

Corbyn's "left" pretensions exposed in UK general election debate

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The televised general election debate between Conservative leader Boris Johnson and Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn was a devastating exposure of Corbyn's claims to offer any alternative for the working class.

The debate, hosted by ITV, was the first in the UK held between an incumbent prime minister and a single opposition leader. According to ITV, 6.7 million people watched, with over 350,000 watching on ITV's YouTube channel.

The first part was centred on Brexit, with Johnson stating that the election was only taking place because of the refusal of MPs to pass the deal he secured with the European Union.

Corbyn outlined his plan for a Labour government to renegotiate a Brexit deal and then put this to a new referendum within six months—alongside an option to Remain in the EU.

Faced with Johnson's constant demands that he make his own position clear, Corbyn refused to state whether he would back Leave or Remain. This was an attempt to paper over the deep divisions within his own party, which has seen over 100 MPs and other Labour candidates declare that they will back Remain whatever deal Corbyn might strike with the EU.

Corbyn's supporters insist that he is the most left-wing leader Labour has ever had. They had claimed that if he faced Johnson head on in a debate, he would annihilate the Eton-educated toff based on his strongest suit—being the only political leader who would end 10 years of Tory austerity.

The *Financial Times*, in a piece trailing the debate, predicted: "He [Corbyn] is expected to take an aggressive line against Mr Johnson during the debate, using class warfare attacks to paint himself as the prime ministerial candidate on the side of 'the many.'"

At one point Johnson, pushing the narrative that plays well among the Tories' right-wing base that Corbyn and his shadow chancellor are dangerous "Marxists," said, "Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party have actually said that they want to overthrow capitalism and destroy the basis for wealth creation in this country. I have to say that would be disastrous for this country."

Presented with this gift, Corbyn said that as prime minister he wanted only to go back to the situation as it was under the last years of the right-wing Blair/Brown Labour governments! Despite saying, "We are a society of billionaires and the very poor, neither of which are right," he made clear there would be no serious moves against the super-rich under a government he led.

Instead, "We will, over a period, over a parliament, increase Corporation Tax to around the levels it was in 2010 in order to reinvest properly in education. In order to pay for the ending of university tuition fees... and we will start to address the grotesque levels of imbalance in our society."

This deliberately vague pledge is made under conditions in which 14 million people live in poverty, with many relying on food banks, and after more than 130,000 people have died in "preventable" deaths in the last decade due to austerity cuts.

Only on one occasion did Corbyn go on the offensive, when he held up an entirely redacted document—obtained under the Freedom of Information Act—and said "what we know of what Mr Johnson has done, is a series of secret meetings with the US in which they are proposing to open up our 'NHS markets'--as they call them--to American companies."

Even after Johnson attacked him for proposing a possible four-day working week for overworked National Health Service workers, Corbyn replied that it would be a four-day working week across the economy

“paid for by productivity increases all across Britain.”

Corbyn made sure that nothing he said would alienate frothing right-wingers, some of whom indicated their presence in the audience by jeering him. The pro-Tory *Daily Telegraph* noted that “the Labour leader sought to portray himself as an avuncular, unifying figure...”

So lacklustre was Corbyn that a YouGov snap poll found that 51 percent thought Johnson won the debate, compared to 49 percent for Corbyn.

The debate was proof that Corbyn is just a run-of-the-mill social democrat. So threadbare are his “reforms” and so pro-capitalist is his agenda that in any period prior to Tony Blair’s government, he would hardly be considered even a “left” reformist.

He is terrified of the bourgeoisie and trembles whenever its shadow falls on him. Corbyn will fight nothing and no one. His political cowardice was displayed in his refusal to oppose the bogus campaign organised by the intelligence agencies of the US, Israel and Britain, and led by the Conservatives and Blairites in his own party, claiming that Corbyn leads an anti-Semitic party.

Host Julie Etchingham asked Corbyn to respond to the comments of the Zionist Board of Deputies of British Jews that “you and your allies have been responsible for turning a once great party into a cesspit of anti-Semitism.”

Instead of denouncing this slander, Corbyn stressed that “I have taken action within my party where anyone has committed any anti-Semitic acts or made any anti-Semitic statements. They are either suspended or expelled from the party and we’ve investigated every single case.”

Corbyn refused to even make the point that Johnson has made a series of genuinely racist and derogatory statements about Muslims and black people.

Asked about the crisis engulfing the Royal family and if the monarchy was fit for purpose, Corbyn could only muster up that it “needs a bit of improvement.”

Even *Guardian* Columnist Aditya Chakrabortty, a generally sympathetic voice towards Corbyn in a newspaper that acts as the bulletin board of the Blairite right, wrote, “I dimly remember some guff about a kinder, gentler politics, [Corbyn’s statement on becoming Labour leader] but an election is a war. Right now, Corbyn is three weeks from what might be his last ever contest--or the one that enables him to take out

Johnson, block his disastrous hard Brexit and finally reverse some of the destruction wreaked by the Tories. He and his team have a fighting chance. But to take it, they need actually to fight.”

Corbyn’s pseudo-left cheerleaders in the Socialist Workers Party also expressed their concern at the refusal of their chosen leader to put forward any viable alternative, saying the debate showed, “There was a meeting somewhere within Labour that said, ‘Don’t attack Johnson.’”

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