

City bosses' £40m bonuses as Number of food banks hits 2,000

Tories out! Corbyn in! Take the wealth off the 1%!

Geraint Thomas, Nottingham Socialist party

While working class people across Britain go hungry, directors of massive corporations continue to rake in obscene bonuses.

Senior bosses at investment firm Melrose Industries will split a £240 million bonus pot between them. [The top four directors are getting a whopping £40 million each.](#)

Even London financiers are worrying about how bad handouts like this look. But the warning by the Investment Association of revolts at corporate AGMs over bonuses [seems to be falling on deaf ears.](#)

Benefit delays

Meanwhile, research by the Independent Food Aid Network found that there [are at least 2,024 food banks in the UK.](#)

The Trussell Trust, running just 427 of these food banks, recorded that it had handed out 1.2 million food parcels to an estimated 550,000 people.

Low income and benefit delays were the biggest reasons for workers being forced [into the humiliation of going to food banks.](#)

These figures only scratch the surface of the problem. Several co-workers at my last job regularly made the choice of heating or eating over the winter thanks to low hours and pay. Even nurses are affected, hit by the pay cap and rising living costs - hardly the "complex reasons" Theresa May claimed.

The Melrose bosses' £240 million will be paying for expensive cars and mansions and filling up tax-dodging banks. That money could easily be used by a Corbyn-led socialist government to create thousands of decently paid jobs.

The billions more paid as executive bonuses and shareholder profits across the top companies could eliminate hunger and poverty, rather than propping up the lifestyles of the have-yachts.

Take the wealth off the 1%. Mobilise mass demonstrations for a Corbyn-led government. Fight for socialism.

Low-paid work till lunch to make rent

Laurel Fogarty

The average low-waged worker gives nearly half of every day's pay straight to private landlords, [housing charity Shelter's new statistics have revealed.](#)

They show that low-earners have to work until lunchtime every day, or for 15 hours a week, just to pay rent on an average one-bedroom flat.

In London, where the housing crisis has reached breaking point, the numbers are worse. The average worker would have to give 78% of their wage to line their landlords' pockets for a one-bed, working almost four days each week just to make rent.

In his manifesto, Jeremy Corbyn pledged to build a million new homes over the course of the next parliament, half of which were to be council and social homes. The Socialist Party supports this, while pushing for them all to be council homes.

Youth vote

These kinds of policies won him a massive proportion of the youth vote - showing the thirst for socialist policies among those hit hardest by Tory austerity and the bosses' and landlords' greed.

However, in light of the results of the general election, we must press further. May's weak Tories faltered on housing during their election campaign, making a massive u-turn on a pledge to build council homes.

This was unsurprising - [nearly 40% of Tory MPs in 2016 were supplementing their fat parliamentary salaries as landlords](#). We must fight for a massive programme of council house building, and against the sell-offs that formed the heart of the defunct Tory and Blairite housing policy.

The Socialist Party campaigns for a cap on rents, not benefits; an immediate £10 an hour minimum wage; lifetime tenancies; timely renovations and repairs instead of gentrifying 'regeneration'; and for safe, secure, affordable housing for all.

Young workers in unions earn 20% more

Tessa Warrington, PCS union rep

Want a pay rise? Join a union. That's the message from recently published government data showing that being in a trade union increases pay for the majority of workers.

In particular, unionised women earn 27% more on average than their non-union counterparts, while membership boosts pay by 20% for workers aged 16-24.

Tories

Meanwhile the Tories are still desperately trying to peddle the line that trade unions are no longer relevant! The reality of austerity Britain is that they're more relevant than ever.

Secure jobs with decent pay were only won in the first place by workers organising and fighting for them. The trade union movement still has that power today. The time is not to defend what we have, but to fight for a greater share.

The Trade Union Congress backing for a £10 an hour minimum wage raised the sights of many low-paid workers. It became a central goal in Jeremy Corbyn's manifesto.

The turnout of young people for Corbyn's anti-austerity policies was the take-home message of the general election, but many young workers are not unionised.

The trade union movement must urgently recruit and organise this politicised layer of youth, and show them we don't just have to wait for elections. As a start, the unions should call a mass demonstration against the weak Tory minority government, and for a Corbyn-led, anti-austerity administration.

Workers have the power to change things for ourselves. Let's use it.

Corbyn surge beats Trump

Hated US president Donald Trump [has reportedly suspended plans to visit Britain](#). It seems he cited concerns about protests in a conversation with Theresa May sometime in the past few weeks. The mass movement around Jeremy Corbyn's anti-austerity campaign must have given him pause.

The capitalist class likes to tell us protests change nothing. Looks like the opposite is true. Especially when we link them to a pro-worker political alternative.

May and Tories must go!

Organise, strike, resist, to fight for Corbyn's policies

Hannah Sell, Socialist Party deputy general secretary

Theresa May's failed election gamble is a nightmare for the capitalist class in Britain. Seven weeks ago most of Britain's elite were hopeful that May would succeed in dramatically increasing the number of Tory MPs, thereby buttressing her government to be able to weather the storms of economic crisis, to carry out vicious austerity against the majority in society and to implement a Brexit in the interests of the 1%.

Instead she is now a 'dead prime minister walking', only able to temporarily cling to power by leaning on the [reactionary, sectarian Democratic Unionist \(DUP\)](#) MPs, describing them as her 'friends' on the steps of Downing Street.

The DUP, [founded by Ian Paisley](#), are anti-abortion, anti-LGBT rights and deniers of climate change. However, it will not only be the Tories who are dirtied by this new 'coalition of chaos'.

The DUP's base is mainly among a section of the Northern Irish Protestant working class who are badly affected by Tory austerity.

It seems that the DUP have already demanded the dropping of May's plans to abolish the winter fuel allowance for the majority of pensioners as a condition of co-operation.

Tories Out! There is no mandate for May

The Tories are split down the middle and now have a leader with no authority inside or outside the party.

She is only remaining in place because the Tories can find no other alternative for now, and fear falling apart if they attempt a leadership contest.

[Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell have rightly called on May to resign](#) and pledged to put their programme to parliament and challenge MPs to support it.

Now we need to build a movement for the implementation of their policies, whatever the parliamentary arithmetic.

The general election result was a complete vindication of Jeremy's anti-austerity stance. [On 18 April, the day the election was called, the Socialist Party declared](#) that: "If Corbyn fights on a clear socialist programme - for a Brexit in the interests of the working and middle-class - he could win the general election."

At the time that was met with derision by many including the right wing of the Labour Party: who wrongly thought a general election would give them the opportunity to unseat Corbyn.

Let's not forget that just last September arch-Blairite Peter Mandelson told the press that he 'prayed every day for a snap general election' as it would mean the end of Corbyn's leadership.

Corbyn strengthened

Instead this general election has enormously strengthened Jeremy Corbyn's position in the Labour Party and potentially in society.

[Labour got over 40% of the vote](#) compared to just over 30% in 2015, the biggest increase in the vote share for any party since the Attlee government in 1945.

This was against the background of a phenomenal increase in the popular vote of 3.5 million, from 9.3 million in 2015, to 12.8 million this time.

This was almost entirely accounted for by the streams of young people that flooded to the polls. The very opposite of apathetic young people participated in a mass electoral revolt to demand a future.

Some estimates suggest that [as many as 72% of young people on the electoral register voted](#), compared to 43% in 2015.

Two thirds of them voted for Corbyn. The Liberal Democrat's hope of winning young, middle class voters by claiming to be the 'true remainers' largely fell flat.

Instead Nick Clegg finally got his just deserts for increasing tuition fees in 2010. Corbyn's programme of a £10 an hour minimum wage, abolition of tuition fees, rent controls, and council house building inspired young people to take a stand.

The resulting politicisation of young people will not be reversed, and lays the basis for the development of mass support for socialist ideas.

The support for Corbyn among young people was widespread among both the working and middle class; demonstrated by Labour's victory in Canterbury, which didn't elect a Tory for the first time since 1918.

This reflects the increasing radicalisation of middle class young people who, as a result of low pay and astronomical housing costs, are increasingly being pushed down into working class living conditions.

It is wrong and scandalous, however, as some in the capitalist media have done, to paint this election as 'young versus old'. This is a conscious attempt to divide the working class which both generations should consciously attempt to overcome by standing in solidarity with each other, whether over tuition fees or winter fuel allowance.

Many older workers, disillusioned with Blair's Labour, put a cross next to a Labour candidate for the first time in decades in order to support Jeremy Corbyn.

In Wales, despite the Tories dreaming of gains at the start of the election, Labour made significant gains.

The UKIP vote also did not simply collapse into the Tories as May had hoped.

Among some who voted UKIP in 2015 (undoubtedly including some ex-Labour voters) May's false posturing as being 'tough on Brexit' meant that they voted for her this time.

Had Jeremy Corbyn not made an early concession to the Blairites by reluctantly agreeing to campaign for 'Remain', and instead stuck to his own historic position (and that of the Socialist Party) of calling [for exit from the EU bosses' club, on an anti-racist, internationalist basis](#), May would never have been able to make the gains she did among working class voters.

Nonetheless, the position Jeremy Corbyn adopted during the election campaign - of explaining he would fight for a Brexit in the interests of working class people - was able to win over a section of workers including some who had previously voted UKIP.

Even Nigel Farage had to admit that Corbyn had 'pulled off' winning the support of both young 'remainers' and working class UKIP voters.

The fundamental reason that Jeremy Corbyn started the election campaign so far behind was that the majority of the population had not heard what he stood for.

Of course, this was partly because of the inevitable hostility of the big-business media, but that was - if anything - stepped up in the course of the election campaign, yet support for him soared.

The difference was that, instead of staying quiet in a vain attempt to appease the Blairites, the Corbyn wing of the party took their programme to the country. The right tacitly accepted this, hoping that Jeremy would then 'own' the defeat - instead he 'owns' the highest Labour vote since 1997.

This would have been even higher if Corbyn had earlier and more clearly stated he supported the right of self-determination for the people of Scotland, including a new independence referendum if they so wished.

As it was, increasing disillusionment with the SNP's implementation of austerity in Scotland, [meant that Corbyn was able to win increased votes in some working class Scottish heartlands](#), but it was far less than could have potentially been achieved.

At the same time the Tories made considerable gains in more affluent areas of Scotland, largely by mobilising a certain 'anti-independence' vote.

Trade union mobilisation needed

Jeremy Corbyn's success now needs to be urgently built on. The trade union movement should call an immediate national 'Tories Out' demonstration against austerity - calling for the scrapping of the Tory attacks on the NHS and schools, for abolition of the anti-trade union laws, and for scrapping tuition fees.

The National Union of Students should also build for the demonstration around the question of fees.

Such a demonstration could be millions strong and the springboard for a 24 hour general strike. This in turn could force May to call a new general election.

At the same time Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour left should make a clear call for Labour councils to stop implementing Tory cuts.

In a short campaign very impressive numbers were convinced to vote for Corbyn despite their initial scepticism about whether he would implement his programme.

Nonetheless, the scepticism was still seen in the considerable numbers who didn't vote. Turnout was up two points from 2015 but 31% of voters still stayed at home.

This scepticism is a result of the betrayals of New Labour in office, and the experience of Labour councils at local level that have presided over 40% cuts in services since 2010.

To consolidate the enthusiasm that was generated for Corbyn in the election it is necessary to now make clear that he opposes any more council cuts, and that this Tory government is too weak to force Labour councils to implement them.

This is particularly important in urban areas, where the surge to Corbyn was strongest, and where many councils in England have elections next year.

Transform the Labour Party

"Big up Jezza for reviving so many ppl's hope in politics. If Labour was united behind Corbyn this past year he coulda won this outright!" [said Riz Ahmed of the hip-hop trio Swet Shop Boys](#) (one of the many musicians who supported Corbyn) - stating what is obvious to many Corbyn supporters.

Now, in the aftermath of the election, many on the right of the Labour Party seem to be eating humble pie and claiming Damascene conversions to Corbynism.

Inevitably, this is raising hopes that the Labour Party will now unite behind an anti-austerity programme.

However, it would be mistaken to draw this conclusion. The hostility to Jeremy Corbyn over the last two years has not been, as the right have claimed, because they thought he was 'unelectable' but rather that his programme, and the movement in support of it, represents a threat to the capitalist elite.

This is the fundamental reason that the capitalist wing of the Labour Party, the Blairites, has been determined to oppose him.

Even in the week of the election right-wing Labour MP Joan Ryan openly attacked Corbyn and banned Labour canvassers from using leaflets which mentioned him! The right's control of the Labour Party machine led to outright sabotage of the election campaign which is only now being revealed.

[According to Skwawkbox](#), virtually all funding was withdrawn from Labour campaigns in both Labour and Tory marginal seats.

For example, the North West regional Labour Party insisted all Liverpool Labour councillors into campaigning, not in marginal seats, but in the safe Labour constituency of the director of the right-wing Progress group!

In the immediate aftermath of this election only a few 'ultra-Blairites' such as John Spellar and Chris Leslie have dared to openly argue that Labour would have done better with a more right-wing candidate.

It is well known that Yvette Cooper and Chuka Umunna were preparing for post-general election leadership bids but they, along with the majority of the right, are now congratulating Corbyn and biding their time.

We shouldn't be fooled, however, into thinking that they are reconciled to his leadership. Labour remains two parties in one.

John McDonnell was correct to say that the minority of Labour MPs who have been prepared to serve in the shadow cabinet and defend Corbyn over the last year should not be pushed aside for alleged new converts.

The right are hoping that by surrounding Corbyn they can force him to retreat from his radical programme.

What else does the ultimate Blairite and would-be assassin of Corbyn, Peter Mandelson, mean when he talks about Corbyn needing to 'show respect' to all wings of the party? It was the right's attempts to gag Jeremy which were largely responsible for most people not knowing what he stood for before the election.

It is on Brexit that the right's approach has been most clearly revealed. Mandelson, who can always be relied on to put issues crudely, wrote [an article in the right-wing slander sheet, the Daily Mail on 11 June, 2017](#) calling on May to pursue a 'moderate' Brexit in the 'national interest'.

If she does, he explained: "Mainstream Labour MPs, who worry about the impact of the continuing Corbyn revolution on centrist voters, should be prepared to stand by the wounded PM, and likewise she should welcome their approach in the national interest."

What is this but a barely-disguised call by a Labour Party member for a national government designed to keep Jeremy Corbyn out of power and act in the interests of the capitalist class!

Serving Labour MPs have not been so crude, but nonetheless a number of them, including Yvette Cooper, have pushed in the same direction, calling for a 'cross-party' way to negotiate Brexit 'in the national interest'.

But there is not one 'national interest'. The richest 1,000 who have doubled their wealth since 2010 do not have the same interests as the working and middle class.

On the Andrew Marr show Jeremy Corbyn correctly argued that there is no basis for a common approach with the Tories, because Labour is pursuing a 'jobs Brexit'.

This approach should be maintained and developed with Corbyn making clear that the starting point of his 'Brexit negotiation policy' would be to implement policies in the interests of the working and middle class annulling every EU law that was an obstacle to doing so.

Democratise the Labour Party

Since the general election it seems that the membership of the Labour Party has surged again, perhaps to over 700,000.

Now the structures of the Labour Party need to be transformed so the party is under the democratic control of the membership.

A campaign needs to be immediately launched to transform the Labour Party into a genuinely anti-austerity, democratic party of workers and young people.

This requires the introduction of compulsory reselection contests for MPs. The next general election could be at any time and Labour must not face another election with the majority of its own candidates opposing Jeremy Corbyn.

That means MPs should have to account for their records, via a democratic process, to Labour Party members in their local area.

This should be combined with the democratisation of the party, including restoring the rights of trade unions, and welcoming all genuine socialists in a democratic federation.

These measures could create a party which was genuinely able to bring together all the young people, socialists, workers and community campaigners who are inspired by Jeremy Corbyn into a powerful mass force.

Fight for Socialism

This general election campaign has introduced socialist ideas to a new generation. That is enormously positive.

It has also given a glimpse, however, of how far the capitalists would go to try and sabotage any attempts to introduce policies in the interests of the many not the few.

The hostility Jeremy Corbyn faces in opposition is only a pale shadow of how they would attempt to derail a Jeremy Corbyn led government.

To prevent this will pose the need for far-going socialist measures including nationalising the 100 or so major corporations and banks that dominate Britain's economy, in order to be able to introduce a democratic socialist plan.

This would allow a socialist government to begin to manage the economy in a planned way under democratic workers' control and management - that really would be "for the many, not the few."

- Tories out - there's no mandate for May!
- Organise to implement Corbyn's anti-austerity programme
- The unions must act! The trade union movement to call a national 'Tories Out' demonstration against austerity - calling for the scrapping of the Tory attacks on the NHS and schools, for abolition of the anti-trade union laws, and for scrapping tuition fees. The NUS should also build for the demonstration around the question of fees.
- Co-ordinate strike action to break the pay cap.
- No more cuts budgets from Labour councils! Stop school sackings - councils should step in and underwrite school budgets. Let the Tories dare to take on councils protecting our local services!
- Prepare for a new, early election - that means mandatory re-selection contests for the Blairites

- Open up the Labour Party. Restore the rights of the trade unions within Labour. Re-admit the socialists, with the right to organise in an inclusive federation.
- Fight for a socialist Brexit. Organise a campaign with European socialists and workers' organisations to use the Brexit talks to tear up the EU bosses' club rules. For a new collaboration of the peoples of Europe on a socialist basis.

This article was updated and expanded on 13.6.17

- [Click here for a leaflet containing some of the above article](#)
 - [Click here for a list of Socialist Party public meetings](#)
 - [Click here for a list of Socialist Party Saturday stalls and a drink afterwards - come and have a chat](#)
-

This version of this article was first posted on the Socialist Party website on 9 June 2017 and may vary slightly from the version subsequently printed in The Socialist.

Northern Ireland: DUP bigots propping up the Tories

For a real cross-community socialist alternative

Daniel Waldron, Socialist Party Northern Ireland (CWI Ireland)

Theresa May's humiliating [failure to win a parliamentary majority](#) has placed the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) at the centre of UK politics, with the party set to prop up the Tories through a 'confidence and supply' agreement.

Many in Britain and Northern Ireland are horrified that a party with such homophobic and sexist positions will have influence at the heart of government.

However, while the DUP leadership are reactionaries, they are also pragmatists. They will not push to roll back LGBT and women's rights in Britain, or undermine them further in Northern Ireland, knowing the public would not tolerate it and the Tories could not deliver it. Nor would it be supported by their voters.

The DUP's support is primarily based upon being seen as the strongest voice for the Union, not its fundamentalist agenda. For example, a majority of DUP voters support same-sex marriage; 73% support some reform of our archaic abortion laws, while 49% support full decriminalisation!

The DUP is not alone in holding a backward position on the issue of reproductive rights - while a majority in both communities support the extension of the 1967 Abortion Act to Northern Ireland, this is not supported by any of the main parties.

Relying on the DUP is obviously far from perfect for the Tories but, given the blow they have just been dealt and with Labour rising in the polls, they will not want a fresh election any time soon.

For its part, the DUP does not want to see a Corbyn-led government - both because they oppose his left policies and because of his long-standing connection with Sinn Féin - and will have little interest in rocking the boat.

DUP demands

It will likely keep its demands relatively limited: funding for some pet infrastructure projects and for security, as well as other monies so they can claim to have 'delivered for Northern Ireland'; guarantees there will be no hard border post-Brexit, as ironic as that may seem; and verbal commitments on issues like the extension of the Military Covenant (a government promise to look after former members of the armed forces and their families) to Northern Ireland.

However, it is an inherently unstable arrangement. The DUP can face opposition from its working class base if it is seen to facilitate ongoing austerity in Northern Ireland and can be pressured to make other demands the Tories simply cannot concede to. For example, elements within the Orange Order are already calling for them to push for the abolition of the Parades Commission.

Countless issues and pressures can bring this arrangement crashing down, not least organised working class opposition.

In response to the DUP's now central role, there have been renewed calls from some quarters for Sinn Féin to abandon its abstentionist position and take its seats in Westminster, believing this would strengthen the 'progressive' forces in parliament and, potentially, Jeremy Corbyn.

Sinn Féin is not a progressive party, but the other side of the sectarian coin. Like the DUP, its support is derived from being seen as the most strident voice for 'its community'. Sinn Féin too would use its seats in the House of Commons to inject its divisive, sectarian and nationalist agenda, not to fight for a left government.

Despite its rhetoric, Sinn Féin has ideologically embraced neoliberalism. It has dutifully implemented cuts, committed itself to the project of shrinking the public sector in Northern Ireland and campaigned alongside the DUP for a cut in corporation tax. It is also, as the late Martin McGuinness put it, an 'anti-abortion party'.

Negotiations to re-establish the Stormont institutions are set to recommence, with a formal deadline of 29 June before fresh Assembly elections have to be called, although this is likely to be swept aside.

The DUP's new role at a UK level has the potential to further complicate matters. Sinn Féin and its leader Michelle O'Neill will question more vocally whether the British government can now act as a neutral arbiter.

Given her strengthened mandate, Arlene Foster will not be standing aside as DUP leader until after the RHI (['cash for ash' ministerial scandal](#)) inquiry, as Sinn Féin had demanded.

Historic opportunity

In Britain, the prospect of a left-wing government is now firmly on the agenda in the near future. Meanwhile, sectarianism has strengthened its hold in Northern Ireland.

The high turnout here, reflected a weary sense of obligation to vote against 'the other side', not enthusiasm. All eyes were turned to the battle between Corbyn and May, with socialist ideas being discussed in a way not seen in a generation.

Unfortunately, there was no genuinely cross-community vehicle for this hope and support to find expression at the polls in Northern Ireland. Fresh Assembly and Westminster elections are possible within a matter of months and local elections are scheduled for early 2019.

The Labour Party in Northern Ireland has swelled and shifted to the left under Corbyn's leadership but is still barred from standing official candidates. In the event of fresh elections, Labour activists here must make a decisive stand, even if this means defying the London leadership and acting independently. The alternative is to surrender the field to the forces of sectarian reaction.

The Socialist Party worked with others to launch [Labour Alternative](#) ahead of last year's Assembly election, to put the idea of building a mass, cross-community left party on the agenda.

The labour movement is the only force which has the potential to turn the tide away from sectarian division. In the coming weeks, we will aim to bring together all those who recognise that 'labour can't wait', to put

forward the strongest possible anti-sectarian voice for those looking towards Corbyn's socialist policies in future elections.

- Full article can be read on socialistpartyni.net
-

Scotland - SNP loses but Labour could've won more seats

The fight for socialist policies remains critical

Philip Stott, Socialist Party Scotland

The biggest loser [in this election](#), aside from Theresa May, was the Scottish National Party (SNP). In a stunning contrast to the 2015 landslide when Nicola Sturgeon's party won 56 of the 59 available seats, the SNP lost 21 seats and 500,000 votes.

Paying the price for failing to deliver on their anti-austerity rhetoric and facing huge polarisation on the national question (independence), their vote fell from 50% in 2015 to 37% this time. Former SNP leader Alex Salmond lost his seat, as did their deputy leader Angus Robertson, both to the Tories. In all, the SNP lost 12 seats to the Tories, three to the Lib Dems and six to Labour.

Tory revival?

As following the Tory gains in the council elections in May this year, there has been much comment about the Tory revival in Scotland - with its share of the vote in Scotland [increasing from 15% to just under 29%](#).

Their MP gains, however, were in north-east Scotland, Perthshire, Stirling and the Borders, etc, which were traditional Tory areas up until 1997. In the main these are rural, more affluent and conservative areas where the Tories and the SNP have battled it out for decades.

Ruth Davidson's Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party had one policy in the campaign - "no to a second independence referendum". They have successfully captured a significant part of the anti-independence bloc by portraying themselves as the most effective vehicle to protest against the SNP's call for a second referendum.

Yet again, Scottish Labour and its Blairite, anti-Corbyn leadership also attempted to make opposition to independence their main policy platform and, as a result, failed to make the recovery that was possible.

Nevertheless, there were significant swings to Labour in working class areas in Glasgow and across the West of Scotland where [Corbyn's left and anti-austerity message had its greatest impact](#). Indeed at the start of the campaign, Labour was on only 18% in the polls in Scotland but ended up with 27%.

Had Scottish Labour modified its disastrous opposition to independence and campaigned on Corbyn's anti-austerity platform, it could have doubled its MPs. For example, Labour failed to defeat the SNP by only 74 votes in Glasgow East and by 60 votes in Glasgow South West. The modest increase in seats from one MP to seven and a 3% vote increase compared to their wipe-out in 2015 could have been much greater.

No one was more shocked by the surge to Labour than the right-wing Blairites who have actively attacked and attempted to sabotage Corbyn since his election to the Labour leadership in 2015.

Many of them refused point-blank to have any reference to Corbyn in their election material. In Scotland, Blairites Kezia Dugdale and Ian Murray did not even show up at Corbyn's rally in Glasgow.

A vital task now for Jeremy Corbyn is to proceed with the completion of the only partially finished revolution that is needed to transform Labour into a real left, socialist and anti-austerity party.

Socialist Party Scotland campaigned in support of Corbyn's manifesto - although we pointed consistently to the need to adopt a far more sensitive approach on the national question. As a minimum to defend the right of the Scottish people to self-determination and to accept the right to a second independence referendum when there was a majority in favour of one.

Corbyn and the Labour left could, as we do, defend the unity of the working class across Britain through a voluntary socialist confederation, while supporting an independent socialist Scotland. In addition we demanded that Labour councillors stop voting for cuts to jobs and services.

Independence

Despite the SNP's setback, support for independence is still at historic highs of around 46%. This underlines the point that a large part of the SNP's losses are down to its shift to the right and carrying out Tory austerity in Scotland rather than a dramatic drop in support for independence.

However, the momentum towards a second referendum on independence has been checked by the scale of the SNP losses. At this stage, Nicola Sturgeon is unlikely to be keen to pursue 'indyref 2' unless and until there is a decisive change in the mood around the national question in Scotland.

This general election campaign has introduced socialist ideas to a new generation. That is enormously positive. It has also given a glimpse, however, of how far the capitalists would go to try and sabotage any attempts to introduce policies in the interests of the many not the few.

The hostility Jeremy Corbyn faces in opposition is only a pale shadow of how the ruling class would attempt to derail a Corbyn-led government.

To prevent this will pose the need for far-going socialist measures including nationalising the major corporations and banks that dominate Britain's economy. This would allow a socialist government to begin to manage the economy in a planned way under democratic workers' control and management - that really would be "for the many, not the few."

- Full article on socialistpartyscotland.org.uk

Wales: Corbyn's left surge refutes right-wing Labour doomsayers

Dave Reid, Socialist Party Wales

There were a lot of red faces among the political establishment in Wales on 9 June.

Before the election there was a universal prediction that Jeremy Corbyn would [deliver a win for the Tories in Wales](#) - from pundits, journalists, pollsters and even the chair of Welsh Labour.

But they were all confounded by an even bigger swing to Labour than in Britain as a whole - [gaining 6% more than the Tories, compared to 4% across the UK](#). The Tories lost three seats to Labour, ending up with just eight in Wales to Labour's 28.

Considering the Welsh Labour leaders entered the election expecting the worse it would be a bit rich for them to claim the credit for one of the biggest swings to Labour since 1945... [but they are](#).

And the usual pundits - who had predicted a meltdown for Labour under Corbyn's leadership - are backing them up.

Corbyn's victory

Cardiff politics professor Roger Scully had predicted the Tories would win the most seats in Wales. [He wrote in the Spectator](#): "Theresa May might just be the person who brings to an end the near-century long era of Red Wales."

[He wrote after the election: "The result in Wales almost defies belief"](#) - and then declared in an interview it was a "personal victory for Carwyn Jones"! Welsh Labour is trying to seize the victory from Corbyn.

The Welsh Labour leaders tried to run a separate campaign in Wales. The general election campaign launch even referred to Welsh government policies promising to "continue to give the NHS the funds it needed" - meaning more NHS cuts.

They refused to mention Jeremy Corbyn at all. But on the streets it was Corbyn that the election was all about.

Initially the unanswered propaganda against Corbyn in the media had an effect. But as soon as Corbyn's policies were announced in the manifesto, the mood changed - and the more Corbyn was seen in the campaign, the more the swing to Labour intensified.

The general election was preceded five weeks before by the Welsh council elections when Welsh Labour defended its leadership in a majority of councils.

The Welsh Labour government and councils have faithfully implemented the cuts to services demanded by the Tory government and Westminster. Although those results were not as bad for Labour as some pundits like Scully had predicted, Labour did lose dozens of council seats.

It was Corbyn who turned the result around for Labour in Wales. This was illustrated by the fact that on 8 June, the very same election day that Labour made big gains in Wales in the parliamentary election, [it lost control of Merthyr council to independents in a delayed local election](#).

Plaid Cymru gained one MP's seat from the Lib Dems, equalling its record of four seats in the UK parliament. But Plaid's overall vote was down as working class voters in the valleys and the north returned to Labour.

Plaid had attacked Corbyn's manifesto in the election. Their party political broadcast said "Labour are making promises even though they know they will never be able to keep them - next they'll be promising free kittens to every voter"!

[The Lib Dems were wiped out](#), losing their last seat. The party of Welsh prime minister Lloyd George has no MP in Wales for the first time since the '50s - the 1850s.

General election: what you thought about it

Readers respond to results...

What they said

They said Corbyn was unelectable.

They said socialism was outdated.

They said this manifesto was another suicide note.

They said the Tories would win a super-majority.

They said young people never vote.

They're not saying much now.

Dan Crowter, Coventry West Socialist Party

Bosses' crisis boosts workers

Comments in the West Midlands show a clear and growing understanding of the capitalists' political crisis and opportunities for socialists.

A young, working class, black woman spoke to Birmingham Socialist Party branch secretary Corinthia Ward. She'd just been to vote for the Blairite Labour candidate. "I felt sick, even dirty. But I had to do it for Jeremy Corbyn."

A friend who'd felt down about Corbyn's chances - particularly after the Leave vote, which we campaigned for on a socialist basis - rang me up to say this: "I'm so happy. Well done. You lot were absolutely right. Praise all your lot for what you've done."

Dave Griffiths, Socialist Party West Midlands region

Corbyn politicises student nurses

As a student nurse, over the last days I have found general chat turning to politics: who people voted for; excitement about Corbyn and his leadership of Labour.

Being an older student, I have had many of the younger students asking me questions such as "what is a hung parliament?" This new interest is encouraging.

As nursing students, we can see that the changes and political climate the Conservative government has been creating in the NHS are leading it into a black hole. Many of our conversations have focussed on how Corbyn seems the only realistic option to keep our patients and our careers safe.

We need to build on this momentum, and the stronger position for the left that Corbyn has built, by organising people and stepping up the fight for the NHS.

We have seen what can happen in the space of seven weeks. With a fierce and well-organised fight, just think how much positive change we can achieve together.

Katharine Youngs, Student nurse, Leeds Socialist Party

Youth reject pompous media

This is the first general election when I have been able to vote. I believed it was important to look into what each of the parties were offering.

The level of abuse the other parties have directed towards Jeremy Corbyn has shocked me. From leaflets appalled by his dress sense to vicious attacks on things about him that have been proven to be lies, the hatred against one man appears to have no boundaries.

Perhaps what is just as shocking is that newspapers, radio and TV stations continue to report this pointless personal smear campaign as 'news'.

You wonder why young people don't vote? Stop treating us like idiots. This election was too important to be decided on personalities like some reality TV contest.

I cast my vote for a programme to answer the injustices I have grown up with.

We live in one of the richest countries in the world, where multibillion-pound companies make their wealth employing people on zero-hour contracts. They exist side by side with pensioners forced to use food banks.

I voted to abolish tuition fees so I won't have debt of over £40,000 when I go to work in the NHS. I voted for a programme that does not seek to divide our communities through fear and threats.

I ignored the hate and urged everyone to use their vote based on who offers them a vision of a better and fairer way of running our society.

Aaron Humphreys, Liverpool Socialist Party

No way Mrs May!

Theresa May's opportunist snap election call has well and truly back fired on her and the Tories. The election campaign pitched the anti-austerity agenda of Jeremy Corbyn against Theresa May's "more of the same misery" message.

Labour's manifesto "for the many" against the Tories tax cuts for the rich and savage social and welfare cuts for the poor. May still clings on to government propped up by a deal with the devil the DUP, but this election result is a huge rejection of what she stands for.

The Tories have no mandate for the continuation of the 1% pay cap in the public sector, no mandate for their attacks on the welfare state, no mandate for job cuts and office closures.

Their authority is in shreds. PC members will be encouraged by this election result to stand and the fight. The Labour and Trade Union movement must come together to agree a programme of action to resist and overcome Tory attacks and defeat this weakened government.

For the many not the few!

Marion Lloyd, PCS executive committee member (personal capacity)

Corbyn surge wins pay rise

Thank you to Jeremy Corbyn.

I am writing this on the day before the elections, because Corbyn has already helped win a small victory in my workplace. We've just received an email from our employers that they will be giving a pay increase and increased holiday.

In a non-unionised workplace we have little power to confront our employers. But Corbyn's demand for £10 an hour and improved working conditions has given confidence to a wider layer of workers to speak up on the issue.

I am hoping this will also encourage more people to join a union as it shows that by fighting together, we can win.

Izabelle Grant, Leeds

Corbyn beats Blair

Corbyn got two million more votes than Blair got in 2001, and three million more than Blair got in 2005!

With the Tories in disarray there's no excuse now, Labour councils should refuse to carry out cuts to local services!

Jim Horton, North London Socialist Party

Mainstream media disgrace

During the run-up to the general election, the mainstream media coverage of Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party - both TV and newspapers - has been, in my opinion, a disgrace.

We have been drip-fed downright lies, hidden behind sensationalist headlines.

I believe the fact that Labour increased its share to 40% of the vote, enjoying massive gains, suggests that the public now pay little attention to bigoted corporate journalism. It proves that the public are more than capable of reading beyond the sensationalist headlines - and, in fact, will search out the truth for themselves.

If the mainstream press is to enjoy public support in the future, it needs to rethink its strategy.

Jackie Murphy, Meltham, West Yorkshire

Fight Tory and DUP anti-LGBT+ bigotry

The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) is propping up May's weakened Tory government. LGBT+ people will rightly be outraged...

The idea that this party will now have some influence on the government is a frightening prospect for LGBT+ people. While Corbyn's policies have gained huge ground, the battle for rights and liberation is far from over.

Nonetheless, the DUP-backed Tory minority government is weak and wobbly, and pressure from the grassroots could topple it. We need to fight back against the Tory and DUP LGB-phobic and transphobic agenda, and fight for real socialist change.

Michael Johnson and Maddy Steeds, Socialist Party LGBT+ group

Grime4Corbyn

We've heard a lot about the student vote, but perhaps less of the politicisation of working class urban youth - maybe best illustrated by the magnificent 'Grime4Corbyn' movement.

I'm a longstanding fan of hip-hop and have noted its increasingly materialistic and reactionary stance.

But where mainstream hip-hop acts see the solution to the ghetto as getting money and fame to escape it, grime instead seeks to challenge the existence of the ghetto in the first place.

This is of huge cultural and political significance. The champions of Corbyn and of socialism should welcome the grime movement.

James Hinchliffe, Manchester

The youth weren't inspired to come out as "Brexit revenge." We were inspired by Corbyn on jobs/health/education/housing/poverty

Suzanne Beishon, Leyton

Corbyn is the absolute boy.

Stephanie Hammond, Harrow

The TUC should call a national day of action against austerity.

Eric Segal, Folkestone

Neoliberal French Socialist Party hammered in parliamentary elections. Would've been the fate of Labour, if Blairites had ousted Corbyn.

Niall Mulholland, East Ham

Lessons from the British elections: Bernie would have won.

Calvin Priest, Seattle, USA

Now that London is a solidly Labour city, can we have the spirit of the manifesto at local level? Can you stop school cuts please.

Nancy Taaffe, Walthamstow

So can they play 'Liar Liar' on the radio yet or not?

Katie Simpson, Northampton

Amber Rudd looking for the "Magic Tory voter tree."

Dan Crowter, 9 June, Coventry

Reports: just some of the marches and events after 8 June

Central London

At four in the morning on 9 June, listening to Theresa May snivel through her 'victory speech' on the radio, I was sure she'd be out before the sun rose. I was wrong.

The Tories struggled on in a misguided attempt to cling to power. As details of their possible agreement with the sexist, racist, homophobic DUP began to grace newsstands, the Socialist Party was already calling a protest.

We joined people protesting and celebrating on Whitehall on that Friday evening.

Then at lunchtime on 10 June, under a smiling sun, several thousand people gathered to reject the Conservatives' austerity and proposed pact with the DUP.

Many young people - whose political consciousness has been ignited by the first Labour platform in decades to offer left policies - spoke to us about their hopes for the future.

"I think there will be a general election in six months or sooner" said one woman - one of dozens who had just signed up to the 'Young Socialists' campaign.

Protesters marched from Parliament Square towards Downing Street to football chants of "Oh, Jeremy Corbyn!" (sung to the tune of Seven Nation Army). We sold over 100 papers on the day.

We must now build on the young people entering the labour movement, to ensure a swift victory in the next few months... or weeks... or days...

Ellen Kenyon-Peers, Lewisham Socialist Party

Cardiff

The mood was incredible. Scores of people, young and old, stopped by to sign our petition calling for May's resignation.

Socialist Party placards were popular and our message and leaflets readily accepted. There was a combative mood throughout the demonstration.

Copies of the Socialist were selling like hot cakes. There is a mood to stand up to the Tories and their rotten deals, and to support socialist policies.

The Socialist Party will be an integral part of the struggle to come.

João Félix, Cardiff Socialist Party

I think it is worth noting that on our campaign stall a number of people came to sign our 'Tories out' petition with words to the effect of "I'd normally say just let her get on with it now the election is over but this DUP deal is the last straw."

We sold at least 70 copies of the Socialist today. Political consciousness is raised and the mood is for change.

Richard Edwards, Cardiff Socialist Party

Huddersfield

Our weekly campaign stall focussed on the chaos within the Tory party. We got positive feedback, even from some Tory supporters.

Following that, Huddersfield Socialist Party had an informal meeting between some of our branch members and people we have been campaigning with on local issues.

We had two people join the Socialist Party, and two others took away membership forms.

Mike Forster, Huddersfield Socialist Party

Swansea

There was obvious delight with Corbyn's success from the majority of all ages in the city centre on 10 June, and disbelief from a few angry and despondent Tory supporters.

We had a noticeable increase in interest from young people, and sold almost 30 copies of the Socialist. Most of the young people signing our petition were first-time voters won over by Corbyn's policies.

Geraint Davies - the Swansea West Labour MP who increased his majority thanks to Corbyn's popularity - came in for criticism. His election material urged voters to remember that they were "not voting for a prime

minister."

We fully agree with the actions of one voter who, while holding his nose, put a cross in Davies's box - but wrote alongside: "Corbyn for PM - Deselect Davies!"

Alec Thraves, Swansea Socialist Party

West London

Increased interest was shown with more discussions on our 10 June campaign stall. Another young unemployed woman joined the Socialist Party and immediately agreed a regular subscription. We had increased sales of the Socialist and lots of thumbs up.

Keith Dickinson, West London Socialist Party

Corbyn's support increases further during last week of campaign

During the final week of the general election campaign Socialist Party members have been out in force to support Jeremy Corbyn's anti-austerity, pro-working class policies - on street stalls and at his large rallies across the country.

Clare Wilkins reported from Birmingham:

There had only been two days' notice of the rally on social media, yet crowds flocked to it. An overwhelmingly youthful audience of at least 5,000 poured into Millenium Point.

The audience listened to actor and comedian Steve Coogan, the band Clean Bandit and a first time voter who stood up to the EDL. Steve Coogan talked about Tory policies and the first time voter said that we should not let the Tories split grandparents from grandchildren with their policies. There was a huge cheer when she mentioned Jeremy's promise to scrap tuition fees.

Then a massive cheer went up as Jeremy Corbyn walked through the crowd to stand in the middle of it to speak. Adding to the atmosphere, a double rainbow appeared as he started to speak (see pic below)!

Jeremy ran through some of the key policies in the Labour manifesto and spoke of the importance of young people turning out to vote on Thursday; and of the crowds of young people who have come to his rallies.

Socialist Party members from the two Birmingham party branches - and also from Coventry - staffed stalls, leafletted and sold 157 copies of the Socialist. We gave out 3,000 leaflets for our Birmingham post-election public meeting at which socialist former MP Dave Nellist will speak, as well as hundreds of a 'Tories Out' leaflets.

Elaine Brunskill reported from Gateshead:

We had feared that the torrential rain might put people off going to Jeremy Corbyn's rally - not a chance! The crowd was huge - local media estimated 10,000.

2,000 couldn't get in to the main rally and were in the over-flow car park. At one point hundreds of young people managed to evade the police and break through their cordon.

The mood was incredible. Youth were out in force. Working-class school students were particularly visible, waving their home-made banners.

Prior to Corbyn's arrival, local MPs were on the platform. Their speeches were largely well received, though Chi Onwurah, Newcastle Central MP ([who had claimed Corbyn could be accused of racial discrimination when she lost her position as a shadow minister](#)) received a noticeably cooler response.

Socialist Party members noted that amongst a layer of people at the rally who have returned to the Labour Party there was a clear understanding of the necessity of ousting the Blairites.

The response to Corbyn was phenomenal. As soon as he was spotted, the chant: "Corbyn! Corbyn! Corbyn!" erupted. He spoke well, setting out his policies. He was cheered when he talked about the need for mass movements, against zero hour contracts, etc. Every time he mentioned either the Tories or austerity there were boos.

The sheer energy of the young people made this rally hugely inspiring. It was a glimpse of how young workers and students are starting to make a mark on history. When these young people decisively move into action they will be an unstoppable force.

Hugh Caffrey reported from Weaver Vale:

This is a 'swing seat' which the Tories hold with a 800-vote majority. At just 24 hours' notice, 1,000 predominantly local working-class people turned out to hear Jeremy Corbyn make a very good speech.

There was a real buzz at this rally and a very strong mood that 'this is the start of something' as well as a sense that Labour could win.

Paula Mitchell reported from Croydon and Islington:

The Croydon rally was called at a day's notice, as one of a number of simultaneous rallies around the country. John McDonnell and Ben Elton were among the advertised speakers and there was an impressive live link-up with Jeremy Corbyn speaking in Birmingham.

The rain beforehand was torrential, but around 2,000 were there and there was a lively mood - for instance we saw a teenager leap out of her mum's car saying "I'm so excited!"

And on the very last day of campaigning, Jeremy Corbyn toured the country, speaking at six rallies, and ending in his home area of Islington:

The turnout in Islington was hard to estimate - maybe around 3,000 - because people were in both the ticket-only rally inside the Union Chapel and there were also crowds outside, coming and going.

The atmosphere was remarkable, like a football match or a rock concert. People stood for two hours or more, singing, chanting, and when Jeremy Corbyn arrived in his tour bus the roar was huge - showing huge enthusiasm for political ideas!

Around 40 Socialist Party members were there to support the event and Corbyn's policies, and we sold 248 copies of the Socialist. As people were leaving they were carrying our leaflets, keen to take them home to look at later.

The Socialist Party has been fighting hard to help spread Jeremy Corbyn's anti-austerity message and bring him as much support as possible. Jeremy himself has done well during the election campaign - on television, in interviews and at his rallies.

His bold manifesto has attracted more and more support as the campaign has progressed, especially from young people, but whether he's had enough time to build this up to achieve a victory is still unpredictable.

Eve of poll opinion polls vary from one from Qriously that gives Labour a small lead over the Tories to several that give the Tories a sizeable lead - eg 7 points according to YouGov or 10 points according to ComRes.

- Look at our website on Friday evening to read our analysis of the result.
 - Whatever the election result, come to our post-election public meetings to discuss the result and the next tasks for the workers' movement: [Click here for a list of them](#).
 - You are also welcome to join us on our street stalls or just come to them to talk about the result - [list here](#).
-

This version of this article was first posted on the Socialist Party website on 8 June 2017 and may vary slightly from the version subsequently printed in The Socialist.

Rallying in support of Corbyn's policies in Leeds

Iain Dalton, Leeds Socialist Party

It was standing room only at the Leeds Socialist Party pre-election rally on Monday night. Over 35 people heard Socialist Party and Labour Party members put the case for the socialist policies in Corbyn's manifesto and how we can fight to kick out the Tories, both in terms of the present government, but also their echoes in the Labour Party who wish to undermine the left-wing shift under Corbyn.

West Yorkshire FBU branch secretary Dave Williams kicked off proceedings pointing out the longstanding links between the FBU and Jeremy Corbyn and shadow chancellor John McDonnell. FBU members have been enthused by the alternative they are offering, including at their recent conference.

He also commented on the savage cuts to fire services over the last period, with councillors often celebrating the replacing of two fire stations by one new one as a step forward! The FBU brigade committee had backed TUSC candidates in the past against such cutters, and unfortunately, while Corbyn's election hasn't led to a change in the policy of Labour councillors who are on Fire Authorities, the FBU will continue to oppose cuts to fire services.

Maddy Steeds from the Socialist Students national steering committee, pointed out the huge enthusiasm for Corbyn's policies amongst young people. Thousands flocked to hear him in Hyde Park in Leeds a few weeks ago. Raising the minimum wage and scrapping tuition fees are among Corbyn's policies that offer young people a vision of a better future.

Jackie Murphy, a campaigner with #HandsOffHRI (Huddersfield Royal Infirmary), explained how her involvement in [that campaign](#) had opened her eyes. From getting involved in the events group of the campaign she became more and more involved, and seeing Jeremy Corbyn speaking at the 4th March national demo co-initiated by the campaign was a turning point. She's gone from a previous Tory voter to backing Corbyn - saying: "I've always been a socialist but didn't realise it!"

Jackie also paid tribute to Socialist Party members for supporting the campaign from the beginning. A HandsOffHRI activist later commented from the floor that campaigners have felt insulted that Theresa May called them 'scaremongering' on her recent visit to the area and demanded that if that is the case then May should announce that the hospital will not face any cuts.

Socialist Party deputy general secretary and former Labour NEC member, Hannah Sell, was the last of the main speakers. Hannah commented on how Theresa May's disastrous election campaign has really been a continuation of the many u-turns her government made on schools, national insurance and other issues over the past year; in reality this was the real reason for calling the election.

Hannah commented that although many Labour Party members were despondent when the election was called, the Socialist Party pointed out that "Corbyn could win with bold socialist policies". His election campaign has far surpassed what most people expected and has demonstrated that socialist policies aren't only popular with those who voted twice in the Labour leadership elections, but with the public as a whole, even despite the vicious attacks on him.

Outrageously some Labour MPs have tried to sabotage the campaign even in recent days. Joan Ryan, MP for Enfield North, sent a letter out to voters contrasting Theresa May favourably with Corbyn! Such attacks won't stop with the conclusion of the election, although Corbyn has done well.

Socialist Party members welcome the opportunity to fight for socialist policies in this election and will be out alongside others, after the election in order to continue that fight either to back up a Corbyn-led government, or to fight new rounds of Tory austerity.

There was a varied discussion from the floor, with many people raising the need to keep fighting against austerity, whether new attacks from a Tory government, or to back up Corbyn in fighting to get his policies implemented.

A local teacher raised the issue of Islamophobia being whipped up by May and the Tories, along with Ukip, which in his school - where most pupils are from a Pakistani background - has pupils worried both about future terror attacks, but also the racist backlash of abuse and assaults that could accompany them.

A finance appeal by Leeds Socialist Party branch Fighting Fund organiser Amy Cousens, pointing out the various campaigns Socialist Party members are playing a key role in across Yorkshire, raised over £350 and several people bought copies of the new book 'From Militant to the Socialist Party' which was referenced by a number of speakers during the meeting.

Those attending came away enthused to fight for a Corbyn-led government in the last few days before polling day and to further build the struggle for a socialist society in the coming struggles.

This version of this article was first posted on the Socialist Party website on 6 June 2017 and may vary slightly from the version subsequently printed in The Socialist.

Large turnout to hear Jeremy Corbyn in Reading

Neil Adams

Around 1,000 people gathered in the glorious sunshine at Rivermead Leisure Centre in Reading on Wednesday 31st May to listen to Jeremy Corbyn speak. This was arranged at very short notice and not in a central location, so the turnout was therefore all the more encouraging.

Among other things, Corbyn highlighted his [commitment to ending zero hour contracts](#) and to providing employment rights from day one. He also confirmed that a Labour government under his leadership would no longer charge for employment tribunals.

He highlighted the difficulties for people with family members who have mental health issues. He reiterated the improvements to social care and mental health services that are part of the much needed policies in his manifesto to protect and fully fund the NHS. These and all of his pledges received massive applause from the enthusiastic crowd.

There was a really positive vibe and a sense that people were open to socialist ideas. This was reflected in the sale of 88 copies of the Socialist, thanks to the 10 dedicated Socialist Party members who turned up at short notice. Many more people received leaflets advertising our own pre-election rally this Sunday in support of Corbyn (details below).

The Reading and Bracknell Socialist Party branch has been consistently campaigning against cuts to local services for a number of years and is the only left group locally putting forward a socialist alternative at every opportunity.

We have embraced Corbyn's leadership from the start and support any reforms that will improve the lives of working people. It is really uplifting to see the hard work pay off and the increased interest in our party

locally. We look forward to the coming period of increased political consciousness and determination of people to fight for a better future. We will continue to play a key role within this movement!

Rally for Socialism: Tories Out! Corbyn In!

Sunday 4th June 2017, 2pm

RISC, London Street, Reading, RG1 4PS

- Speakers: Claire Laker-Mansfield, Socialist Party; Sara Gillman, healthworker; Annie, Reading Socialist Students and Berkshire Schools Funding Campaign.

All welcome!

This version of this article was first posted on the Socialist Party website on 1 June 2017 and may vary slightly from the version subsequently printed in The Socialist.

France - Huge voter abstention belies Macron's 'landslide' election

Clare Doyle, Committee for a Workers' International

Amid the trumpeting about a massive vote for the party of the new president, Emmanuel Macron, in the first round of France's parliamentary election on 11 June, a deep malaise pervades French society. This is indicated by a record number of voters staying away from the polling booths; less than half of the electorate turned out.

Macron's newly formed party, LREM (La République en Marche), may end up after the 18 June second round with 445 of the Assembly's 577 seats - ["potentially the biggest majority since president Charles de Gaulle's conservatives and allies got 80% of seats in 1968" as Reuters commented](#) (after 58% of the votes in the first round). But that was on a nearly 80% turnout.

It should also be remembered that it was a Pyrrhic victory as, within a year, a national referendum on which de Gaulle staked his future went against him and he retired from political life.

The 6.3 million votes for LREM is [far less than Hollande achieved in 2012](#) (10.3 million for the presidential majority in the first round) [or Sarkozy in 2007](#) (11 million).

Macron was the first choice for president of less than 25% of voters. His vote of just 16% of those eligible to vote is actually less than the proportion of Britain's electorate who voted for the party of the hapless Theresa May.

The right-wing Republicans came second with 15.77% and Le Pen's Front National got 13.2%. Marine le Pen came top of the poll in her northern constituency of Henin-Beaumont (North), but may be defeated by the kind of 'anti' vote which saw Macron defeat her in the second round of the presidential election.

Her party could end up with no more than four seats in parliament. 15 are needed to form a parliamentary group with rights to be able to speak at each session and propose laws.

France Insoumise is the organisation of Jean-Luc Mélenchon who, with his pro-worker and anti-capitalist programme, won seven million votes in the presidential election, nearly reaching the second round.

It, too, is hoping for enough seats to form a parliamentary group. With 11% of the first round votes for parliament, it fared better than the ill-fated so-called Socialist Party (PS).

The vote for the previously governing pro-capitalist PS collapsed from 29.35% to 7.4% (9.5% with allies).

The party's presidential candidate, Francois Hamon, was defeated in his constituency as was the PS secretary, Jean-Christophe Cambadélis, who acknowledged that the first round marked an "unprecedented" setback for the party which was expected to get between 30 and 40 seats in total.

The future of the party is in the balance. As Gauche Révolutionnaire - the CWI affiliate in France - has explained, there could be a three-way split and an eventual disappearance of the one-time social democratic party that had both the president and a parliamentary majority until two months ago.

It was the refusal of the PS to take on the French bosses and the banks and make them pay for the economic crisis that saw workers, young people and sections of the middle class involved in a mass movement of strikes and demonstrations in the spring of last year.

Mass discontent

Macron, with a background in banking and no party allegiance, had been taken into the Hollande government as Minister for the Economy to assist in pushing through the deeply unpopular changes to the country's labour law.

Now, as president, he has declared his intention to continue on this path and get new laws ensuring 'flexible labour markets' rammed through by presidential measures in June and ready for full adoption in September.

The trade union leaders have warned him to 'go slowly' on these plans, and there is some talk of protests in June, before the big shutdown of the summer holidays. But much more should be done.

Macron has been presented in the capitalist press internationally as neither left nor right, but his programme is blatantly pro-business - continuing attacks on the welfare state while lowering taxes on the rich.

He has also announced plans for France's state of emergency to be permanently written into law.

As Rachel Mahé of Gauche Révolutionnaire said in a post-election speech to those who supported her candidacy on behalf of France Insoumise in Drôme, southern France: "Macron's policies will amount to a 'social coup d'état'. Mass resistance must be built from today onwards!"

Rachel got a very creditable 10% of the vote - the highest score of the 'left' candidates in her constituency - far more than the Communist Party (who had refused to make an alliance with her, despite the proposal of a joint ticket) or the PS.

There can be all sorts of deals and realignments for the second round of elections on 18 June. There will be a big push for more people to go out and vote.

But, as Gauche Révolutionnaire has said, given the mass discontent among workers, the continuing industrial battles taking place, the counter-reforms in education and the lack of jobs for young people, the more important battles will be in the workplaces and on the streets.

The political follow-up consists in elaborating how a new left force can build on the success of Mélenchon's movement and arguing for clear socialist policies that can gather support and destroy the apparent invincibility of the Macron phenomenon.

International news in brief

USA: Socialist Alternative summer school

Over 350 members of Socialist Alternative from across the USA met recently for its first ever national summer school. It heard from Socialist Alternative Seattle city councillor Kshama Sawant and Seattle members about their battles for affordable housing. Also, Ginger Jentzen and Minneapolis members spoke [about their recent victory for a \\$15 an hour minimum wage](#).

In addition there were discussions on US politics, 'Trumpcare', building a new broad party, the role of a revolutionary party, and debate on a Marxist approach to fighting oppression. Members of the CWI also spoke. Everyone left energized to go back to their areas to build campaigns and fight for a socialist world.

CWI broadcasts new channel - SocialistWorld

In its [opening broadcast by SocialistWorld visual](#) - a new anti-capitalist video channel offering regular comment and analysis of the world struggle against capitalism - Tony Saunois of the CWI speaks to Andre Ferrari, from LSR (Liberdade, Socialismo e Revolução, CWI Brazil) about the explosive movement developing there against the illegitimate and corrupt Temer government.

Sweden demo 'for safety and welfare'

On 5 June, Rattvissepartiet Socialisterna (RS - CWI Sweden) members marched again against the deadly violence which recently claimed the life of a teacher in Gothenburg. All our proposals for the demonstration were accepted by 60 trade unions and associations that backed the initiative.

RS members participated - at the front, in the tenants' union and our own CWI bloc - on the demo.

NSSN conference: workers' action to kick out the Tories

Carl Harper, CWU shop steward (personal capacity)

For the first time in the eight years that I have been a representative and activist with the Communication Workers Union (CWU), there is a Labour leader who is unapologetic in his support of trade unionism.

Jeremy Corbyn recognises and respects the historic links between the Labour Party and the trade unions and has joined union members on picket lines and demonstrations during his time as an MP.

In the build up to Corbyn's magnificent general election campaign, he said of Labour under his leadership: ["Not only will we repeal the Trade Union Bill... we will extend people's rights in the workplace and give employees a real voice in the organisations they work for."](#)

Compare this to the leaders before him that have disgracefully kept in place anti-trade union legislation introduced by Thatcher.

Despite the huge swing to Labour, particularly with support from workers and young people, we now face a 'coalition of chaos' [with the Tories being propped up by the Democratic Unionist Party](#).

Fresh

This year's [National Shop Stewards Network \(NSSN\) conference](#) provides an opportunity to harness the mood of those workers and youth to make sure this weak government doesn't last and to propel that momentum into a fresh movement within the trade unions.

NSSN conference brings together representatives and activists from across the working class - NHS, education, factories and offices, of the private and public sectors.

Given the current situation, this is likely to have a feeling of a 'council of war', coordinating how best to mobilise the power of the union membership.

As a CWU representative, I will be putting forward ideas of how best to defend ourselves against the attacks on our pensions and the chaotic approach to 'efficiency savings' following privatisation, which Corbyn has pledged to reverse.

Plans for demonstrations, preparations for industrial action, and an agenda of support for Corbyn's policies will be openly discussed in a comradely and democratic manner.

Such an agenda, formed from rank-and-file members and activists, will push any trade union leaders reluctant to engage in the fight towards action and gain support from across the union movement.

I recommend not only attending yourself but inviting all activists from your workplace. If organised we can defeat the 'weak and wobbly' Tory party and lay the basis for a pro-worker Corbyn government in the near future.

National Shop Stewards Network conference 2017

The 11th annual National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) conference will be on Saturday 1 July 2017 from 11am in Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL.

It is open to all trade union and anti-cuts campaigners.

Speakers include: Len McCluskey, Unite general secretary (invited), Ronnie Draper, BFAWU general secretary, Steve Gillan, POA general secretary, Chris Baugh, PCS assistant general secretary, Sean Hoyle, RMT President, Linda Taaffe, NSSN national secretary, Rob Williams, NSSN national chair.

- See shopstewards.net for more information and updates

GMB conference: angry mood from delegates not reflected by leadership

Kim Hendry, GMB union PCS branch and GMB conference delegate (personal capacity)

Up to 800 delegates met in Plymouth from 4-6 June for the 100th congress of the general union GMB.

Delegates heard a wide range of motions, although the packed timetable - two days shorter due to the snap general election - meant there was even less debate than usual.

The most controversial motion was the leadership report on energy, which included qualified support for fracking. While the report was carried, a growing number of delegates were confident enough to express opposition.

Two motions which sought very modest improvements to rectify the democratic deficit in congress debate were passed, against the wishes of the leadership.

Two important motions - one setting out a partial, fighting programme to defend the NHS, was carried with qualification. The other calling for mandatory reselection of Labour MPs, was defeated. respectively. The reselection motion was moved by Socialist Party member Tony Davidson.

Against these disappointing but predictable developments, delegates agreed a range of progressive policies on such issues as defending migrants, fighting racism and Islamophobia, and increasing the diversity of GMB reps.

Gig economy

There was also a report on precarious work and the gig economy including a new GMB survey which found that one-third of all UK workers are now on zero-hour contracts and other forms of insecure employment.

As in recent years, the unifying theme of many motions was the appalling human impact of Tory austerity cuts, both for workers and service users.

NHS porters, ambulance drivers, teaching assistants, council staff and care home workers - angry, demoralised and stressed - lined up to tell their stories.

But as usual, there was a striking disconnect between the problems identified and the lack of a clear programme of action.

Much of this can be attributed to the GMB leadership, which yet again failed to call for coordinated industrial action and campaigning with other unions. The GMB response to austerity is to wait for a Labour government.

But while this prospect is now a real possibility, after the general election upheaval, it's no thanks to GMB which supported Owen Smith in last year's Labour leadership challenge, despite 2016 congress delegates overwhelmingly backing Corbyn.

LSE victory

The [United Voices of the World \(UVW\) union](#) has announced that striking cleaners at the London School of Economics (LSE) will be brought in-house and become employees of LSE from Spring 2018! This will ensure they get, among other things, 41 days annual leave, sick pay, plus proper employer pension contributions.

This is a significant victory and comes on the back of an awe-inspiring ten-month battle for dignity and equality waged by the cleaners.

This dispute saw the largest number of cleaners in UK history strike at a single workplace, and the cleaners take seven days of strike action in total. There were also several protests and two occupations through the course of this dispute.

The cleaners were heavily supported by the student-led 'Justice for LSE Cleaners Campaign' and the wider trade union movement.

Window strikers joined by second plant

Alex Moore and Sean Brogan, Torbay and Exeter Socialist Party

Socialist Party members visited the picket lines at Sierra Glass in Paignton on 5 June and showed the strikers [the previous report in the Socialist](#). It was handed around and read enthusiastically in the nearby café and I was repeatedly told: "This is the best and most accurate account of the dispute so far."

Workers were particularly pleased we had highlighted that there had been no pay rise since 2008 as this is not being mentioned elsewhere. To reinforce the point I was introduced to a striker who had been there for 30

years and was still on the minimum wage.

Growing

The mood on the picket line is still good, especially as workers at a sister company, DB Glass, in nearby Newton Abbot are now also joining the strike.

We believe it is essential that direct links are made by the strikers at both plants and have offered to help. We also suggested that the workers form a strike committee.

Exploited agency workers organise

A theme of the 2017 general election was insecure and precarious work. International multi-billion pound company Procter and Gamble has a long history of union-busting which creates these conditions.

That continues today in its UK operations. As part of its cost-cutting strategy it retains the services of numerous agencies.

Agency workers report to the Socialist that they're treated as second class, singled out for enhanced scrutiny, and excluded from benefits like bonus and pension schemes, discounts, healthcare, sickness pay, and use of gym facilities.

Valuable agency workers are constantly reminded of their second-tier status, with no rights and no opportunities for advancement. Procter and Gamble pay top prices to long-term contractor and agency fatcats, while workers providing valuable services receive a derisory fraction.

Unite

Agency workers say: "This is demoralising and hard to accept. We're also precluded from addressing our concerns to the company directly.

"This means that problems go unresolved, creating stress and tension in an already difficult environment. We have joined Unite the Union, and look to link up with other Procter and Gamble agency workers across Britain."

The fight goes on - let's make it a socialist fight to win

Sarah Sachs-Eldridge, Socialist Party national organiser

The election showed that socialism is popular and tens of thousands of people have drawn the conclusion that it's time to get organised to fight for their future.

[Jeremy Corbyn's manifesto](#) inspired people that an alternative to the austerity nightmare is possible. That a world where a home, a job, an education and decent public services are not the stuff of dreams but something we can fight for.

That has been linked to the idea of a socialist alternative and thousands of young people now identify as socialist or are interested in learning about socialism.

It used to be that the idea of joining a political party was as attractive as a bucket of sick. By the time you read this 200,000 people will probably have joined Labour since the election. They will have to get organised to

fight the right wing who cannot be trusted. Blairite horror Peter Mandelson has already called on them to back up Theresa May over Brexit - just when she's at her weakest!

We now need the biggest possible socialist voice to help this movement win - by saying what needs to be done.

Our job as socialists is to continue to say how workers and young people can consolidate the victory so far - and build on it.

That includes ideas about how to transform the Labour Party into a democratic mass party of workers and youth, introducing reselection of candidates, fighting for a federal party that socialists can join, demanding Labour councils stop passing on Tory cuts - all in preparation for the next general election.

'For the many not the few' means fighting for a socialist transformation of society on an international basis to take the wealth and power out of the hands of the billionaire bosses and bankers and start planning democratically how to meet the needs of all.

We need you to strengthen the socialist voice bringing these ideas into the movement.

Racist EDL humiliated by Liverpool workers for third time

Matt Gordon, Liverpool Socialist Party

The far right was once again completely humiliated in Liverpool on 3 June.

The racist English Defence League (EDL) had attempted to march through the city, attempting to whip up hatred in the aftermath of recent terrorist atrocities. They gave no real reason for the march except taking on what the EDL called "leftie antifa land," hoping the third time would be different to [their last two attempts in recent years](#).

That backfired. A national mobilisation could only gather 30 to 40 hardened EDL racists, countered by over 1,000 anti-racist protesters, made up of working class people, young and old, bolstered throughout the day by passers-by who wanted to play a part in stopping the EDL.

Confusion caused by the police, who initially tried to kettle the counter-protest, allowed the EDL to leave the pub where they had assembled and begin their march - albeit down a back street. They could have been prevented from doing even this - but nonetheless, they did not march more than 200 yards before they were stopped dead in their tracks.

The police massively outnumbered the EDL by as many as ten to one, and were determined to allow them to march their planned route, a ridiculous mile-long march directly through the city centre. Police often seek to facilitate far-right marches, officially in the name of 'free speech', but in reality to intimidate ordinary people and discourage them from taking part in demonstrations.

The size and determination of the counter-protest, including groups of protesters lying down in front of police horses, made sure the EDL was instead taken back to the train station and bundled out of the city, completely humiliated and embarrassed yet again.

Its small numbers show how fractured and insignificant the EDL has become, and how little echo its ideas have in society. However, that is due to the continued resistance they have faced whenever they try to organise, despite the whipping up of racism and division by pro-capitalist politicians and the right-wing press.

The [report in the Sun newspaper](#), rightly boycotted throughout Liverpool, was widely shared by the EDL for presenting an 'alternative reality' version of the day. It implied counter-protesters were violent and sailed close

to tacit endorsement of the EDL itself.

The Liverpool Echo initially reported that the EDL was only stopped after completing its planned city centre march - [although has now corrected this](#) after we contacted them. The reality is that the EDL was stopped and turned back by a mass protest of mainly working class people.

The Echo also praises the role of Blairite Mayor Joe Anderson in standing up to the far right, [despite him being responsible for the austerity](#) that creates the miserable conditions where the far right can thrive. None of the 20 Socialist Party members present saw Anderson on the day.

Working class people have the power to stop the far right, and to build a mass campaign to end racist division and its causes. There was large and visible support for Jeremy Corbyn on the demonstration, including chants of his name. This shows there is a mood to go beyond protest - to build a movement to rebuild jobs, homes and services, and fight for a real alternative to austerity, terrorism, racism and war.

The demonstration could have been much larger if organised by [the trade unions, which also have a key role to play](#) in stewarding and protecting such protests. The unions must look at the needs of local communities to organise a defence against the violence and bigotry propagated by groups like the EDL.

Good work for a mere three hours - and another complete defeat for the EDL.

This version of this article was first posted on the Socialist Party website on 6 June 2017 and may vary slightly from the version subsequently printed in The Socialist.

From Militant to the Socialist Party

By Peter Taaffe general secretary Socialist Party

The general election was a choice for those opposed to Tory austerity.

The battle within Labour rages between Tony Blair's legacy and those seeking to continue it, and supporters of Jeremy Corbyn who want to see working-class political representation. In this battle, the example of Militant has been a touchstone, showing how it is possible for working-class people to organise and win.

From Militant to the Socialist Party covers developments from the New Labour takeover to the first rumblings of the world economic crisis of 2007-08, and is the sequel to The Rise of Militant. In the aftermath of the collapse of the Stalinist regimes, capitalism's representatives proclaimed 'the end of history'.

But the struggles of workers and young people continued. From the Liverpool Dockers' strike to the mass movements against the invasion of Iraq, From Militant to the Socialist Party charts the fightback, and highlights the lessons of these movements for today.

From Militant to the Socialist Party offers unique insight into how Marxists organised, the programme and strategy put forward at key stages of the struggle.

What you think

"Just finished From Militant to the Socialist Party. It is a masterpiece. While focusing on the 1997-2007 period, using the struggles and history of Militant/the Socialist Party to analyse the convulsions and development of history and class struggle, it also draws the lessons. It connects the thread clearly to what is happening in Britain and the world right now, and with the movement behind Jeremy Corbyn and the struggle against austerity. Get yours today!"

João Félix

"I collected my book at the Birmingham meeting on 30 May and was up till 1am reading it. I am really enjoying it, and not just because I was there! It's really readable."

Claire Wilkins

"I learnt a lot reading Peter Taaffe's new book. It is an excellent follow up to the Rise of Militant and can be read and studied again and again. The book says that in 1997 there were 217 millionaires in parliament. Several weeks ago the Victoria Derbyshire show on BBC showed a short film of two women visiting parliament. These two women had never voted in their lives. One of them said that the problem was that the MPs are out of touch. They don't know what it is like to struggle. I don't know how many millionaire MPs are in parliament today but I'm sure those remarks made by those women are shared by many who are struggling to make ends meet in austerity Britain today."

Chris Fernandez

"The book is a great opportunity to understand the importance of organising, especially for young comrades. The analysis and lessons are vital."

Nadi

From Militant to the Socialist Party

- £15 from leftbooks.co.uk
 - Or call 020 8988 8789; write to PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD
 - Please make any cheques payable to 'Socialist Books'
-

<http://www.socialistparty.org.uk/articles/25635>