

## Dump Starmer to defend Palestine!

Starmer has pledged his support to the state of Israel and will defend genocide against the Palestinians for as long as he and Israel exist. He is one of the staunchest Zionists in the whole of the country; this is no revelation to anyone. As for the Labour left and trade union leaders, they completely back him. Yet the overwhelming majority of the country is against this genocide. Hundreds of thousands of people who hate Starmer protest week in and week out in defence of Palestine. So how is Starmer so comfortable and just inches away from becoming Prime Minister? Anyone who wants to push forward the Palestinian movement must confront this question head-on.

The problem is that the pro-Palestinian movement is chained to Starmer's Labour. Movement speakers include Zarah Sultana, John McDonnell and union leaders, who send their liberal solidarity to Palestine on the weekend and then get back to their day job of building for a Starmer government.



Spartacist banner in "Dump Starmer to defend Palestine" contingent, London, 13 April.

They try to play both sides. On the one hand, they call for peace. On the other, they have a career to protect. If they don't

support Starmer, he'll chuck them out.

But you can't support Palestine and support Starmer! We can't build an effective

movement against genocide while there are leaders within it who are supporting Sir Kid Starver! The only way to get any kind of peace for the Palestinians is first to wage war on these pro-imperialist leaders. Therefore, we say: *Labour lefts choose your side, Starmer stands for genocide!*

To make this happen, what's needed is an anti-Starmer bloc inside the Palestinian movement. We obviously can't fight for Palestine with the Tories. It is no different with the supporters of Starmer. We need our own separate contingents. We must agitate in the movement so that *Dump Starmer* becomes one of its main slogans, forcing the two-faced Labourites to choose.

This is what will push the movement forward. And that's why the Spartacist League fights to build a bloc under this call as part of our communist perspective. But more organisations and individuals must take this up. Everyone hates Starmer. So let's have the Palestinian movement get rid of him! ■

## Down with US/UK support to Israel Defend Palestine! Defend Iran!

*The following statement first appeared in Workers Vanguard no 1181, newspaper of our American comrades. Since then, Israel has retaliated against Iran, which so far seems keen to downplay the event and not respond. However, the situation remains highly volatile.*

APRIL 15—As we go to press, the conflict between Israel and Iran is rapidly escalating. On April 1, Israel flattened part of the Iranian embassy in Damas-

cus, killing two Iranian generals. Iran retaliated by launching 300 drones and missiles toward Israel, most of which were shot down with the help of the U.S., France and Britain.

At the moment, it is not clear where all this will lead. What is clear is that the situation was provoked by Israel to further rope the U.S. and its other imperialist allies into the genocide in Gaza. A war right now between Israel and Iran would

be an extension of Israel's national war of oppression against the Palestinians. Liberal cries for "de-escalation" and respect of international law are pacifist dead ends. It is urgent for the working class in the U.S. and beyond to oppose all imperialist maneuvers and block military aid to Israel. *Defend Palestine and Iran against the imperialist-backed Zionist onslaught!*

It is also a dead end to look to Hamas and the Islamic Republic of Iran to defeat

Israel and the imperialists. Hamas's strategy of provoking the Israeli slaughter to compel the Arab regimes to do something on behalf of the Palestinians has led to the utter devastation of Gaza. As for the Iranian regime, it is balancing between superficial support to Palestine and conciliation of the U.S.-dominated world order. Only a revolutionary working-class strategy can lead to the liberation of Palestine and to the final defeat of imperialism.

# PARTISAN DEFENCE COMMITTEE

**AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL!**



Israel's imperialist backers are massively escalating their campaign to criminalise any and all defence of the Palestinian people. On 12 April, Berlin authorities mobilised *more than 900 police* to shut down a Palestine solidarity conference. Now, the Austrian state is set to begin the criminal trial of Michael Pröbsting, a leader of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency threatened with two years in prison for his group's activism for Palestine. In Britain, police continue to arrest

pro-Palestinian protesters, while throughout Europe attacks on the left are combined with attempts to proscribe Islamic groups.

The imperialists are firmly united in upholding their Zionist outpost in the Middle East. The response must be the firmest unity in action of the Palestinian and workers movements in defence of all the imperialists' intended victims. In our last issue, we warned that each of the British left groups being suppressed for defending Pal-

estine was "mobilising only its own forces and never collaborating or actively seeking to involve each other in common defence work." That is the road to defeat for all!

What is urgently needed is *united-front defence* of the left and Muslim organisations. And that requires pushing back against the imperialists' lapdogs in the workers movement, for whom such struggle is a red line they dare not cross. Left-Labour MP Zarah Sultana refused to sign the PDC petition defending pro-Palestinian activists, printed below, when she saw it also opposed the ban of the Islamic group Hizb ut-Tahrir, knowing that her signature would incur the wrath of Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer.

The petition notes the use of anti-terrorism laws against the Revolutionary Communist Group (RCG) in London. RCG supporters also face trumped-up charges of assault on police, resisting arrest and breach of peace stemming

from a pro-Palestine protest in December outside a Scottish Labour Party event in Glasgow, where Starmer was speaking.

Shortly after we initiated that petition, Tory "levelling up" secretary Michael Gove moved to open the floodgates of repression by designating several Muslim organisations as "extremist". But there hasn't been any fightback. As we stressed in our 25 March call (see below), the widespread denunciations of Gove's crusade by socialist and Muslim groups needs to be turned into *action*.

It is with the same urgency that we call on the entire workers movement and all pro-Palestinian activists to join in worldwide protests against the prosecution of Michael Pröbsting, an attack on the Palestinian movement as a whole. His conviction would open the door to any organisation being dragged through the courts for supporting resistance to the genocide in Gaza. *Hands off pro-Palestinian protesters!*

## Protest Austria's repression of pro-Palestinian socialists!

While Israeli bombs continue to rain down on Gaza, Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency, faces trial in Vienna on 2 May for defending the Palestinians and opposing the Zionist state. Charged with "incitement to commit terrorist offences and approval of terrorist offences", Michael could serve up to two years in jail if found guilty. This would set a precedent for governments throughout Western Europe to criminalise all those who stand in defence of Palestine. Other activists, including two supporters of the International Marxist Tendency, have also been questioned by the Austrian



Michael Pröbsting

state under the same "hate speech" legislation.

The International Communist League and its fraternal defence organisations call on the left, the Palestinian movement, and on all fighters for civil liberties, to protest Michael's prosecution. **Join us in organising demonstrations outside as many Austrian embassies and consulates as possible in the days leading up to his 2 May trial.**

**Drop the charges against Michael Pröbsting!  
Hands off pro-Palestinian protesters!**

Contact us to co-ordinate our efforts at [contact@partisandefence.org.uk](mailto:contact@partisandefence.org.uk).

Endorsed by the RCIT

For more information and to sign the petition "No to the Criminal Complaint against Pro-Palestine Activist Michael Pröbsting!", see <https://www.thecommunists.net/rcit/petition-no-to-criminal-complaint-against-pro-palestine-activist-michael-proebsting>

## LONDON PROTEST

**Monday 29 April, 5:30pm, Austrian Embassy**

**18 Belgrave Square, SW1X 8PQ (Nearest Tube: Hyde Park Corner)**

*Initiated by the Partisan Defence Committee*

**07438 878 627 • [contact@partisandefence.org.uk](mailto:contact@partisandefence.org.uk) • [X@PDCBritain](https://www.facebook.com/PDCBritain)**

## WORKERS HAMMER



**Marxist newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain  
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## Fight Gove's anti-Muslim "extremism" crusade!

For over six months, hundreds of thousands have marched in cities across the country against Israel's genocidal assault on Gaza. In response, both the Tories and Starmer's Labour Party have vilified pro-Palestinian activists and many have been arrested. Escalating these attacks, the government with the support of Labour recently moved to designate several Muslim organisations as "extremist", which opens the door to an outright ban. This is an outrageous threat to the entire Muslim community in Britain. The government's repression of a vulnerable minority of the British population represents an attack on the whole workers movement as well as the left. It must be opposed by the broadest possible forces. **An injury to one is an injury to all!**

The organisers of the national marches as well as Muslim and socialist groups have denounced the government's attack. They speak of legal actions and call to continue to demonstrate for Palestine. While necessary, this is far from enough. Many have recognised that this is one of the most severe attacks on democratic rights since Prevent but it has not yet been met with a strong and large fightback! We call on the Muslim Association of Britain, CAGE International, MEND, Friends of Al-Aqsa, Stop the War Coalition, trade unions and all socialist organisations to come together in a united front.

A first obvious step is to organise a large national demonstration to defend the rights of Muslims and oppose the government's attacks as soon as is feasible.

—25 March 2024

## No to repression of pro-Palestinian activists!

As western-made bombs rain on Gaza and Yemen, the British state is cracking down on and intimidating pro-Palestinian activists at home. This repression is a direct threat to the workers movement, the left and anyone who stands in opposition to British foreign policy. We condemn this repression and demand that all charges against pro-Palestinian protesters be dropped.

In particular, we denounce the sinister use of anti-terrorism laws against the leftist Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist) and Revolutionary Communist Group (FRFI) as well as the Islamic group Hizb ut-Tahrir. This does not mean support for these organisations, or their views, but a recognition that the state's attacks on them must be protested and denounced by the broadest possible forces.

**An injury to one is an injury to all!**

**Sign the petition:**



**Signatories as of 11 March 2024, with the full list of signatories available on the petition website:**

Len McCluskey (Unite)\*, Liverpool  
John Rees (NUJ)\*, London  
Andrew Feinstein, London  
Craig Murray, Edinburgh  
Chris Hedges (The Real News)\*, Princeton, USA  
\*signed as individuals

## Let's stand up for ourselves

All teachers will agree with two things: workload is insane and behaviour is mad. Over a decade of cuts means there are not enough of us to provide quality education. Teachers are also quitting in droves because of the physical and mental toll the job takes. Fewer teachers mean more students in each class, so workload increases. More students in each class leads to worse behaviour, especially post-pandemic, as young people have lost crucial years of education and socialisation and are struggling mentally and academically. Most of the time, it feels like we are not teaching but babysitting a room of 30 kids.

Our jobs are difficult, yet there is a conspicuous absence of any struggle to change the status quo. Why isn't there pushback in defence of our sanity and for better working conditions? To make sense of this, we need to understand what the union is (or isn't) doing, since it is supposed to fight for us.

The NEU's campaign this year is called "Pay up"; it is "actively campaigning for a fully funded, above-inflation pay rise for all educators". Fine and well. We certainly aren't paid enough, but pay alone won't solve the problems we face. Unbearable working conditions are the driving force behind the crisis of retention, and the union is doing *nothing* about *this*—the very things that

make our job difficult, lead to our colleagues breaking down in the staff room and suck the joy out of teaching. This largely explains why the indicative ballot only scraped by at a turnout of 50.3 per cent—it simply did not strike a chord with most teachers.

The union's job is to act as the collective voice of teachers on a *daily basis, at the workplace*, reacting to teachers' daily conditions. New rules increasing workload? Being used for cover every other week? The union needs to be there to challenge management and defend us! But it totally fails on this count. The union does not actively recruit new members and is absent in many schools. Where it does exist, it is usually weak and submissive. This doesn't inspire others to join. After all, why pay union dues if it doesn't seem worth it?

So why doesn't the union fight? Because its leaders see schools as one big family, where "we're all teachers" and "we are in this together for the good of the children". This impedes any struggle and reinforces all sorts of wrong ideas in the workforce.

The first wrong idea is precisely that everyone in education, from senior management to teachers and support staff, is in the same boat. This is a lie. There are those who call the shots, and the rest who eat it. This difference is between senior manage-

ment, or SLT, and the rest of the teachers. It is SLT that disciplines teachers, imposes workload increases and carries out cuts. We are not all one big happy family. To make schools better for students and teachers both, we need to stand up to SLT!

Another wrong idea is that part of being a teacher is to suffer for the kids. Teaching is a vocation—we are teachers because we love educating students and improving their life outcomes. But the government and school management take advantage of this to make us accept worsening conditions, which also make students suffer. "We do it for the kids" is used to compensate for shrinking budgets, guilting us into buying glue sticks out of pocket or staying late most evenings catching up on marking and never-ending admin work. It is also used to prevent collective struggle by teachers. Just think about how many teachers crossed the picket line last year because they thought striking would jeopardise students' education.

The truth is that a real fight for schools is the only way to help students. That teachers fighting back will hurt students' education is a form of blackmail. The problem is that the union, instead of fighting this, accepts this blackmail.

The fact that the union isn't putting

up a real fight for education means that teachers don't look to their collective strength as the way forward. Instead, many teachers change schools in the (false) hope that the next one will be better, or quit altogether. But the crisis of education is national; the next school won't be different. And quit? To do what? Britain is broken. Working people are getting squeezed in every sector. Instead of changing our jobs, we need to change education itself. For this, we need to stand up for ourselves!

**Push back against encroachment!** Against the onslaught of work, look not to SLT but to your fellow teachers and stand together. There is strength in numbers. SLT can't fire 50, 25 or even 5 teachers who all refuse to accept increased workload.

**SLT out of the union!** The union is the logical place to organise and find co-thinkers willing to take a stand. But we can't do this if senior management is in the union meetings. How can teachers freely discuss their concerns if they are afraid of reprisals? The problem is that the NEU allows SLT in the union. This ties our hands behind our back. Teachers need to oppose this and put maximum pressure on local/branch level reps, all the way to the national leadership, to overturn the NEU's policy

*continued on page 11*

## LONDON BUSES GOING TO HELL

# How about Unite does something about it (for a change...)

Driving buses was once a good public job. Now, working for one of the dozen or so private companies that run London buses is like working in a sweatshop. Six and seven days in a row, working all hours day and night, on buses that are hot in the summer and cold in the winter. A million tiers are designed to divide workers and make them chase every bit of overtime just to make ends meet. The companies that run the buses put as little as possible into wages, repairs and facilities, squeezing every bit they can until they decide to sell off to the next batch of overseers. And the public and the workforce get to ride burning buses through the wreck that is broken Britain.

As for Unite, it cannot challenge the most basic conditions in buses or anywhere else without confronting the entire rotting structure of British capitalism. This requires an entirely different union leadership. We received the following leaflet from the Committee for a Fighting Transport Union, which offers a first step in this direction.

\* \* \*

We need jobs worth having, and the public needs buses worth riding. As London transport goes down like a Liz Truss mini-budget, what's needed is obvious.

- Buses properly maintained
- Working heat and air conditioning
- A five-day workweek at an actual decent wage

Unite must organise a fight for these things. The union is willing to negotiate over the usual just-get-by pay rise but not willing to stand for what we actually need. Why? Because doing so would mean taking on the entire way the privatised system is run. If we want to make this a decent job again, we have to take matters into our own hands. This starts by demanding that Unite fight for what is truly needed.

Talk about the most burning work issues with your co-workers, get your union rep to fight for them and contact the Committee for a Fighting Transport Union: WhatsApp, text 07907 329 659, email [fightingtransportunion@gmail.com](mailto:fightingtransportunion@gmail.com).



Michael deLemos

Another day on the London buses.



Scan to join WhatsApp group

# SAVE THE ISA FROM THE COC!

A crisis has exploded in International Socialist Alternative (ISA). For some time, the organisation has been riddled with differences on the burning questions of the day—imperialism, Gaza, Ukraine and much more. However, it is not because of any of these questions that the ISA finds itself on the verge of a split. Rather, all political questions are now subsumed under a dispute over the handling of a case of sexual misconduct by one of its former leaders.

A substantial minority of the ISA's international leadership has declared a "Faction to Defend Safeguarding, Socialist Feminism and Internal Democracy". While this is already bizarre, it turns out that both the minority and majority agree that the handling of the investigation did not follow the ISA's Code of Conduct (CoC), which states:

"The basis for a leadership body taking action at the conclusion of an investigation is not on whether or not 'proof of guilt' has been acquired, which bourgeois courts use to systematically discredit survivors of harassment and abuse every day, but on the basis of our commitment to the safeguarding of individuals and the organisation."

Without knowing the details of the case, it is impossible to pronounce on the accusations. However, what is clear is that both sides agree that it was wrong for the investigation to try to find facts and "proof of guilt" (!) instead of abiding by the feminist principle that an accuser must be believed no matter what.

So, if both sides agree that the ISA should conduct its investigations in the manner of the Spanish Inquisition, what are they fighting over exactly? In the eyes of the minority, the crime of the majority is that they have not shown sufficient remorse for how the investigation was handled. The minority demands more repentance, the removal of all those involved from leading positions and a more stringent CoC. To make sense of this, we must exit the real world and dive into the twisted and moralist universe of modern-day feminism.

## Socialist feminism and moralism

At the heart of the ISA's current crisis is the issue of socialist feminism. Much of the ISA's existence is defined by being the

Content warning: abuse, betrayal of survivors

## A crisis in International Socialist Alternative

### International Socialist Alternative Harassment Policy & Code of Conduct



#### Part 01: Overview

#### Part 02: ISA Code of Conduct

Section 01 - What We Expect of Our Sections

Section 02 - What We Expect of Our Members

#### Part 03: Harassment

Section 01 -

Section 02 -

Section 03 - Expectations of Those in Leadership Positions

#### Part 04: Procedures for Addressing Harassment

Section 01 - The Rights of All Members and the Party

"Our sections should work to fully integrate a socialist feminist perspective in their outlook...."

"The basis for a leadership body taking action at the conclusion of an investigation is not on whether or not 'proof of guilt' has been acquired...."

#### Part 01

The International Socialist Alternative is a revolutionary party of the working class and all the oppressed for socialist change by overthrowing capitalism as a system, and all the injustices and inequalities that this system perpetuates.

In joining ISA, members commit themselves to this struggle to change society and to build

left pole of the feminist movement. They are critical of liberal feminism for seeking to resolve women's oppression within capitalism. They write about winning working-class men to women's emancipation; they can denounce Hillary Clinton and quote Engels, Marx and Zetkin. However, as their current crisis shows, they fully imbibe the moralist and counterproductive means by which feminists seek to fight women's oppression.

Women's oppression and the antagonism between men and women in capitalist society are rooted in the institution of the family. Like every form of oppression, this divide cannot be overcome (as some on the left advocate) by simply uniting around economic demands. Working-class men must be won to the understanding

that their own emancipation depends on actively championing the cause of women's liberation. This is not a moral argument but a materialist one. For example, while the burden of care, education and domestic chores falls overwhelmingly on women, working men have a direct material interest in socialising these. Advances for women—better health and social care, education and services—also benefit working-class men.

But for feminists, the problem of women's oppression can only be tackled by fighting men and their backward ideas. Men must do more chores at home. Men must stop "mansplaining". Men must behave better. In the case of violence against women, which is everywhere a burning question, the feminist approach seeks to solve the problem by policing men's behaviour through shaming, repression and ideological education. On all these counts, feminists avoid the root of the problem—the economic organisation of society and its level of social and cultural development—thus perpetuating the antagonism between men and women.

The rise in violence against women and trans people is directly linked to the degradation of the social conditions of the working class. In the context of general social decline, an ideological campaign telling men not to be violent towards women not only has no tangible effect but also fosters a backlash among men who know such behaviour is wrong and legitimately resent being patronised by arrogant liberals. The inevitable backlash is then directed against feminism and against women generally. Violence against women and social reaction must be fought in a way that strengthens the position of the entire working class, from promoting armed self-defence

to defending the right of trans kids to choose (see article, page 12) to the struggle for better social and living conditions. All these struggles require methods and aims completely opposed to those of the feminist movement.

The ISA rejects such a class-struggle approach by embracing feminist moralism, as most clearly seen in their cheerleading of the #MeToo movement. Against a real social ill—the impunity with which powerful men abuse women—the #MeToo movement offered only a dead end. Shaming campaigns, sensitivity training and rejecting the presumption of innocence, once again, did not tackle any of the fundamental problems (the capitalist justice system, the abuse of power, social hierarchies) and predictably fostered a backlash.

Furthermore, it is simply a fact that sometimes women do lie about being abused. There can be all kinds of motivations and material incentives to fabricate or exaggerate allegations of sexual assault, not least to attack the left. The case of Julian Assange is a notorious example. To simply believe every allegation without question is not only absurd but suicidal for the workers movement. But it is precisely such moralism that the ISA has enshrined in its CoC, creating the mess we see today.

## Sex and the CoC

Needless to say, an organisation which claims to be socialist and yet conciliates acts of violence against women in its ranks betrays its fundamental purpose. It is not difficult to believe that an organisation like the ISA, which comes from the CWI's long tradition of social-democratic reformism, would have conciliated such acts. However, the ISA has responded to this problem in a typically feminist manner, adopting a Code of Conduct to police the behaviour of its membership—a document which is scary and downright bonkers.

The ISA's CoC says more about the organisation than all their writings about socialism. Not only does it insist that "proof of guilt" is not the criteria for determining disciplinary measures, but it also lists in detail all the things that could constitute harassment, from serious crimes such as rape and sexual battery to "jokes or innuendo of a sexually suggestive nature", unwanted hugging or even yelling and swearing.

The problem with the CoC is that it does not judge the actions of ISA members according to whether they are consistent with the revolutionary aims of the organisation. Instead, the CoC is written according to the moral principles of the liberal feminist petty bourgeoisie, whereby male members are considered a threat to women members, who are victims needing "safeguarding". Instead of having as its starting point that ISA members are united in the fight against oppression, the CoC creates a climate of suspicion in which flirting and sex are considered dangerous activities, one wrong move away from assault and rape.

The CoC's definition of harassment is totally subjective, based on hurt feelings rather than betrayal of the socialist cause. A member on the receiving end of a heated political argument can claim to be a victim of abuse just as one who has really been

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Randy Glasbergen

# IMT founds RCI: The GRANT leap forward



IMT

In June of this year the International Marxist Tendency (IMT) will found the Revolutionary Communist International (RCI). It is not every day that a new international is proclaimed, much less one that promises to be the first genuine working-class international since Lenin's Comintern. What is behind this radical transformation of the IMT? Has the tendency founded by the late Ted Grant unlocked the secret to Leninism in the new epoch?

To answer this question, we must analyse the political basis of this leap forward, elaborated centrally in the "Manifesto of the Revolutionary Communist International", a document the IMT describes as a historic landmark of the "utmost importance to the world communist movement". In this manifesto, the soon to be RCI claims to uniquely have the "correct ideas". So, let's look at which ideas exactly warrant such bold claims.

The RCI manifesto has lots of analysis, but beyond abstractly calling for communism it offers no road forward on the major conflicts shaking the world. Astonishingly, the manifesto includes no programme for the liberation of Palestine, even as Gaza is being starved and bombed. And what about the current tasks for workers regarding the Ukraine war, the most important conflict in Europe since World War II? Nothing, not a word.

On the other hand, and somewhat bizarrely, the manifesto takes the time to explain that there is no danger of fascism because

"wide layers that formerly saw themselves as middle-class (professional people, white-collar workers, teachers, university professors[!], civil servants, doctors[!] and nurses) have drawn closer to the proletariat and become unionised."

But what about *how to fight* the rise of right-wing reaction, a burning question throughout the world? Nothing. But no worries, surely university professors and doctors will come to the rescue.

On the struggle for black liberation, women's liberation and trans liberation, the manifesto states the platitude that "the

struggle against all forms of oppression and discrimination is a necessary part of the fight against capitalism", only to then make clear that "our attitude is essentially a *negative* one. That is to say: we are opposed to oppression and discrimination of any sort." In other words, they have nothing positive to say about how to concretely *advance* any of these struggles today.

What about the fight against imperialism? Surely the manifesto for a new international says something on how to liberate the majority of the world population from the boot of foreign finance capital? Beyond the empty slogan "Down with the imperialist robbers!", not a word. In fact, national oppression is not even mentioned.

The point is not that the IMT/RCI says nothing about all these questions in general (more on what they say later). Rather it is that answering the question "what is to be done?" in the face of the world crisis does not constitute the basis for their Revolutionary Communist International. This begs the question, what then *is* the basis to found this new international?

Answering the question "Is the time right for a Revolutionary Communist International?" the manifesto explains:

"The latest polls from Britain, the USA, Australia and other countries provide us with a very clear indication that the idea of communism is spreading rapidly. The potential for communism is enormous. Our task is to make this potential a reality by giving it an organisational expression."

*This* is the key to the IMT's great transformation. Article after article repeats that millions of young people are attracted to communism, and that they "do not need to be convinced. They are already communists" (marxist.com, 5 April). In other words, the principal reason to found the RCI is a conjunctural leftward movement among certain layers of petty-bourgeois youth in imperialist countries. This is hardly a strong foundation. In "*Left-wing communism — an infantile disorder*", Lenin explained:

"A petty bourgeois driven to frenzy by the

horrors of capitalism is a social phenomenon which, like anarchism, is characteristic of all capitalist countries. The instability of such revolutionism, its barrenness, and its tendency to turn rapidly into submission, apathy, phantasms, and even a frenzied infatuation with one bourgeois fad or another — all this is common knowledge."

Clearly the boldness of the RCI's pretensions is surpassed only by the vacuousness of their content.

## Corbyn: their lessons and ours

It is important to appreciate that the IMT's radical reorientation has not appeared out of thin air but is an impressionistic and opportunist reaction to changes in the political landscape, first and foremost in Britain. It was the IMT's British section, Socialist

Appeal (SA), which first started agitating for communism. And it is from the London centre that the international tone was set.

As RCI documents make clear, it is largely because of the disillusionment in the likes of Corbyn, Syriza and Sanders that the IMT has turned towards the supposedly untarnished banner of "communism". To explain the IMT's current turn we must then look at its actions during the Corbyn years, and more specifically the lessons it has drawn from this experience.

For starters, to say that SA, soon to be the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), was neck-deep in the Corbyn movement would be a gross understatement. Their entire existence was always defined

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## Spartacist League public meeting

### 40 years since the miners strike



## Lessons for Broken Britain

John Sturrock/reportdigital.co.uk

**With guest speaker Dick Hall, veteran of NUM strike, Warsop Main Colliery**

**Saturday, 22 June, 2pm**

**Resource for London, 356 Holloway Road, London N7 6PA**

**X @WorkersHammer • workershammer@btconnect.com**

# WHY THE SPARTACIST LEAGUE S AND WHY OTHER GROUPS SHOULD

Below is a transcript of the presentation by Eibhlin McColgan of the SL to the 3 February 2024 TUSC Convention in Birmingham, edited for publication.

Thank you comrades, I appreciate being given the time to explain why the Spartacist League has applied to participate in TUSC's election campaign. We think it is a good initiative. We agree with TUSC comrades—it absolutely is in the interests of the working class to have a socialist opposition to Starmer's Labour in the election. We welcome TUSC's campaign because it draws a class line against Starmer. We are prepared to build that campaign and to make it successful. We would like to stand a candidate under the TUSC banner; we are prepared to campaign for and vote for TUSC candidates where possible.

We agree that TUSC's core policies are a minimum that voters would expect from a socialist campaign. We have two amendments to be debated under the next agenda point: we think we should only vote for left MPs who oppose a Starmer government and we're opposed to supporting prison guards. But, to answer Comrade Nellist's question, even if our amendments are voted down we are still prepared to run as TUSC candidates and support TUSC's initiative.

We very much appreciate that TUSC gives



Socialist Party

If TUSC would stop tailing the Labour left, it could actually work.

participating organisations the autonomy to run their own independent campaigns. The turnout here today *is* disappointing: we think all the other left groups should join forces in a united electoral opposition to Starmer, fight together for the things that we agree on, while presenting their own independent views.

I want to explain our independent campaign and show how it's different from

TUSC's. At the same time I will show that adding our programme to the TUSC campaign will build up TUSC and *strengthen* it as a working-class opposition to Starmer.

Our difference with TUSC is simple. TUSC has dozens of good and supportable demands. But taken together the programme becomes a laundry list that tries to satisfy everyone and offend no one. In trying to appease left MPs and union lead-

ers, it promises everything that Corbyn promised—including in his 2019 manifesto—but which he *could not deliver*. The question is *why*? That's because Corbyn was not prepared to engage in a serious confrontation with the capitalist rulers. We think TUSC's programme has the same problem.

Our programme offers *five* bold, sharp demands that throw down the gauntlet to the capitalist class. The theme is:

**Workers must run the country!**

1. Liberate Palestine!
2. Down with NATO!
3. Expropriate the banks!
4. Citizenship rights for immigrants!
5. Down with the monarchy!

I'm sure every socialist organisation in the country—and everyone in this room—agrees with these demands. They are intended to give a voice to the visceral class hatred of the millions of people who despise Starmer, especially over his support to the genocide of the Palestinians. They will drive the likes of Starmer and Blair hysterical. And they put it squarely to the left Labour and trade union leaders: *what side are you on?*

**Down with NATO:** This is a red line for the British ruling class that takes its marching orders from Washington. It also drives a wedge against the likes of Sharon Graham

Below is a transcript of our comrade Kaur's intervention at the TUSC Convention, edited for publication.

I would like to motivate the amendment under the attitude to left-wing candidates put forward by the Spartacist League, which reads as:

"The joint election challenge will not in general seek to contest seats against left-wing Labour candidates or left MPs or ex-MPs standing as independents *so long as they stand on a pro-working-class programme and refuse to support a Starmer government.*" [amendment in italics]

We believe that this amendment will strengthen TUSC and boost its chances at electoral strength because it will enhance the appeal of TUSC as a challenge in the eyes of workers, minorities and youth looking for an alternative to Starmer's Labour. Our amendment insists that our attitude to left-wing or left Labour MPs must be based on a pro-working-class programme and a refusal to build a Starmer government. Why is this crucial for building the working-class challenge that TUSC seeks to provide?

Comrades, we are together in this room today because we understand the necessity of having a working-class voice in Britain. Starmer has drawn a hard line on each question facing our class: Palestine, NATO, trade unions, lifting caps on bankers' bonuses, you name it. He will carry on sticking it to the workers. So when it comes to left or independent MPs, *our criteria must*

## DEBATE ON LEFT MPS

*be their attitude towards Starmer:* will they take a stand with the working class *against* Starmer and *refuse* to build his government, or will they speak left but ultimately build a Starmer government when elected? This is the class line, comrades.

And we believe that it would defeat the very purpose of TUSC if it supports these candidates or doesn't stand against them. I think it would amount to leaving the back door open to supporting a Starmer government.

I want to touch on the question of the 2019 manifesto, which is looming in the background here. I want to remind the room that Starmer himself said he was for the 2019 manifesto back in the day, only to throw Corbyn and the left wing out of Labour. So, I don't think it matters if you verbally pledge your support to the manifesto. I think the question is *now!* Where do you stand on opposing or supporting Starmer? This has to be our criteria.

I want to motivate our amendment against the three other amendments being proposed under this point. These amendments stem from either logistics and practicalities or a real hatred for Labour, but they end up splitting the working-class vote

because they disregard any left-wing MPs who might actually come on to our side to build a *united challenge* at the elections.

### Response to opposition to our amendment

I'd like to respond to the criticism from the speaker from the Socialist Party about how workers may be confused by our amendment as being for a bloc with the Tories. I believe that's the content of your opposition to our amendment and I think that, frankly, it is very misplaced. We are building TUSC here. Our argument is that drawing a class line and making that class line sharper by saying for or against a Starmer government will actually enhance our appeal in the eyes of workers and actually tap into that real hatred for Starmer. I don't think they will think, "Oh well, you're against Starmer, so objectively, you're for a bloc with the Tories". I think the substance of what you put forward as a criticism of our amendment really undermines the entire purpose of TUSC here.

I'd also like to address the speaker from the Socialist Students. If I understood correctly, you said: "why would we stand a candidate against Zarah Sultana", as an

example? I think she's a great example of a left-Labour MP who has been super vocal about Palestine, yet if we look at the objective social role she plays: she is in the Labour Party, and come elections, she *will* campaign for a Labour government. Our point is that actions speak louder than words at the end of the day. And this applies to the 2019 manifesto, it applies to Palestine, it applies to all kinds of left speakers. Sultana will vote Labour at the end of the day.

That doesn't mean that we wouldn't want to advocate tactics towards her. We will put it to her: we are for Palestinian liberation—take a side! If you are against genocide, break with Starmer! That is the choice! And that is actually how you're going to build TUSC. That is the way to drive a wedge. Not to conciliate her because she's got lots of support in Coventry. You know, all those people in Coventry are looking for a real way to go forward and use her in some way to have a path forward against Starmer. As Marxists, you have to look at the social role that individuals play. All her pro-Palestine stuff aside, at the end of the day, she will vote Labour, she will be part of a Labour government, and that will be a Starmer government! And the purpose of TUSC is to fight against the prospects of a Starmer government by enhancing, to the best of our goddamn capabilities, the working-class voice. ■

# SUPPORTS TUSC DO THE SAME

# TUSC, CPGB AND LENINISM

The first letter of this exchange was sent to the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) on 19 February. The CPGB accepted our proposal for debate (details below). The second letter, dated 22 February, is from SL/B CC member Perrault, making an important correction.

## SL/B letter to the CPGB

Dear comrades,

Your entertaining article on the 3 February TUSC Convention in Birmingham (“Farcical Labour Party mark two”, *Weekly Worker*, 8 February) is rightly scathing about the state of the left. We agree it is split into umpteen “sects grouplets and ‘parties’”, each “doing their own thing”, yet they are mostly pushing the same political programme which is a variant of Corbyn’s left Labourism. But what is the CPGB doing about it?

There is an urgent need for a strong, united, working-class opposition to the Tories and Starmer’s Labour in the election. The left must join forces in a common electoral platform representing the interests of the working class. TUSC’s campaign draws a class line that is sorely needed. It provides a vehicle for working-class opposition to Labour, while allowing participating groups the freedom to run their own independent campaigns.

Communist unity is a constant theme in your press. But what’s the point of it if you’re not prepared to fight for unity of the working class against Starmer in the election? Communist unity cannot be separated from the struggle to unite the working class against its class enemy. Your article criticises TUSC, sometimes along the same lines as we do, yet you put forward no proposal for working-class opposition to Starmer. That makes you no different than the myriad other “sects, grouplets and ‘parties’” that your article decries.

As a way out of the present impasse of the left, we propose a public debate with you on the theme: what strategy for communists in the election? Even better, we should encourage other groups to participate in a panel discussion and debate our differences openly, all the while putting to the fore: how to advance the interests of our class.

Our perspective is laid out in our 9 February leaflet “Why the Spartacist League supports TUSC and why other groups should do the same” [see article on facing page]. It challenges the British bourgeoisie on “red line” questions, saying: *Workers must run the country!* Liberation of Palestine! Down with NATO! Expropriate the banks! Citizenship for immigrants! Down with the monarchy!

By sharply opposing the bourgeoisie on these questions, our programme also draws a line against the Labour and trade union lefts. At the TUSC Convention we put forward amendments, one of which stated that we should only support left Labour candidates (eg Zarah Sultana) if they oppose a Starmer government. By voting down that amendment, TUSC is keeping the door open to unity with those “lefts” who will support a Starmer government. That gets to the core of our criticism of TUSC. Its aim is to breathe new life into Corbynism using the same “broad church” model of unity with the right wing as Corbyn did, with disastrous results.

Contrary to the letter published in *Weekly Worker* (“TUSC and Sparts”, 15 February), our approach to the election does not contradict the description of TUSC in *Workers Hammer* (no 251) as “an openly reformist ‘broad church’ electoral coalition, to revive the Corbyn movement, oblivious to the fact that Corbynism already proved its bankruptcy precisely because of its reformist ‘broad church’ programme”. This political characterisation of TUSC is completely valid and we restated it at the Convention. Our approach is to fight for communist politics inside TUSC. Our criticisms of it, including our amendments if adopted, would *strengthen* TUSC as a vehicle for working-class opposition to Starmer.

The working class is weak, atomised and demoralised as a result of the defeat of the strike wave. Unity of the class is of paramount importance for rebuilding its fighting capacity and preparing for future battles. The *Weekly Worker* is right to condemn the lack of unity and reformist illusions on the left. But are you prepared to do something to overcome these? Let’s at least debate the issue.

Comradely,  
Eibhlin McColgan for the Spartacist League

## Letter to the SL/B CC: an unfortunate formulation

Dear comrades,

The 19 February letter to the *Weekly Worker* effectively explains why we are for building TUSC as a working-class electoral front against Starmer and Sunak. It makes clear that we do this while opposing its social-democratic Corbynite programme and by putting  
*continued on page 11*

## Debate between Spartacist League & CPGB

**GENERAL ELECTION 2024  
AND COMMUNIST PERSPECTIVES**

**Sunday, 5 May, 5pm (online)**

Use this link to join the meeting: [communistparty.co.uk/ocf-register](https://communistparty.co.uk/ocf-register)

## SPARTACIST LEAGUE PROGRAMME

### Workers must run the country!

- Liberate Palestine!
- Down with NATO!
- Expropriate the banks!
- Citizenship rights for immigrants!
- Down with the monarchy!



Workers Hammer

TUSC needs Spartacist  
Eibhlin McColgan!

and John McDonnell who are warmongers over Ukraine.

**Expropriate the banks:** The only way to reindustrialise the so-called Red Wall working-class areas of England, as well as Scotland and Wales, is to seize the capital in the City of London.

**Citizenship rights for immigrants:** This demand is to cut through the obscene racist squabbling over how to get rid of refugees that are rotting in prison camps.

**Down with the monarchy:** We’ve had enough of Labour and trade union leaders bowing and scraping before the Crown as we saw when the Queen croaked. We developed a saying at that time—“A leadership that’s too spineless to oppose the monarchy will never have the backbone to confront the British ruling class.”

We’re not promising the moon. We are promising a serious confrontation with the ruling class. Our aim is to give a taste of what an actual workers government would look like. It’s not a parliamentary body where you elect a majority

of socialist MPs. The model for TUSC is the same “broad church” that led to disaster for Corbyn. Corbyn’s programme did touch on some of the bourgeoisie’s red lines, including his opposition to Trident and to the European Union. But when he became Labour leader, Corbyn was faced with a choice. He could either organise a serious confrontation with the ruling class or cave in. He caved in, because Corbyn’s programme did not politically equip him for a serious confrontation with the capitalist order.

To conclude: our perspective will strengthen TUSC as a working-class opposition to Starmer. Our approach to TUSC is a small step in our overall goal, which is to build a socialist movement in this country in opposition to Labour by totally breaking the mould that has paralysed the left for decades. We aim to unite under one banner all the forces that are committed to waging the kind of uncompromising class battles that it will take to bring down the rotten British ruling class. ■

Thousands of activists, working-class families and minorities, as well as Irish Republicans, have directly experienced brutality and murder at the hands of the prison guards. This would alienate millions of potential voters, particularly those involved in BLM and Just Stop Oil, not to mention the anti-war activists that have been mentioned numerous times today.

Rather than defending any so-called “right” of brutal state henchmen, we should be for defending the rights of prisoners, especially in the context where Starmer and Sunak are arguing over who can be toughest on crime. This is why we urge you to vote in favour of this amendment. ■

## NO SUPPORT TO PRISON GUARDS!

*Below is a transcript of our comrade Tom’s intervention at the TUSC Convention, edited for publication.*

We have already explained how we view TUSC as a much-needed class opposition against Starmer. So, I’m just going to get straight to the point.

We propose to remove the following clause [from TUSC’s core policy platform]: “Reinstate full trade union rights to prison officers.”

This policy is explicitly counterposed to the idea that TUSC is standing on the side of the working class. Prison guard unions, just like cop associations, are about defending naked state violence, not the oppressed.

# Grant leap...

(continued from page 5)

by the Labour Party, so when Jeremy Corbyn got elected leader, it was a dream come true. *Socialist Appeal* headlines featured “Complete the Corbyn Revolution!” (15 July 2016), “Vote for Corbyn! Fight for Socialism!” (22 August 2016), “We face the fight of our lives — mobilise for a Corbyn victory!” (30 October 2019). The goal was clear: support Corbyn and push him to the left.

Even after Corbyn’s disastrous 2019 election, when he betrayed the working class by campaigning for a second EU referendum, in an article titled “After the election: Continue the Corbyn revolution” IMT leader Alan Woods explained that “it is not Corbynism that has failed, but Blairism, liberalism, and the centre ground” (18 December 2019).

However, in the years following Corbyn’s defeat left Labourism has been in constant retreat. Sir Keir Starmer has purged the left wing of Labour and made a particular point of expelling Socialist Appeal. At bottom, it is these objective blows and not a critical re-evaluation of its previous course that has pushed SA to radically reorient. It is only recently that they have started denouncing Corbyn in order to argue that a “particularly pernicious role has been played by the so-called Left” (RCI manifesto).

While such statements are certainly true, the practical conclusions that the RCP draws from them are wrong. For example, it has shut the door on any kind of tactical approach whatsoever to Labour, the Labour lefts or elections at the current time. The RCP is instead engaging in empty radicalism totally disconnected from the struggles and consciousness of the British working class.

It must be said that Socialist Appeal was far from alone in cheerleading for Corbyn during his leadership of the Labour Party. The entire left did the same, including *Workers Hammer*. However, unlike SA, we recognised our mistakes and sought to draw key political lessons from them (see *Workers Hammer* no 247, Winter 2021-2022). Instead of simply denouncing Labour, changing our name and waving red flags, we understood that at bottom the failure of the so-called revolutionaries throughout the Corbyn years was to not fight for a *split* with left Labourism.

This could not be done by simply denouncing Corbyn but by showing the need to break with his programme, which, by always putting unity with the right above

principles, was an obstacle to defeating the Blairites. This is the meaning of the united-front tactic: to engage in joint struggle with reformists and demonstrate in action the need for a split with opportunism.

However, instead of this the entire “Marxist” left liquidated into the united front and refused to put forward a fundamentally different strategy to fight the Blairites. Not only did this subordinate the most militant elements of the party to the losing strategy of Corbyn and his team, but it also betrayed the task of winning a fraction of the Labour Party to communism.

Far from recognising this reality and seeking to understand how their strategic perspective within Labour was wrong, the new RCP has just turned the page. Now it ironically embodies the worst caricature of the ultraleft sectarians denounced by SA not so long ago.

## Lessons of the strike wave

After Corbyn, the most important event shaping the British left was the 2022-2023 strike wave. Here, too, we can understand the overall trajectory of the IMT/RCI by looking at the wild zigzags of their British section.

At the height of the strikes, SA supported the general secretary of Unite, Sharon Graham, a proud NATO stooge and one of the main figures responsible for the defeat of the strike wave (see “Sharon Graham or Lenin? You can’t have both”, *Workers Hammer* no 250, Summer 2023). The urgent task throughout the conflict was to build a left opposition within the trade unions based on organising a real confrontation with the hated and weak Tory government. But instead of this SA, like most other groups on the left, simply called for more co-ordination between the unions, or a few more strike days here and there, while being in a bloc with a wing of the bureaucracy.

Nothing better symbolises this non-aggression pact with the union tops than SA’s refusal to raise the basic slogan “Never cross a picket line”. Not only was this slogan essential to build the strikes, but it directly went against the photo-op strategy of the union leaders. The opportunism of SA on this question is all the more obvious given the fact that their comrades in English Canada organised a whole campaign around the slogan “Picket lines mean don’t cross”, while in Britain they staunchly refused our appeals to raise such a call.

Now that the strike wave has been defeated, the RCP has denounced Sharon Graham and finally mentioned her support for “the NATO-backed regime in Ukraine” (*The Communist*, 10 April). Consistent with

the RCP’s new left turn, the article proclaims, “What is required instead is to build up a revolutionary communist leadership that is both fighting and democratic, based upon the militancy of the union rank-and-file.” This is certainly correct, formally speaking; the question is: how do you advance this perspective concretely?

A revolutionary leadership in the unions will never be built by waving red flags and proclaiming the need for radical action, no matter the obstacles standing in the way. But this is precisely what the RCP means by “revolutionary leadership”. The 5 April article in *The Communist* on the results of the NEU indicative ballot is symptomatic. Not only does the article deny the very real fact that sentiment in the union is far more demoralised than it was last year, but its “bold perspective and militant strategy that links our fight to defend education to the fight against capitalism” consists of a series of broad political demands with no bridge to the actual situation facing teachers. Of course, it is necessary to “overthrow the Tories and the rotten system they defend!” The question they leave unanswered is how the union will do this while it invites senior managers to its meetings, and while teachers feel utterly powerless in the face of crushing workloads, decrepit schools and worsening behaviour shaped by two years of lockdowns and social decay (see teachers article, page 3).

When the social context in Britain was explosive, SA raised minimal demands and supported left-wing bureaucrats. Now that the mood is sombre and demoralised, the RCP denounces all trade union bureaucrats and calls for radical action. The continuity between the old course and the new is that neither one does anything to push the class struggle forward or build a serious opposition to the bureaucracy.

## Pyramid scheme or Leninism?

A revolutionary party is built by guiding class struggle, helping workers and the oppressed overcome the obstacles holding back the advancement of their interests. The pro-Palestine movement in Britain is stuck because its leaders have one foot with the movement and the other with Starmer (see front page). The same can be said for the barely existent opposition to the NATO campaign in Ukraine. It is impotent because it relies on left-Labour MPs cowed into silence by Starmer. In the unions, the rank and file are hurting while the union tops refuse to organise any real struggle.

In all these cases, the task of revolutionaries is to break the chains holding back the movement and to show *concretely* that advancing the various struggles requires *breaking* from the clutches of spineless Labourites. This is the essence of Leninism and must be the purpose of all tactics.

For decades, the IMT’s approach was to push reformist parties and trade union bureaucrats to the left, never fighting to advance a revolutionary split. Now, without acknowledging a single previous misstep, the RCI proclaims that it will build a revolutionary party through the exponential growth of its own forces. The problem is



That was then.

that they propose to do this without seriously responding to any of the arguments tying the workers and oppressed to their reformist leaders, including Stalinist parties like the Greek KKE which they now seem so fond of.

The solution for Palestine? Intifada until victory. The solution for Ukraine? Revolution. For women’s oppression and black oppression? Abolish capitalism. Against the dominance of Modi? General strike. Against Starmer? Communism. These are not answers. They are empty slogans that can attract a certain amount of youth...for a time, but are utterly useless in actually advancing the class struggle.

Instead of directly confronting the problems which have plagued the IMT and the entire Marxist left in the past decades, the RCI has turned sharply to the left, yelling their anger at capitalism into the void. But since they cannot provide answers to the questions facing the working class, they have opted to build their party through a vulgar pyramid scheme. The formula is simple: foster frenetic energy and pressure each new member to recruit one new member every few months. This way the RCI will grow from thousands to tens of thousands to millions. You don’t need Marxism to know how this will end. Like every such scheme, it will eventually collapse under its own weight.

Coming from our own experience of sectarianism, collapse and reorientation, we can only urge comrades of the RCI to confront the hard realities of their past and present head on, rooting themselves in the lessons of the Marxist movement (see *Spartacist* no 68, September 2023). The RCI has invented nothing new — except a catchy ad campaign. One only has to look at the writings of Lenin and Trotsky with open eyes to see that the trajectory of the RCI has been followed and analysed time and time again:

“Like reformism in the preceding epoch, sectarianism transforms historic tendencies into omnipotent and absolute factors. The ‘ultralefts’ conclude their analysis just where it should really begin. They counterpose a ready-made schema to reality. But since the masses live in the sphere of reality, the sectarian schema does not make the slightest impression on the mentality of the workers. By its very essence, sectarianism is doomed to sterility.”

—Leon Trotsky, “Ultralefts in general and incurable ultralefts in particular”, 28 September 1937 ■

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**THE BREAKDOWN OF U.S. HEGEMONY & THE STRUGGLE FOR WORKERS POWER**

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# Philippines: US bases out!

# Build an anti-imperialist front!

We reprint below a 23 February supplement to Talibang Anakpawis, publication of the Committee of Correspondents Overseas, Spartacist Group Pilipinas.

As its hegemony declines and the liberal order slides toward disintegration, the U.S. response has been to increase pressure on China and Russia, while tightening control of countries like the Philippines. The crisis of imperialism is driving the U.S. to war, with the military buildups from the East China Sea to the Malacca Strait acting as tripwires for bloody confrontation with China.

Situated by the South China Sea, the Philippines guards the busiest maritime routes in the world, through which passes much of China's oil supply. These disputed waters host rich fishing grounds, as well as untapped reserves of undersea oil, gas and minerals. From the Philippines, the U.S. has access to East Asia, Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean—the littoral of the most populous, economically active part of the world.

For decades, the Philippine left has supported the bourgeoisie's territorial ambitions in the South China Sea. The forces influenced by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its National Democratic Front (NDF), the social democrats and the labor bureaucracy have enthusiastically cheered for the bourgeoisie's legal case in the Arbitration Court in The Hague against China's maritime claims. Their often hysterical anti-China nationalist campaign, in concert with capitalist forces, over the Spratly Islands gave cover for U.S. imperialism to ramp up its presence in the region, eventually gaining access to nine military sites under President Ferdinand (Bongbong) Marcos Jr. via the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA).

The restoration of U.S. basing rights in the Philippines under EDCA is a milestone in the imperialist hegemon's war drive in the region. For Filipinos, who marked the 125th anniversary of the Filipino-American War on February 4, EDCA is the latest imperialist burden on the Philippine masses—a stark reminder that the Philippines is an American neocolony, independent only in name. Likewise for the workers and peasants of China, these U.S. bases represent a



## Drive the US lapdogs out of the workers movement!

Twitter/AFL-CIO

Philippine labour leaders troop to the White House to curry favour with US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan.

clear and present threat to their existence.

U.S. access to bases in the Philippines pushes the region closer to the brink of war. EDCA bodes terrible hardship for the workers and oppressed masses of the region and the world. The bases in the Philippines will become targets, and ensuing armed conflict will wreak havoc on the economies of Southeast Asia and Australia, for which China is a major trading partner.

For the Filipino youth, the U.S.-led march to war means further regimentation via the compulsory ROTC program and a grim future as cannon fodder for the warmongers. To this we say: **Smash EDCA! U.S. bases out! Imperyalismo Ibagsak! Down with bourgeois militarism and imperialist war! Oppose compulsory ROTC! Not one tao, not a single sentimo for the bourgeois military!**

To smash EDCA will require monumental international proletarian struggle, including in China, to drive out the U.S. bandits from the Philippines and throughout the West Pacific Rim. The leftists and labor leaders who refuse to take the side of China against imperialist enslavement, like Akbayan and Makabayan, stand in the camp of our exploiters and will never win the support of the workers and peasants of China. Meanwhile, the ruling Communist Party of China, which upholds the program of “socialism in one country,” craves only its “peaceful rise” within the imperialist-dominated international order and sees social revolution in the Philippines and elsewhere as a threat to achieving that goal. An anti-imperialist alliance would inspire the 100s million strong Chinese proletariat to sweep away the parasitic bureaucracy and seize the helm of the biggest country today where capitalism was overthrown.

Militant workers and youth are increasingly frustrated with the leaderships of Akbayan, Makabayan, NAGKAISA and Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, who have not offered any solutions to fight the bourgeoisie's attacks and new imperialist impositions including the Public Services Act, the PUV Modernization Program, and Charter Change. Instead, these

labor bureaucrats and self-proclaimed leftist leaders promote the idea that the Philippine bourgeoisie can be friends and allies of the workers and the oppressed in the fight for national and social liberation.

Anti-imperialist workers and radical youth: beware the bourgeois politicians like former President Rodrigo Duterte, who masquerade as friends of the oppressed and opponents of imperialist war! The Dutertes of Davao and their northern counterparts, Sen. Imee Marcos of Ilocos and the Mambas of Cagayan, will be the first to abandon and betray our struggles against EDCA because it is their nature as members of the neocolonial property-owning class to put their business and narrow clan interests ahead of the oppressed nation. Any militant mobilization by workers and the poor that the bourgeoisie cannot control is rightfully seen as a danger to the peace and stability of Philippines society, which is built on human misery and super-exploitation of labor in the plantations and export processing zones.

Raising a revolutionary internationalist banner against the pro-imperialists inside the left and workers movement will serve as a rallying point for opponents of imperialism among the workers and the urban and rural poor. To achieve national industrialization, peasant emancipation and free the country of foreign bases, our struggle needs a leadership that is not bound to the wretched Philippine bourgeoisie or the imperialists.

To the militant workers and anti-imperialist students, we assert that the vital task today is to build an authentic communist party capable of propelling our struggle for national liberation toward socialist revolution. As a first step, this means we must clean our own house: **Drive the reformist conciliators and pro-U.S. lapdogs—the likes of Sonny Matula (FFW), Joshua Mata (SENTRO), Mike C. Mendoza (TUCP), Elmer Labog (KMU) and Raoul Manuel (Kabataan)—from the left and workers movement!**

The Philippines and China have a common enemy in U.S. imperialism. It is in the

interests of the oppressed masses of the Philippines, the toiling majority in the archipelago, to form an anti-imperialist alliance with the Chinese workers, peasants and PLA soldiers.

To begin, we must recognize the obstacles in the way of forging this fighting alliance. Firstly, imperialism exploits the anti-China resentment generated by the Beijing Stalinist regime's maritime policy in the South China Sea, where Chinese authorities harass fisher folk from neighboring countries who have shared these traditional fishing grounds and safe harbors for countless generations. Secondly, China's support for deeply hated factions of the bourgeoisie, like the authoritarian regime of former President Duterte, does not make Beijing any more popular among the working people.

For the Chinese people and the Philippine masses to form this anti-imperialist alliance means rejecting the calls for “zones of peace,” “non-interference” and “peaceful coexistence” with the imperialists, peddled by the Beijing Stalinists and Philippine leftists like Partido Manggagawa and Partido Lakas ng Masa. These do not advance our struggle against imperialism and war. What we need is a revolutionary internationalist program. At the minimum:

- **Rip out the anti-fishing barriers! Share the waters!**
- **Joint defense of the South China Sea against the imperialist aggressors!**
- **Filipino fisher folk, give this leaflet to the Chinese PLA Navy/Maritime Militia!**

If you agree with the revolutionary anti-imperialist positions in this leaflet and would like to discuss how to achieve them, please write to:

—Committee of Correspondents Overseas  
Spartacist Group Pilipinas (SGPII)  
spartacist@spartacist.org

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## CoC...

(continued from page 4)

assaulted. For a party that aims to fight for revolution—a business which necessarily entails stepping on liberal sensitivities—this is insane.

In sex, as in everything else under capitalism, there are all kinds of oppressive and unequal relations. Faced with this reality, the task of Marxists is not to pronounce moral judgement or determine what is acceptable or not but to defend the fundamental principle that whatever happens between two consenting individuals is nobody else's business. Ultimately, Marxists fight for a world where individuals can make their own choices as freely as possible. Fortu-

nately, the establishment of socialism only requires convincing the working class of the need for a revolution, and not that looking at a woman's breasts is a sin.

But the feminist approach to the problem of sex and “imbalances of power” is precisely to dictate who people should have sex with and how. The ISA's CoC is a prime example of this. The CoC of their Irish section pushes things even further by explicitly discouraging sex between members with significant age gaps, banning all sexual intercourse with anyone under 18 and giving detailed instructions on how to behave in the bedroom:

“The party advocates ‘enthusiastic consent’.... Enthusiastic consent can look like this: Asking permission before you change the type or degree of sexual activity with

phrases like ‘Is this OK?’.... Periodically checking in with your partner, such as asking ‘Is this still okay?’”

For all their radical verbiage, the feminists of the ISA are not so different from priests. Whether it is the Church or the ISA's CoC, both tell consenting individuals what they can and cannot do with their bodies and in the bedroom. In both cases, women and young people are treated as victims threatened by men's corrupt sexual appetites. In both cases, this puritan preaching is totally destructive to working-class consciousness.

Since no one can ever be pure enough, and since anyone questioning this madness is immediately suspected as a defender of abuse, the ISA's CoC and everything it stands for can only lead to endless inter-

nal strife and splits. Moreover, it breeds hypocrisy. Do ISA members watch porn only if it promotes “enthusiastic consent”?

Joking aside, if ISA members are to have any chance at reorienting themselves towards a revolutionary path, they must break with the bourgeois moralism of feminism and approach the struggle for women's liberation from the standpoint of Marxism. Instead of socialists chewing themselves up in the never-ending task of purging themselves (and each other) of their presumed unconscious bias and other sins, they should direct their energies towards purging the working class and the movements for LGBTQ+ and women's emancipation of their liberal and Labourite leaders, who are the living embodiment of timid and cringing submission to the exploiters. ■

## Left...

(continued from page 12)

to not upset anyone—especially Labour's big boss. Despite this, the bulk of the left is sitting in the waiting room of Corbyn's office...waiting.

George Galloway's election as Rochdale MP did provide a small glimmer of hope for the anti-Starmer left. On the one hand, his election was a satisfying slap across Starmer's face and has led to a surge of left independent candidates wanting to challenge Labour and the Tories (like the “No Ceasefire No Vote” bloc). On the other, this “movement” is totally divided. Now, any bloke thinks he can lead his little independent campaign, engaging with others only to divide their turf, ie “I run here, you run there.” This includes Galloway's Workers Party, which, for all his promises to present hundreds of candidates, remains a one-man show. Owen Jones quitting Labour was a recent addition to this disorganised chorus, calling to support the pro-EU middle-class liberals of the Green Party. “Quit Labour and saw off your left leg” would have been a simpler way to say the same thing.

What is needed is obvious: a unified, pro-socialist and pro-working-class front against Starmer and the ruling class. Instead, we have a swarm of individuals each running their own little show, interested in advancing their own little name but in no way advancing the interests of the working class. The main reason for this is not ego (although ego plays a role, and not just with “gorgeous George”), but that every single one of these independent candidates seeks to remain respectable in the eyes of the Labour left and trade union bureaucrats, who themselves need to remain respectable in the eyes of Starmer,

who himself needs to remain respectable in the eyes of the ruling class.

You see, running in one constituency against Labour is cute but harmless—particularly when Labour is sure to win the election. Building a working-class movement against Starmer is an entirely different business and means making a lot of enemies. But no one on the left wants to do this. No one wants to rattle the cage, draw a sharp line against the union leaders and Labour lefts and put it to them: “With the working class and Palestine? Or with Starmer? *Which side are you on?*”

### TUSC and what to do

There is one partial exception to this: the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC). To its credit, TUSC's goal is to regroup the left in a united pro-socialist front against Starmer and the Tories, which is why we support it and urge all other left groups to do the same (see pages 6-7).

However, TUSC generates little enthusiasm and seems to function by inertia. The main reason for this is that TUSC's leaders—mainly from the Socialist Party—suffer from the same disease as others in the left. Despite TUSC's statement of intent, its leaders are adamant in supporting the Labour left (who support Starmer). Why? Because opposing them frontally would wreck TUSC's chances of attracting Corbyn or trade union honchos.

In this way, TUSC tangles itself in the same chain as everyone else. The result is that no one understands the point of TUSC and how it differs from the dozens of other outfits. In turn, TUSC's leaders wage the most timid campaign for their coalition, scared of alienating the Labour left and hoping to catch a big fish by being nice. This vicious circle only makes TUSC appear lame and irrelevant.

There is a clear appetite among workers

and youth for a real working-class challenge to Starmer. And as simple and obvious as this sounds, it is not happening because everyone else on the left refuses to step on the toes of trade union bureaucrats and Labour MPs who still cling to Starmer! So, the first task of leftists is to recognise the problem, which no one does. Many far-left groups, like the RCG or the RCP, have not even begun to understand that the task now is to organise a working-class opposition to Starmer and instead scream into the wind for revolution. Hello? These groups must get out of their



**“Mick Lynch says voters must ‘grow up’ and see Starmer is only alternative”**

— *Guardian*, 24 February

RMT

bubble and confront reality and the political impasse workers and youth face today.

The left must work together—and not by papering over our differences—to build a common front against Starmer. TUSC remains an obvious vehicle for this. What is needed is a fight inside TUSC so that it aggressively draws a hard class line against Starmer and puts the screws on the pathetic Labour lefts instead of tailing them. Force them to choose! Expose them at every opportunity! Then it will become clear who wants to fight and who wants to cling to Starmer's tits. And TUSC might finally get some real traction because—guess what?—everyone hates Starmer!

Again, the point is simple: as long as the left clings to left-Labour MPs like Zarah Sultana, to union bureaucrats like Mick Lynch and Sharon Graham, or to discredited figures like Jeremy Corbyn—who all cling to Starmer—it will remain crippled and tied to the forces of the status quo. The result will be to push the working class towards right-wing and reactionary forces, who appear to be the only ones opposing the establishment. This is precisely the main lesson of the Corbyn years.

### Corbynism and its lessons

Most on the left still think that the goal is to revive Corbynism, which only shows how the left has failed to learn any lessons. It is worth elaborating on this.

Corbyn won the leadership of the Labour Party in 2015, not because he had anything original to propose, nor because he was particularly charismatic or ambitious. The Labour left's decision to run Corbyn was a desperate one. They needed some symbolic presence in the leadership contest to show

that the left was not completely dead. What happened is that the contest intersected a massive wave of discontent against two decades of Blairism, austerity and war, which lifted Corbyn (an irrelevant backbencher minutes before) to leadership, surprising everyone, including himself. Contrary to those begging Corbyn today, the man was never the cause of his success. He just happened to be the lightning rod for the explosion of discontent.

Fast-forward four years: Corbyn led Labour into an electoral disaster and resigned in shame. The right wing always likes to bring this up. Yet there is a reality that in 2019 Corbyn lost vast swathes of the working class to the Tories and ended his tenure with the left in tatters and tens of thousands of youth disillusioned, paving the way for Starmer. What happened?

A lot of ink has been spilled over Corbyn's demise. Still, everyone attributes it to personal traits, organisational matters or the strength of the right wing. At most, some will say that Corbyn conceded too much and should have fought more. Sure, but why didn't he? This is the crucial question that no one proposing to revive Corbynism has answered. The central issue is not so dissimilar to what we face today: it is about political programmes and unity with the ruling class.

From the day Corbyn won the leadership, he was torn by the contradictions inside Labour. On the one hand, he was pushed to the fore by the party's working-class base and pro-socialist aspirations, gaining the support of a wing of the trade union bureaucracy in the process. On the other hand, he faced total hostility from the ruling class, the press and the Blairites,

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# CPGB...

(continued from page 7)

forward our own revolutionary programme for the elections.

That said, the letter contains the following unfortunate formulation: “The left must join forces in a common electoral platform representing the interests of the working class.” This is incorrect. The above formulation is, in fact, closer to the position of the CPGB than to ours. The CPGB is for the amalgamation of the existing left based on a socialist programme that would (to use our words) stand “for the interests of the working class”. They call this “communist unity”. In contrast, our objective is to *split* the left and the workers movement along *fundamental class lines*.

The position of the CPGB is the classic position of the pre-World War I social democracy: unity of the workers movement under a formally socialist banner. In contrast the essence of Leninism is to split the workers movement from its pro-capitalist leaders (Noske, MacDonald) *as well as* from those “socialists” who uphold unity with these very traitors (Kautsky being the most pre-eminent of such centrists). Throughout the war and the Russian Revolution, Lenin showed how unity with centrism divided

the working class and paralysed its actions. This lesson was fundamental to the success of the Russian Revolution and the creation of the Third International.

Bringing this back to today, we can see that for all its denunciations of Corbyn, the CPGB upholds his conception of the party *at one step removed*: left Labourites advocate a broad-church party which includes the right wing of Labour while the CPGB advocates a broad church including the Communist Party, the Socialist Workers Party, the Socialist Party, Socialist Appeal, etc. The problem is that these left groups all support, in one way or another, the very “left” leaders who stand for unity with the right. In the unions, they support the likes of Mick Lynch and Sharon Graham and/or, in Labour, Zarah Sultana & Co. This is classic Kautskyism, and it is through this mechanism that the working class remains chained to Labour no matter how many times it betrays.

All things considered, the mistaken formulation quoted above does not negate the principled nature of our letter to *Weekly Worker*. However, this mistake should be used as an opportunity to insist once more on the Leninist principles of the party question within our ranks and in the broader left.

Comradely,  
Perrault

with the latter controlling the party’s parliamentary fraction and apparatus.

But fundamentally, Corbyn was not defeated by the right wing. Despite their never-ending hysteria and plotting, every time they tried to take on Corbyn directly, they failed because of his massive support at the party’s base (eg, the 2016 “chicken coup”). Rather, Corbyn was defeated by himself and his coalition of supporters.

What drove the Corbyn movement was largely negative—a rejection of Blairism, austerity and war. Corbyn’s coalition included an array of people with completely counterposed views on almost every critical political question of the time: pro-EU left Labourites (like MPs John McDonnell and Diane Abbott or Owen Jones), not so pro-EU Labourites (like Andrew Murray and Seumas Milne), left union bureaucrats (like Len McCluskey), Stalinists, left-wing Zionists, pro-Palestinian nationalists, ecologists etc. Then a significant number of more right-wing Labourites, turncoat Blairites and pure opportunists (like Starmer) latched on to this coalition.

All this is because the “Corbyn project” was never based on defending the interests of the working class against the bourgeoisie and drawing clear class lines on the burning issues of the day: Brexit, anti-Semitism, foreign policy, Scotland etc. Rather, it was a liberal jumble, loosely united on abstract values of “peace” and “social justice”. Thus, from day one the central preoccupation of Corbyn and his immediate advisers—waking up every morning to fresh scandals—was to keep this hodgepodge of conflicting interests together. This meant pursuing a constant and chaotic policy of appeasement and conciliation of the most right-wing elements of the bloc, who were under pressure from the Blairites, who were under pressure from the ruling class.

This was clear with the issue of anti-Semitism, the first effective wrench the Blairites threw into the Corbyn coalition. The most right-wing elements wanted Corbyn to crawl. The liberal anti-racists, utterly paralysed by the racist bourgeoisie

accusing them of racism, wanted Corbyn to bend over backwards and give way to the offensive. The most left-wing elements wished to oppose the whole thing (including dismissing real cases of anti-Semitism) while conciliating the right. What was needed was a forceful fightback against the slanderous campaign by the ruling class, striking at the source of this hypocritical crusade: British imperialism’s support for Israel’s oppression of Palestinians and the demonisation of anyone attacking this as anti-Jewish. Instead, Corbyn’s bloc was polarised and paralysed, with Corbyn himself refusing to confront the issue (often literally going AWOL).

A similar dynamic happened around the question of the EU, which is the one that destroyed Corbyn. Support for the EU was a red line for most of the bourgeoisie and all the Blairites and was reflected in large numbers within Corbyn’s base and coalition. Corbyn was never a fan of the EU, but he nevertheless caved and campaigned for “remain” in 2016 to avoid a split in the party and his coalition. Then, as the zombie Tory government was on its last legs, as pro-EU remainers began raising their heads and as Corbyn was crippled by the never-ending quest to appease his pro-EU liberal bloc partners (extending from Starmer to McDonnell and Abbott), he became the candidate for a second referendum against Johnson’s “Get Brexit done.”

Most working people saw Brexit as the first real challenge to the liberal status quo of the previous three decades. The 2016 referendum was seen by many, particularly in the north of England, as not only on the EU but also on the state of the country. The question was: “Do you want things to *remain* as they are, or not?” Corbyn and most of the left played a criminal role in siding with “remain”, ceding the terrain of opposition to the EU to racist bigots. Concession after concession led Corbyn to stand for a second referendum, thus presenting himself to working-class voters as leader of the pro-EU, pro-London establishment party. As a result, millions

# Teachers...

(continued from page 3)

and kick SLT out of the union.

**Oppose repression of students!** What students need to succeed and what we need to improve our conditions are the *same*: more teachers, more resources, more funding. But instead, CEOs of academy trusts and their SLT minions introduce draconian behaviour management rules that make schools feel more like prisons. Students are suffering as these rules become the norm for dealing with worsening behaviour. This only makes the problem worse: more punishment for students, more work for teachers and more animosity between students and teachers. It is not in our interest to go along with crazy new behaviour rules. Students will learn and listen when our conditions improve, and our conditions won’t improve without a struggle.

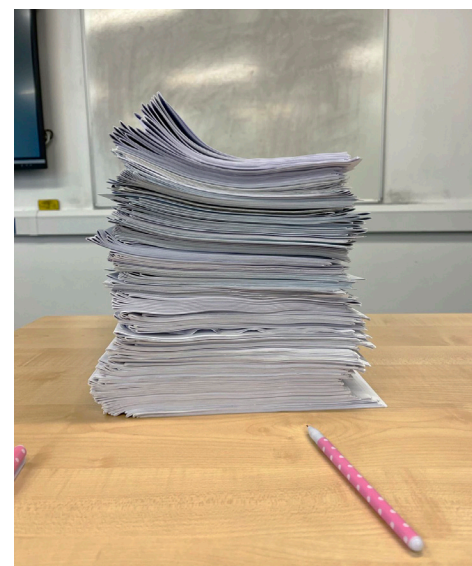
Worsening grades and behaviour are symptomatic of the crisis in schools, which is a reflection of a society going to hell. A Starmer government will do nothing to change this; in fact, no government is going to just hand out nice things. Every gain working people have won has come through struggle. Schools are no different. To fight for schools, the NEU needs a completely different strategy, one not just focused on pay but going to the heart of the crisis in education.

Last year’s strikes demonstrated that

of working-class voters turned against Corbyn and the left. Today, those who want to revive Corbynism must wilfully conceal that Corbynism caused one of the most significant schisms between the left and the working class and gave a tremendous boost to right-wing Tories and Reform UK.

As soon as he was elected party leader, what was posed for Corbyn was to confront the entire ruling class, drive the Blairites out of Labour, mount a working-class opposition to the EU, British imperialism and racist reaction and unleash the full force of the workers movement against Fleet Street and the City of London. But the whole idea of Corbynism—and of left Labourism in general—is that advancing socialism must be subordinated to a partnership with Blairites, pro-EU liberals, trade union bureaucrats and the ex-Crown prosecutor Knight of the realm, who are all hated by the working class and, in various ways, represent and defend the interests of the British bourgeoisie. Unity with the ruling class: this is why Corbyn’s project was a disaster.

To return to today, no one has learned this lesson. The bulk of the left is still in this holy alliance with the ruling class through the union leaders and left Labour



F. Lorena

What teachers do in their “free time”.

the NEU leadership (old and new) is not committed to the fight to save schools. The strikes were not organised to challenge the Tories, and we all took home a pay cut as a result. To defend teachers and their jobs, the union needs a new leadership, one that will stand up for teachers for their most pressing concerns *now*, not when the pay review committee hands out its insulting offer. We urge all teachers to stand up for themselves using the three demands above as the means to save their sanity, build the union and fight for a leadership that reflects our interests. ■

MPs, which explains the glaring absence of a working-class challenge to Starmer and the total lame state of the left.

\* \* \*

Trotsky wrote of Lenin that “the struggle for the independent political party of the proletariat constituted the main content of his life” (*The Permanent Revolution*, 1929). Any serious leftist must reflect on these simple yet profound words. The party of the working class must be *politically independent* from the bourgeoisie and any elements tied to it.

To become a real factor, the socialist movement must stand on its own two feet and *draw a hard line against Starmer and against those who support him*. To unite the socialist left, the socialist left must be split. This might sound contradictory, but some alliances make you stronger and others make you weaker. If one understands that the left is weak because of those within it who cling to the trousers of the bourgeoisie, then it follows that getting rid of these people will make it stronger. This is the fundamental difference between Corbynism and Leninism. The former is a dead end, the latter is the only way forward. ■

## Lessons of Corbyn: Bankruptcy of left Labourism

The following is an extract from the *Spartan League National Conference* document.  
From the moment Jeremy Corbyn won the Labour leadership elections to his eventual demise following the 2019 elections, the task of revolutionary Marxists was to show concretely through the course of events how Corbyn’s programme was utterly incapable of addressing the needs of the working class, increasing the need for a Leninist party armed with a Marxist programme. This necessity required a correct understanding behind Corbyn’s initial as well as the factors which led to his spectacular collapse. The *Spartan League* was the only publication, the last article...

There was huge accumulated discontent in the working class and in particular in the base of the Labour Party against the decades of austerity and military interventions. In *Where is Britain going?* (1925), Trotsky explained the reasons behind the success of the Independent Labour Party after World War I:  
“Behind the democratic pacifist illusions of the working masses stand their awakened class self, a deep discontent with their position and a readiness to back up their demands with all the means that the circumstances permit, in the working class.”  
While Corbyn was never a centrist, his winning of the leadership of the Labour Party had a similar character. The minute he won the leadership contest his function and role changed and he started to be ripped apart by the contradictions of his new position. Not only did Corbyn have to provide com-

ing class but vague notions of “peace” and “justice”, he had no firm ground to stand on and quickly capitulated on one question after the other.  
Moreover, due to the fact that Corbyn was elected only on a negative programme of opposition to Blairism, his supporters had divided as soon as he came up the EU, Russia, and Corbyn’s programme. This division also meant he was in a weak position in terms of electing him away according



Corbyn’s campaign for EU imperialist cartel in 2016 Brexit referendum was betrayal of working class.

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## Why is the left so weak and divided?

The fact that Jeremy Corbyn remains the central figurehead of the British left is the surest sign of a crisis. Corbyn is now an irrelevant factor in the national debate. Old and tired, purged from Labour, discredited in large sections of the working class, he is politically finished. Yet it is this figure that the bulk of the left still looks to. His paralysis is monitored with the greatest eagerness. Every one of his speeches is preceded by childish excitement and rumours that he may make a grand announcement, only to disappoint everyone. The whole left waiting for Corbyn is like a pathetic remake of *Waiting for Godot*, minus the artistic genius.

Here is the situation: the country is broken and rotting. The Tories are utterly discredited, and the coming election will likely see the victory of the most right-wing Labour Party ever, with Sir Keir Starmer openly supporting genocide and promising austerity and attacks. The situation cries out for a working-class opposition to the Tories *and* Starmer's Labour. But there is none on the horizon. Instead, the socialist and workers movement is weak, splintered and playing zero role in this picture. *Why?*

It is common to hear that the problem with the left is that they spend all their time fighting among themselves instead of uniting against the real enemy. There is truth to this. However, simply stating this does not explain or solve anything, and such explanations are usually used to cover up



UK Parliament

### The great hope of the left...

the real problem. The left is weak because its representatives refuse to stand on their own two feet against the ruling class. They are always more interested in building coalitions with “respectable” elements of the liberal intelligentsia, the Labour Party and trade union bureaucracy than in uniting the workers against the ruling class driving the country into the ground. But let's see how this plays out today.

### Starmer, Corbyn and the “independents”

It is Starmer who has drawn the class

line in the coming elections. He has spent the last three years leading Labour like a mini-Stalin, purging any whiff of leftism, positioning himself as a total lackey of British imperialism and making it crystal clear that anyone remotely for the working class, Palestine or socialism is his arch-enemy. One would think that the workers and socialist movement would have responded by declaring war on Starmer. Not so...

The few Labour lefts who have not been purged—Zarah Sultana, John McDonnell and Co—have raised the white flag. Everything they do or say is carefully crafted

to remain acceptable to the Starmerite clique, terrified that their career could end in a snap. They still try to appear left—they make speeches for peace, show up on picket lines and give food to the poor. Nevertheless, they are committed to getting Starmer into Number 10. At this point, any Labour left who has not taken a stance against Starmer has wilfully chosen to be his useful idiot.

As for the leaders of the trade unions, they no longer have such qualms. All unions now support Starmer, from the more right-wing leaders of the GMB and Unison to the “lefts” like Sharon Graham (Unite) and Mick Lynch (RMT). The latter recently explained that voters had to “grow up” and vote for Starmer (*Guardian*, 24 February).

With the Labour left and trade union leaders crawling on their bellies before an openly anti-working-class barrister, the left outside of Labour is utterly paralysed, starting with Jeremy Corbyn himself. The reason Corbyn is dragging his feet in even announcing that he will run in his constituency is that he has been a Labourite all his life. He does not want to run against Labour, let alone lead a movement against it. Corbyn's natural habitat is the Labour backbenches, and his ultimate wish is to be readmitted to the party—an illusion he probably still entertains. Even if Corbyn did run independently, it is already clear that he would wage the most tepid campaign

*continued on page 10*

## Let trans kids decide!

The publication of Dr Hilary Cass's review on gender identity services in the NHS has unleashed a torrent of anti-trans reaction. Anti-trans campaigners present the report as a vindication of their views. However, its most significant impact is that it has given the green light to centrists and wavering liberals to dump the trans cause. The Labour Party leadership has hailed it, with Wes Streeting (shadow secretary for health) repudiating his comments last year that “trans women are women”. The BBC now invites anti-trans activists as serious “experts”. Even Stonewall was largely positive about it. Written by an authoritative NHS doctor and couched in “science”, compassion and even pro-trans rhetoric, the Cass review has enabled those who had previously tepidly defended trans people and were looking for a way out to do so with a “scientific” and “respectable” cover.

The review's recommendations are

devastating for trans kids. Hormones and puberty blockers (which have been in use for decades) would now be treated as dangerous drugs to be withheld. Those between 17 and 25 would not be treated by adult services. More barriers to the already restrictive transitioning process would be implemented. While the report describes real failures by the NHS, the “scandal” being whipped up is that too many young people were allowed to transition. Indeed, the whole premise behind the report's “holistic” approach is that most youth who want to change gender are mentally ill. The implication is that giving them what they want to transition must be avoided, and they must instead receive mental health treatment. Gays, too, used to be seen as sick people who needed empathy

and therapy. The Cass review treats trans people the same way.

With most liberals embracing this anti-trans review, the pro-trans milieu has been on the defensive. Many have tried to counter the report with facts and methodology. The Cass review is littered with methodological mistakes and ignores many studies that debunk its conclusions. But you can't wage an effective fightback on this basis. What is needed is to attack the pillar of the anti-trans crusade and of the Cass report, which is the idea that teenagers are too stupid to make decisions about their own lives and that it is the state, the NHS and parents which must dictate what they can and cannot do—in the name of “protecting” them! The problem is that most pro-trans activists agree or concede to this in

one way or another, which only ties their hands. The response to the Cass report must be the simple yet controversial statement: *let trans kids decide!*

The whole weight of this rotten system is felt on youth's shoulders like a ton of bricks. Kids' rebellious spirit and creativity are crushed at school and at home so that they be obedient robots with no future. “Responsible” adults (most of whom can't get their own lives together) are the ones ordering them on how they should live their lives: “You can't vape, you can't drink, you can't dress as you want, you can't do this or that; sex is a dangerous and monstrous thing, and if you question your gender, we'll send you to a shrink because you are sick.” *This* is what destroys young people. *This* is what traumatises them and pushes them to suicide. Yes, kids must be helped. They must be informed. *But for god's sake, leave the kids alone! Let them choose!* ■