



UK: Why we are relaunching WORKERS POWER

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With this issue, WORKERS POWER is resuming publication after six years ? replacing RED FLAG which appeared for 39 issues during the four and a half years of Jeremy Corbyn?s leadership of the Labour Party and the first 18 months of Keir Starmer?s. In all respects, RED FLAG argued for the same politics as its forbear and continued as the organ of the British section of the League for the Fifth International.

In 2015, Jeremy Corbyn appealed to all socialists to join or re-join the Labour party. This L5I supporters did, along with hundreds of thousands, helping to make it the largest left party in Europe. Under Corbyn, Labour challenged the hitherto accepted necessity of austerity, as well as the openly pro-market ideology of Tony Blair.

But Corbyn?s leadership, won almost by accident, was hemmed in by the fact that a huge majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party was hostile to him, as were most local councils and the party bureaucracy. Corbyn and his lieutenant, John McDonnell, from the outset made it clear that they would not seriously challenge the disloyal MPs or councillors.

At the same time, no lasting reforms to democratise the party were installed. They feared a split which would doom the prospect of Corbyn government. Like the Labour left in the last hundred years, they believed that Labour had to be a broad church, forgetting that if the right do not occupy the pulpit they will try and wreck the party.

This is because the right?s loyalty is not to the party, let alone the working class, but rather to its enemy: the Establishment and the capitalist class. Corbyn?s internationalism, and support for Palestinian resistance to Israel?s attempt to destroy them as a nation, meant he had no hope of a security clearance and would never have been allowed to become prime minister.

So, although the Corbyn left within the party and the trade unions was probably even bigger than in the 1980s or ?50s, it was atomised, without its own leadership above the local level, and paralysed when the right counterattacked.

Probably hundreds of thousands have left, or are in the process of drifting out of the party. The Left MPs (the Socialist Campaign Group) as measured by those who dared protest the expulsion of Ken Loach, is down to 15, about where it was before 2015. Soon, if not already, most of the Corbyn left will be outside the party.

Who are Workers Power?

We will continue to relate to the left reformists and subjective revolutionaries from this milieu, but we can no longer say to them, or to the new generation of class fighters, that the battle inside the Labour Party is the central issue of the day.

On the contrary, socialists must turn to the social movements like Black Lives Matter, Extinction Rebellion and Kill the Bill to provide practical support and offer political leadership. We must connect with the rank and file base of the unions, whose members face imminent threats of job losses, pay cuts and casualisation and whose leaders offer only compromise and sell-outs.

In doing so we want to re-emphasise our own revolutionary tradition as WORKERS POWER, which goes back to 1975. While we never abandoned this tradition, embodied in manifestos, resolutions and major articles, as well as on the ground in the miners? strike, against the Iraq war and elsewhere, we want to make that connection as visible as

possible.

We also want to underline that we are part of a global tendency, the League for the Fifth International with sections on four continents, many of them called Workers Power in their own languages. We are, as yet, not parties but fighting propaganda groups, but as Leon Trotsky said:

?If our international be still weak in numbers, it is strong in doctrine, program, tradition, in the incomparable tempering of its cadres.?

Join us!

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