

Socialists in Jeremy Corbyn?s Labour Party

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Jeremy Corbyn?s overwhelming victory in the Labour leadership election, 59.5 per cent - 251,417 votes - opened the door to a revolution in the Labour Party. The legacy Blairite candidate Liz Kendall took a derisory 4.5 per cent, while the centrist candidates Andy Burnham and Yvette Cooper managed just 19 and 17 per cent respectively. Membership has doubled as hundreds of thousands add their voice to Corbyn?s call for a break from the past.

Over 16,000 people volunteered in some capacity for the ?Corbyn for Leader? campaign. Between 5 May and 5 October 183,658 people joined the party. Over 100,000 registered as supporters and 80,000 as affiliated trade union members. The primary system, allowing registered supporters to vote, boosted support from the left but the decisive moment came when all the contenders bar one obeyed interim leader Harriet Harman?s instruction to abstain on the second reading of the Tories? welfare bill.

Corbyn won the election because his campaign struck a chord with hundreds of thousands of people who wanted to see Labour abandon the austerity consensus and put up real opposition to cuts, privatisation and war in Parliament and on the streets. His longstanding identification with the trade unions, particularly with workers on strike, contrasted with the previous three Labour leaders who went out of their way to condemn strikes and limit the trade unions? influence on policy - although they were happy to be bankrolled by them.

Joining with intent

The scale of his victory and the continued rise in membership, prompted by Corbyn?s appeal for all socialists to join or rejoin, represents a major political turn by a broad layer of activists from the labour and progressive movement, are united whose unifying factor is a desire for Labour to oppose cuts and set out a positive alternative.

There is no question that, in this context, it?s right to be in the Labour Party. This is where the major political battle to see whether it is possible to have an anti-austerity, pro-workers rights, pro-refugees party and government in Britain is taking place. The course of this struggle will set the agenda for socialists in the coming years. Groups that stand aside, hoping it will fail so they can return to their routine, deserve to be derided as sects.

But socialists would be wasting our time if we simply cheered on Jeremy Corbyn, his shadow chancellor John McDonnell and their (admittedly few) allies in the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP). We need to remember that these figures are no longer just leaders of a left wing faction of the party, but leaders of a PLP and a shadow cabinet that is actively hostile to their policies. The forces that supported or gained preference and seniority under Blair and Brown still control the PLP, the party apparatus and local councils. The recent slight dip in membership shows that constant sniping by the right wing is succeeding in discouraging some new members from staying to fight.

Right wing MPs, councillors and even trade union leaders will all lean on the new leadership to triangulate, trim and eventually renege on the radical proposals set out in Corbyn's leadership campaign.

Corbyn and McDonnell have already made compromises with the centre and right of the party. Some are tactical and inevitable; others infringe on the principles they campaigned for in summer 2015. The reported rapprochement with the former Party leader Ed Miliband could increase this pressure. If Corbyn goes further, i.e. for a 'big tent' alliance with former Miliband supporters like Jon Cruddas MP and the Compass think tank, this would block the leftwards momentum of his election campaign.

Socialists within Labour, especially the huge number of new members, naturally support the new leader against those who would oust him if they dared. But that doesn't mean they have to make or endorse the same compromises made by our leaders. Without pressure from our side – the side that supports a genuine struggle against austerity, that supports workers on strike, that is opposed to the wars waged by our ruling class – the concessions to the right will continue to mount up until Corbyn and McDonnell are little more than figureheads, tolerated by the PLP majority that remains firmly in control of the party's policy until they judge can get rid of them.

If we want to prevent the fruits of Corbyn's victory being squandered, we need to organise ourselves around a clear perspective of what is possible, what is not possible, and what is the most effective way to achieve our goals.

Our goals

A united front of trade unions, working class organisations and progressive campaigns is needed to bring millions together in a campaign to defend jobs and services. The influx of new members inspired by Corbyn's opposition to austerity in combination with the party's roots in the trade unions means the goal of a united anti-cuts movement is within reach.

Local councils of action which draw in delegates from trade unions, community groups and anti-cuts campaigns could enable the local community to unite around a strategy for fighting cuts, overcoming the sectarian divisions that have obstructed meaningful unity for years.

These bodies are urgently needed to help unite communities in opposition to Labour councils cutting their services and demolishing their homes. The influx of enthusiastic members can take advantage of Labour's roots in the communities and its links with trade unionists to make these proposals a reality.

The Corbyn revolution has brought hundreds of thousands into debate over the nature of the Labour Party, its past victories and betrayals, its relationship with the labour movement and the working class as a whole. In short, people are debating what the Labour Party's programme should be, how it could address people's immediate needs and how it could achieve permanent improvements.

All wings and factions in the Labour Party have their own answer to these questions. As socialists, our short answer is the creation of a party with a programme for the expropriation of capital and the socialisation of the economy.

But we think that members can only have a useful debate over what programme and which perspective to adopt if we are at the same time engaged in a thoroughgoing struggle for the democratisation of the party. The withering of Labour's grassroots, which accelerated after 2001 under Blair, Brown and Miliband, stems from the suppression of its internal democracy. This is true both at national and local level. It has produced MPs and councillors willing to sacrifice working class gains and instead appeal to the individualistic values of middle class Tory and Lib Dem voters.

A central focus for the left will be the need to defend the right to criticise and to oppose politically motivated witch-hunts. It is instructive that those full of praise for parliamentary democracy are also those who always try to suppress workers' democracy, i.e. representatives answerable to and recallable by those who elected them, especially if they break their mandates or manifestos. They always object to control by the party membership, citing their voters as the source of their superior authority voters who can neither recall them nor control them.

In the past union and Labour Party leaders have worked hand in hand to suppress workers' demands and divert them into the dead end of parliamentary committee-rooms. Changing this relationship means changing the relationship between the unions and Labour and changing the relationship between union leaders and the rank and file members.

We will have to find ways to use the grassroots support for Corbyn against the opposition of the right wing union leaders and the inaction and delays of the 'left' leaders. The obvious starting point is to create or revitalise Labour Link structures for affiliated unions and fight for affiliation in other unions. The next is the creation of union-wide and cross-union rank and file organisations to control disputes and elect leaders who will be accountable to the membership. Last but not least, young supporters of Corbyn should press for a major unionisation drive among the unorganised, particularly the many young people in insecure and temporary employment.

Even partial success in just one of these aims would enable trade unionists to add their collective strength to the contest in the decisive events to come.

The vital element linking the struggle for each part of this strategy is the development of a conscious revolutionary current within the Labour Party that, while it supports the left leaders and the unions when they fight the right or are attacked by it, is not afraid to frankly criticise these lefts when they hesitate, retreat or sell-out. We will not revolutionise the British labour movement, political and trade union, without a much greater number of conscious revolutionaries active and organised at every level.

Obstacles we face

After decades of right wing leaderships whose policies have hollowed out the constituencies, restricted internal democracy and alienated the trade unions, overcoming the conservatism and hostility of the entrenched party apparatus, councillors and PLP, is akin to turning around a super-tanker in the middle of the ocean.

The federal character of the Labour Party means we are fighting a war on many fronts. Councillors imposing Tory cuts alienate local residents and make enemies of trade unionists. Trade union leaders funnel members' money into the party, while obstructing a campaign of industrial action to defend jobs and services. The unaccountable Compliance Unit arbitrarily suspends and expels ordinary activists, whilst tolerating disloyal public attacks on the leadership from MPs.

The new Mayor of London is frittering away Labour's mandate for change by praising methods of the deeply hated Blair, and asserting the need to work with (read:??concede?) the Tories.

The Labour right retains its control over the apparatus of the Party and it will take a hard struggle to alter this, at least under peaceful conditions. This is especially the case if new Corbyn supporters are deterred from participating in large numbers in local party structures, either by dull routine or by the hostile attitude of the incumbent officials. Much of the party's full time apparatus was selected during the long years of right wing dominance and constitute a bureaucratic deadweight obstructing the formation of a campaigning

party.

Moreover, armed with the Compliance Unit, the apparatus sees its task as purging as many active and conscious socialists from the new intake (and those lefts who have been members for years) as it can get away with. This Spanish Inquisition, which does not let its victims know the charges against them or argue their case before it, is a gross affront to democracy and John McDonnell was right to call for its dissolution.

The right controls the PLP. As the price of being allowed to settle in as leader, Corbyn has rejected mandatory re-selection of MPs; however, this merely gave the right wing the security and confidence to continue to undermine him. Corbyn appointed a majority of rights and centre-rights to the shadow cabinet who immediately began to brief against him. This culminated in Hilary Benn's 'brilliant' Commons speech in December, advocating the bombing of Syria. It also meant he was unable to get the shadow cabinet to endorse the BMA's junior doctors' strikes. In fact Corbyn has had to continue to 'rebel' against the majority of the PLP and his own Shadow Cabinet.

The Labour right is overwhelmingly dominant in local government where council Labour Groups have their own rules and discipline separate from the local parties that select and elect them. The 17 December letter from Corbyn, McDonnell and Jon Trickett, urging Labour councils, faced with cuts in central government funding, not to set deficit budgets represents another major concession and is alienating those engaged in the resistance to cuts at local level, who should be drawn into the party to strengthen the left.

The promised national campaign against local government cuts - drawing in local councils to a fight against central government cuts - never materialised. Why? Because the local councillors, well networked and influential, don't want to challenge the government. Their role as councillors and their proprietorial attitude to local services means many of them have adopted the outlook of property speculators, and abandoned - if they ever had it - the outlook of the working class tenants and residents.

The right talked openly of challenging Corbyn for the leadership as early as this summer, openly speculating as to whether they could block Corbyn from standing, using their overwhelming majority in the PLP to ensure he doesn't get the support of enough MPs to be nominated. Their main hope was for a disaster at the May local government elections, after which they could strike. Some of them colluded in a plot to launch a public witch-hunt in the press about the Labour Party being overrun by antisemites. This reached a crescendo in the week before the council and mayoral elections, clearly hoping to damage Labour's vote.

The fact that Labour held on to nearly all of its seats on 5 May, winning all four of the Mayoral elections as well as councils in the north and south of England, frustrated the manoeuvres of the right. Even Scottish Labour's lamentable result could not be laid at Corbyn's door. It was clearly the result of the Scottish right's mishandling over many years and the consequent defection of many left wing members to the Scottish nationalists. Both at Holyrood and at Westminster the Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) was able to pose to the left of Labour by stealing Labour's old policies - even though in Scotland it is carrying out an austerity-lite programme.

There is a risk that if, as a result of a turn to political activity (which itself was partly a result of the failures of union resistance in 2011-15), there was a further weakening of trade union resistance to the cuts. The major unions are still showing little signs of renewing the fight, let alone stepping it up, despite strikes like those of the junior doctors, who were supported by Corbyn and McDonnell, while the Shadow Health Secretary Heidi Alexander refused to be seen on a picket line.

There are problems too with Momentum, the new left Labour campaigning group, set up by core members

of Corbyn's election team. While it got off the ground quickly in many localities, it has put off having a national conference to February 2017 and its leadership has failed to organise the most basic tasks of a left wing tendency.

There are few if any propaganda materials; it provides no advice on how to organise against the right; it has failed to organise a serious drive to turn supporters into members and worst of all, it has shied away from taking on the right in political argument. It is vital to move towards a conference and elected structures as soon as is practicable and certainly before next February.

Momentum has shown no propensity to develop policy out of the Corbyn for Leader manifesto. This may in part be because its leadership fears to jump the gun while John McDonnell and his advisors, assorted neo-Keynesian academics economists and journalists, develop one.

To be fair, McDonnell is running a series of 'conferences' open to Labour Party members, with platform speakers and floor contributions. But Momentum seems to have no role in this. Without political education and development and without launching campaigns through local parties wherever possible, or on its own initiative where necessary, alongside anticuts groups and trade unions, Momentum will wither on the vine.

Democratising the Labour Party

Getting Labour to take a leading role in the resistance to austerity in the workplaces and on the streets will mean working to create a united front of the left within the party to fight for Labour Councils to pass no-cuts budgets, and pressing for a united anti-cuts federation of local trade unions, anti-cuts groups and campaigns.

It means insisting that MPs vote against all austerity and war policies and that shadow cabinet members vote in line with party policy and don't undermine the party or its leader in the billionaires' press. It also means fighting for the democratisation of the Labour Party by relaunching the stalled membership drive, drawing the maximum number in local branches and electing left wing branch and constituency officers. It means organising Labour party branches in workplaces where practical. It also means a fight to stop the expulsions and bans on socialists joining or organising within the Labour Party and an end to the witch-hunts.

It means dissolving the Compliance Unit that has expelled and suspended a considerable number of members, without giving them the opportunity to respond to the reasons given for these sanctions. Discipline should be in the hands of party branches, constituencies, the national executive and conference, after a full democratic debate where those accused know the charges, are able to defend themselves in person, and there is an immediate right of appeal to the higher bodies.

Despite Corbyn and McDonnell's concession, there needs to be a fight for the democratic selection of all MPs - including sitting MPs - before a general election plus major reform to the way local councillors are selected and held to account.

The National Policy Forum should be abolished. We should champion the right of local party bodies, affiliated trade unions and socialist societies to submit policy documents and amendments to conference, reinstating the right of CLPs to mandate their conference delegates. Our struggle to democratise the party will have to start by transforming the local constituencies and branches to remove bureaucratic obstacles to any member standing for elected positions, and to ensure that Labour councillors are held accountable to their local parties, not the 'Labour group' of councillors, which acts like a mini-PLP. Branches should decide which way councillors vote on major issues.

The councillors' argument that they were elected by thousands of their constituents not by hundreds of party members is a fraudulent one since a) they were elected on manifesto drawn up by the party, b) their election depended on the many hours put in campaigning by the party members, and on funds raised by them and c) only the party has the potential to maintain its links with the wishes of Labour voters and union supporters, and to use this relationship to hold councillors to account.

New old Labour

Jeremy Corbyn's programme for a future Labour government contrasts dramatically with the austerity-lite policies that lost Ed Miliband and Ed Balls the general election. In 2016, when we are used to hearing every politician repeat the mantra that austerity is inevitable, Corbyn's call for an end to cuts and 'a publicly-led expansion and reconstruction of the economy' sounds ultra-radical.

Yet his proposals are, by past standards, including Labour's own manifestos in the 1940s and from the 1960s to the 1980s, quite modest. He is open enough about this, saying frankly at one leadership campaign rally: 'None of what we have said on this platform today would be seen as remotely exceptional, extreme or left-wing in Germany where they proudly have public investment in all kinds of industries and don't feel ashamed about it.'

Nevertheless it is worth reminding ourselves of the policies that won a landslide election and revitalised a party whose internal life was verging on moribund. His programme centres on increasing public spending, boosting investment in industry, services and construction and stopping the austerity that Labour imposed to pay for the bank bailouts, and the Tories extended to demolish the welfare state.

On the housing crisis Corbyn says a Labour government should encourage and fund major local council building projects. To stop exorbitant rents charged by private landlords these rents will be regulated to a level linked to local average earnings. The bedroom tax and the benefit cap will be abolished. Corbyn has also pledged to eradicate PFI deals from the NHS – albeit with the significant caveat that the contracts would be bought out with taxpayers' money.

He says fighting climate change means the 'socialisation of our energy supply', which can only mean nationalising the oil, gas and electricity companies. This will be a step towards ending the era of fossil fuels, creating a green, resource-efficient economy with a million new climate jobs.

He has pledged to defend the welfare system, saying 'the disabled, the unemployed and the retired have all been portrayed as scroungers and layabouts and as a result immense damage has been caused by cutting the money given to those who need it the most.'

Jeremy praises and supports those fighting to defend social welfare, like Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC) and Boycott Workfare. This is in sharp contrast to the former Labour leadership, which was set to join attacks on claimants rather than challenge media and Tory scapegoating.

Corbyn outlines plans for a National Education Service; like the NHS, it would be universal and free at the point of use, starting with free childcare and expanding funding for adult education. This would mean an end to all tuition fees in further and higher education, the restoration of student grants, and an Education Maintenance Allowance plus a Disabled Student's Allowance. He wants to bring the free schools and academies back under local authority control.

Other measures for young people include reducing the voting age to 16 years, a ban on zero hour contracts and a statutory £10 an hour living wage for all workers, regardless of age.

Corbyn's programme calls for a 'radically different international policy', based on 'political and not

military solutions?. He is still resolutely opposed to air strikes in Iraq and Syria and military intervention in the region. He also says he would work to withdraw Britain from NATO, the US-led military alliance which is aggressively building up its forces in Eastern Europe.

On the European Union, like most of the Labour left, Corbyn was once in favour of withdrawal. He now says he supports the UK remaining in, but wants to see major reforms in the opposite direction to Cameron, away from the pro-market and privatising rules that have caused so much suffering in southern Europe. He is totally opposed to the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

Jeremy has pledged to cut spending on weapons and would abandon the commitment to NATO's two per cent of GDP target. He would cancel the Trident nuclear missile system, and to save jobs a diversification plan would be agreed with the local communities and workforces affected.

He also talks of making large reductions in the £93 billion corporate tax relief and subsidies to big business. These funds will be used to establish a National Investment Bank to head a multi-billion pound programme of infrastructure upgrades and support for high-tech and innovative industries.

To make the tax system progressive, a Corbyn-led Labour government would cancel Tory tax cuts for the rich and collect £119 billion (2013-14 figures) in evaded business taxes.

The Bank of England, he says, should continue to print money ? he calls it ?People's Quantitative Easing? for ?new large scale housing, energy, transport and digital projects?. Corbyn says this would create ?a million skilled jobs and genuine apprenticeships with knock-on boosts for the supply chain.?

He wants to create a national investment bank. Although he proposes a windfall tax on their profits, he does not explicitly call for the nationalisation of the banks. His promises of renationalisation are limited to the public utilities: rail, mail, water, and electricity. John McDonnell as Shadow Chancellor proposes an extension of state supported cooperatives and considers that renationalisation of the railways can only be a slow process, i.e. not renewing franchises when they expire.

The measures outlined above are certainly radical relative to the political centre of gravity in British politics that has endured for nearly 30 years. Yet no sooner were Corbyn and McDonnell ensconced in the shadow cabinet than these measures began to unravel under pressure from the right. In the May local elections, Labour went to the polls with substantially the same programme put forward by Miliband in 2015.

A socialist critique

A consistently socialist programme would reject paying compensation to the former owners of big businesses and would insist that they be run under the control of workers, not just by highly paid senior civil servants and managers.

So while supporting the proposals above, socialists must criticise their weaknesses and identify ways they can and should be strengthened.

Before George Osborne's Autumn 2015 Budget, John McDonnell issued his own fiscal rule, trying to convince journalists and business leaders that Labour would always balance the books. According to McDonnell, this would not lead to austerity-lite because he would ?grow the economy?. However, his refusal to answer the question, ?But what if the economy doesn't grow, what if it shrinks?? hardly filled his supporters with confidence.

When Tata Steel announced the closure of its plant in Port Talbot in Wales, McDonnell did call for nationalisation, more than we have heard from a Labour shadow chancellor for a long time. But his proviso

that it should only be done if a buyer could not be found, and that it should be a 'temporary' measure until it was 'stabilised' was an unnecessary concession. This policy could become a re-run of Gordon Brown's bailing out of the banks with taxpayers' money, only to sell them off, cut price, back to the private sector. This has rightly been described as 'socialising losses and privatising profits'.

On tax, positive as Jeremy's pledges are compared with the policies of recent Labour governments, increasing the number of tax inspectors alone will not recover the funds needed. Only opening the books of the monopolies and their owners to inspection by their workers will really uncover and recover these sums.

The starting point for working out how much tax we should raise needs to be a public audit of how much it takes to fund the health and education services, to build hundreds of thousands of council homes a year, etc. then identifying how we raise it from the enormous unearned wealth of the super-rich.

To guarantee the funds are there for this programme it will also be necessary to break the old Labour rule of compensating the billionaires for their nationalised property. After all they already accumulated profits from the unpaid part of the labour of their workers. We've already paid them once - why pay them again? The modesty of Corbyn's left reformist programme is seen most clearly in its stance on nationalisation, which was exceeded by some previous Labour governments, not just Attlee's in 1945-51 but also Harold Wilson's in the 1960s and 1970s.

It is Blair and Brown's conversion to liberal economics in the 1990s that makes today's reassertion of old Keynesian Labour programmes look radical. Instead of nationalising a few monopolies in the private sector like their predecessors, post-1997 Labour opened up the public sector to private profiteers, via the Private Finance Initiative (PFI).

They started the break-up of the national education system with the new Academies, which took schools out of local authority control, handing them over to 'faith bodies', consortia of businessmen and middle class parents. It is true that under Labour's PFI there was significant investment in hospitals and schools, but it was very expensive money. The result has been crippling debts for the hospital trusts, threatening them with bankruptcy.

The capitalist class abandoned Keynesianism for neoliberalism nearly 40 years ago. Depressed rates of return on investment compel it to look for fresh sources of profit wherever it can find them, especially by opening up and breaking up public services.

However modest his programme of renationalisation might appear when viewed in a wider historical context, if Corbyn came to power the capitalists would find it intolerable unless they were threatened with something substantially worse - like losing ownership and control of the means of production and exchange altogether.

Nonetheless, if Corbyn's proposals make it into Labour's programme and election manifesto, the bosses and their media will scream that it is 'Marxist' and 'revolutionary', and mount a frenzied campaign against it.

This raises a simple question: what power could force the capitalists to pay up on taxes, or hand over their enterprises? A left-wing Labour government, if it was armed with no more than an electoral mandate and a majority in the House of Commons, would be faced with sabotage and revolt: by the bond markets, by the stock exchanges, by a run on the pound, by a flight of capital. In short it would be faced with the enormous economic power of the 1 per cent.

That is what the Syriza government in Greece faced in the first half of 2015. By July it faced the choice of

either giving in or going further, breaking with its self-imposed legal limitations, nationalising the banks, confiscating the property of the economic saboteurs. In Britain the same dilemma would face a Corbyn government elected on his present programme.

If Corbyn did not capitulate and agree to become an austerity government, as Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras did last August, or as François Hollande and the Socialist Party did in France in 2014, then there would be a head-on clash with the unelected parts of the establishment, not just in the boardrooms but in the state, from the judges, the police chiefs, the military high command and the monarchy. Army chiefs have already said as much.

A transitional programme

So what attitude should socialists take to Corbyn's programme? We should defend every one of its positive goals, against the Labour right and the Tories. Indeed the left in the Labour Party and in the trade unions should do all in our power to get these policies adopted by Labour's conference, to make it obligatory for the MPs and councillors to defend them and include them in election manifestos.

At the same time we need to start a debate about what forces and strategy would be necessary to stand a chance of implementing it. The great economic power of the capitalist class and the repressive power in the hands of its state cannot be successfully defied, let alone broken, by electoral mandates alone.

But we also need an honest debate on the shortcomings of Jeremy's 'modest' programme and what a fundamental alternative might be.

For a revolutionary socialist, the purpose of a programme is to address the immediate burning needs of the great majority of the working class: on under/unemployment, low wages, housing shortages, the NHS crisis etc. It should be clear that the resources to solve these problems can only be gained by taxing the rich and the great corporations, and wherever necessary taking industries and businesses which are strategic to developing major services like the NHS, combating climate change, improving transport into social ownership.

When it comes to nationalising industries that collapse like Tata or retail chains like BHS, we need to demand that their books are opened to inspection by trade union and community organisations to see where the money has been ferreted away. Billionaires like Philip Green (BHS) and Cyrus Mistry (Tata) should not be allowed to strip their former employees of their pensions, while they move on to greener pastures.

John McDonnell was right to say the old Labour model of nationalisation is not adequate. What was and is wrong is paying compensation to those who have exploited workers for generations and hiring managers from private industry who run the nationalised industries just like their former companies. The alternative to the old model is nationalisation without compensation and under workers' control, moving towards full workers' management.

Putting the working class in control of strategic parts of the economy, as both producers of those goods and services and as consumers, must also mean reviving one of the Labour left's demands that has never been enacted: the drawing up of an economic plan. And here we have to say that the socialist nationalisation of the banks and merging them into a single people's bank is necessary, precisely because they do control all the spare assets of society and can see into every corner of the economy.

But to force through these measures necessitates first of all mobilising a mass movement to resist the ruling class's attacks on our living standards and our futures, and to fight for the adoption of measures

which, while addressing the needs of the day, open the road to ending capitalism through a revolution that can lay the foundations of a new socialist society. Meanwhile we support anything that takes serious steps in that direction. A workers' government Only the huge numbers and organisation of the working class and the youth, rallying to our side any progressive sections of the middle class, can match and master the power of business and the state.

The working class can win and exercise control over production and distribution. We can organise mass self-defence against the state forces when they repress strikes and demonstrations, let alone when they threaten a coup, as they would undoubtedly do against a Labour government which became a genuine workers' government by adopting such goals and tactics. But this mass mobilisation cannot be called up at the last minute ? after a left wing government gets into trouble.

The process of building up our forces has to start now: during the resistance to the cuts and the anti-union laws. By creating democratic bodies for mobilisation, councils of resistance at local and national level, by creating instruments of workers' control of production and services, not only can we shorten the life of this Tory government, but we can also create the basis for a new type of government altogether: not just a parliamentary Labour government encircled by the institutions of capital, but a workers' government determined to break the power of the bosses, the bankers and the generals for good.

A last warning

It is the duty of socialists to defend Corbyn from any attempted coup by the right wing. But this appears an unlikely prospect - in the short term at least. Far more likely, is that Corbyn and McDonnell pursue stability in the PLP and local governments by attempting to triangulate with the policies of the centre-right. Socialists are equally duty bound to criticise this when it happens.

It is the most dangerous threat because it will demoralise the new members - and will not automatically lead to people turning to the organised left. To prevent or mitigate against this unhappy prospect we need to rally the new members and especially the young people who support Corbyn but are invisible in party and Momentum structures, to an organised movement to campaign for the policies we need - whether Corbyn, McDonnell or the Party conference back them or not.

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