

UK Elections: Tasting the Bitter Pill of History

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I have to admit I took my eye off the ball. My desire to see the back of this awful government overwhelmed my powers of reasoning but hopefully it's only temporary.

That's the problem: We want Corbyn to be real.

So it's just wishful thinking on my part and on the part of others, ([here](#) and [here](#) for example) to put so much faith in Jeremy Corbyn. As I pointed out in my previous [piece](#), you're not voting for Corbyn, you're voting for the Labour Party, the bulk of whose candidates were utterly opposed to most of Corbyn's (draft) Manifesto (see below). So the question has to be asked, what chance does Corbyn have of enacting nothing at all but a small part of his manifesto, e.g., funding the NHS or perhaps tuition fees? But once on the slippery slope of compromise in order to save the Labour Party as an agent of capital, it's game over.

But of course, nothing he does, within the straightjacket of existing Parliamentary politics, can address not only our immediate concerns but the already present combined global crisis of capitalism and climate change. The double whammy of the 21st century.

It's nothing if not a novel situation. A friend (and comrade) has compared Corbyn to Bernie Sanders, Syriza, Podemos and even gone back to Allende's Chile. And it's true, all have failed, and mostly, if not all, for the same reasons.

He says:

Now we have some experience, called history, to make that determination. So can you point to any example in recent history; say in the last 100 years where supporting such a candidate of such a party that pledges its allegiance to the political institutions of capital has led to anything other than defeat? I mean, Lula? You vote for Rousseff and you get....Temer; you vote for Chavez and you get Maduro and the collapse of the economy; you vote for Syriza and you get the Troika; you vote for Podemos and guess who they prop up in power? And I surely don't have to tell you about the path of the ANC.

Gulp.

It's true of course, all of it. I assisted the ANC in its '94 election campaign, but should I not have done given the results of our collective efforts? Zuma and his gang of thieves. Easily said in hindsight of course.

Is it over before it's over?

Of course it is, in the unlikely event of a Labour victory, the deal has already been done and dusted:

Tuesday saw the official launch of the Labour Party's manifesto for the June 8 snap General Election. The manifesto contained a number of highly significant amendments from the draft version leaked just days earlier.

The draft, produced by the team around Labour's nominally left leader Jeremy Corbyn, was subject to ratification by the party's top officials on May 11. It sought to marry a watery commitment to certain social reforms and a slight relaxation in the Conservatives' austerity agenda with a raft of measures demanded by the Blairite right wing. In particular, it committed Labour to the £200 billion renewal of the Trident nuclear weapons system, and to supporting NATO, and included a declaration that Corbyn would be prepared to launch a nuclear attack—albeit while being “extremely cautious” about it.

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However, the concessions contained in Labour's draft manifesto have since been revealed as only a staging post for Corbyn in what his shadow foreign secretary, Emily Thornberry, described as a “[journey](#)” towards accepting NATO and nuclear war.

The qualification on the use of the armed forces contained in the draft version, “That's why we will never send them into harm's way unless all other options have been exhausted,” is removed in the final manifesto. – ‘[Labour's manifesto amended to stress commitment to militarism and war](#)’ By Robert Stevens, WSW, 19 May 2017.

It's not looking good, is it? Further on we read in the same article:

The draft manifesto said Labour would “end support for aggressive wars of intervention.” This also had to be amended so that the final version reads only that Labour will oppose “unilateral aggressive wars of intervention” (emphasis added) so as to reassure all concerned of the party's support for future wars of aggression under the imprimatur of NATO and the United Nations.

It gets just as worse and depressing the more I read, but at least it disabused me of any illusions I seemed to have acquired:

Corbyn is often portrayed by his advocates as a man of principle—a good man fallen among thieves. His every action since being elected leader in September 2015 confirms that his only “principle” is unswerving loyalty to the Labour bureaucracy.

Corbyn's infinite malleability is not a personal characteristic, but is an essential feature of the Labour “left” in providing the necessary progressive window dressing to sell what is a capitalist party of big business, militarism and war to the working class.

Heavy stuff but essentially true. I suppose the real question is whether or not the grassroots movement the various agencies have created for Corbyn (38 Degrees, Momentum, Peoples Assembly and so on), once they realize they've been conned will demand some answers?

Can something be rescued from the wreckage?

Again, I'm probably fishing for some kind of face-saving feature from the rise of Corbyn and the reality that he is as I've long said, a professional politician and his primary objective is saving the Labour Party for the creation of some mythical, nay non-existent socialism at some distant point in the future, just as it did back in 1910.

I was also chided by my NY comrade on my exasperated cry to see the back of May and the Tories:

That's the point. You're not going to get rid of them by voting for Corbyn. You're not going to get rid of them without getting rid of the Labour Party. You're not going to build a thing that can withstand the bourgeoisie for ten minutes when you're voting to collaborate with the bourgeoisie.

He went on:

Nobody is advocating "purity." But if the British working class is, in your view thoroughly "imperialized," the main mechanism for accomplishing that has been the adherence of the Labour Party to the maintenance of imperialism. That's an institutional allegiance; not a personal one. I have never argued for purity, or all or nothing. I'm arguing simply for the first step, which is opposition to class collaboration. Nobody's advocating "not acting;" I'm advocating not acting on behalf of the maintenance of British capitalism.

Which is another way of saying don't vote for Corbyn, I mean the Labour Party but work toward building an alternative to this awful madness before it's far too late.

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