



**STARMER ATTEMPTS TO
BURY CORBYNISM
— UNIONS MUST BACK —
CORBYN TO STAND
& PREPARE A
WORKERS' LIST FOR
THE GENERAL ELECTION**


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The day before the March 2023 meeting of Labour's National Executive, Labour leader Keir Starmer declared to the press that he would be putting a motion to the meeting reiterating his insistence that Jeremy Corbyn, the previous Labour leader, will not be allowed to stand for Labour in the general election. The resolution was passed 22-12.

The resolution's argumentation was ludicrous. No reason was given other than that, in Starmer's view, Corbyn being a Labour candidate would lose the party votes. This is justified on the much-repeated myth that Labour's 2019 election result was unprecedentedly bad, and that Corbyn was responsible for that.

Never mind that in 2017, also under Corbyn's leadership, the Labour vote increased by 3.53 million, the biggest increase for any party in a single election since 1945. That is wiped from history. True, in 2019, Labour lost 2.6 million of those votes, in part because Corbyn gave into relentless pressure – not least from Starmer himself – to move towards a pro-capitalist remain position on Brexit, allowing Johnson to cynically claim that he alone would 'get Brexit done'.

However, even in 2019 Labour polled over ten million votes, something not achieved by Gordon Brown or Ed Miliband in 2010 and 2015, or by Blair in 2005. But far from being expelled from Labour's ranks, Blair and Brown – the architects of New Labour Mark I – are praised to the skies, while Miliband is in the shadow cabinet.

Starmer argues that "the Labour Party's standing with the electorate" will be "significantly diminished should Mr Corbyn be endorsed by the Labour Party" but what does he actually mean by that? It is not the electorate as a whole that Starmer is concerned about pleasing with this measure, but his reputation with the elites as having made Labour into 'New Labour Mark II', a party that can be relied on to act in the interests of the capitalist class.

Hatred of the Tories, rather than anything Starmer has done, has now put Labour ahead in the polls. However, along with Corbyn the man, Starmer has eradicated Corbyn's policies. Renationalisation of mail, rail, energy, and telecoms are gone. At a time when Labour pledging to immediately renationalise Royal Mail after a general election victory could be decisive for the postal workers' fight! And the working class is being told by Starmer that – under his government just as under the Tories – that austerity and real-terms pay cuts will be the diet on offer.

Of course, millions will still vote Labour in order to get rid of this rotten Tory government. But how should the workers' movement respond to this situation? Trade unionists in the Labour-affiliated unions should demand their representatives on Labour's national executive are held to account for how they voted on Corbyn's right to stand. GMB, Usdaw and the Musicians' Union voted for Starmer's motion, Unison abstained.

However, it is absolutely clear that Starmer will not allow Corbyn to stand, and more broadly that a Starmer-led government will not act in the interests of the working class. Therefore the trade unions need to take the first steps to build a new mass workers' party. The Socialist Party calls for trade unions to organise their own workers' list for the general election, including Jeremy Corbyn and other debarred left Labour MPs. Such a list could succeed in getting at least a bloc of MPs elected at the general election, and could quite rapidly become a pole of opposition to an incoming Starmer-led government.

But whatever happens next, there should be the biggest possible trade union, socialist, environmentalist and anti-austerity election challenge mounted. This is why the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is hosting local meetings to discuss what needs to be done, including, should that workers' list not be realised in time, standing trade unionists and socialists as TUSC candidates in the general election. TUSC will also be standing in the upcoming local elections, and there is still time to show your opposition to Starmer's New Labour by becoming a candidate (see www.tusc.org.uk).

MODEL MOTION FOR TRADE UNIONS:

This union organisation/conference believes that:

- This is an utterly undemocratic act, removing Jeremy's right to take part in a selection contest

- As with Jeremy's suspension from the Parliamentary Labour Party, this is a political statement by the Labour leadership, moving the party to the right politically, proving its credentials to big business and the capitalist establishment. It follows the refusal of Starmer to support striking workers, and the sacking of Sam Tarry from the shadow cabinet for speaking up for union action from the picket line

- It is confirmation that, under Starmer's leadership, Labour does not represent the interests of workers and working-class communities

- Therefore, workers need political representation that supports their action against the cost-of-living squeeze, and stands for policies such as re-nationalisation, opposition to cuts, and for the repeal of the Tory anti-union laws

Therefore, this union organisation/conference agrees to:

- Instruct the union NEC/EC/Executive to give full support to Jeremy Corbyn, and if necessary change the rules of the union to allow the union to campaign for his re-election as the Islington North MP if he decides to stand in the next general election, including as an independent candidate

- To also provide political and material support to other genuine pro-trade union, anti-austerity candidates in the general election