



Down with the EU! For Scotland's right to independence! No vote to Labour!

After years of attacks from successive Blairite and Tory governments, Jeremy Corbyn's promises to defend the unions; to increase spending for public housing, the NHS and education; and to renationalise rail, water and the Royal Mail raised the hopes of working people and the oppressed across Britain and provided a welcome challenge to the Blairites. Corbyn's support has been bolstered by the Tories' vicious plans to increase the squeeze on working people — including Theresa May's "dementia tax" scheme to force families to sell the homes of deceased relatives to pay for their home healthcare. But last year, Corbyn sided with the City of London and betrayed his working-class base by campaigning to remain in the EU. Now Corbyn is continuing this betrayal by campaigning for Britain to remain in the European single market. The central issue in the 8 June general election is Brexit — and Labour's position on the EU is contrary to the interests of the working class.

The EU is a reactionary capitalist bloc, originating as the economic adjunct to NATO in the anti-Soviet Cold War. From its inception, the EU has been a weapon to increase the exploitation of workers across Europe. The European imperialist powers — centrally Germany, Britain and France — have used the EU and the German-controlled euro as a means to plunder dependent European countries such as Ireland, Portugal and, most starkly, Greece. The single market which Corbyn embraces lies at the very heart of the capitalist EU project of privatisation and austerity.

Corbyn's betrayal on the EU pushed workers towards the racist UKIP and the Tories. Now the Labour Party is playing into the resulting chauvinist frenzy, pledging to ban immigrants from recourse to public funds. Immigrants, including many from Eastern Europe, as well as black and Asian minorities constitute a key part of the British working class.

continued overleaf

On Manchester bombing

The hideous 22 May suicide-bombing in Manchester that killed 22 people and injured dozens more targeted innocent concert-goers including teenage girls and children. The bomb appears to have been detonated by an Islamist youth of Libyan descent. This points once again to the poisonous fruits of British and US mass murder in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria, where horrors like the Manchester bombing are a daily occurrence. In indiscriminately butchering children, the perpetrator of this atrocity has displayed the same mentality as the imperialists: they identify the working class and the whole population with the policies of the ruling-class oppressors.

The day after the bombing, Prime Minister Theresa May activated "Operation Temperer", a plan for deploying up to 5000 troops on the streets of Britain to augment the police. This deadly force will in the first instance target the Muslim population, who time and again bear the brunt of the state's "anti-terror operations". Jeremy Corbyn is under attack for criticising British intervention in the Near East. Yet he joins the "anti-terror" chorus in demanding more cops on the streets. Ominously, Home Secretary Amber Rudd announced

an intended "uplift" in the witch-hunting Prevent programme, which directs public sector workers such as teachers to spy on Muslims to spot "radicalisation". Under Labour and Tories alike, the purpose of the British rulers' "war on terror" has been to massively augment the state's machinery for repression, aimed ultimately at the working class.

As always, the capitalists' media flunkies are on the job, whipping up racism against Muslims. Hours after the Manchester bombing, a mosque in Oldham was subjected to an arson attack. The Manchester bombing was a heinous crime, but the fact remains that the biggest terrorists on earth are the imperialists. British, French and US bombing in 2011 led to the ouster and assassination of Muammar el-Qaddafi, leaving Libya a chaotic hellhole and paving the way for ISIS to strengthen its forces in that country. The imperialists support Islamic fundamentalists when it suits their purposes, most notably in the counterrevolutionary war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, but also more recently in Syria, Libya and elsewhere in the Near East. **Down with the anti-Muslim "war on terror"! Down with "Operation Temperer"! British, US and all imperialist forces out of the Near East!** ■

class, often confined to the hardest, dirtiest and lowest-paid jobs. The capitalists use threats of deportation and attacks on the rights of immigrants and minorities to drive down wages and working conditions for the working class as a whole. The workers movement must champion defence of these oppressed layers of society, including organising immigrant workers into the unions. **No deportations! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!**

In Scotland, a historic Labour stronghold, Labour is on life support after campaigning together with the Tories against Scottish independence in 2014. As party leader, Corbyn has upheld Labour's long tradition of loyalty to the reactionary "United Kingdom", opposing another referendum on Scottish independence and pushing Scottish workers into the arms of the bourgeois SNP. Likewise, Corbyn's remain campaign meant that Labour failed to provide a working-class pole for the nearly 40 per cent of Scots who voted leave. Advancing the fighting unity of the working class requires upholding the basic democratic right of the Scottish people to determine whether to stay in Britain or to form an independent state, including by holding a new referendum whenever they see fit.

Corbyn's 2015 leadership campaign and his resounding re-election one year later posed the possibility of driving the Blairites, who have been seeking to transform Labour into an outright capitalist party, out of the Labour Party. Despite the bankruptcy of Corbyn's parliamentary reformist programme, this would have constituted a step towards the political independence of the working class from its capitalist exploiters. However, in the general election, voting for Labour will not exacerbate the divisions in the Labour Party or advance the consciousness of the working class. Corbyn has blocked with the Blairites and has betrayed the interests of working people on the decisive questions of the EU and Scotland.

In attempting (vainly) to conciliate the Blairites and prove to the British bourgeois establishment that he is "fit" to lead British imperialism, Corbyn has produced an election manifesto packed so full of concessions that it was cheered as "a cornucopia of delights" by Blairite *Guardian* columnist Polly Toynbee. Despite Corbyn having been a longtime opponent of NATO and a past chair of the Stop the War Coalition, his manifesto now embraces NATO and Trident. The manifesto criticises Tory cuts in military spending and calls for more cops, prison guards and border

guards, attacking the Tories from the right for supposedly weakening the capitalist state's apparatus of repression. Moreover, any moves to actually implement the manifesto's promised nationalisations would run right up against the privatisation diktats of the EU and its single market, which Labour supports!

Corbyn's capitulation has not dampened the enthusiasm of the reformist left for electing a Labour government. The Communist Party of Britain (CPB), the Socialist Party (SP) and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) all called for a leave vote in the EU referendum last year, but for these opportunists, Corbyn's betrayal on the EU is no obstacle to tailing Labour. The CPB, for the first time since 1920, is not running candidates. Likewise, Dave Nellist, perennial parliamentary candidate for the SP and the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, is not standing; instead, he is working "to send Jeremy to No. 10". For its part the SWP has emblazoned "Back Corbyn — Vote Labour" across the masthead of *Socialist Worker*. (The SWP's other masthead slogan — "Vote left in Scotland" — leaves the door open for support to outright bourgeois parties like the SNP and the Greens.)

These reformist outfits are all promoting the illusion that electing a Labour government could meet the needs of working people. In reality, the parliamentary system provides a democratic facade for the class dictatorship of the capitalists, who own the means of production and make their profits from the exploitation of labour. To put the productive wealth of society at the service of workers and those minorities, women and youth impoverished by capitalism requires **breaking the power of the bourgeoisie**. It requires proletarian revolution to sweep away the state's repressive apparatus and establish a workers government.

The bourgeoisie has been able to get away with decades of attacks on the working class because the trade union misleaders have diverted and sold out class struggles. Corbyn supporter and notorious sell-out Len McCluskey has been particularly outspoken in pushing illusions in the ballot box in order to divert workers away from fighting in their own interests. History shows that improvements in the lives of working people and the oppressed are won through hard-fought class and other social struggle, not by relying on Parliament. The task of rebuilding the fighting strength of the workers movement is tied to forging a new, class-

struggle leadership of the unions as part of the struggle to build a revolutionary workers party.

The Spartacist League/Britain seeks to combat illusions in Labourite reformism in order to win the most conscious workers, minorities and youth to build a multiethnic workers party devoted to rooting out the system of capitalist exploitation. The model for such a party was provided by Lenin's Bolsheviks, who led the multinational working class of Russia to power 100 years ago. Following in their footsteps, we are devoted to the expropriation of the bourgeoisie around the world, to lay the basis for an egalitarian society of abundance based on an international, planned economy. **For a voluntary federation of workers republics in the British Isles! For a Socialist United States of Europe!**

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