist stooges to spearhead the attack.

It is an attack that can only succeed if people can be conned into believing that opposing the existence, or even merely the fascistic nature, of the state of Israel amounts to antisemitism.

Only the hopelessly ignorant can have failed to notice that the 'jewish state' had to create *lebensraum* for the jews whom it wanted to attract to Palestine by violently dispossessing without any kind of compensation and driving out of the country three million of the local inhabitants whose families had been settled in the area for centuries.

Only the wilfully blind can be unaware of the extreme race hatred fostered in Israel against Palestinian Arabs.

Only those lacking in moral sensitivity could fail to support the right of Palestinians torn by force away from their motherland to do everything possible to get back what is rightfully theirs.

So unless a person is ignorant, wilfully blind and morally totally in-

sensitive, they are, by the definition the zionists and their imperialist friends want us to accept, of necessity antisemitic racists.

Traditionally, the Labour party has on the whole heartily embraced zionism and the state of Israel. This support was summarised recently by the *Times of Israel*:

Labour proved itself a steadfast supporter of the establishment of a jewish homeland. Its own annual conferences, and those of its allies in the trade union movement, repeatedly endorsed this principle during the 1930s. In May 1939, Labour opposed the Conservative government's white paper, which sought to halt jewish immigration to Palestine . . .

The horrors which were to unfold in Europe over the following six years only served to strengthen Labour's conviction. In 1944, the party declared that the case for large-scale jewish immigration to Palestine was 'irresistible' in the face of the 'unspeakable atrocities' perpetuated by the Nazis. [Most European jews would have far preferred to go to Britain or the US rather than Palestine, but that case, of course, was entirely 'resistible!']

Shortly after Germany's surrender, and as Britain prepared for its first general election in a decade, Labour nailed its colours firmly to the zionist mast. Addressing its annual conference in May 1945, Hugh Dalton, who two months later would become chancellor of the exchequer following the party's landslide win, declared it 'morally wrong and politically indefensible to restrict the entry into Palestine of jews desiring to go there'.*

The article pointed out that there were times when Labour departed from its usually dependable support for everything the zionists wanted, but of course this was only where imperialist interests from

* 'It backed Israel before Balfour: Corbyn stance is stark shift from early Labour' by R Philpott, *The Times of Israel*, 17 April 2018.

time to time so demanded.

If during World War Two the Labour party was prepared to agree to restrict jewish immigration into Palestine, it is obvious that this policy was necessary to maintain any kind of an alliance with the Arab states in the war Britain was waging against Germany. It was a policy driven by love neither of Arabs or jews, much less justice, but by the interests of imperialist domination. These are usually best served by support of zionism, but not always.

What it is necessary to understand about the Labour party is that it is an imperialist party – a party representative of the interests of British imperialism – whose purpose is to rally the British working class behind its imperialist masters.

In order to do that, it has to convince the working class that in so doing the working class is serving its own best interests. Hence it has to cover its bloodthirsty, aggressive, exploitative nature under a hypocritical left-wing veneer of progressive-sounding promises of 'jam tomorrow'.

This is why the Labour party has always tolerated its 'left' wing, which spends its time publicly regretting the policies being pursued by the party but holding out the hope that they could be changed at the next congress, or the one after that, or, at any rate, eventually . . . Meanwhile, the anti-working class, pro-imperialist agenda carries on, whether Labour is in or out of office – though obviously it's much easier for the party to sing its 'progressive' siren songs when it is *out* of office.

It is in this context that Jeremy Corbyn's lifelong support for progressive causes – anti-Nato, anti-zionist, anti-EU, anti-Trident, etc must be seen. Even though he is backing down from some of these heartfelt causes (in the interests, he says, of 'party democracy!'), still there are elements of the bourgeoisie who are terrified that he might follow up on his previously expressed anti-imperialist sentiments if he ever became prime minister.

It is in this context that rich moneybags, jewish and non-jewish

alike, fearful that some part of their immense riches might be diverted to improve the lives of British workers – through increased funding of schools or the NHS, for example – have been assiduously and relentlessly repeating the ‘Labour party antisemitism’ mantra, steamrolling all opposition.

Even Jeremy Corbyn lost his head in the face of this assault and was persuaded that an anti-capitalist mural that enlivened the streets of east London (showing greedy bankers living off the backs of the oppressed masses) was antisemitic – not apparently realising that he was thereby bowing to antisemitic beliefs that all greedy bankers are jewish!*

Although he will probably do his best, Jeremy Corbyn, despite all the support he gets from grassroots Labour members, will not be able to turn the Labour party into anything other than it is – a party of imperialism.

Ella Rule

London, June 2018

* See ‘The famous “antisemitic” mural’ by E Rule, *Proletarian*, April 2018.

7. The mixed message of the IHRA definition of 'antisemitism'

*Anti-zionism and opposition to the fascist activities of Israel must not be conflated with antisemitism.*²⁰

After a protracted public dispute,* the Labour party's national executive committee (NEC) has decided to adopt the 'internationally recognised' definition of antisemitism, as put together by the Zionist pressure group, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA).

For around two years, the media have pushed the lie that there is an 'antisemitism problem' within the Labour party, particularly around Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, and the party has finally buckled to this pressure.

Despite an NEC now dominated by Corbyn allies, Corbyn's own five-hundred-word caveat to the definition was rejected by his colleagues at the meeting. This caveat attempted to make explicit the criticisms of Israel and Zionism that would still be allowed under the definition. The NEC rejected this move by their party leader, instead adding the shorter caveat of members' right to freedom of speech.

* See Chapter 8: 'Why is Corbyn under attack?' by J Brar, p77.

This was a spectacular failure of strategy by the NEC. Its members gambled that their amendment would placate the noisiest of Labour's Zionist critics. Instead, however, they have gone too far in placating the Zionists for pro-Palestine members, whilst not going far enough to actually placate Zionist members and critics. *In trying to play to both sides, they have pleased neither.*

Corbyn's caveat to the IHRA definition

Of Corbyn's rejected add-on to the definition, particular criticism has been made of the following sentence:

Nor should it be regarded as antisemitic to describe Israel, its policies, or the circumstances around its foundation as racist because of their discriminatory impact, or to support another settlement of the Israel-Palestine conflict.

According to the *Times*:

John Mann, the Labour MP and chairman of the all-party parliamentary group against antisemitism, told the *Times*: 'What was he thinking of, after all we have gone through, to try and create another almighty row? It would have been turmoil if his proposal had been accepted.'

Jennifer Gerber, the director of Labour Friends of Israel, said the proposed statement was 'contemptible' and that it was 'utterly unsurprising that Jeremy Corbyn prioritised and fought for the right of antisemites to describe the world's only Jewish state as racist in a meeting supposedly about combating antisemitism'. She added: 'It is now even more clear that Jeremy Corbyn is part of the problem not the solution.'

Dame Margaret Hodge, who has been at the centre of the row after

THE IHRA DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM

accusing Mr Corbyn of being an 'antisemite and a racist', said: 'Two steps forward and one step back. Why dilute the welcome adoption in full of the IHRA definition of antisemitism with an unnecessary qualification?'

She said that the acceptance of the definition had been 'sullied' by the 'get-out clause'. 'Absolutely this is not over,' she told the BBC's Today programme.*

That such an obviously true statement as Corbyn's was has been seized upon and attacked can only reinforce the aggressive push by the zionists to stifle all and any criticism of Israel, however mildly expressed. They clearly seek to redefine 'antisemitism' as meaning 'any criticism of Israel's existence or policies', and, to date, they have been rather successful in this endeavour.

Ken Livingstone

Another ex-Labour party figure some time ago smeared with the antisemite label, former London Mayor Ken Livingstone,²¹ has defended Jeremy Corbyn and the party. Mr Livingstone said:

'No one should have any worries about this stuff. Antisemitism is about people who hate and loathe jews. It's not about criticising the Israeli government's policy towards the Palestinians. People who hate jews, blacks or homosexuals are never going to join the Labour party because we have always been defending the rights of people like that.'[†]

There is some truth to these words. Antisemitism is most definitely

* 'Jeremy Corbyn slapped down by allies over antisemitism' by H Zeffman, *The Times*, 5 September 2018.

† Quoted in Ibid.

about hatred of jews; it does not concern criticism of Israeli policy, nor of the ideology of zionism. We may disagree that the Labour party has a spotless record on defending the rights of minorities – it is quite as racist as the other main parties of imperialism – but it is certainly not *more* racist than the other parties.

Nor is antisemitism more prevalent in the Labour party than in the other parties, or than in society generally, where it is, in fact, at an extremely low ebb. The idea that Corbyn himself is an antisemite is laughable.

The zionist propaganda assault against Jeremy Corbyn

Despite support from the likes of Livingstone, Corbyn and Labour have been hammered by a well-coordinated zionist assault.

Karen Pollock, chief executive of the Holocaust Educational Trust, said: 'The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition and all of its examples should have been accepted in full today, no amendments, no caveats. We all believe in freedom of speech and this framework does not stifle that.'

'Why is it that the Labour party feel that they are different or above anyone else when looking at this issue? Thirty-one countries including the UK government have adopted it.'

Marie van der Zyl, president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, said that the adoption of IHRA and its examples in full was the right decision but 'very long overdue'. She said it was 'regrettable that Labour has wasted a whole summer trying to dictate to jews what constitutes offence against us'. Ms Van der Zyl maintained that 'Jeremy Corbyn needs to apologise for past antisemitic comments and affiliations'.*

* H Zeffman, *The Times*, *ibid*.

THE IHRA DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM

Unsurprisingly, Ms Van der Zyl entirely misses the point. Whether jews or anyone else is offended is neither here nor there. Offence is not relevant, and cannot be used as an excuse to close down all argument.

Just because someone is offended does not make them right. Increasing numbers of people have joined the prevailing fashion, built into the bourgeois individualism of identity politics, of taking offence at anything and everything, from disability to support for this or that football team.

But feeling offended makes no difference to whether one's point is in any way valid or logical. In the words of Richard Dawkins (of whom we are no fans, but with whom we are, on this point, in full accord):

Offence is the last straw the faith-heads clutch when they run out of rational arguments.*

And whilst zionists may claim that the 'internationally-recognised' (ie, heavily pushed by imperialism and its zionist stooges) definition of antisemitism is universally accepted, in fact just 31 countries accept the definition. That is, the overwhelming majority of states do *not* accept the so-called 'international definition'.

What, then, does the IHRA's definition consist of? Far from sticking to the simple statement that 'antisemitism is the hatred of jews as jews and for no other reason', the IHRA sets out a far lengthier 'definition', complete with examples, which we reproduce in full below. With most of the examples we would agree, but, as they say, a spoonful of tar spoils a barrel of honey.

* @richarddawkins, Twitter, 23 January 2014.

The IHRA definition of antisemitism

Antisemitism is a certain perception of jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward jewish or non-jewish individuals and/or their property, toward jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

To guide IHRA in its work, the following examples may serve as illustrations:

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Antisemitism frequently charges jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame jews for 'why things go wrong'. It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanising, demonising, or stereotypical allegations about jews as such or the power of jews as collective – such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world jewish conspiracy or of jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Accusing jews as a people of being responsible for real or imag-

THE IHRA DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM

ined wrongdoing committed by a single jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-jews.

- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (eg, gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the jewish people at the hands of national-socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War Two (the holocaust).

- Accusing the jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the holocaust.

- Accusing jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.

- *Denying the jewish people their right to self-determination, eg, by claiming that the existence of a state of Israel is a racist endeavour.*

- Applying double standards by requiring of Israel a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.

- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (eg, claims of jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterise Israel or Israelis.

- *Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.*

- Holding jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

Antisemitic acts are criminal when they are so defined by law (for example, denial of the Holocaust or distribution of antisemitic materials in some countries).

Criminal acts are antisemitic when the targets of attacks, whether they are people or property – such as buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries – are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, jewish or linked to jews.

Antisemitic discrimination is the denial to jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many countries.*

Despite the fact that the IHRA text contains the following sentence: 'criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic', it is clear from what follows that this is exactly what the zionists are trying to abolish – the right to criticise Israel.

Having been unable to prevent the worldwide spread of sympathy for the cause of the dispossessed Palestinians or of disgust at the barbarity and hypocrisy of the Israeli state in any other way, they are attempting to use the power of the imperialist media, political and legal machinery to *terrorise the public into submission* by smearing all critics of Israel as racists, liable to imprisonment for 'hate crimes'. In this way they hope to put Israel, its policies and its existence above all criticism and beyond the reach of free speech.

But truth will out. The increasing drive to criminalise criticism of Israel and outlaw any discussion on the subject is having the opposite effect than that intended. Outraged by the use of such sledgehammer tactics, many people are starting to look more closely at the reality and to find out for themselves the truth of the statements that the definition specifically tries to ban – that *Israel is indeed a racist state*, and that the zionists did in fact collaborate with the Nazis in the build-up toward and even during the jewish holocaust.

Finally, it is worth noting the point that the IHRA does not want jews to be collectively blamed for Israeli policy. We quite agree with the authors on this point. However, it is perfectly clear that their wish will only be brought to fruition when Israel itself *stops claiming to represent all jews*.

So long as Israel calls itself 'the jewish state', claiming to represent international Jewry, so long will there be people who wrongly blame jews as a collective for Israeli policy.

* 'Working definition of antisemitism', IHRA, 26 May 2016, our emphasis.

THE IHRA DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM

This is a situation of the zionists' own making, and the remedy is in their hands.

Joseph Phinn

Glasgow, September 2018

THE RISE AND FALL OF PROJECT CORBYN

8. Why is Corbyn under attack?

It is not his alleged 'antisemitism' that offends the ruling class, but his refusal to give unconditional support to Israel.²²

It can hardly have escaped our readers' notice that a relentless campaign is being waged to discredit Jeremy Corbyn, with the ultimate aim of removing him as the leader of the Labour party.

Not a day goes by without some fresh allegation against him of racism, extremism, fraternisation with terrorists, etc. As papers like the *Times*, the *Telegraph* and the *Daily Mail* combined with right-wing Labour MPs, BBC anchors and self-appointed 'jewish community leaders' (as if there were actually such a thing as the 'jewish community') this summer, the levels of media hysteria over the fabricated issue of Mr Corbyn's supposed 'antisemitism' reached fever pitch.

Even after Labour's NEC buckled to the pressure of the Zionist lobby and accepted the IHRA Zionist lobby group's 'definition' of antisemitism (which brands legitimate criticism of Israel as criminal 'hate speech'), we were told ominously by former Blairite minister and frontline anti-Corbyn crusader Dame Margaret Hodge that this was 'not the end'.

The question we must ask ourselves is: Why? Why all this evident fury over the possibility that a left-Labour candidate just might

become prime minister? After all, judging by his programme, Mr Corbyn wouldn't be the *most* left-wing Labour prime minister Britain has ever had, nor is his agenda more radical than that of all previous Labour governments.

Members of Momentum, the left-Labour grassroots organisation that backed his campaign to become leader and is a prime mover in pushing for a more left-wing direction in the party, will tell us that it is because Jeremy represents hope; that his election would bring about the restoration of Britain's welfare state to its former glory, bring back jobs and security to all the workers who have lost it over the last few decades of deepening economic crisis; and would end British involvement in imperialist war abroad.

But is this true? Certainly there are people who would like it to be. There is indeed a great feeling of hope amongst his supporters. But beyond all the emotional hyperbole about social justice and peace, what are the key points of Labour's programme, and do they really represent such a threat to the ruling class as might justify this present level of ruling-class outrage?

Corbyn's programme

Corbyn's Labour has gained huge popularity among voters on the basis of some key promises, which would certainly bring a material improvement to the life of many workers.

1. Renationalisation of the railways, the postal service, the national grid and the water companies.

This measure is popular not only with workers but also with a growing section of the bourgeoisie, whose businesses are increasingly inconvenienced by the expense and inefficiency of these essential utilities, and by the blatant kleptomania of the corporations that run them. Labour has promised to pay market value for the companies' shares and to wait until the vari-

ous franchises are up for renewal, so no property rights will be violated if it is carried out, and all expense will be borne by the masses.

2. The abolition of tuition fees for students and the reintroduction of maintenance grants.

This policy is hugely popular with privileged workers (aka the 'middle class'), and is likewise seen as a sound one by some members of the ruling class, who understand that completely pricing poorer workers out of university and massively indebting the better-off ones who do go is producing too many angry and disillusioned young people, with little or no hope of building a decent future for themselves, especially when combined with the soaring price of housing.

3. The building of 100,000 council and housing association homes every year.

It has been admitted even by the Conservatives that the housing crisis cannot be addressed without building more social housing. Hence prime minister Theresa May's recent statement that workers should be 'proud of their council houses' and the Tory pledge to build more of them. Labour has not promised to organise the building directly, so presumably this would create a further bonanza for Britain's already bloated construction monopolies.

4. The lifting of the public sector pay cap, introduction of a living wage of £10 per hour by 2020 and the banning of zero-hour contracts and unpaid internships.

The minimum wage and zero-hour promises will certainly worry many employers, but the public sector pay cap is already being lifted by Theresa May's Tory government as it is clear that the mass of the low-paid nurses, firefighters, council workers, etc simply cannot be squeezed any more after ten years of real-terms pay cuts. Again, a growing section of the ruling class sup-

ports this policy, since it is hardly desirable that nurses should be under such financial strain that they are forced to visit food-banks to feed their families.

5.A cash injection for the NHS and for social care.

This policy has also already been adopted by the Conservatives and is not a controversial one, particularly as there is no commitment to reversing privatisation or abolishing the layers of management that have been introduced to facilitate profit-taking in the health service. Indeed, it is perfectly possible that much of the increased funding promised by both parties could end up funnelled straight into the pockets of the privateers.

6. Tax raises for people earning over £80,000, a rise in corporation tax to 26 percent, more money for local councils, the reformation of council tax and business rates, and the possibility of a new land value tax.

This is potentially more worrying to the ruling class, but the proposals are actually fairly restrained. There's no talk, for instance, of reintroducing the 90 percent tax band for top earners that existed in the fifties and sixties. Moreover, even Theresa May has been forced to promise that 'austerity is over'. There are plenty among the bourgeois class who recognise that the complete scrapping or privatising of all public services and infrastructure could undermine social peace to an unmanageable extent.

This programme, in comparison with that of Clement Attlee's Labour government of 1945, is extremely modest. It does not undo all the devastation wrought by decades of privatisation and austerity. How could it? The world today is not the world of 1945, when socialist revolution threatened capitalists across Europe and made them fear for the existence of their system.

At that time, the fear of the socialist example, the need to rebuild following the devastation of the second world war, and the intensi-

fied plunder by British imperialism of its colonies combined to bring tremendous prosperity to British workers, fooling them into believing they could have the benefits of socialism without the trouble of organising a revolution, and that things would only get better.

Moreover, the fear that Corbyn's Stop the War and CND background might pose a serious threat to British imperialist warmongering has been somewhat mollified by Labour's promise to renew Trident, retain membership of Nato and comply with the alliance's membership criteria by allocating two percent of GDP to 'defence' spending.

Overturning Brexit

Meanwhile, it is clear that for the dominant section of the ruling class that wishes to overturn the Brexit referendum, its best bet would be a Labour-led coalition, since not only most of the parliamentary Labour party MPs and most of the Labour party membership, but also all of the Scottish Nationalist Party, LibDems, Plaid Cymru and the Greens are fervent remainers, ready to do whatever is necessary either to organise a second referendum or to negotiate a Brexit deal that keeps Britain inside the common market and following all the EU's rules and regulations – ie, a deal that would deliver 'Brexit' in name only. Corbyn himself is no remainer, but neither is he so attached to the idea of leaving the EU that he would stand in the way of his colleagues if he found himself in a minority.

So what exactly are those attacking Mr Corbyn afraid of? What prevents the neoliberal EU and Nato-backing sections of the ruling class doing what they can to help him into Number 10 in order to carry out this plan?

It boils down to two things. The first is the chimera that the corporate media themselves have created. In their desire to prevent Corbyn becoming Labour leader in the first place, media and politi-

cal commentators painted him in such monstrous colours that to stop attacking him now seems almost impossible.

Some saner voices have indeed backed away from the constant haranguing of their colleagues, pointing out Corbyn's increased 'professionalism' and the clear sense in many of his policies, but journalists writing in papers like the *Times* seem almost to have painted themselves into a corner of vitriol and bile, constantly conjuring up a caricature of the Labour leader as an unrepentant Marxist, getting ready to pull down the pillars of capitalist rule around the ears of their masters.

British imperialism and Palestine

More importantly, there is one principle, however politely expressed, that Mr Corbyn simply cannot walk away from – his commitment to 'peace and justice' for Palestine.

Having been for some years the chair of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) and an avowed and vocal anti-zionist, Corbyn could hardly do an about-turn on this particular issue even if he wanted to – and we have no reason to suppose that he does.

But the question of Israel/Palestine is not merely an academic one for the British ruling class – *it is at the heart of British imperial policy in the middle east*. The very same big bourgeois – particularly those involved in the interlocking interests of oil, arms and finance – who wish Britain to remain in the EU, remain in Nato, and continue to defend the neoliberal free-market fundamentalist status quo of the last two-and-a-half decades are also those most determined to retain Britain's connection with zionist Israel, which is their preferred tool for *keeping control of the region's oil and suppressing its national-liberation movements*.

It is not the rights of jews or muslims, Israelis or Palestinians that get these liberal warmongers so worked up, but *their own right*

to plunder and domination. This is the significance of Israel and Palestine, and the real reason for all the vilification of Mr Corbyn.

As a backbench MP, his position was a perfectly acceptable one, and his pacifistic concerns over the human rights of dispossessed Palestinians continue to be expressed by MPs across the bourgeois spectrum. This is an acceptable and necessary safety valve. *But for a chief executive of British or US imperialism, unqualified support for zionism is an essential precondition.*

This explains why Corbyn has come under such a sustained attack, and why a vocal and powerful section of our ruling class is so desperate to see him removed from office before the next general election.

But their very rage is a symptom of their impotence. Despite all their efforts, Corbyn remains in place and his grassroots supporters are not one whit abashed by the propaganda onslaught against him. And, in a further sign of the waning power of the corporate media, the public at large remains either unconvinced or indifferent to the storm that has been whipped up.

As with the election of Donald Trump and the outcome of the Brexit referendum, the failure of our rulers to get their way over Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour party is one more sign of a ruling class in chaos and losing its grip on the popular consciousness.

For our part, we are very hopeful of Mr Corbyn's remaining in place long enough to fight and win a general election, since it is clear that only direct experience of what a 'left' Labour government is actually able to do when in office in such times as these will open the eyes of the workers to the simple fact that *no changing of the guard, no mere changing of ministers within the British parliamentary system, can fix the capitalist crisis or end imperialist war.*

If we want the things that Corbyn's Labour seems to promise: real jobs with living wages and pensions, decent homes, universal and free healthcare and education, freedom from poverty, insecurity and war, we will have to replace the entire economic system, not

merely the politicians standing at its head.

It is not a new or nicer chief executive of British imperialism we need, but a socialist revolution.

Joti Brar

Bristol, October 2018

9. Brexit betrayal reveals the sham of bourgeois democracy

*Parliament has shown itself to be in direct opposition to the will of the people it theoretically represents.*²³

The ability of our illusory British bourgeois democracy to dupe the workers of this country is fast eroding.

Nearly three years after voting to leave the European Union, workers still have no idea *when, how or even if* that promised exit will actually take place.

Despite 17.4 million people delivering a direct democratic mandate for leave in June 2016, the overwhelming majority of British parliamentarians – Labour, Tory, LibDem, Green, Plaid and SNP alike – are committed remainers. As a result, ‘Brexit day’ has passed with Britain still a member of the EU.

According to the law passed two years ago, 29 March 2019 was supposed to be the day Britain left the European bosses’ club; prime minister Theresa May promised on more than eighty occasions that the people’s referendum vote would be honoured, and the country would leave the union on schedule.

Instead, she has seen her withdrawal deal (which is really a treaty) rejected three times by Parliament; and rejected by leavers and

remainers alike. In an attempt to satisfy everyone, she has satisfied no-one. For remainers, *any* deal to leave the EU was too much, and for leavers, her proposed deal was 'Brexit' in name only.

At each successive parliamentary defeat, Mrs May did manage to narrow the margin of defeat, moving from a record-breaking 230 votes on the first reading, to a relatively moderate 58 votes on the third, not-so-lucky attempt.

For any other prime minister at any other time, to have lost even once would have proved a resigning matter. To have lost three times and be considering a fourth attempt at squeezing the same deal through is self-evidently beyond the pale – a sign of the extraordinary chaos presently reigning in ruling-class circles.

Political bribery fails

In fact, May did finally offer to resign just before the third round of voting – in the hope of enticing members of the Tories' free-market fundamentalist Brexiter European Research Group (ERG) in the first instance, but also those (rather fewer than one might expect) opposition MPs who are hoping to force a general election, to back the hated deal.

And this political bribery did in fact manage to pull some Tory big-hitters – allegedly 'staunch' Brexiteers such as Jacob Rees-Mogg, Boris Johnson, Dominic Raab and Iain Duncan Smith – into line. Their numbers were not enough to swing the deal for Mrs May, however.

These hypocrites thus showed the depth of their much-touted 'commitment' to Brexit and to the 'national interest'. Clearly the only reason for switching from their previous position of opposing the deal (quite rightly pointing out that it would deliver Brexit in name only) was that they hoped *personally* to capitalise on the prime minister's resignation, which in turn was dependent on the

deal being passed.

Desperate last-minute haggling to save May's 'Brexit means remain' deal

May has nothing left to offer before a touted fourth vote, and is, in desperation, turning to Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn to try to find an acceptable compromise that will pull Labour party MPs into supporting her.

This could conceivably work if they are promised extensive legislation for the 'protection of workers' rights', which would in turn enable them to present their betrayal of Brexit as a great victory for the labour movement.

However, cosying up to Corbyn is just as likely to cost May a whole host more of Conservative defections.

Since June 2016, the prime minister's political slogans have been the notoriously vacuous 'Brexit means Brexit' and the somewhat more meaningful 'No-deal is better than a bad deal'. If she had been true to these statements, Britain would have left the EU on 29 March without a deal under World Trade Organisation (WTO) terms.

Nigel Farage, erstwhile poster-boy for the xenophobic little Englander branch of the leave campaign, has characterised May's withdrawal deal as a surrender document, the likes of which are only signed under conditions of war. In this he is perfectly correct. May's deal is, in fact, such a surrender that it would clearly be better to remain than to leave under the conditions it contains.

To remain in the European Union is to at least retain the right to leave. But May's treaty would *lock Britain further into the EU project* – only now the country would have gone 'from rule maker to rule taker', as the popular argument goes. It is a sign of the deep division in the ruling class that its members have allowed themselves to get into such a mess.

Britain until now has been one of the three major powers (along with France and Germany) determining the direction and reaping the rewards of Europe's joint imperialist bloc. To remain inside the customs union, bound by its rules and trading standards as the deal proposes, would mean that to all intents and purposes Britain would be remaining in the EU. It would be 'Brexit' in name only. Only under the terms of the deal, she would remain indefinitely, and with no ability to shape those rules and standards.

What a comedown for the once-mighty British imperialists!

And yet, despite knowing all this perfectly well, since most of the ruling class simply wants to remain in the EU, increasing numbers of MPs are being persuaded to vote for this deal in order to stop a *real* exit – the one that was voted for – from taking place.

Parliamentary democracy exposed as a sham

This is not just the failure of one hapless remainder prime minister, but of all of Parliament and the entire so-called democratic system. Our whole system of government has been fatally exposed in the eyes of the British people.

As Lenin pointed out a century ago:

In capitalist society we have a democracy that is curtailed, wretched, false, a democracy only for the rich, for the minority.*

This is the key issue to be grasped in the Brexit shambles; the point which is being hammered home for an entire generation. Government, Parliament, the bureaucracy, the EU, the media, big business and the deep state are all colluding on this front against the interests and expressed will of the people. We have both a British state and an EU super-state project which are in essence

* VI Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, 1917, Chapter 5.

instruments of bourgeois power, and they are working to maintain that power. They will fight relentlessly to this end with every instrument at hand.

Media distortions

The organised campaign against Brexit was at its most blatant in the coverage of the remain and leave rallies held in London as the Brexit deadline approached.

The so-called 'people's vote' march of Saturday 23 April received wall-to-wall positive coverage of its well-funded and organised demo, backed by international capital as represented by the deep pockets of international financier George Soros, notorious for his funding of regime-change operations, and with spin-doctor extraordinaire Alistair Campbell at the helm, who has gained equal notoriety as a hatchet-man for imperialism, particularly in his promotion of the Iraq War.

The coverage of the leave rally on the supposed 'Brexit day' of 29 March was so biased that Channel 4 had to issue an apology after Jon Snow commented, in a portentous style that was clearly meant to convey the imminent collapse of civilisation, that he had 'never seen so many white faces in one place'.*

The implication of his remark was that the masses who demand that Britain should leave the EU are all racists who hate foreigners, supporters of the extreme right, rather than angry working-class people upset by the deep biting of austerity and by the closure of large parts of British industry, with the consequent loss of jobs, increase in poverty, and break-up of long-established communities.

The rest of the media took a similar tone. Instead of focusing on the mass of people from all over the country who had turned out

* See 'Jon Snow: More than 2,000 people complain over Channel 4 News host's "white people" Brexit protest comment' by C Baynes, *Independent*, 1 April 2019.

in anger over the Brexit betrayal, they choose primarily to focus on the attendance of right-winger Tommy Robinson at a fringe Ukip-organised rally.

While right-wing parties do take advantage of working-class grievances in order to direct the anger of the masses in directions least harmful to the ruling class, it is the genuine anti-imperialist opponents of capitalism, representing the real interests of the masses, who have the most to gain from Brexit, which has the potential to weaken not only British imperialism, but also EU and US imperialism and the integrity of the warmongering Nato alliance.

The EU exists to benefit European imperialism, and European imperialism alone

Instead, politicians and media alike falsely present the EU as some kind of benign, 'internationalist' body that 'protects workers' rights'. Most of them, however, are only too aware that *the EU exists purely to promote the rights of European imperialists, bankers and multinationals*. The workers of Greece can offer a few lessons to their British counterparts on this question.

The point of the EU, as far as the big British bourgeoisie is concerned, was hammered home in Parliament by Tory remainder James Cartledge. He told the House:

'It was in the Lancaster House speech the red line on the single market was first stated. I want to return to it [that speech]. [Margaret Thatcher] was addressing an audience of business leaders in which she said:

""Just think for a moment what a prospect that is, a single market without barriers, visible or invisible giving you direct and unhindered access to the purchasing power of over three hundred million of the world's wealthiest and most prosperous people. Bigger than

BREXIT BETRAYAL

Japan, bigger than the United States, on your doorstep and with the channel tunnel to give you direct access to it. It's not a dream, it's not a vision, it's not some bureaucrat's plan, it's for real and it's only five years away."

'The Lancaster House speech of Mrs Thatcher in 1988, Mr Speaker. Because there's only three MPs left in the house who voted against the Single European Act: one of them is the honourable member for Blyth Valley [Ronnie Campbell], the other is the honourable member for Bolsover [Dennis Skinner] and the third one is the Leader of the Opposition [Jeremy Corbyn]. *Because the single market is not some socialist conspiracy. It's capitalism and it's free trade.*'"

This is the essence of the EU, outlined by an unapologetically pro-capitalist, pro-EU Tory and by the woman who took us into the single market by signing the Single European Act, the impeccably pro-capitalist PM Margaret Thatcher. They can tell us more about the essence of the EU than the current fake left – which preaches internationalism but defends the interests of the rich – ever will.

Brexit means remain

Calls for a second referendum will not go away until a proper Brexit has been concluded. In the absence of this, the hardline remainers' well-funded campaign will continue to result in well-publicised rallies and petitions.

A petition to revoke Article 50 (the mechanism by which the UK gave formal notice to the EU of its intention to leave the union, thus setting the two-year countdown in motion) and remain in the EU received six million signatures (many from abroad). Support for the

* Video of European Union Withdrawal Debate speech by James Cartlidge MP, Facebook, 25 March 2019, our emphasis.

petition was strongest in the wealthy south-east and in Scotland's wealthier and SNP-controlled constituencies.

Watching the media's coverage, you would be forgiven for concluding that *six million signatures on an online petition trump 17.4 million votes in a legal ballot*. The desperation is palpable.

The bourgeois-democratic institutions in our country are becoming more obviously bourgeois and more obviously *undemocratic* in the eyes of ever greater numbers of workers. Faith in the system is faltering, and further attempts to subvert the vote, whether by delivering a Brexit in name only, revoking Article 50, pushing for a second referendum or simply remaining in the European Union can only accelerate this process.

The custodians of bourgeois democracy are thus playing a dangerous game. And few are playing it more brazenly than the backers of the amendment proposed by Tory remainder Oliver Letwin. This amendment succeeded in taking power away from the executive (the government) for one day and passing it to the hands of the legislature (to Parliament), facilitating a first round of 'indicative votes' on other possible solutions to the ruling class's Brexit conundrum.

The votes achieved little other than to further highlight the impasse in both government and Parliament, and to enhance the disrepute in which those august institutions now stand.

The indicative votes were a chance for Parliament to take control of proceedings and make known their preference for moving forward with Brexit in a series of non-binding votes. But not one of the options received a majority in the House.

The closest to succeeding was a customs union option put forward by arch Europhile and Tory grandee Ken Clarke, which received 264 votes for and 272 against. A second referendum was the second most popular choice, with 268 votes for and 295 votes against – and this despite MPs having voted to trigger Article 50 in February 2017 by an overwhelming 498 votes to 114.

A proposal to revoke Article 50, meanwhile, which would reset or

cancel the entire process of leaving the union, received 184 votes for and 293 against. Interestingly, Labour's Brexit plan received 237 votes for and 307 against, a larger margin of defeat than was suffered by May's deal at the third time of asking.

Finally, and shamefully, the option of a straightforward no-deal Brexit received 160 votes in favour and 400 against. *Parliament is thus most clearly revealed to be at direct odds with the people.*

The arrogance of MPs was perfectly highlighted by Labour's Helen Goodman, who told her parliamentary colleagues:

'We cannot continue with a situation where the government defies the will of the House.'*

If they are not careful, our elected representatives may find it is their defiance of the popular will that can no longer be tolerated by the long-suffering workers of Britain.

A second round of indicative votes followed on 1 April. The entire indicative voting process, it is worth noting, was one facilitated by the intervention of the Speaker (and remainer) John Bercow. As with so many other aspects of the Brexit process, his intervention was an unconstitutional one, for it passed control of the parliamentary agenda from the executive to the legislative branch, which is entirely against the conventions of the conveniently uncoded and unwritten 'British constitution'.

As ever, our rulers are demonstrating their complete disregard for 'the rules' (even when those rules have been written to ensure their class's permanent advantage and control). *Rules, it turns out, are for the confusion and control of the masses*, not for taking too literally if one is actually running the show.

Much attention has been paid by the press to the arcane ins and outs of parliamentary procedure and convention. None of it is in any

* European Union (Withdrawal) Act debate in Parliament, *Hansard*, Vol 657, Col 60, 25 March 2019.

way to the point, however. All that really needs to be noted is that while 'convention' is used to inspire awe and to scuttle all chances of using Parliament as a vehicle for meaningful change, as far as the law-makers themselves are concerned (of whatever stripe and on whichever side of the argument), none of it is to be allowed to get in the way of their masters' objectives.

Such are the wonders of our 'great British democracy' and 'mother of all parliaments'.

At the second hearing, Bercow cut the options to be voted on from eight down to four. None of these options – two of which were remain dressed up as 'Brexit' and two of which were openly remain – received a majority. However, the so-called 'Father of the House' Ken Clarke saw his customs union plan defeated by the narrowest margin of only three votes. The 'common market 2.0' option was defeated by just 21 votes and a proposal to hold a second referendum was defeated by a mere 12 votes.

Significantly, a proposal to revoke Article 50 was defeated by 101. Although this would in fact be the simplest way to overturn Brexit, which is clearly what the majority of parliamentarians want to do, they still balk at taking such an *openly* undemocratic route. A 'Brexit' that really means remain seems to be the favoured option for politicians who are keen to save themselves while also saving British imperialism.

Labour's 'Brexit plan'

At this point in the process, Labour had moved to support for a 'Norway plus' option, otherwise referred to as 'common market 2.0'. This involves remaining not only in the customs union, as per Mrs May's deal, but also in the single market – which would put paid to Britain being able to prevent the free movement of European workers, among other things.

The anti-democratic machinations of this move are twofold. The first is that remaining in either union is in no way compatible with delivering Brexit. Jeremy Corbyn's Labour party, therefore, is as much in direct opposition to the will of the people as May's conservatives, and is also *in direct breach of its own manifesto*.

Furthermore, this plan also means maintaining the free movement of labour (for EU citizens only; naturally no-one in the bourgeois parties is suggesting we actually abolish divisive immigration controls). This is also in direct conflict with the party's manifesto, which responded to the 2016 Brexit vote by once again upping its anti-immigrant credentials.

So Corbyn finds himself implementing a three-line whip onto his MPs in order to get them to break their own party's manifesto promises. And this despite the outrage expressed by the party leadership when Chukka Umuna and his little posse of spivs left the Labour party to form the Independent Group (later rebranded as Change UK).

Chukka and co were attacked for getting themselves elected on a Labour manifesto only to quit Labour and discard those election promises when they became inconvenient. Corbyn and his team pointed out that the Independent Group were honour-bound to resign and contest by-elections.

Will the entire Labour party now step down and hold a by-election in every seat it presently controls? We need not hold our breath on that one; these are the workings of sham democracy – or, more precisely, of a bourgeois democracy. That is: democracy for the ruling class; which goes hand in hand with dictatorship over the working class.

What now?

The only certainty at this moment in time is that the ruling class will continue to obfuscate and hamper proceedings, hoping that the more they can delay and confuse the issue, the more chance there is that they can find themselves a way out of the present deadlock and back into their favoured-nation status inside the EU.

But there is a rising anger at the shambles, and should Britain participate in the European elections in May then the results will no doubt be embarrassing for the EU. There is certain to be a heavy abstention rate, while a considerable number of people who do vote are likely to express their disgust at Britain's failure to exit by voting for parties ill-equipped for running even a bourgeois government, such as Ukip or Nigel Farage's new Brexit party.

It is time we learned the lesson summed up so profoundly by Lenin in 1917:

In capitalist society we have a democracy that is curtailed, wretched, false, a democracy only for the rich, for the minority. The dictatorship of the proletariat, the period of transition to communism, will for the first time create democracy for the people, for the majority, along with the necessary suppression of the exploiters, of the minority.*

Joseph Phinn and Joti Brar

Glasgow and Bristol, March 2019

* VI Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, 1917, Chapter 5.

10. BBC's anti-Corbyn hatchet job fails to land blow

*If Corbyn's allies can't fight back against the Israeli lobby within their own party, what chance will they have against the power of British imperialism?**

The BBC heavily trailed details from its recent *Panorama* programme, 'Is Labour antisemitic?'

The papers were full of headlines about it over the weekend before it was aired, and it was supposed to prove just how antisemitic Labour has become under left-wing leader Jeremy Corbyn.

In truth, all the programme proved was just how dishonest the British establishment and the Israel lobby have been in manufacturing this 'Labour antisemitism crisis' for the past four years.

Mike Creighton, Labour's former director of complaints, admitted this candidly in the film itself.

Asked by Corbyn's top aide Seumas Milne how Labour could deal with the 'crisis', Creighton says he insisted Corbyn should give a

* This article by Asa Winstanley is reproduced from *The Electronic Intifada* of 11 July 2019 with thanks. Our emphasis throughout.

speech, 'particularly saying that Israel had a right to exist'.

That sums up what this fabricated 'crisis' has been about all along. Corbyn is a veteran Palestine solidarity activist.

That became the biggest weapon used to attack him from day one.

Israel's supposed 'right to exist as a jewish state' is predicated on *systemic racism and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians* – as my colleague Ali Abunimah has for years patiently explained.*

Therefore, recognition of Israel's 'right to exist as a jewish state' – as Israeli leaders and lobby groups demand – means recognising that Israel has a '*right to be racist*' against Palestinians.

It is no surprise that a member of the old, 'new' Labour establishment like Creighton would support such racism.

Blogging about his retirement in 2017, Creighton complained in his goodbye speech that Labour was becoming a 'party of protest' against things like the Iraq war.†

He wistfully recounted an anecdote about his hero Tony Blair.

More recently, Creighton tweeted that although he was remaining a party member,

I'm not interested in winning government. I'm interested in winning the party.‡

In other words, he's determined to win Labour's civil war, *even if it means sabotaging the party's chances at the ballot box*.²⁴

* See 'Does Israel have a right to exist as a jewish state?: An excerpt from Ali Abunimah's *The Battle for Justice in Palestine*', *Mondoweiss*, 14 March 2014.

† 'When the music has to stop' by M Creighton, *Chalkhill Digital*, 3 March 2017.

‡ @MJCreighton, *Twitter*, 28 June 2019.

Israel lobby

This was a message endorsed on Twitter by two activists from the Jewish Labour Movement (JLM), Ella Rose and Adam Langleben.

Both also appeared on the *Panorama* programme.

The JLM is an explicitly pro-Israel organisation that has close ties to the Israeli embassy.

Indeed, Rose herself is a former embassy employee, who came straight out of that job and into a role as the JLM's executive director in 2016, soon after the JLM was reactivated to fight against Corbyn.

Yet not only were these affiliations unmentioned on the BBC's programme, these two heavily partisan figures were not even named.

Instead, they appeared on screen, distressed, speaking straight to camera. They were presented as sympathetic whistleblowers against Labour party racism.

Yet, as the *Electronic Intifada* has reported in detail for the past four years, the JLM has been one of the main groups promoting and manufacturing the false 'Labour antisemitism crisis' all along.*

If the BBC was so convinced of the truth of its claims, why did it not disclose their clearly relevant affiliations and let viewers make up their own minds?

The rest of the programme went mostly along the same dishonest lines.

The limits to criticising Israel

One of two main 'experts', portrayed as independent authors, was Alan Johnson,²⁵ who tried to set what he claimed were the accept-

* See 'Labour witch hunt' tag on *The Electronic Intifada*.

able boundaries for criticising Israel.

'You can say the occupation is wrong, you can say the settlements are wrong,' he opined – but he spoke against calling Israel 'an inherently racist endeavour'.

This is the typical line of Israel and its lobby groups – *recognising the reality of Israel's foundational and systemic racism against all Palestinians is deemed antisemitic*.

It is no surprise to see Johnson putting forth this poisonous view – he is an employee of Bicom,²⁶ the UK's main Israel lobby group.*

Once again, *Panorama* did not mention this affiliation.

The programme was chock-full of such figures – many of whom have been driving the manufactured 'antisemitism crisis' all along.

One further example is telling.

Fabricating antisemitism

Another of the young whistleblowers speaking 'as a Jew in the Labour party' was Alex Richardson – a member of the JLM executive.

The BBC did not name him, but I – and many others on social media – recognised him because he was a key figure exposed in Al Jazeera's 2017 undercover documentary, *The Lobby*.

At the time of filming, Richardson was an employee of lawmaker Joan Ryan – who chairs Labour Friends of Israel, which is an Israeli embassy front group.[†]

Ryan, who quit Labour earlier this year, was infamously exposed in Al Jazeera's film fabricating an instance of 'antisemitism' at the Labour conference in 2016.[‡]

But the film also shows that Richardson was personally involved in

* See *Bicom.org.uk* staff profiles.

† See 'Is Labour Friends of Israel an Israeli embassy front?' by A Winstanley, *The Electronic Intifada*, 12 January 2017.

‡ See 'How the Israel lobby fakes antisemitism' by A Winstanley, *The Electronic Intifada*, 14 January 2017.

that same fabrication.

'Joan convinced me to report the one yesterday because I was made to feel uncomfortable,'

the undercover footage shows him telling Labour Friends of Israel's director Jennifer Gerber.

Yet he privately admitted:

'Nothing antisemitic was said.'*

But a party member was still reported for 'antisemitism'. She was Jean Fitzpatrick, a supporter of Jeremy Corbyn and of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

Fitzpatrick was formally investigated by the party and ultimately cleared of accusations of antisemitism. But the experience had a disturbing effect on her life, leaving her under a cloud of suspicion.

Hatchet job

Judging from social media, though, the grassroots base of the Labour party is not fooled by the narrative put out by *Panorama*.

Calling it the #PanoramaHatchetJob, Corbyn supporters have slammed the programme for its numerous misleading aspects, including selectively edited emails leaked by disaffected ex-staff members from the Labour right.

Labour's press office has hit back, promising to lodge a formal complaint with the BBC and calling the programme 'seriously inaccurate', an 'authored polemic' and 'an overtly one-sided intervention in political controversy'.†

* 'The Lobby p3: an antisemitic trope' by Al Jazeera Investigations, *YouTube*, 12 January 2017.

† 'Labour Party response to Panorama programme', 10 July 2019.

THE RISE AND FALL OF PROJECT CORBYN

But this could be far too little, far too late.

*If Jeremy Corbyn and the rest of the Labour leadership cannot even fight back and defeat the Israel lobby within their own party, what hope is there that, in government, they could successfully take on the far more powerful combined forces of British – and American – capitalism?**

Asa Winstanley

July 2019

* 'Jeremy Corbyn must stop pandering to Labour's Israel lobby' by A Winstanley, *The Electronic Intifada*, 28 March 2018.

11. EU election: a second Brexit referendum. Do we really need a third?

Britain's Labour-Tory two-party political monopoly is cracking under the pressure of Brexit.²⁷

The polling stations for the 23 May 2019 European Union election had barely closed, and the first results were not yet announced, when Theresa May succumbed to the overwhelming pressure and announced that she would resign as prime minister, finally stepping down on 7 June.

For some time now Mrs May has been labelled a 'zombie prime minister', holding office but not power. Yet in every meaningful sense she is a typical and representative Tory, and it is unlikely that her successor will fare much better, as s/he too struggles to formulate a strategy to deal with the poisoned chalice that is Brexit.

In an uncharacteristically teary speech delivered outside 10 Downing Street – tears of personal defeat and frustrated ambition that moved few, even among her supporters – she admitted to the watching world that her time was up.

Brexit iceberg sinks May

Earlier in the week, May had declared her intent in the Commons to hold a *fourth* 'meaningful vote' on her infamous Brexit deal (slightly amended, but in substance unchanged). Her resignation was the result of the slow dawn of realisation that the deal was a dead duck – a conclusion that much of the world had reached after her historic defeat over meaningful vote number one back in January.*

For months, May had appeared to be blind to this obvious fact. Stubbornly, she had hung on, oblivious to the impasse.

Remainers allege that May was a hardline Brexiter, and that she therefore made no effort to control the pro-Brexit wing of her party. But her attempt to reach rapprochement with the Labour party, which is 99 percent pro-remain, in an attempt to snub the referendum and force her Brexit-in-name-only (Brino) deal through, is more indicative of her true position.

Following the breakdown in talks with the Labour leadership, and the tepid response to her announcement of a fourth vote in Parliament, the Conservative party was finally galvanised into ousting their discredited leader. In her final days, bereft of support, May became a recluse, hiding in number 10 and refusing even to see members of her cabinet.

In the words of *The Thick of It* spin-doctor Malcolm Tucker:²⁸

'This is the ending of a chapter of a very thin book that nobody enjoyed reading.'[†]

* See 'Bring on the no-deal Brexit!', *Proletarian*, February 2019.

† *The Thick of It*, Series 4, Episode 4, BBC Four, 2012.

The election that should not have been – Tory and Labour receive a drubbing at the hands of the Brexit party

Bourgeois politics cannot solve the problems of workers. That is abundantly clear. But Brexit, we maintain, will weaken British, US and EU imperialism.

This is not equivalent to working-class salvation, *which can only grow from working-class power and policy* (not to be confused with Labour party policy, which is entirely bourgeois). But weakening or breaking the EU will create more favourable conditions for the struggle, and for this reason we advocated a vote for leave in the 2016 referendum.

For the same reason, we considered this EU election, held after the 29 March 2019 deadline for Britain's withdrawal from the EU, to be in essence a *second referendum* – a chance for workers to demand the fulfilment of Brexit.

For all the criticisms of Brexit party leader Nigel Farage – some valid, many less so (he himself is evidently no more far-right racist or fascist, even if the odd follower is, than many members of the Conservative and Labour parties) – what cannot be denied is that he has been a most consistent voice for Brexit.

From a standing start, and campaigning entirely on the single issue of leaving the European Union on World Trade Organisation (WTO) terms (ie, for a no-deal Brexit in which Britain actually leaves the EU common market and political framework) *in accordance with the result of the 2016 referendum*, his party scored a resounding success that has shaken the complacency of Britain's two-party political system.

Juxtapose this with the Brexit party's remain counterpart, Change UK. The breakaway parliamentary group had its logo rejected by the electoral commission and changed its name twice in quick suc-

cession. This is a group with no substance, no shred of ideology or values, and no platform other than overturning the referendum result.

And the one thing its members were supposed to be good at – political presentation (ie, public relations) – proved to be entirely beyond their reach, despite the natural predisposition of much of the media towards their party's line (such as it was). No-one will be surprised if the group soon ceases to exist, or is quietly absorbed by the resurgent LibDems.

Following the LibDems' tuition fees betrayal and its role in forming an austerity government with David Cameron's Tories, the party had lost all credibility amongst its former voters. But now, in an act of political resuscitation, Brexit has breathed new life into its decaying carcass.

Having successfully rebranded itself as the unequivocal party of remain, it has been facilitated in its resurrection by the inability of Corbyn's Labour to take a clear position on Brexit, trying instead to hide behind a message of 'national unity' that united no-one.

Mr Corbyn, to his credit, has been a lifelong leaver, albeit at a time when no-one seemed much interested in either the question of the EU in general, or in his opinion in particular. He now finds himself, to his own surprise and others', leading a parliamentary party that is at odds with his view on this, *the traditional working-class view*.

While Labour MPs and members are overwhelmingly remainers, some five million 'traditional' Labour voters (ie, from the poorer section of the working class) are in favour of Brexit. Trying to please both sides, Corbyn's Labour has found itself walking down the 'middle of the road', only to be knocked down from both directions.

Such are the contradictions within the Labour party – a party which our revisionist and Trotskyist friends continue to assure us will lead Britain to 'socialism'!

It was crystal clear in the run-up to the European election that the Conservatives were heading for disaster, and were likely to get a

kicking from Farage's new Brexit party. This fact had been obvious to anyone paying attention to the opinion polls from the moment the party launched.

When the results were announced, the Brexit party claimed twenty-nine of the UK's seventy-two MEP seats (it did not stand in the occupied six counties of the north of Ireland). It topped the polls in every region it contended bar London (which remains a haven for remain), and took a whopping 31.4 percent of the national vote (on a relatively low turnout of just under 37 percent – although this is higher than usual for an EU election).

In fact, *the Brexit party is now the largest party in the entire European parliament – and its MEPs join a growing anti-EU bloc elected from countries across the continent.* About one-third of the 751 newly-elected MEPs are eurosceptic.

Moreover, although President Emanuel Macron of France has been hailed as the parliament's new 'kingmaker', in recognition of his Renaissance party's position leading the largest bloc in Brussels, in the French election his party was beaten into second place by the eurosceptic National Rally, led by Marine Le Pen.*

The turnout for the election across Europe was just over 50 percent, the highest in twenty years, signifying not engagement with Europe but a *growing anger at EU-imposed austerity and kleptocracy.*

The LibDems, meanwhile, having clearly flown the flag of remain, took twenty seats and 20.3 percent of the vote, pushing Labour into third place with ten seats and 14.1 percent. The Green party, which had also campaigned on a remain platform, as well as on the issue of climate change, came fourth, taking seven seats and 12.1 percent of the vote, battering the Tories into a humiliating *fifth place*, as they clung to just four seats (down from eighteen!) and a derisory 9.1 percent of the national vote, failing to top the ballot in a single

* See 'Eurosceptic parties reshape EU politics after strongest showing in European elections' by J Crisp, *The Telegraph*, 27 May 2019.

electoral constituency.

For any ruling party – and for the British ruling class's preferred party of rule for some two centuries in particular – this was more than a defeat; it was an absolute mauling. Commentators were quick to point out that it was, in fact, the Tory party's worst performance at the ballot box since 1832.

In a long list of humiliations, the following were particularly notable:

- Syed Kamall, leader of the Europe-wide European Conservatives and Reformists group, lost his seat in London.
- Ashley Fox, leader of the Tory group in the Brussels parliament, lost his seat in the south-west.
- Prominent right-wing Tory Brexiter and MEP Daniel Hannan, who retained his south-east seat, said that the delay to Brexit had blighted the Tory campaign.

In fact, *Brexit threatens to destroy the Conservative party completely if it is not resolved soon* – a fact that is now being openly acknowledged.

The future of the Conservative party could be in doubt unless it manages to deliver Brexit, leadership hopeful Jeremy Hunt has warned. The foreign secretary acknowledged the very existence of the party he hopes to lead could be threatened by the Brexit backlash after the Tories secured just nine percent of the vote in England and Wales.*

In Scotland, the Scottish National party dominated, receiving 37.7 percent of the vote, echoing the region's majority remain vote in the 2016 referendum, although the Brexit party did manage to

* 'Conservative party existence 'under threat' after worst ever European election result, Jeremy Hunt admits' by J Collie, *Evening Standard*, 27 May 2019.

take a seat alongside the Liberals and Tories. Whilst historically it seems incredible, it is nevertheless all-too understandable that here Labour, in one of its former heartlands, failed to take a single seat.

In Wales, formerly a communist stronghold and a long-time Labour party bastion, Labour was beaten into third place behind the Brexit party and Plaid Cymru.

Don't speak too fast, for the wheel's still in spin!

This triumph of the new Brexit party in a national election has sent a strong message to our rulers: British workers, having voted for Brexit, *are extremely disillusioned with the failure of Westminster parliamentary democracy to deliver it*, and wish to send a clear rebuke to the governing parties – Tory and Labour alike – for their failure to implement the result of the 2016 referendum.

But the BBC, the *Guardian* and other pillars of Britain's 'objective' and 'impartial' media, still battling heavily for remain, went into an immediate PR overdrive even as the election results were being announced.

Former Labour spin-doctor and Tony Blair ally Alistair Campbell was invited onto the BBC's election programme, and the audience was treated to long diatribes from this notorious war criminal about how Labour must now adopt an unequivocally remain position, and how there must be a second referendum (or is that now a *third* referendum?), *during which Labour should campaign for remain*.

Campbell went on to say that he had personally voted LibDem (for which he was promptly expelled from the Labour party), and that his interpretation of the election result was that by adding up the votes for LibDem, Green, Plaid Cymru, SNP and Change UK, the result was in fact a clear victory . . . for remain!*

* See 'Alastair Campbell says Labour expulsion was discriminatory' by B Quinn, *The Guardian*, 31 May 2019.

The BBC was absolutely complicit in pushing this message, as all its coverage since the election has shown. See for example the following, which was accompanied by a pretty bar chart to illustrate the point:

Anti-Brexit parties – those in favour of another referendum – collectively took about 40 percent of the vote, compared with 35 percent for the Brexit party and Ukip, both in favour of leaving the EU without a deal.

Liberal Democrat leader Sir Vince Cable said he was ‘pleasantly surprised’ by his party’s ‘very good result’.

He added that there was ‘a majority of people in the country who don’t want to leave the European Union now’.*

Such a conclusion neatly disregards the overwhelmingly *pro*-Brexit Tory voters (the Tories’ remain voters having deserted to the LibDems and the Greens) and the significant percentage of Labour voters who are also Brexiters.

Adding only the Tory vote to the leave camp in this spurious equation would cause the leave vote to rise to a 5-6 percent advantage over remain in what was clearly regarded by voters and observers alike as a ‘soft’ referendum.

And that is leaving aside the huge numbers of working-class people who stayed away from the polls in disgust or disillusionment – having drawn the inevitable conclusion from the government’s failure to deliver Brexit that their votes don’t count and there is therefore *no point in engaging* with the electoral process, even in protest.

Indeed, so widespread has this feeling become that many political commentators are starting to worry about its impact on British

* ‘European elections 2019: Brexit party dominates as Tories and Labour suffer’, *BBC News*, 27 May 2019.

society. After all, if the very poorest don't vote that's perfectly acceptable to our rulers, who don't have to bother even pretending to look out for their interests, but if the number of abstentions rises too high, the whole system of bourgeois democracy starts to look a little less convincing – and *when too many workers start to distrust the ballot box as a solution to their problems, that clearly threatens the stability of the capitalists' rule.*

Labour comes out for remain

It is quite evident that the ruling-class elite remains determined to frustrate Brexit, and the fact that our rulers have mobilised former first-stringers (but now widely discredited war criminals) such as Alistair Campbell and Tony Blair shows the extent of their concern that they may be losing control of the narrative. It smacks, indeed, of desperation.

Despite Campbell's expulsion and Corbyn's 'leadership', *it is Campbell's line that the Labour party is adopting*: the line of a so-called 'confirmatory vote' – a second referendum in anyone else's language.

This position was made clear on the night of the election count by figures including Jeremy Corbyn himself, shadow chancellor John McDonnell and shadow foreign secretary Emily Thornberry. Having latched gratefully onto the idea that it was LibDems and remain voters who decimated their vote, rather than the party's betrayal of the Brexit referendum and its five million Brexit-supporting voters – and studiously ignoring the fact that the Brexit party topped virtually every poll – Labour is now confirming itself as an outright party of remain, ditching the 'soft Brexit' line it has for so long tried to hold.

The closer we approach to the new 31 October deadline for exiting the EU, the louder will be the disgruntled remainers' voices as they struggle to overturn Brexit. The cognitive dissonance displayed by

those calling themselves 'liberals' and 'democrats' but who will stop at nothing to defy the largest democratic mandate in recent British history, is jarring, to say the least.

Their assertion that the British people were too stupid to know what they were voting for must surely have lost whatever credibility it had after these latest results. So entrenched are the liberal remainers in their own view, however, so trapped in the Westminster bubble and the London echo chamber, that they still seem to have no idea of the *real anger and sense of betrayal* pervading the rest of the country.

But this sense of political entitlement and moral superiority could prove to be their downfall. The antagonisms between the masses and traditional two-party bourgeois politics look set to further deepen as the new Brexit deadline approaches. The further entrenched the elites become, the more they expose themselves and the sham democracy they represent, and the further they push the people away.

What next?

In this situation, it will surprise no-one if the EU election results are replicated in a general election (something political commentators are at present trying desperately to reassure themselves could never happen).

Nigel Farage has claimed he could win the next general election if Conservative leadership candidates fail to deliver Brexit by the end of October, as his party topped the European polls in the UK.

The Brexit party leader said he had no trust in Boris Johnson or any of the other Tory hopefuls to deliver Brexit, as he pledged to field 650 candidates to stand for Westminster office.

Farage told the BBC Radio 4 *Today* programme: 'The next date is

31 October. That will become as big a day in people's minds as 29 March. If we don't leave on 31 October, then we can expect to see the Brexit party's success last night continue into the next general election.*

Again, we emphasise: Brexit will not solve the problems of the working class; only workers themselves can do that by taking power into their own hands. But in order to set out on that road, a *thorough political crisis of confidence* in bourgeois leaders, their political rule, and their economic system is required.

British workers must break with their old tribal allegiances to the well-marketed but closely allied brands of their oppressors – Labour, LibDem and Tory alike – and learn to put their own interests, and those of the international proletariat, first.

Nigel Farage has his own reasons for wanting to take Britain out of the EU. His reasons are not ours, but he has unwittingly struck at a weak point of our ruling imperialist class, and *we should help him to drive home the spear.*

Failure to deliver a no-deal Brexit could well result in many Brexit party MPs getting elected to Parliament, possibly even to it becoming the largest party at Westminster, in what will likely be another hung parliament or minority government.

It is not out of the question that while Farage wipes out the Tories, Labour could limp on to form a Corbyn administration. In which case, the myth of 'left Labour' as a vehicle for socialism will be swiftly shattered. *Either of these outcomes is to be welcomed.*

Only those whose parliamentary cretinism and social-democratic Labour party loyalty are unshakable pillars of faith, and whose belief in the working class is pitifully low, would lament these blows to stable capitalist rule in Britain.

Whilst the bourgeoisie recoils in fear at this prospect, and tries

* 'Farage warns Tories Brexit party could win general election' by R Mason, A Walker and M Weaver, *The Guardian*, 27 May 2019.

to encourage us to do the same, we instead remember the words of Mao Zedong as he assessed the opportunities for working-class advance in pre-revolutionary China:

Everything under heaven is in utter chaos; *the situation is excellent.*

Joseph Phinn and Ranjeet Brar

Glasgow and London, June 2019

12. The Brexit election and the death of Project Corbyn

*What lessons can workers take from the last four years?*²⁹

Rarely has the British public entered a general election with less enthusiasm or interest in the election campaigning and manifesto promises of its contending parliamentarians.

Why? Largely because, as a nation, our trust and belief in the statements of British bourgeois politicians is at an all-time low. 'They never do what they promise,' is the overwhelming sentiment.

And then, of course, there's the fact that the 2016 Brexit referendum result tossed a hand grenade into the formerly cosy British establishment from which the political elite remains in shock, and shows little sign of recovery.

Who does Parliament serve?

Our British parliament, the 'mother of all parliaments', was developed out of the king's council, a feudal body of the country's chief nobles and church dignitaries that was formed as a mechanism for the landed nobility to advise their absolute monarchs. This council

went on to become the political vehicle of the rising bourgeoisie.

With the slogan 'No taxation, without representation', the merchant parliamentary class was propelled to real power by the roundhead armies of the Cromwellian revolution, which deposed the monarchy and beheaded the last absolute monarch, King Charles I, on 30 January 1649.

Over the centuries of its existence, Parliament has been through many stages, but at all stages since the English revolution, Westminster has been and remains the vehicle for the political power of the bourgeois – capitalist – class.

This year saw the 200th anniversary of the Peterloo massacre.³⁰ That event is held up by many as a seminal moment in the struggle for the right to vote of the working class. It should certainly be held up as a sign of the attitude – a mix of contempt tempered with fear – with which the ruling class and its acolytes view the proletariat, and its attempts to organise and express its political will.

The gains of Chartism – which demanded a charter of workers' rights, including the right to vote – were granted by decree, not by the victory of that movement, which was suppressed. In the second half of the nineteenth century, British workers' living conditions were elevated by their participation in an industry that had the huge colonial empire as a market.

The right to vote was tempered at first by the limited franchise (being granted only to men of property and not to women or to workers). Later on, even its universal extension, while resisted at every stage by the ruling class, became *a guarantor of the privilege of the wealthy*. Political and state mechanisms were enmeshed with the real economic power of the exploiting capitalist class, which, despite all show of 'democracy', exercises the most secure dictatorship over our economy and the state apparatus.

The British Labour party

Since the newly-formed Labour party proved itself to be loyal to British imperialism, loyal to empire, loyal to the monarchy and to its 'betters' in the wealthy industrial magnate class, to the bankers and financiers in the City of London – since World War One,³¹ in fact – our 'democratic' parliament has remained a vehicle for the rule of wealth, unchallenged by its contingent of loyal Labour MPs.

Beyond that, all talk of 'democracy' and 'socialism' has simply been for show. Labour has become integral to the system of controlled opposition, which is, in reality, a two-party Labour-Tory consensus.

'You can have any colour so long as it's black,' said Henry Ford. You workers can have any political party so long as it serves us, say our city-financier rulers. As in the casinos they own, the electoral odds are rigged in their favour.

Workers are not meant to have any say or control

And that's why it was such a mistake, on the part of former prime minister David Cameron and his Conservative party, to give any semblance of a say to the working people *over a question as fundamental to the economic interests of British imperialism* as the organisation of rule of European finance capital, our membership of the European Union.

Why did they do it? For their own selfish and petty internal party reasons (there was a split in the property-owning class between the financiers and manufacturers). And because they have of late developed such supreme contempt for the working people of Britain that they felt confident we'd simply do as we were instructed.

But they had not factored in the preceding decade of austerity

and financial crisis that has crushed so many British workers, and about which there is a justly seething and bitter, if often unfocused, resentment.

Our position

We have been clear in calling for workers to support Brexit – even advocating a tactical vote for the Brexit party in the 2019 European Union election. We viewed that election as a second referendum, and the results – with the Brexit party winning the most seats and the most votes – clearly showed that we were not alone in doing so.

But let us be clear: we advocate Brexit because we fiercely oppose the EU and the unbridled domination of finance capital that it embodies; we do not support the Brexit party.

Nor do we claim that the British parliament is the natural vehicle of the will of British workers. We support the working class, and all that will strengthen its struggle to gain *real power and independence* from the exploiting capitalist class, which is more alien to us and our interests than any foreign power.

But that road will not be trodden lightly by British workers, so let us survey the political scene that actually lies before us.

Labour and Corbyn

Jeremy Corbyn was not expected to become leader of the Labour party. Labour was the party of the Iraq war; of blood-soaked imperialism; of Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, Frank Dobson and Alistair Campbell's NHS privatisation by Public Private Partnership (PPP) and Private Finance Initiative (PFI); of crushed unions and the subordination of all to the market.

Tony Benn, Jeremy Corbyn, Dianne Abbot and John McDonnell

were regarded by their own party grandees as 'loony-left' jokes, to be tolerated for as long as they provided an electoral 'left' fig-leaf, covering the truly hideous nakedness of Labour's servility to capitalist imperialism, and (falsely) signposting to the discontented and unrepresented workers that Labour remained the party for them.

Like clause iv in the Labour party's programme, they were to be *tolerated but ignored*; a mutual pact of convenience. They were permitted to quietly voice their opposition from within the party's ranks, just so long as they did not cross the red line and stand up for their supposed principles – as George Galloway so memorably did in exposing British imperialism in the lead-up to the Iraq war.

Corbyn: a man of 'principle'

Jeremy Corbyn, throughout his long tenure as a back-bench Labour MP, said he stood against Nato, against apartheid in South Africa, against imperialism, against the Israeli suppression of Palestine and apartheid in Israel, against British suppression, division of and apartheid in Ireland, against US suppression of Venezuela and Cuba, against the 'Tory' (and Labour) crushing of the miners' strike, against racism and against war – and of course against the European Union.

But in order to remain in 'real politics' – ie, in the Labour party parliamentary racket – he was happy to bury all these fundamental differences with his own party and remain *a loyal back-bench MP*: quietly voicing opposition from within the ranks was his social-democratic calling-card.

All this, of course, under the slogan of 'Unity'!

The 2017 election: austerity, poverty and class

Soon after the 2016 EU referendum, Jeremy Corbyn found himself propelled, as a man of apparent principle, into the position of leader, and leading the Labour party into a general election in the teeth of overwhelming hostility from his own party, the political establishment and the media alike.

His strong performance tapped into the discontent of the working masses, and for a while the enemies within his own party were compelled to mute their critical tone, apparently making 'peace'.

The Grenfell Tower massacre underlined, just weeks after that general election, all that was wrong with modern Britain; the contrast between the impoverished workers and the billionaire playboys, living cheek-by-jowl in the royal borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

The Tories, led by a Theresa May who promised only further austerity, seemed so obviously alien to the crying needs of workers that they found themselves fighting a rearguard action for the political narrative of capitalism itself – ground they were not expecting to revisit. Thatcher had declared Blair to be her greatest political achievement, but now Corbyn was threatening to reverse austerity (as an 'ideological choice' of the Tories), increase taxation on the wealthy and spending on the poor and needy. Wasn't that just the socialism that Britain had been fighting all these years?

A new mode of discourse entered political life. In fact, there was nothing very radical about the plan to tax and spend a little more, but in the conditions of profound economic crisis and the general tightening of the screws on the workers, it was a message that the City of London capitalists could not stomach. Neutralising Corbyn and neutralising Brexit became their watchwords.

The party machine strikes back, hand in glove with the state

There was a real question at issue. If the parliamentary Labour party (PLP) could not eject Corbyn in 2017, through the electoral ruin it had foreseen and worked towards, and there was an influx of 400,000 into the party, loyal to and *inspired by* Corbyn's apparent message of social equality and justice, how would they keep control of it?

Corbyn was encouraged by his allies and Momentum base to introduce mandatory reselection – which would require all Labour MPs to face mechanisms that would make acceptance of Corbyn's leadership, manifesto and political line fundamental to being chosen as a candidate to fight the *next* election. This would have seen some political struggle, but was a putative mechanism to gain control of the parliamentary party: toe the line, fall behind your new leader, or face the members, who will deselect you as an MP.

But a general hue and cry was raised. Daily media propaganda emanated from the press, government and state officials, with a leading part being played by the PLP – notably, by deputy leader Tom Watson and shadow cabinet members such as Chukka Umunna, Hilary Benn, Keir Starmer and Emily Thornberry.

Corbyn was a security risk. If Corbyn became prime minister the army would stage a coup. Corbyn was weak on Syria (where he apparently did not support the 'democratic' bombardment of that country by British cruise missiles). Corbyn was weak on Venezuela, and refused to condemn 'dictator' Nicolás Maduro (who had done no more to deserve the presidency of this important oil-rich nation than win the presidential election; as opposed to the US approved and 'democratically selected' leader, Juan Guaidó!) Corbyn was weak on the economy. Corbyn was weak on Trident.

Jeremy caved on issue after issue. Would he use the nuclear bomb? If he had to. Would he support Venezuela? He condemned 'the violence on all sides' (this amid a US-sponsored attempt at colour revolution). Would he oppose war in Syria? No, he'd allow a 'free vote'.

He was formerly head of CND, would he oppose renewal of Trident? He'd 'support Labour policy' – that is, renewal of nuclear weapons in order to protect arms workers' jobs, and their use if needed. Every position he claimed to hold was given up – as, in fact, it had always been throughout his career – for the sake of 'unity'.

Antisemitism

First they came for Ken Livingstone. Ken unwisely claimed that Hitler was a Zionist. Not quite right – but the Nazis did make a direct agreement (the Haavara) with the Zionist Federation of Germany to *transfer* Jews from Germany to Palestine, since both groups had an overriding nationalist supremacist ideology and both believed that Jews did not belong in Europe. Hitler, of course, believed that Jews did not belong in the human race.

But the plan was clear; a very British imperialist plan. Israel is but one small cog in the imperialist machine, but its particular stock-in-trade is to play upon its credentials as a victim state, or a state of victims – of *European* imperialism, and European history, we note – to cover its very real imperial crimes, committed on behalf of Anglo-American imperialism against the Palestinian people, throughout the middle east, and even further afield.

And what better ruse than to attack left Labour on its cause celebre – to make it impossible for its members to criticise Israeli imperialism (as a minor middle-eastern partner of British and US imperialism), and in that way mute their criticism not only of the Israeli monkey, but, most importantly, of the Anglo-American or-

gan-grinder.

The fact that Corbyn's support of these anti-imperialist causes has been tepid at best was neither here nor there. The mild-mannered anti-apartheid campaigner and social democrat was reinvented as an 'IRA and Hamas terrorist', and of course, an 'antisemitic racist' to boot.

The IHRA definition of antisemitism

On the back of this campaign, a new definition of antisemitism – the International Holocaust Remembrance Association definition, quietly garnered from, of all places, the European Union Monetary Committee – was adopted by the Labour party, clearing the way for its legal adoption as a 'consensus view' by many state institutions.

This Zionist definition makes it illegal, and officially a 'hate crime' to denounce *Israeli policy* – perversely, and as an appalling and truly racist insult added to a century of injury to the Palestinian people, in the name of 'fighting racism'. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Chris Williamson

The vitriolic, even rabid attacks and accusations levelled at Labour MP Chris Williamson, a loyal Corbynite, for suggesting that Labour should have responded by *rebutting* unfounded accusations of antisemitism – 'We've been too apologetic' – would be funny if they were not an indication of the profound lack of leadership, plan or vision of any of the so-called Labour 'left-wingers', and their complete inability to mount any serious or sustained challenge to British imperialism on behalf of and in the interests of British workers.

Corbyn did nothing to defend Williamson, one of his chief allies.

Rather, he cemented his own isolation by allowing the Blairite PLP and press to dispense with him unopposed. This was Jeremy showing his true lack of mettle or moral fibre.

Whether through careerism or cowardice, in the end it amounted to the same thing.

The 2019 election campaign

And so zionist organisations, 'Labour' friends of Israel, 'Jewish Labour' movements, chief rabbis and Tory peers are all falling over themselves to cry wolf.

Corbyn may be pusillanimous. He may be weak. Corbyn may be many things, but he is not a racist. Even the retiring John Bercow, in his interview with *GQ* magazine's war-criminal-in-residence Alistair Campbell, admitted that the Tories, not Labour, were the actual party of racism, including antisemitism – and he should know.

The jewish community, meanwhile, should think long and hard before allowing itself to become the political football of the British imperialists. This is to an extent the logical extension of the pact that zionism concluded with British and US imperialism a century ago.

Zionists have already travelled so far down this road that the transition may have seemed easy to swallow. But calling out workers, anti-capitalists, anti-imperialists, and defenders of human dignity and social justice as 'racists and antisemites' can only serve to undermine fatally their own position within society.

When *real* antisemitism raises its ugly head, and no-one any longer listens to the boy who cried wolf, the folly of this moral prostitution to the British ruling class will become terribly clear. The British ruling class is supremely cynical. It has no permanent allies – only permanent interests.

Our rulers will throw Britain's jews under the bus just as surely as they have thrown everyone else, from muslims to Somalis,

Yugoslavs, Iraqis, Afghanis, Pakistanis, Africans, African-Caribbeans, and minorities and immigrants generally, not to mention coalminers, steelworkers, single mothers, benefit claimants, and, indeed, the majority of British workers, in order to secure their own privilege and power.

The European Union

And then, of course, there was Brexit. Seventeen and a half million people voted to leave the EU. The majority of Labour supporters voted to leave the EU. The majority of the electorate Labour needed to win over to gain a parliamentary majority voted to leave the EU.

Corbyn has always been against the EU. So, apparently, has his former close comrade and current shadow chancellor John McDonnell. Yet suddenly there was an about-face. We are not privy to the dark forces at work here. We don't know what kompromat, what dirt, the state has on McDonnell, or whether he has simply been offered an illusory reward: 'Change your position on Brexit and we can do business.'

Either way, and despite Corbyn's dancing on the head of a pin as he tries to please both sides, no-one is in any doubt that *Labour has effectively joined the remain camp*, abandoning the wishes and interests of the British, European and world working class – and, most glaringly of all in the current political climate, of the expressed majority of the British electorate.

This leaves Corbyn open to easy point-scoring that he is flouting the will of the people, and *abolishing democracy*.

True, he has not gone quite so far as LibDem leader Jo Swinson, who says her party will simply 'cancel Brexit' and ignore the referendum result altogether. But *he has betrayed those who voted for his last manifesto in 2017, and effectively sealed his own fate in the 2019 elections*, which will be decided above all on this single issue.

No promise of free full-fibre broadband will detract from the scale of this about-face.

Who are the Labour party?

And so Corbyn remains, in title at least, the general of the Labour party's army, but the real power has remained with Tony Blair and his cohort of Labour grandees – Alistair Campbell, Peter Mandelson, Gordon Brown et al, who, along with 99 percent of the PLP, are only too happy to openly suborn themselves to the unbridled interest of city financiers and industrial capital.

Having given up on mandatory reselection, Corbyn stands at the head of a motley crew of free-market fundamentalists who are in *open mutiny* against his rule and talk frankly of ousting him by Christmas. Far from culling the worst of the Blairites and 'reclaiming' the party, the only members who are not contesting the 2019 election are the loyal Corbynite, who have been taken down, or hamstrung, like Corbyn himself.

We will leave aside, for now, the fallacy that old Labour and new are separated by a deep and meaningful political divide, and that clause iv was in fact a true statement of socialist intent that repelled social-imperialists from the Labour party's ranks, as holy water repels devils.

The Labour party has shown itself, once again, to be a machine that rules over workers in the interest of capital. Labour has proven, heedless of the influx of Trotskyite, revisionist and anarcho-liberal sects, to be *a machine that is incapable of meaningful change, or of being 'reclaimed' for the working class*. You cannot 'take back' something that was never, in reality, yours.

The Corbyn project has proven as ill-fated as we foresaw. And the disillusioned Momentum influx, now ebbing out of that party, will have to decide what to do and where to go.

Any honest elements among them who really stand for social justice and workers' control over an economy that serves the interest of the people would do well to look to us, join with us and work to build a real political alternative.

What price 'unity'?

History repeats itself. The first time as tragedy, the second time as farce. The 'tragedy' of Corbyn's defeat in 2017 was mitigated by the strong resonance of his anti-austerity message, and the perception of his being 'a man of principle'.

The farce of the intervening years, during which Corbyn has betrayed his closest supporters, abandoned many of his apparently fervently-held principles in the scramble to become 'prime minister' at any cost, and, most notoriously of all, has made a blatantly anti-democratic Brexit U-turn, has *fatally undermined his credibility* and thus wiped out any ability he might have had to wield influence over the PLP, once cowed by the 2017 election result.

The Labour PLP machine has shown its hand and trounced Corbyn, and it is Blair and Campbell with their free-market-trumps-all capitalist ideology who remain in control of the Labour party, in close alliance with the interests of the British ruling class.

Britain's workers, dismayed at Labour's position on Brexit, look set to desert the party in droves and vote for the Tories or Brexit independents across the country.

It is a sorry spectacle when a truly racist Etonian Tory toff, who openly sneers at the working class and espouses theories of racial and ruling-class supremacy, can use the leader of Britain's gang of 'left' Labour clowns to back up his assertion that his own party, the Tory party, represents the many, while Labour has deserted the workers.

'Getting Brexit done'

Regardless of Boris Johnson's careerist use of the Brexit issue, it should not be forgotten that the whole saga and spectacle of parliamentary deadlock and endless 'Brexit' news can only be understood once a simple fact has been acknowledged: *the British ruling class does NOT want to 'get Brexit done'*. Quite the reverse.

This point needs a little clarification. Not least because Labour, under the leadership of Corbyn, has taken to referring to a 'hard' or no-deal Brexit (*actually leaving* the EU customs union, single market and security block) as a 'bankers' Brexit'. This term is, well – bonkers!

As a gauge of the true feeling of the City of London, it is always useful to turn to Mark Carney, the financier who has been entrusted with Britain's macroeconomic policy – a man of culture and sophistication, and an imperialist servant to his fingertips.

Speaking in August this year on the perils of recession facing Britain (we are already in a prolonged and profound recession, we note) consequent upon Brexit, he opined:

'Leaving the most integrated economic relationship in the world would have an impact on the economy.'*

Everything has an impact upon the economy. Socialist revolution will no doubt have an impact upon the economy. The question is: *who benefits and who suffers?*

The concept that we are 'all in this together', that what is good for the capitalist is good for his workers, is as old as capitalism (as old as exploitation, in fact), and boils down to the notion most beloved

* Quoted in 'Mark Carney warns of instant shock from no-deal Brexit', *BBC News*, 2 August 2019.

by our ruling class that, to paraphrase Marx and Engels:

The capitalist is a capitalist – for the benefit of the workers.*

‘The economics of no-deal are that the rules of the game for exporting to Europe or importing from Europe fundamentally change,’ said Carney.

As a result, he said, ‘very big’ and ‘highly profitable’ industries in Britain would become ‘uneconomic’.

‘Very difficult decisions will need to be taken,’ he said, explaining that those would have a ‘knock-on’ effect on the economy.

He pointed to carmakers, food manufacturers and chemical firms as some of those that would be hardest hit. ‘These are the sectors that have not been investing,’ he said.†

We will not here expound the entirety of Marxist political economy. Let this brief reference be sufficient to note that *in no way do the bankers wish to see Britain leave the EU*, particularly without a deal; without perpetuating manufacturers’ market access, the free movement of capital, and access to cheap labour from the depressed economies of Europe (in particular the recolonised countries of eastern Europe), and generally ensuring the ongoing close unity of Britain’s financial centres with the rest of EU imperialist block.

Who owns Britain?

The ruling class, we must remind ourselves, does not consist of the *political* representatives of capital alone. Our rulers are not the

* K Marx and F Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 1848, Chapter 3.

† *BBC News*, op cit.

politicians who sit on the benches of Westminster and in the various regional parliaments, but are made up of the *economically* powerful – in particular, the billionaire class and the owners of huge conglomerate businesses and financial directorships of capital that are centred in the City of London.

It is the finance capitalists who call the tune, and these true representatives of British, US and EU banking and industrial capital find the EU a most convenient vehicle for advancing their interests – as they have done since its inception after the second world war.

At that time, a domestic policy of anticommunism twinned with an anti-Soviet foreign policy was the order of the day – the only way for the imperialists to preserve their exploitative system and the remnants of empire. Since the collapse of the USSR and the people's democracies,³² the EU has been on a mission to expand up to the borders of Russia, and is the economic vehicle of Nato imperialism in Europe.

Inequality, poverty, homelessness and social destruction: austerity capitalism

We have long held that EU convergence criteria limit state spending on social welfare and hamper many domestic industries in order to push an agenda of austerity and free-market fundamentalism in the interest of the giant conglomerates and large European banks.

The financiers in the City of London, like those in other European national financial centres, particularly in Germany and France, are happy to participate in this exploitative bonanza, which has deindustrialised Britain to such an extent that *only nine percent of our workforce is involved in manufacture*.

European capital lives, increasingly vampire-like, from sucking dry the labourers of the oppressed world. And this parasitic vandalism finds its mirror image in the devastated communities in Europe –

not least in the former socialist countries, but also in the slow decay of the industrial heartlands of the Midlands and the north of Britain.

Anti-EU sentiment on the rise throughout Europe

The diminished income of the working class and the drive to austerity has become abundantly clear since the worldwide capitalist economic crash of 2008. Greece has been devastated socially in order to ensure the continuing flow of tribute to the European central bankers.

The southern European economies of Spain, Italy and Portugal are under enormous strain, and there is mass anti-EU sentiment among workers even in Germany.

In France, the yellow vest protests have gained mass support in demanding an exit from the EU, Nato, the Euro *and capitalism*.^{*} But the EU bankers have no desire whatsoever to see Britain or any other country fall out of their orbit.

Inequality has not been prevented by the EU; the reverse is true. Our environment has not been protected by the EU, but continues to degrade at an ever-increasing rate.

Record levels of poverty, homelessness, hunger and inequality have all been achieved precisely under the tender loving care of the EU alliance of capitalist national governments, which have all signed up to its key imperialist tenets in order to receive the questionable 'benefits' of access to its 'free market of goods, labour and capital'.

The presentation of this *anti*-working-class imperialist institution as some kind of welfare institution for British (or European, or any other group of) workers, and as a force for peace and environmental harmony, is about as far from the truth as Prince Andrew's claim that he never met Virginia Roberts.

^{*} See 'One year on: the yellow vests and the class struggle in France' by A Monville, *The Communists*, 19 November 2019.

Parliamentary foot-dragging and obvious frustration of 'democracy'

And yet our parliamentary representatives have been staging a sit-in protest for three years, refusing even to accept Theresa May's 'Brexit means Brexit' deal, which was really only a Brexit in name only (Brino), entailing as it did remaining within the EU customs union.

Joe Swinson has taken the remarkable step of committing the Liberal Democrats to simply annulling the referendum result entirely. Her party wants to cancel Brexit, and in so doing make it abundantly clear to all that British democracy is an utter irrelevance.

Several of the smaller parties – the Greens, Plaid, SNP, etc – trail haplessly in her wake. All are united in their will, if not their ability, to serve British capitalism.

That kind of obvious slap in the face for the great unwashed British proletariat is one that even the Tories under David Cameron, Theresa May or Boris Johnson feel deeply uncomfortable delivering. Not because it changes the essence of the matter, but because the well-worn cynicism of the British ruling class and its preferred party of rule helps them to understand that form is important.

Better to give a semblance of humility and compliance.

The Tories, of course, act only in the 'best interests of the whole country' (capitalist ruling class) and will 'respect the will of the British people' (speak in euphemisms, employ high-sounding phrases and, with forked tongues, tell outright lies and put the boot in when necessary). Mrs May's deal was Brexit in name only, and yet it was a *step too far* for the majority of her parliamentary colleagues.

Deal or no-deal?

Re-enter Boris. This was different. It was 'Do or die'. We would demand a deal in Britain's favour or leave without a deal. And after much negative mood music from Brussels and other European capitals, it was rather a 'surprise' to find that a deal was, in fact, concluded between Boris and EU president Jean-Claude Juncker – with smiles all round.

So what was the content of the deal? After much fanfare it transpired that the deal was Theresa May's deal, but accepting that there would be a British-EU customs border in the Irish Sea.

Boris's plan was to dissolve Parliament, fight a general election and change the composition of Parliament in his favour by painting his party as the only popular party of Brexit that could 'get Brexit done', undermining the anti-austerity agenda of Labour and the no-deal, WTO, clean-break, single-issue politics of the Brexit party in one fell swoop.

In this way, the northern Irish Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) would again recede to being an anachronistic irrelevance, and its predictable 'We're British, not Irish: no surrender!' obstructiveness could be pushed aside.

Boris has even admitted that the threat of no-deal Brexit had to *seem* real, but that, in fact, he had no intention of leaving without a deal – revealing himself once again as an arch-opportunist who has played his hand well.

The collapse of the Brexit party

Brexit party leader Nigel Farage stepping down in the face of desertion from his members' ranks to Boris's popular position means that

the party is now extremely unlikely to split the Tory vote, and is set to stand principally against remainder Labour MPs in Brexit areas.

Yet despite Boris agreeing to a border in the Irish Sea (the obvious place for Britain's border to fall, incidentally – the clue is in the name) and the desertion of the unionists who exercised their veto so effectively over Theresa May; despite the ejection of the twenty-three 'one-nation' Tories (whatever that name means) who were so concerned about Britain leaving the EU that they couldn't even stomach the *threat* of doing so, Parliament agreed to Boris's deal by a majority of twenty-three, with several Labour MPs from leave-backing constituencies voting for the deal.

But up popped former Tory Oliver Letwin – that arch-reactionary, former city banker, and architect of the privatisation of the NHS under Margaret Thatcher – to propose an amendment that the deal be deferred until all necessary legislation had been passed that would enable it to function – an amendment to frustrate the spirit of the bill in favour of the detail; or to put the cart before the horse.

So Boris was forced to die in his ditch and apply for the article 50 extension that he had sworn he would not, beseeching EU leaders in a slightly codified accompanying letter to *reject* his request, and thus force Parliament's hand on the existing deal.

The collapse of Project Corbyn?

Corbyn promised to be the great white hope of the 'British left'. Unfortunately, the British left were on the whole a rather uninspiring collection of Trotskyites and revisionists, who themselves wanted nothing more than a Benn or a Corbyn to 'reclaim' the Labour party for their personal vision of socialism – a vision that entailed business as usual for capitalism while announcing a little more spending on welfare and the NHS in dribs and drabs, piecemeal here and there.

Something of a damp squib, in fact. And in no very tangible way

any different from the policies of the former Labour leader Tony Blair, or indeed the ConDem coalition or the Tory governments. Yet even the little increased spending and a sprinkling of social-democratic phraseology was enough to put the entire British establishment on a war footing.

Labour long ago learned to isolate itself from the radical demands of British workers. It did so by expelling the communists who formerly operated openly within its ranks (it was, after all, formed by an amalgamation of smaller parties and organisations, many of whom went on to form the communist party in the wake of the October Revolution in Russia), through the restructuring of its membership, through maintaining a block vote of unions wielded by trade union bureaucrats who were corrupted by the perks of their positions, and most importantly through the formation of a parliamentary Labour party (PLP) that was given a dominant position such that MPs elected on the ticket of the Labour party are not mere representatives of the party but *an independent organisation holding power over the mass organisation*.

While Chukka Ummuna led a small group of Blairite lemmings off the cliff, to be followed by such worthies as Labour's deputy leader Tom Watson (unequal to the challenge posed by George Galloway in his home constituency of West Bromwich East), it remains the case that the tradition of voting Labour in some working-class constituencies has been so strong that, to quote Comrade Harpal Brar, standing against the notable idiot Pyara Khabra in the Ealing Southall constituency:

'You could pin a Labour rosette on a donkey and it would romp to victory.'

So the reselection battle was key if this machine was to be turned in favour of Corbyn.

Labour, in fact, cannot be 'reclaimed', as it has always been a party of British capital; a social-imperialist party (*socialist in words,*

imperialist in deeds), to use Lenin's apt expression, which was recently adopted by Derby MP Chris Williamson as he was ejected from its ranks after forty-four years of painful service.

The Labour party has proven this, its treachery to the British workers, time and again in concrete practice. Notably, during the 1914-18 interimperialist 'great' war, during the 1926 British general strike,³³ and during the 1984/5 miners' strike.³⁴

Other badges of shame of which Labour can boast include its seminal role in entering the EU and forming Nato, in partitioning India, in ruling the colonies, in crushing dissent and the liberation movements in Ireland, Malaya (Malaysia), and Kenya; in betraying the antifascist struggle in Spain and in helping to crush the popular post-second world war communist liberation and partisan antifascist movements in Greece and Italy; in persecuting and isolating British communists at home; in pursuing a relentless and savagely anti-communist and anti-Soviet foreign policy, and, in the recent past, in conducting wars in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq, and cheerleading for countless others.

But ignore all this, say Corbyn's supporters. Jeremy stood against all of that! But did he? Corbyn constantly campaigned for Labour and remained a loyal member and supporter of the party despite its bloody history of subservience to British capital in holding the British working class down.

He was an MP of the ruling party throughout the campaigns and actions he allegedly disagreed with. It is time we notice this incongruity and call it out for what it is: either ignorance, lack of vision and cowardice, or worse; frank careerism, opportunism and rank hypocrisy.

Even with the best interpretation of his personal intentions, we can firmly state that the Corbyn project to 'reclaim' Labour has ended as an ignominious failure.

And the result of Corbyn's weak and irresolute stance, and the strength and fervour of the establishment and the core Labour

party machine, mean that as the country heads into Boris's 'Brexit election', ironically, the only notable Labour MP who has been de-selected is Derby MP Chris Williamson – Corbyn's most faithful supporter in the parliamentary party.

Corbyn's project, backed by Seamus Milne, Andrew Murray and John Rees, to reclaim Labour for their pallid vision of 'socialism' with Trotskyite-imperialist characteristics has proved a total failure.

No room for a 'new' or 'reclaimed' Labour party; we need a real workers' party

The Labour party's social-democratic social-imperialist politics have evolved to fill the evolutionary niche within British capitalist society. There is no room, as Arthur Scargill discovered twenty-three years ago, for a mark-two Labour party.

Any *new workers' party* will have to be different. It will have to put the agenda of workers first. It will have to be *economically radical*. It will have to stand for *a change in the ownership of the means of production*, of the real sources of our modern material wealth, and make it clear to workers why this is necessary.

A new workers' party will have to campaign amongst workers for *real unity*; for them to identify *as workers primarily* on their common economic grounds. It will have to fight against discrimination in order to put aside all secondary and incidental differences in the struggle against the hegemony and the tyranny of capital.

A new workers' party will have to *oppose imperialist war*, not on pacifist or charitable grounds but on the basis that it is against the interests of workers at home and abroad. It will have to be capable of *standing up against the tide of media propaganda* that always accompanies such wars, of telling workers the truth, and of leading them in a campaign of *active non-cooperation*.

Any new workers' party worth its salt will have to campaign vig-

orously and unashamedly against the EU – *for a real Brexit, and against the parasitic and moribund system of monopoly capitalism.*

It will have to educate, mobilise and weld workers into a determined force. It will have to speak to and appeal to the mass of the British working class.

Ranjeet Brar

London, December 2019

NOTES

1. This article was first published in *Lalkar*, September 2015. Most of these articles have been edited for inclusion in the present collection. Original versions are available online at *lalkar.org* and *thecommunists.org*.
2. TUSC: the Trade Union and Socialist Coalition, co-founded by RMT (transport union) general secretary Bob Crow. Members of the PCS (civil servants), NUT (teachers), FBU (fire brigades) and POA (prison officers) unions are on the steering committee. The most prominent participating groups are the Trotskyite Socialist Party and Solidarity. TUSC stood 135 parliamentary candidates across England, Wales and Scotland at the 2015 general election and 619 the same day in local government elections. TUSC did not stand candidates in the 2017 general election as the party supported Jeremy Corbyn's Labour party.
3. Left Unity was formed in 2013 by film director Ken Loach in opposition to the austerity programme of the Labour party. Its own programme was left-wing social-democratic – ie, anti-capitalist while being vague about what would take its place and in practice confining itself to demanding reforms within capitalism. The party stood ten candidates in the 2015 general election, seven of which were joint candidates with TUSC. In the general elections of 2017 and 2019 it called for a vote for Jeremy Corbyn's Labour.
4. Gordon Brown (b 1951) was a Labour party worthy who was Tony Blair's chancellor of the exchequer from 1997 to 2007, working closely with the City of London financiers while claiming to have eliminated the 'boom and bust' cycle of capitalism.

He became prime minister just as the financial crisis was erupting and presided over bold counter-recessionary measures including a bank rescue package worth around £500bn – to be paid for by austerity savings. Austerity caused his Labour government to lose support, with the result that it found itself out of office after a very poor showing in the 2010 general election, although the Conservatives had no overall majority and only took over government through

an alliance with the LibDems.

5. John Whitaker Straw (b 3 August 1946), aka Jack Straw, served as MP for Blackburn from 1979 to 2015. He was Tony Blair's home secretary from 1997 to 2001 and foreign secretary from 2001 to 2006. Always on the right wing of the Labour party, he ignominiously supported the Asylum and Immigration Bill 1999 and the introduction of limits to trial by jury and legal aid.

He was informed months in advance of plans for the 2004 Equatorial Guinea coup d'état attempt and failed to alert the country's government as is required under international law. He also knew about the US's 'extraordinary rendition' torture activity but kept quiet.

6. Yvette Cooper (b 20 March 1969) is a British Labour party politician who has been the member of parliament for Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford since 2010, having served as the MP for Pontefract and Castleford since 1997. She served in the cabinet between 2008 and 2010 under prime minister Gordon Brown as chief secretary to the Treasury and then as Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.

After Labour lost the 2010 general election, Cooper was appointed as shadow foreign secretary, then became shadow home secretary in 2011. She has become infamous in recent years for her championing of the European Union and her efforts to scupper Brexit. She is married to Labour politician Ed Balls.

7. Liz Kendall (b 1971) was another rival of Corbyn's for the Labour leadership. An arch-Blairite, she didn't even become an MP until 2010, yet five years later was able to muster the support to run for leader of the party. She is currently the shadow minister for social care.
8. Andy Burnham (b 1970) was yet another contender in the 2015 Labour leadership election. A Labour party politician, he is currently mayor of Greater Manchester. He was chief secretary to the Treasury from 2007 to 2008, culture secretary from 2008 to 2009 and health secretary from 2009 to 2010, all in Gordon Brown's cabinet.
9. From 1969 until 1997, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) conducted an armed struggle aimed at ending British rule in northern Ireland and at reuniting the island of Ireland. In 1984, the IRA bombed the Brighton hotel where the Tory party conference was taking place and only narrowly failed to assassinate prime minister Margaret Thatcher.
10. Michael Foot (23 July 1913 - 3 March 2010) was associated with the left wing of the Labour party and became its leader from 1980 to 1983 at a time when it was in opposition. He was a well known ardent supporter of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and of British withdrawal from the European Economic Community (EEC, the precursor to the European Union).

He was pilloried in the press for his 'leftist' views and was nicknamed 'Worzel Gummidge' (after the scarecrow featured in the children's books and TV series that were popular at the time), reflecting his famously rumpled appearance. When he led Labour into the 1983 general election, his party obtained its lowest share of the vote since 1918 and the fewest parliamentary seats it had had at any time since before 1945. He resigned the party leadership and was succeeded as leader by Neil Kinnock.

11. This article was first published in *Proletarian*, October 2015.
12. This statement was issued by the Jewish Socialists Group (JSG) on 28 April 2016, in response to the contrived campaign accusing the Jeremy Corbyn leadership of the Labour party of antisemitism.

This campaign not only sought to undermine Corbyn. More importantly, it was the latest example of a concerted attempt by imperialism and its Zionist stooges to equate the settler-colonial state of Israel with the Jewish religion, culture and people, and thereby to criminalise support for the just struggle of the Palestinian people.

The statement was republished in *Proletarian*, June 2016.

For more on the topic of Zionism and antisemitism see H Brar, *Zionism: a Racist, Antisemitic and Reactionary Tool of Imperialism*, published by the CPGB-ML in 2017.

13. This article was first published in *Proletarian*, August 2016.
14. This article was first published in *Lalkar*, July 2017.
15. Following the shock result of the Brexit referendum, when British workers defied the instructions of the majority of financiers, politicians and media and voted to leave the European Union, the Tory prime minister David Cameron resigned, sparking a leadership contest in the party.

Theresa May, who had been home secretary in Cameron's government, emerged victorious after all the other candidates dropped out, including Boris Johnson, whose ally Michael Gove infamously stabbed him in the back. Although Johnson has made his career in recent times as a Brexit supporter, he was noticeably shaken when the result was announced.

See 'After Brexit: what next?', *Proletarian*, August 2016.

16. In Britain at the time of writing, older voters are more likely to vote Conservative (Tory), while younger voters are more likely to vote Labour.
17. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND, founded 1957) is a pacifist or-

organisation advocating unilateral nuclear disarmament in Britain. Although supposedly politically neutral and focused on the issue of Britain's nuclear arsenal and the dangers that this arsenal poses to British workers, it has often been used by imperialism to foster hostile feelings amongst the British working class towards any anti-imperialist state that tries to develop its own nuclear weapons as a deterrent against US nuclear blackmail.

18. Stop the War is Britain's official anti-war movement, founded in September 2001 after the bombing of the Twin Towers in New York and in the lead-up to the invasion of Afghanistan. Led by a coalition of Socialist Workers Party (SWP, later Counterfire) Trotskyites and Communist Party of Britain (CPB) revisionists, it has always been closely tied to the Labour party and more concerned with electing Labour governments than with effectively opposing Britain's imperialist war machine.

Stop the War takes credit for organising Britain's biggest ever demonstration against the Iraq War on 15 February 2003, although in reality a substantial section of the ruling class and its media were also opposed to the war and helped mobilise for the demonstration.

From this 'high point' (where between one and two million marchers were allowed to disperse with no more militant message given to them than 'Well done, see you next time'), the once vibrant movement with active branches all over the country has dwindled into an irrelevance with no connection to the British working class.

For more on Stop the War see J Brar, *The Drive to War Against Russia and China*, published by the CPGB-ML in 2017.

19. This article was first published in *Lalkar*, July 2018.
20. This article was first published in *Proletarian*, October 2018.
21. Kenneth Robert Livingstone (b 17 June 1945) was a Labour party politician who served as the leader of the Greater London Council (GLC) from 1981 until the council was abolished in 1986. On the left wing of social democracy, he was dubbed 'Red Ken' by the media and presented as a 'hard left socialist' as a result of his opposition to many of Margaret Thatcher's policies and his support for Palestine and a united Ireland, among other things.

Livingstone served as MP for Brent East from 1987 to 2001, standing against Tony Blair in the Labour leadership campaign of 1994. He left the Labour party in order to run as an independent candidate when the party refused to give him its nomination for the newly created post of London mayor. After he won that election and proved to be very popular with Londoners, Tony Blair readmitted him to the Labour party and he served his second term of office as a Labour party representative. He was deposed in the 2008 mayoral election by Tory

candidate Boris Johnson.

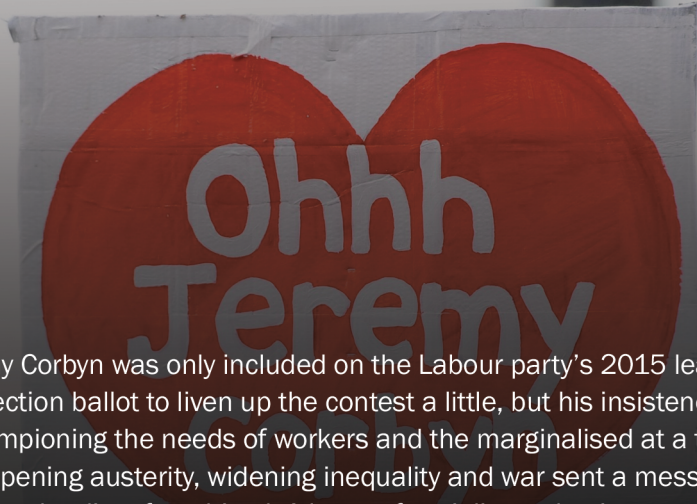
A strong supporter of Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, Livingstone was suspended from Labour membership in April 2016 on a charge of 'bringing the party into disrepute' following remarks that were alleged to be 'antisemitic'. His suspension was made indefinite after two years and he finally resigned his membership in May 2018. The unproven 'example' of Livingstone's 'antisemitism' was incorporated into training that was devised by Zionists to 'stamp out antisemitism' in Jeremy Corbyn's Labour party.

In June 2019, after the EU election was won by the Brexit party, Livingstone advocated that Labour should begin to openly campaign to overturn Brexit and remain within the European Union.

22. This article was first published in *Proletarian*, October 2018.
23. This article was first published in *Proletarian*, April 2019.
24. This has been eloquently and conclusively proven by the leaked Labour anti-semitism report, which became public in April 2020, and was studiously ignored by the same British media that relentlessly plugged the spurious and demonstrably false allegations of Corbyn's supposed 'antisemitism'.
25. Professor Alan Johnson, formerly professor of democratic theory and practice at Edge Hill University in Ormskirk, Lancashire, currently editor of Bicom's quarterly online journal *Fathom: For a Deeper Understanding of Israel and the Region*. Not to be confused with former Labour MP Alan Johnson.
26. Bicom: Britain Israel Communications and Research Centre.
27. This article was first published in *Proletarian*, June 2019.
28. Malcolm Tucker: fictional spin doctor in Armando Iannucci's BBC political satire *The Thick of It*. The character was closely based on Tony Blair's notorious press secretary, Alistair Campbell.
29. This article was first published on *The Communists*, 12 December 2019.
30. For more on the Peterloo massacre see 'Peterloo in its historical perspective' parts 1, 2 and 3, *Lalkar*, September 2019, November 2019 and January 2020.
31. For more on the first world war, see *World War One, an Interimperialist War to Redivide the World*, published by CPGB-ML in 2015.
32. For more on the fall of the USSR see H Brar, *Perestroika, the Complete Collapse of Revisionism*, 1992 and H Brar, *Revisionism and the Demise of the USSR*, published by the CPGB-ML in 2011.

33. For more on the general strike see H Brar, *The 1926 British General Strike*, published by the CPGB-ML in 2009.
34. For more on the 1984/85 miners' strike see H Brar, *Social Democracy the Enemy Within*, 1995.

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Jeremy Corbyn was only included on the Labour party's 2015 leadership election ballot to liven up the contest a little, but his insistence on championing the needs of workers and the marginalised at a time of deepening austerity, widening inequality and war sent a message of hope to the disenfranchised. A burst of socialist enthusiasm attracted a mass influx of members into his declining party and swept him to a thumping victory on a wave of 'Corbynmania'.

Initially struck dumb at this unexpected turn of events, the Labour party grandees, along with the wider British political establishment, formulated a plan to contain and limit the influence of Corbyn and his supporters, and to neutralise his obvious and growing mass appeal.

Launching an assault on every front, they hounded him on question after question, creating one fake controversy after another. And it gradually became clear to all that no amount of pacifying, compromising or apologising was going to be enough for those whose interests were threatened by the prospect of a Corbyn-led government, no matter how reasonable and respectable its aims.

Those who flocked to his banner took Corbyn's evaluation of the Labour party at face value. They believed that Labour was socialist, that it would champion the interests of the working class against the wealthy; that it could and would take on the British political establishment; and that a better life could be won by simple electoral means.

So what should British workers conclude from this four-year experiment in 'reclaiming the Labour party for socialism'? Why and how did it fail? And what should we do now if we want to succeed in winning a decent and dignified life for all, free from poverty, inequality and war?

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