

THE CONDITIONALITY AT THE HEART OF LABOURS ELECTION MANIFESTO.

The personal attack on Corbyn by the media was premeditated. If they could not destroy the message, then it is one of the cardinal rules of propaganda to discredit the messenger. The capitalist class was aware that Corbyn's message of hope and of an alternative to austerity, would be popular. The capitalists fear raising of the aspirations of the masses like no other, because when it breaks the political inertia paralysing the working class and sets workers in motion, they become more difficult to manage. May, as Home Secretary, knew that disaffection was rising. That is why the Tories originally fought the campaign on Presidential issues rather than bread and butter issues. It failed.

Labour's Manifesto which the media could not bury only malign, gained popularity by the day. Today millions of workers have taken it to heart. However, unless it is fought for it remains purely aspirational.

1. **We should not wait for another election.** Speculation is rife that a new election is imminent. Jeremy Corbyn has kept Labour on an election footing. Our slogan instead should be, "to fight to implement the Labour Manifesto with or without an election". It should not be reserved to win a future election, but used to campaign in the here and now to improve services, block privatisation and raise wages. The manifesto belongs in the streets.
2. **For a united front around the manifesto.** Not all the workers who voted, voted for Labour. The manifesto allows us to engage with all workers around its demands. While it remains the programme of the Labour Party its demands are universal. It can act as a unifying focus. In common with all united fronts, all those who engage with it, are not obliged to take a vow of silence. We should ensure that discussion around the programme and especially the tactics needed to win its implementation, are not silenced by the bureaucracy. Criticism is the steering wheel of any united front.
3. **Campaigning not electioneering.** The capitalist class demand political passivity from the working class. To achieve this end, they sow the illusion that the only effective way to deliver change is through the ballot box and therefore for the electorate to delegate decision making to the 650 MPs sitting in a palace. However, none of the major pieces of legislation that affects the lives of workers, including the right to vote in the first place, has been won in parliament. Rather, it is only when workers have won these demands in the streets first, that Parliament rubber stamps them, but only after watering them down as much as they can get away with. If Momentum remains purely an electioneering and democratising force within the Labour Party, if it is turned inwards rather than outwards, then a delayed election will wear it down. If the Tories do not fall on their sword, and they are determined not to so, this could wear down the left in the Party and demoralise it.
4. **Campaigning for the manifesto makes it more difficult to disown it.** If Labour members, including Momentum, take the manifesto into the workplaces, the hospitals, the universities, the estates, arguing for its immediate implementation, we can build a real political movement. It will put the spine into the manifesto. It will challenge Labour MPs who do not support it. It will make it more difficult to march us up the mountain only to march us down the mountain.
5. **Campaigning now will prevent a new election being delayed.** Jeremy Corbyn did not just stir voters, he stirred a movement of millions. Millions who want to crush austerity before they are crushed by it. We need to ensure this movement is not lulled to sleep by promises of next time, but mobilised around the slogan "bring forward the next election through protest and resistance to austerity". The next test is council budgets. We should demand that labour councils refuse to implement any council cuts including ones already passed. What use is an anti-austerity manifesto

on the bookshelf, when labour councils are implementing cuts in the here and now. To make the manifesto real, we need to oppose all cuts.

6. **The conditionality behind the manifesto.** The Manifesto is not socialist manifesto, it is a comprehensive (Keynesian) social democratic manifesto, or what is the same thing, it is a left reformist proposal on how to manage the capitalist economy in the broad interests of society. No more no less. Even so it is conditional. Both Jeremy Corbyn and John Macdonald spent much time explaining that they were fiscally responsible and that the manifesto was fully costed. In this sense, they presented themselves more as accountants than as politicians. The problem with an affordable and costed programme is what happens when it is no longer affordable. It is illustrative to examine what happened with the “Trump Bump”. The Trump Bump was the effect on the markets of Trump’s reflationary proposals, primarily a boost to infrastructural spending. Now mark this, unlike Corbyn, Trump was considered a friend to the markets. Despite his benevolence, interest rates in the US went up sharply. The key 10-year treasury bond which sets the rates for mortgages, car loans, student loans etc went up from under 1.5% to over 2.6% in March. This mere 1% increase, still historically low, was enough to undermine demand in an economy dependent on low interest rates. In the UK indebtedness is just as high as in the US, interest rates are lower, the economy is structurally weaker and the trade balance more precarious. If a 1% interest rate rise was enough to hold back housing and car sales in the US, imagine what effect it will have in Britain. Affordability is a smouldering fire at the heart of the manifesto.
7. **Turning the manifesto into a transitional manifesto.** Many on the left argue that the manifesto does not go far enough. For example, it does not call for the nationalisation of the banking system. The problem is not that the manifesto does not go far enough, the problem is how we argue for the existing demands in the manifesto. Our central argument should be that the manifesto is about what workers need, not what the capitalists can afford. In other words, to collectively push for its policies regardless of the effect on the economy. Class consciousness is always the consciousness of a “class being for itself”. Just as the capitalists don’t consult with their workers when they set top salaries, bonuses or dividends, so workers need not consult with the capitalists as to how much they need to live. What makes this manifesto transitional to socialism is not adding in more demands, it is winning the argument that this manifesto must be implemented regardless of the consequences to the economy. That if capitalism cannot afford such basic demands, it must give way to a society which can provide them.