

UK Labour right wing mounts leadership challenge against Corbyn

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Angela Eagle will be the Labour leadership challenger to Jeremy Corbyn, after the British Labour Party leader refused to resign following Tuesday's no confidence vote by 81 percent of Labour MPs.

The aim of Tuesday's vote of no confidence in Jeremy Corbyn was to make it impossible for him to continue as Labour leader. Only 40 MPs backed him, while 172 voted against. But his declared intention to represent those who elected him on an overwhelming popular mandate just ten months ago left the coup plotters with the task of fielding a candidate.

Eagle, the former shadow business secretary, at this point has little chance of winning. Corbyn has the support of hundreds of thousands of members. Over 242,000 have signed an online petition supporting him, while Momentum, the pro-Corbyn pressure group, announced that it has recruited 1,700 members in the past two days. A pro-Corbyn social media operation has had a 165 percent increase in support, reaching nearly three million since June 21.

A legal challenge might be made over whether Corbyn needs 50 nominations from MPs before he can stand, which he has not got, or is automatically on the ballot. However, there is in any case no intention by the Labour right of abiding by the will of the party members and supporters should a contest go ahead.

The vast majority of Labour MPs, mobilised by the Blairite wing of the party in a high-level state-orchestrated operation, are actively hostile to the aspirations of Labour members and supporters and function as ruthless enemies of the working class.

The first response has been to launch a "Saving Labour" campaign, which will urge various right-wing individuals to take up a £3 supporter option to vote against Corbyn.

If Corbyn wins a fresh contest, discussion is of a split

by MPs and a legal challenge over who keeps the party's name and assets. Mary Honeyball, a Labour Member of the European Parliament, said in the pro-Labour *New Statesman* that 200 Labour MPs could form a new party and that she would join them. The *Independent* commented that it would "be assured of backing by rich individual donors who have shunned the Corbyn-led one, which is in a parlous state financially."

The coup against Corbyn has involved a concerted effort by the media, including the BBC, with the central and undemocratic aim of creating the conditions for the result of the June 23 referendum on European Union (EU) membership to be overturned. This is considered vital to the ability of the British ruling class to safeguard its interests globally.

The United States, which views UK membership of the EU as a vital element in ensuring the stability of Europe, of the world economy and the success of NATO operations against Russia and China, is intimately involved in this political skulduggery. Yesterday, speaking at the Aspen Ideas Festival, US Secretary of State John Kerry indicated that he was well aware of discussions of how to "roll back" the referendum result: "I think there are a number of ways. I don't, as secretary of state, want to throw them out today. I think that would be a mistake. But there are a number of ways."

The political forces being mobilised are led by some of the most hated figures in British politics, grouped around the war-criminal Tony Blair. Blairites such as Alastair Campbell, David Blunkett, Jack Straw and others have dominated the media. The *Canary* website published a valuable expose of the role played in preparing the putsch against Corbyn by Portland Communications, a PR company set up by Tim Allan, a

former adviser to Blair and director of communications at Rupert Murdoch's BskyB. Other Murdoch figures include Tony Ball, former CEO of BskyB and Fox and George Pascoe-Watson, former political editor of the *Sun*. At least 15 of the shadow secretary of states and nine of the shadow ministers who resigned were affiliated to the Fabian Society.

Tuesday's no confidence vote was preceded by articles by newspapers across the official political spectrum—in the *Financial Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Independent*, *Guardian* and *Daily Mirror*—that “Corbyn must go.” Talk is of the imminent possibility of a general election that could be used to overturn the results of the June 23 referendum by cobbling together a government pledged to keeping Britain in the EU. Labour is being lined up to be that government, or to be part of a new coalition or party—with pro-remain Tories and the Liberal Democrats, who, like the Scottish National Party, have declared themselves to remain in the EU at all costs.

As early as the day after the referendum, June 24, Juliet Samuel wrote in the *Daily Telegraph*, “Over the coming years, we are going to see a massive realignment of the political order. The old political spectrum is useless. Left and Right don't describe anything anymore except a set of interesting philosophical theories in university textbooks.” That realignment included “a pro-market, pro-business mix of Tories and Blairite Labour—the elites, in other words, whose ranks include Michael Gove and Boris Johnson.”

What is at stake is not only an overturn of the June 23 exit vote, but to create the political conditions for the ruling class to deepen its savage austerity measures and ever sharper turn to militarism. Not only must Corbyn go but Labour must also reaffirm itself as a party wholly committed to the Thatcherite agenda of austerity and unreserved loyalty to NATO and the EU epitomised by the era of Blair and Gordon Brown—but now under conditions of a raging political crisis that demands a further shift to the right.

The *Guardian* has played a particularly pernicious role. Blair's personal friend, Martin Kettle, declared that Labour must now adapt to “new times where the working class are no longer seen as the engine of social change... The big difference between the past and the present, though, is that the underlying societal logic

that created the Labour party, a party of the industrial working class, no longer exists to anything like the extent it once did.”

Securing cross party alliances is already underway—building on the arrangements put in place for the referendum campaign. The Compass think-tank has sent out an appeal for its planned “series of events on the idea of a progressive alliance with politicians, activists and organisers from across the spectrum who feel the scale of the crisis and want to respond accordingly.”

The coup plotters must be opposed by all class conscious workers and youth, but this must blind no one to the abject failure of Corbyn's stated aim of refashioning the Labour Party as a political defender of the working class. It can no longer be seriously questioned that Labour is the creature of British imperialism, shaped by its pro-capitalist programme and a history of defending the bourgeoisie against any threat from below.

Corbyn and his allies have in any case never once pursued the type of principled and determined fight against the right wing that their supporters had every right to expect. His ten months in office has instead been characterised by one retreat after another. Even now, Momentum has launched a petition urging, “With a government in crisis, Labour must unite as a source of national stability.”



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