

UK Public Meetings:

The election of Boris Johnson and the failure of Corbynism

28 December 2019

The 2019 general election debacle suffered by the Labour Party confirms the political bankruptcy of what passes for the left and labour organisations all over the world.

Jeremy Corbyn confronted a despised, internally-divided government, amid record social inequality and growing support for socialism. Yet his party was not only incapable of capitalising on the situation but suffered a landslide defeat.

Boris Johnson now has the biggest Tory majority since Margaret Thatcher's 1987 victory, heading the most right-wing government in post-war British history. He has pledged to "get Brexit done," which will bring a lurch deeper into trade war and a military alliance with the Trump administration, targeting Russia and China.

His goal of completing the "Thatcher revolution" means savage attacks on jobs, wages and working conditions, including making strikes illegal in transport and other essential services. His agenda is to destroy the National Health Service (NHS), whip up nationalism, impose anti-migrant measures and carry out a frontal assault on democratic rights.

Corbyn was hailed by all of Britain's pseudo-left groups, such as the Socialist Party and Socialist Workers Party, as leading a left renewal of the Labour Party. Instead the election proved that four years of constant political retreats meant millions of workers and youth who once backed him have turned away in disgust for his betrayal of every issue they cared about.

Under Corbyn's leadership, Labour ditched any class appeal in favour of promoting "national unity" combined with an agenda based on the identity politics of race, nationality, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation.

He opposed efforts to kick out the Blairites, allowed a free-vote on the bombardment of Syria, pledged to renew Trident nuclear weapons, supported NATO spending targets and said he would consider using nuclear weapons. His key supporters were driven out of the party based on bogus accusations of anti-Semitism, without Corbyn lifting a finger in their defence.

Had he won the election, Corbyn's betrayal would have been more abject than the "radical left" SYRIZA government in Greece, which turned the country into a vassal of the International Monetary Fund and European Union.

These events are a strategic experience for the working class. To wage the necessary struggle against the Tory government, workers and young people must now draw the most fundamental conclusions from the political shipwreck suffered by Labour.

Labour long ago ceased to defend the interests of the working class in even the most limited sense.

The election revealed a deep alienation from Labour that has been decades in the making, beginning in the 1970s, and encompassing Neil Kinnock's betrayal of the miners' strike of 1984-85. Generations who looked to Labour and the trade unions to oppose the Tories' decimation of the mines, steel works and engineering factories were instead abandoned to their fate before the election of the equally Thatcherite "New Labour" government of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown—which will forever be remembered for launching the Iraq war and setting the Middle East on fire.

Nothing fundamental has changed under Corbyn. The general election confirmed that broad sections of the working class have now seen through his pretence.

What is exposed in Labour's debacle is a type of politics that seeks to deny the revolutionary nature of

the working class.

Fundamentally, Corbyn's debacle is the exposure not just of the Labour Party but of the entire perspective of the "parliamentary road to socialism." The great questions of war, poverty, and social inequality are not going to be solved with demagogic election campaigns. The precondition for resolving any of the great social problems confronting mankind is a massive mobilisation of the working class and the intensification of the class struggle on a global scale.

Only a movement that identifies itself with this struggle, that breaks through the nationalist debate over Brexit, and fights for a programme of international proletarian unity, will be able to win the confidence of the working class and lead it in the fight for socialism.

The Socialist Equality Party rejected all claims that Corbyn's leadership would lead to a renewal of the Labour Party. We have opposed every attempt to dragoon the working class behind one or other reactionary capitalist faction in the Brexit dispute. We warned of the political dangers of the divisions created and urged a unified struggle by workers across the continent for the United Socialist States of Europe.

The SEP has been vindicated, at a time when workers all over the world are being driven into struggle against the brutal imposition of austerity by governments of the financial oligarchy. We urge all those who can do so to make plans to attend our public meetings and discuss the building of the SEP as the new and genuinely socialist leadership of the working class.

London

Sunday February 2, 3.30p.m.
Marchmont Community Centre
62 Marchmont Street, Kings Cross
London, WC1N 1AB
(nearest tube: King's Cross)

Manchester

Monday February 3, 7p.m.
Friends Meeting House (*behind Manchester Central Library*)
6 Mount Street
Manchester, M2 5NS

Liverpool

Saturday February 8, 2p.m.
John Woolman room
The Quaker Meeting House
22 School lane

Liverpool, L1 3BT

Glasgow

Saturday February 8, 2p.m.
Premier Inn George Square
187 George Street
Glasgow, G1 1YU

Sheffield

Tuesday February 11, 7p.m.
Central URC Church
60 Norfolk Street
Sheffield, S1 2JB

Leeds

Saturday February 15, 2p.m.
HEART Centre Bennett Road
Headingley
Leeds, LS6 3HN

Cambridge

Sunday February 16, 2.15p.m.
The Bath House, Gwydir
Cambridge, CB1 2BE



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact