

# Revolutionary Communist Party junks its opportunist turn to Corbyn and Sultana's Your Party

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After months of boosting Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana, the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) now admits the Your Party initiative is dead on arrival.

November 24 saw the publication by the RCP of an explanatory comment, "Where does the RCP stand on 'Your Party'?" Written by general secretary Ben Gliniecki, it admits, "This weekend, Your Party's founding conference will take place. Unfortunately, the potential to forge a radical, working-class mass movement has been driven into a ditch by the reformist leaders and their petty squabbling," before adding the caveat, "at least for now."

What follows is a mournful presentation of "What could have been" had Corbyn and Sultana, after announcing Your Party in July, successfully channelled the "wave of enthusiasm" this aroused by giving "political expression to the pro-Palestine movement and all the strike action erupting across the country," attacking "the rich and the capitalist system as the cause of the crisis in Britain" and similar.

In other words, had Corbyn and Sultana listened to the friendly advice offered to them by the RCP, beginning with prominent member Fiona Lali's July 4 "Open letter to Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana", we would now be living in clover. "Unfortunately," Gliniecki complains, "we couldn't be farther from that today."

Instead, Your Party's founding conference this weekend is "likely to be a mess of petty squabbles", with no viable programme to discuss and new Green Party leader Zack Polanski's "approach, though reformist in content... more belligerent and anti-establishment than anything this new party is officially putting out," with the result that "the Greens are occupying the space to the left of Labour."

Both Corbyn and Sultana "need to shoulder the blame", primarily because "left reformism" holds "no answers for the crisis of capitalism," the RCP solemnly concludes.

To give credence to any of this belated wisdom demands that the RCP is again allowed to draw a veil over its enthusiastic support for Your Party, beginning with Lali's letter to "Dear Jeremy and Zarah." This was documented in the August 22 *World Socialist Web Site* article, "The Revolutionary Communist Party and Corbyn and Sultana's new party: Naked opportunism and political amnesia."

It explained that whereas the RCP

proclaims an agenda shared with all of Britain's pseudo-left groups of joining and supposedly imparting a revolutionary character to the new party announced by former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn and MP Zarah Sultana... it has the additional task of reversing its claim, barely two years old, that Corbynite reformism is a dead letter in the working class and among young people. This

was the basis for the International Marxist Tendency (IMT) relaunching itself as the Revolutionary Communist International.

Lali, the RCP's national campaigns coordinator, cautioned against "the mistakes that threw the Corbyn movement back" when he led the Labour Party, including accommodating "our movement to the representatives of the capitalist system—the Blairites and the establishment." But she then proposed to Corbyn and Sultana that "Our party" should be based on an "anti-capitalist" and "revolutionary programme."

On July 24, with no indication that Jeremy and Zarah were listening, the RCP announced that it was "getting on board" and mobilising its members "to help make a success of this new—much-needed—party." Naturally the RCP would be building "a revolutionary communist force" within Your Party, but only by "hoping to fill in the details of the rough outline already sketched by Jeremy and Zarah."

## The RCP's history of opportunism

This was a return to political form for the RCP, we wrote:

The group, now led by Alan Woods, was founded by Ted Grant. He broke from the Fourth International following the Second World War and subsequently built his entire perspective for decades on the argument that the postwar restabilisation of capitalism, made possible only by the suppression of revolutionary struggles by Stalinism, had disproved Trotsky's revolutionary prognosis. Instead, for a protracted historical period, independent revolutionary action by the proletariat was impossible thanks to the completion of the "democratic counter-revolution," necessitating extended entry into the Labour Party in Britain while advocating an essentially left reformist programme of achieving socialism through Labour's nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies.

The entire activity of what became known as the Militant Tendency, and continued by its splinter led by Woods, was based on the assertion that entry work in Labour—justified above all by its base in the trade unions—could push it to adopt a socialist programme.

In 2015 the Woods group, then known as Socialist Appeal, urged

workers, young people and trade unions to help the “Corbyn revolution” transform the Labour Party, insisting that he would not buckle before opposition from the ruling class like Syriza and its leader Alexis Tsipras had done in Greece because “The Labour Party has a far greater historical weight and much deeper roots within the working class than Syriza ever had. It is not an ephemeral trend, but the traditional mass party of the British working class, with strong links to the trade unions.”

It was only after millions, especially among the youth, had begun turning away from discredited forces such as Tsipras and Corbyn and leaving the Labour Party in droves that, in mid-2022, the Woods group announced the building of a new independent party, proclaimed as the Revolutionary Communist Party, part of a new Revolutionary Communist International.

Woods declared that reformism was a dead letter and that young people were being transformed into communists in their “thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, probably millions”. But this burst of rhetorical fervour was unceremoniously abandoned as soon as Corbyn and his allies set out to build Your Party as a trap for workers and young people exploiting the very reformist illusions the RCP claimed were a thing of the past.

Woods now insisted that “Given the weakness of the forces of genuine Marxism at the present time,” the political vacuum created by Labour’s rightward lurch “could only be filled by some kind of left reformist alternative.” In any event it was “too early to say what the actual physiognomy of the new party will be” because “the crucial question is whether the leadership of this party really stands for a fundamental transformation of society.”

Even after all the experiences suffered by workers, including Corbyn’s five years leading the Labour Party, Woods added, “We cannot answer this question in advance.” While standing “on the programme of socialist revolution”, the RCP would stand side by side with Corbyn in fighting for reforms without which “the socialist revolution would be an impossible utopia.”

In opposition the SEP explained:

The task of Marxists is not to start from the illusions workers have, but to systematically combat reformist illusions and raise the consciousness of the working class to an understanding of the revolutionary tasks that are posed by the objective situation.

This includes a consistent effort to educate workers so they can draw the necessary conclusions from what the RCP acknowledges regarding Corbyn, Bernie Sanders and Syriza, that “None have delivered a single meaningful reform” because they have never waged a political struggle against the right-wing.

Citing Russian Revolutionary and founder of the Fourth International Leon Trotsky, we concluded:

Preparing the working class for socialist revolution is impossible without doing the political work to “dismiss the ‘reformist illusions’ of the masses... to inform the workers that they are making a mistake, that their leaders will betray,” all of which is raised in disparaging terms by the RCP. This, they claim, is “all well and good in the abstract... But it would still be utterly self-defeating and false, precisely because it is so abstract.”

For the RCP, a concrete programme is equated with first-name-terms appeals to “Jeremy and Zarah.” But unity with the masses does not mean even a hint of unity with the leaders, who must be exposed before workers as part of their political education and

tempering....

The working class in Britain and internationally faces a world in which the super-rich oligarchy monopolises an ever greater percentage of the world’s wealth and the imperialist powers build up their militaries for wars for territory and resources. Workers’ collapsing living standards are the price to be paid, and police-state measures deployed and right-wing parties cultivated to repress resistance....

The ruling class will respond to any challenge to the destruction of living standards and imperialist war with savage repression. This has been demonstrated by the Starmer government’s arrest of hundreds of anti-genocide protesters and banning of Palestine Action under anti-terror laws. Victory will require a revolutionary mobilisation of the working class—nationalising critical industries, confiscating the wealth of the billionaires and an international socialist strategy.

### **The Mamdani Protocol**

While the SEP was fighting to alert the working class to these political realities, the RCP was frantically rowing back from its initial burst of enthusiasm for Your Party, while still insisting that its young members busy themselves with the search for some “left reformist” tendency to which they must, in the absence of at least 50,000 members, modestly suggest the adoption of a revolutionary programme.

As late as November 5, the RCP was writing, “Whether it be Polanski and Sultana in Britain, or Mamdani in the USA: those spearheading this new left revival are all partial expressions of the radicalisation within society,” all “well meaning and sincere” individuals whom “The communists will support... in every positive step they take; in every struggle against the billionaires, landlords, and the rest of the capitalist establishment.”

The next day, following his election as Mayor of New York, the RCP wrote: “The main question now is how Mamdani delivers in the fight against the billionaires.” It was the turn of “Zohran” to be told, “In his effort to deliver on his reforms and help the socialist movement take a real step forward, Zohran’s only reliable allies are the workers and youth who propelled him into the mayorship.”

Calling on him to break from the Democrats and build a new workers’ party, the RCP suggested this “would not simply be an electoral vehicle, but would organize a serious struggle of the working class... The comrades of the Revolutionary Communists of America will be in the thick of these battles, fighting alongside our class. We are eager to discuss the way forward with Zohran’s supporters in New York City and across the country, and will continue to offer our perspectives for how the movement around Zohran can succeed.”

While this political drivel was being formulated, Mamdani’s “people” were busy requesting a meeting with President Donald Trump, which took place just two weeks later. Far from breaking with the Democrats, Mamdani spat in the face of all those who campaigned and voted for him based on his promises to take the fight to the fascist in the White House.

Having witnessed the shipwreck of the pseudo-reformist Your Party project they endorsed, the RCP is making clear that it also intends to repeat this disastrous turn here in the UK at the first available opportunity.

### **Preparing new betrayals**

Gliniecki states that whereas “The antics of Corbyn and Sultana have isolated their party from the mass anger that exists in Britain today... This situation won’t necessarily exist forever.” As well as the rise of the Greens, “it can’t be ruled out that something with a bit more promise could come out of this Corbyn and Sultana mess. That could happen quite quickly, by accident, and in spite of their appalling leadership. It’s impossible to say what that would look like, which personalities would be involved, and how it would relate to other formations like the Greens.”

Whereas presently “there’s no mass movement around Corbyn and Sultana... What is important is to understand that left reformism in Britain will revive, in one form or another... Our task now is to prepare for that movement, in whatever form it takes, by strengthening the forces of communism.”

This is the essence not only of the politics of the RCP, but of all other pseudo-left groups still clinging desperately to Corbyn and Sultana’s sinking ship. To the extent that they employ revolutionary phrases and Marxist terminology, this obscures their role in reinforcing the political stranglehold of the labour and trade union bureaucracy over the working class.

Justified in terms of “recognising” the presently reformist consciousness of the working class, any struggle to raise workers’ consciousness and build a revolutionary alternative is opposed. The “intransigence, vigilance, revolutionary distrust, and the struggle for every hand’s breadth of independence” and “not blissful ‘optimism’”, listed by Trotsky as the “essential traits of Bolshevism”, are condemned as “sectarianism”.

The RCP and other pseudo-left groups are not genuine advocates for socialism. They act as the last line of defence for capitalism through their insistence on “tactical”, “critical” support to strengthen the “real movement” represented, in turn, year after year, by Tsipras and Syriza, the Labour Party under Corbyn, Corbyn and Sultana’s Your Party, Polanski and the Greens, Mamdani, or whatever fraudulent petty bourgeois alternative is thrown up next following their inevitable betrayals.

In opposition, the SEP insisted as early as July 27:

We will not be advocates of and apologists for “Your Party”. It is not ours. We will engage energetically with the many workers and young people who currently look to Corbyn for leadership and seek to educate them in the fundamental historical experiences of the past decade and beyond, which point to the necessity for a revolutionary, internationalist and socialist perspective and party.

Our aim is to ensure that the working class does not spend its energies in a demoralising campaign for a party which will lead them to betrayal and defeat, to ensure that illusions in Corbynite reformism are dispelled as quickly as possible in preparation for the revolutionary class battles ahead.

We can cite extensively from our record because we have nothing to be embarrassed about, because we take seriously our responsibility to the working class to provide a consistent revolutionary perspective. The RCP has no such scruples. It takes no responsibility for what it said a few months ago, or for educating the working class, even its members, in anything other than acceptance of each new pragmatic, opportunist turn.



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