The Tories have won a substantial parliamentary majority. Boris Johnson’s victory speech talked about being a ‘one-nation Conservative’ and promised increased spending on the NHS. This is a lie. When Maggie Thatcher won in 1979 she quoted Frances of Assisi, promising to bring harmony and hope to Britain. Instead, she ruled ruthlessly and attacked the working class. Johnson will do the same and rule not for the ‘whole nation’ but the billionaires.

His manifesto promised an immediate assault on the rights of rail workers to strike. This, combined with the recent brutal anti-democratic court rulings against the postal workers’ union, the CWU, gives a glimpse of the attacks on workers’ rights to come. But Johnson’s attacks on trade unions and the working class as a whole can be defeated. The seeming strength of Johnson’s government will be shattered by coming events.

In 1987 Margaret Thatcher had a majority of 102. Within 12 months the campaign of mass non-payment against the poll tax, led by Militant, now the Socialist Party, had begun. It turned the Iron Lady into iron filings, forcing her resignation in 1990. Today, the Tory party is far weaker than it was then. It is bitterly divided, and Johnson has only been able to win by distancing himself from his own party, using populist rhetoric to falsely claim he is standing up for ‘the people’. This was a ‘snapshot’, a very ephemeral result, with even Johnson having to acknowledge workers had only lent him their votes.

In the immediate period after the election there is bound to be bitter disappointment, even despair, from workers and young people who can see what a Johnson government will mean. None-theless, their anger will find an outlet and mass struggles - like those taking place in France, Chile and many other countries - will come to Britain. The workers’ movement needs an urgent council of war to plan a fight back against Johnson’s attacks, firstly in support of the postal, rail and other workers currently in dispute, and in order to harness the anger and give it an organised form.

A vital part of that resistance is a fight for socialist policies. Already the capitalist politicians and commentators, and the Labour right wing, are lining up to argue that Labour’s poor result was caused by Corbyn’s left-wing manifesto. This is nonsense.

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We should expect nothing less from the mass media, which is mainly owned by billionaires or, in the case of the BBC, an arm of the capitalist state which has always ultimately defended its interests.

As far back as the 1936 general strike it claimed to be ‘independent’ while bashing speeches from the Labour leader and even the Archbish- op of Canterbury - because he was considered too conciliatory. As 1945 showed, however, with a clear fighting programme it is possible to cut across the lies of the capitalist media.

Blairite sabotage

In this election the capitalist class had another important ally in the battle to defeat Corbyn: the Blairites. 15 ex-Labour MPs took out huge adverts in northern papers the day before the election urging people not to vote for Corbyn. This open sabotage was only one example: many MPs who stayed inside the Labour Party but openly undermined Corbyn, failing either to mention him or the manifesto in their leaflets.

Already this election is being compared to Labour’s defeat under Mi- chael Foot in 1983. On that occasion it wasn’t the left but the right-wing traitors - the SDP - who left Labour and split the vote, which was the main reason for the defeat. This time their successors, the Blairites, were mostly working to defeat Corbyn from inside the party.

However, it was the compromises that the Labour leadership showed the Blairites that are the central reason for this defeat, above all on Brexit. swathes of working-class Leave-vot- ing areas saw Labour as a ‘Remain’ party. Even right-wing Sunday Times commentator, Dominic Lawson, rec- ognised this last week, declaring, ‘La- bour’s counsellors blew this, not its leftie leader’.

Lawson went on to state the obvi- ous: “It’s the centrists, supported by the former Tory Blairite by-elections, and his erstwhile spin-doctor Alistair Campbell, who dragged the party from its policy of respecting the result of the 2016 referendum.”

He goes on to point out that Corbyn never supported the EU, in order to convince pro-EU Labour MPs to join a shadow cabinet reluctantly agreed to campaign for Remain in the referendum, and has made concess- ions after concession ever since.

Rage against system

As the Socialist Party has consistently argued, the working-class vote for Brexit was a cry of rage against every- thing they had suffered in a decade of austerity. Had Corbyn, as we did, tak- en a different position in the EU refer- endum and opposed a new Tory-Blairist nacional- ists would not have had the space to dominate the Brexit campaign in the way they did.

He should have argued in 2016 for a vote for Brexit on the grounds of pos- sing the EU bosses’ club - with its pro-privatisation and anti-working class laws, standing instead for a new collaboration of the peoples of Eu- rope on a socialist basis.

Even after this mistake, the 2017 snap election showed how promising it was to respect the EU referendum, and negotiate a Brexit in workers’ inter- ests, could win working-class Brexit voters. More than a million people who had previously voted UKip voted Labour in that election.

This failure to grasp Corbyn’s neu- trality, combined with months of seeming to collaborate with parliament with pro-capitalist Remainers - Jo Swinson, who has been touted as the only can- didate who could ‘get Brexit done’ - a considerable number of Brexit- voting professionals have demanded we remain. Remain voters who were fed up of the Brexit paralysus and just wanted it ‘sorted’, lent their vote to Johnson, often holding their noses to do so. It will be sorely disappointed.

The capitalist class, the majority of whom to remain as closely aligned to the EU as possible, are hop- ing against hope that - having won a clear majority - Johnson can now be pressured into negotiating a final deal in their interests.

There are more than 130 Re- main Tory backbenchers, facing no threat that Johnson may do what they are calling for, and it will almost cer- tainly mean extending the transition period beyond the end of next year. That would reinforce the Tories’ hand, and shatter the lie that Johnson will ‘get Brexit done’.

However Johnson plays it, his Brexiteer 보러 이동 Brexit claims of being anti-austerity, nationalising the banking sector, restoring the rights of the working class, defending the in- terests of workers, are a joke. As his Chancellor, George Osborne, showed that the government’s actions will be an important step.

The most important measure, how- ever, would be to take a clear and firm position for Labour to be a real anti- austerity party in words and deeds, with no place for MPs and councillors who implement Tory attacks on the working class.

Unfortunately, at least on election night, this was not the approach of the Johnson regime. They urgently need to halt the retreat, and stand and fight. Even if they do not, the burning need for a mass workers’ party will remain and the task of creating one, in one form or other, will be posed as part of the mighty battles to defeat the John- son government. The Socialist Party will play a key role in this fight.

In the coming turmoil there will be a burning need for a political vehicle to represent the working class: a mass workers’ party programme against the Blairites’ attacks - should be immediately called to discuss a programme to transform Labour into a workers’ party with a clear socialist programme.

Democratization of the party - in- cluding restoring the rights of the trade unions, introducing mandatory reselection, and organising on a fed- eral basis with the Socialist Party and others encouraged to affiliate - would be an important step.

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