What is in the UK Labour Party's manifesto?

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13 May 2017

Britain's Conservative-supporting media have declared Labour's general election manifesto to be a "socialist" document. The following excerpts demonstrate that it is in fact a right-wing programme, committing a Labour government to continuing austerity, militarism and war.

The economy

Clause IV of Labour's constitution committed the party, until its removal in 1994, "To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service."

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn's manifesto declares: "Labour understands that wealth creation is a collective endeavour—between investors, workers, public services, and government. Each contributes and each must share equitably in the rewards."

The Fiscal Credibility Rule

Labour calls for a £250 billion "ten-year national investment plan to upgrade Britain's economy." However, this is "underpinned by the responsible economic management embodied in our Fiscal Credibility Rule" committing the party "to eliminate the current spending deficit on a forward-looking, five-year rolling timescale… Leave debt as a proportion of trend GDP lower at the end of each Parliament than at the start."

Every spending commitment in the manifesto is subject to veto as the Fiscal Credibility rule will "make the Office of Budget Responsibility responsible to Parliament with a clear mandate to 'blow the whistle' on government breaching these rules."

Corporation Tax

Labour proposes to fund its spending by an increase in Corporation Tax, asking "large corporations to pay a little more while still keeping UK corporation tax among the lowest of the major economies."

Health

While claiming that it will reverse the privatisation of the NHS, the manifesto in fact states only that it will "introduce a new legal duty on the Secretary of State and on NHS England to ensure that excess private profits are not made out of the NHS at the expense of patient care."

Brexit

The manifesto states, "We will scrap the Conservatives' Brexit White Paper and replace it with fresh negotiating priorities that have a strong emphasis

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on retaining the benefits of the Single Market and the Customs Union—which are essential for maintaining industries, jobs and businesses in Britain… We will reject ‘no deal’… and negotiate transitional arrangements to avoid a cliff-edge for the UK economy.”

Immigration

Whereas the manifesto states, “Labour will not make false promises on immigration numbers,” it emphasises, “Labour believes in fair rules and reasonable management of migration.”

Law and order

The manifesto utilises one of the main slogans of former Prime Minister Tony Blair: “We still need to be tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime, too.”

Labour will recruit 10,000 more police officers and 1,000 more border guards “to add to our safeguards and controls.”

Royal Mail and railways

The manifesto states it will reverse the privatisation of Royal Mail, as it is part of the “key national infrastructure,” but this will take place only at the “earliest opportunity.” Nationalisation of the private rail franchises will is planned but only as the current “franchises expire.” Some of the private franchises are in place until 2024, with more currently being negotiated.

Militarism and war

The manifesto commits Labour to renewing the Trident submarine-based nuclear missile programme and “to spending at least 2% of GDP on defence” to “guarantee our Armed Forces have the necessary capabilities to fulfil the full range of obligations, and ensure our conventional forces are versatile and able to deploy rapidly in a range of roles...”

The manifesto commits Labour to a complete strategic defence review “to assess the threats facing Britain and the necessary defence requirements.”

The number of Armed Forces personnel will be ramped up, with the document stating, “Labour will immediately examine recruitment and retention policies in order to stem the exodus that we have seen under the Conservatives, reducing the size of the army from over 100,000 to just 80,000.”

It adds, “The UK defence industry is world-leading and Labour will continue to support development and innovation in this sector and ensure that it can continue to rely on a highly skilled workforce. We are committed to a procurement process that supports our steel industry and other manufacturing that provides good quality jobs throughout the supply chain. Labour will publish a Defence Industrial Strategy white paper, including a National Shipbuilding Strategy.”

It states, “Labour supports the contribution of a responsible arms industry to the UK economy.”

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