

Ahead of vote on UK membership in EU

Corbyn and Cameron use killing of Cox to cement their alliance against Brexit

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The murder of Labour Party MP Jo Cox by the fascist Thomas Mair is being cynically utilised by the campaign for the UK to remain in the European Union (EU), to be decided in Thursday's referendum.

Monday was set aside by parliament to pay tribute to Cox. In unprecedented scenes, all MPs wore white roses in the House of Commons, as tributes were made by Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn and others. Despite it being against the rules, at the end of the session, MPs rose in unison to applaud. Following the tributes, MPs filed out of parliament in pairs in what the *Guardian* described as a "procession of cross-party unity" for a service held in the nearby St Margaret's Church.

Corbyn, together with the vast bulk of Labour MPs, is backing Cameron's campaign for a Remain vote. Yet to cover up his alliance with a government carrying out savage attacks against the working class, Corbyn began the referendum campaign by saying that he would not appear together on a platform with the Tory prime minister. Now he does little else. Indeed, his speech Monday was virtually identical to that delivered by Cameron, and he walked with him afterwards to the church.

Since Cox's death, Corbyn has not uttered a word about the mounting evidence of the fascist politics of her killer. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) told Westminster Magistrates Court on Saturday that Mair told police he was a "political activist".

On Monday, before parliament met, the United States-based Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), which previously noted Mair's connections to the neo-Nazi US organisation, National Alliance, revealed that he was among those attending a meeting held in 2000 of

"well-known" British fascists. Among them was "Stephen Cartwright, who was affiliated with the Scottish branch of the British National Party..."

Mair's attendance at the meeting was known to both UK and US intelligence services. The SPLC notes, "Todd Blodgett, an American who was then a paid informant for the FBI and also met with MI5" states that Mair was present. It adds, "Blodgett had helped arrange the meeting at the request of William Pierce, then head of the neo-Nazi National Alliance..."

In Parliament, Corbyn called for a rejection of the "well of hatred" that killed Cox, referring only to "what increasingly appears to have been an act of extreme political violence."

Cox's death was "an attack on democracy, and our whole country has been shocked and saddened by it... and was united in grief," he added. He appealed for "a kinder and gentler politics," saying "this is not a factional party political point."

Politicians have a responsibility "not to whip up hatred or sow division," he added.

This judicious application of political chloroform by Corbyn was in keeping with Monday's proceedings. One would not have known from the vast majority of tributes that Cox had been slaughtered in the street by a fascist, who opposed her strong advocacy in favour of EU membership. Only once, in the speech of Labour MP Stephen Kinnock, was the word "assassination" used to describe Cox's killing.

Corbyn's call for a "kinder and gentler politics" only serves to gloss over the filthy, xenophobic atmosphere that has been whipped up not only by the Leave campaign, but also by Remain. The supporters of EU membership have responded to the Leave challenge by

constantly reinforcing their own demonising of immigrants.

After the briefest of pauses following Cox's death, it's now business as usual for the most xenophobic and anti-working class forces within the political elite who will stop at nothing to secure a Leave vote on Thursday. They reacted with fury to the move by the Remain campaign to utilise Cox's murder to support staying in the EU.

Until last week, Leave had established a significant lead in the polls. But since Cox's death, polls show an increase in support for Remain—with Remain either running even or slightly ahead of Leave.

On Sunday evening, the BBC's "Question Time" hosted another debate, with Cameron answering questions from an audience equally comprised of Remain, Leave and undecided voters. Once again, virtually the entire programme was given over to the issue of immigration—in particular the claim that Turkey's accession to the EU will lead to a flood of millions of people into the UK.

Cameron was denounced following his "Question Time" appearance by the *Daily Express*, which cited the head of Vote Leave saying, "You cannot trust Cameron on Turkey."

On Monday, the Leave-supporting *Daily Mail* headlined its editorial, "Migration—the issue that just won't go away."

It stated that the "vital issue of mass immigration" was rightfully the main topic of debate on "Question Time", as "the baleful consequences of our open door policy to migrants from inside the EU" took "centre stage".

Speaking to the BBC Monday, UK Independence Party leader Nigel Farage said, "The Remain camp are using these awful circumstances to try to say that the motives of one deranged, dangerous individual are similar to half the country, or perhaps more, who believe we should leave the EU..."

In his paean to "gentler, kinder" politics, Corbyn deliberately obscures the fact that the filth spewed up during the referendum campaign is not an aberration, but flows logically from the reactionary aims of the competing factions of the ruling elite.

For those leading Remain and Leave, the issue of membership of the EU is a conflict over what is in the best strategic interests of British imperialism as it

pursues trade war and prepares for military conflict with Russia. The debate is over how best to continue enforcing savage cuts against the working class and over the best means to keep the immigrants and asylum seekers out of the UK.

To respond to Cox's murder with appeals for national unity is politically dangerous. The political assassination of a Labour MP by a deranged fascist thug is the surest indication that Britain is entering uncharted political territory. The most dangerous social forces are being readied for use against the working class. As has been demonstrated by their response over the past several days, far from the right heeding the appeals of Corbyn, they will instead redouble their offensive.

Should the vote go in favour of Remain, the cry will almost certainly go out that the referendum was "stolen" by using Cox's death to stifle "popular" concerns over immigration and to silence the "patriotic" desire to "take back control" from Brussels.

These events underscore the critical importance of the campaign by the Socialist Equality Party for an active boycott of the referendum.

The working class, which owes no allegiance to any nation and faces the same class enemy wherever it lives and whatever language it speaks, must adopt an independent, socialist perspective and reject being dragooned into supporting any faction of the ruling elite.

Unity with either Cameron and Corbyn or Boris Johnson and Farage is a pact with the enemy. The unity that is required is the international unity of the working class. In opposition to all forms of nationalism, chauvinism and racism, workers and youth must turn to the struggle for the United Socialist States of Europe, as part of a world socialist federation.



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