



The referendum result has opened a period of crisis and uncertainty.

The crisis has many dimensions:

- Racism, migration and borders
- Labour Party crisis with the neoliberal PLP desperate to deny the country the left option represented by Corbyn
- Tory Party crisis, with their MPs and big business backing Remain and their middle class base backing Leave
- Potential breakup of the UK
- Damage to the EU project
- Adding to existing global economic turmoil

It was a mistake for most of the labour movement to allow itself to appear as defenders of the status quo rather than its most trenchant critics, letting the right present themselves as anti-establishment.

We must now offer radical answers to prevent the right retaining the initiative.

The Tories hope to cobble together a government to implement Brexit, but has no mandate for any programme. However, we can be sure they will want more austerity, free trade, racism and attacks on human rights and workers' rights.

**We must demand an election so that we can elect a government to pursue a particular post-referendum programme.**

Post-referendum, political debate is intense in every workplace and community. The labour movement, including Momentum, has many thousands of activists who can facilitate and shape this politicisation to strengthen the movement.

The actions of the PLP are disgraceful. The vast majority never supported Corbyn, and had been waiting for a chance to oust him. It is now clear that the coup was plotted before the referendum result.

The right pretended the coup was about Corbyn's ability to win elections. It was really about policy. Driving Corbyn out would mean returning to the policies that offered little to working class people and lost the previous two elections.

The EU acted as some restraint on right-wing UK governments. But it would obstruct any move to the left too, as shown in Greece.

***Continues inside, plus:***

*Opposing Racism and defending Free Movement of Labour, Trident, Partnership v Organising*

We can put forward a left programme for a post-EU Britain that ends austerity and privatisation, without rules that make it harder for governments to intervene to defend jobs in steel or any other industry.

Tens of thousands of people are joining the Labour Party to defend Corbyn against the coup. Where this is drawing people into activity and organisation, this is hugely positive.

However, it contains dangers too.

Unless the right-wing MPs (including many unions put there) are removed, Labour activists will find themselves campaigning for right-wing candidates and having to defend their policies. Nothing is more likely to demotivate, demoralise and demobilise people.

## Deselect the right

The PLP will try again. They cannot be trusted. It's time to select socialists to stand in their place.

If the PLP threaten again to split the Labour Party rather than allow the public an anti-austerity option, Unite must publicly stand up to their blackmail. A mass left party unencumbered with those who back anti-union laws, neoliberalism, racism and austerity is preferable to one capitulating to these traitors.

## Activity beyond Labour

It's also vital that we draw people who are angry and politicised into campaigning beyond the Labour Party – fighting for strong unions, workers' rights, human rights, against austerity, cuts and racism.

The TUC argued we are dependent on the EU for our rights. French workers are showing that isn't the case – we fight for our rights.

## Solidarity with Migrants

Cameron had stoked up anti-migrant racism before the referendum, and elements on both sides stoked it further during the campaign. Now the racist right feel buoyed by a vote they (wrongly) believe shows they are a majority.

Last year we saw a huge wave of solidarity with migrants after the photo of Aylan Kurdi, the dead Syrian boy on the beach, hit the news.



Solidarity with refugees, 24 June (Photo: Steve Eason)

The issue of migration played an important part in the right-wing argument for Brexit, but people's reasons for voting varied. The right-wing are now demanding restrictions on freedom of movement and the right to work. Sadly, elements of the labour movement are giving ground to this.

## For Free Movement

The EU doesn't give free movement of people – thousands have died at its increasingly militarised borders.



But the right to travel and work within the EU is important. Millions of EU-citizens (many Unite members) live and work in the UK and now feel more vulnerable.

Since the referendum Len McCluskey has argued that politicians must satisfy the genuinely held concerns of the public and Labour must have a "very different message concerning free movement of labour". He justifies this by arguing that unions have always sought to control the labour supply.

Of course it is true that business wants migration to increase the labour supply and weaken "native" workers' bargaining position, just as they want to cut benefits to drive sick and desperate people into the labour market. This is also the reason why bosses were keen for more women to enter the labour market.

Confronted with new entrants to the labour market, there are fundamentally two ways for unions to respond. We can try to exclude certain types of people (women, blacks, migrants) from the workforce or from certain jobs in the hope of protecting the jobs and pay of white men by giving them privileged access. Or we can organise all the workers.

The truth is that in the modern world, attempts to exclude people from the labour market are futile. Every attempt to do so just makes those workers affected more precarious and desperate. This is the ideal scenario for the worst employers. They don't want their workers deported – they want them terrified of deportation. They don't want women back in the home – they want them in the workplace being discriminated against and paid less.

Every attempt to restrict freedom of movement and the right to work actually just creates more division between workers and weakens *all* our power against our bosses and government.

**Unite Policy Conference 2016 should take a clear stance in favour of the freedom to travel and the right to work.**

Of course not all our members will agree with this. Just as they didn't when we started taking better positions on gender, race or sexuality. But it's the right stance for our union and one we need to win our members to if we are to have a strong union.

### **Partnership v Organising**

Partnership is the idea that we can work together with employers on problems at work. Instead of starting with workers' needs, it focusses on the business case. Many union leaders, including the TUC, see partnership as the pinnacle of industrial relations. At its heart is the idea that workers share their employer's interests and their goal of "beating the competition".

Partnership undermines independent workplace organisation in favour of consensus. In the workplace it draws reps and workers into

supporting management's drive to increase profits. It blunts opposition to "management's right to manage". Production problems become shared concerns rather than opportunities to advance workers' own bargaining agenda.

Industrial relations issues become problems to be resolved together. It undermines the idea of "us and them", which accurately reflects the power imbalance between employer and worker, along with the ability to develop independent union agendas. Without building the independent and collective power of workers, we become weaker and management become stronger. Senior union figures who are committed to partnership undermine activists who defend union independence and workers who don't swallow the corporate agenda, which always puts profit first.

### **No Fight Means Jobs At Any Price**

A recent example of partnership in action is the Tata steel catastrophe. The Community union has long accepted defeat and partnership.

The pension fund was managed by Tata appointees and was run into serious difficulties. Tata threatened to quit and slaughter all the jobs unless they were relieved of liabilities and the risk of fraud charges.

Instead of fighting closures we've had Stephen Kinnock, son of Neil the windbag (both traitors to Corbyn) offering to sacrifice everything workers have struggled for in the search for a business "partner" to take over the plants.

Instead of demanding that Tata and the government protect jobs and communities, Kinnock and union leaders tempted Tata back to Port Talbot by surrendering pension rights for jobs. This means cuts to pension benefits for existing pensioners and those yet to retire.

If employers really were our partners we wouldn't need unions. Such deals make it harder to for many to see the point of unions. Partnership is a barrier to organising and independent trade unionism. It is a curse upon the trade union movement.

## Trident

Many Unite members are perplexed and disappointed at recent statements on Trident. Before the 2015 Labour conference, Len said:

*"Everyone would love the whole world to get rid of nuclear weapons – we understand the moral arguments and cost arguments in these days of austerity. However, the **most important thing for us is to protect jobs**. In the absence of any credible alternative to protect jobs and high skills **we will vote against any anti-Trident resolution.**"*

Many members thought our policy opposed Trident. Unite's policy, an Executive Statement, can actually be interpreted either way, but whenever it has to take sides Unite's leadership has put jobs before disarmament.

*"The question of Britain's nuclear weapons system is not about employment alone, however. It is **first of all a moral issue**, and then a strategic one concerning Britain's place in the world and the international environment we wish to see."*

*"Yet such weapons would, if used, constitute a mortal threat to humanity's survival; they are massively expensive; senior military figures have described them as 'militarily useless' and said that they should be scrapped; and our possession of them encourages other countries to seek a similar arsenal"*

But the statement concludes:

*"We need a policy that would see the jobs and skills of Unite members preserved, and until we receive firm commitments to this end we will continue to support our members and their employment. Money saved by ending our nuclear weapons system could be used to sustain the process of defence diversification, vital to our*

*manufacturing future, as well as freeing resources for investment in other socially-useful forms of public spending."*

The Executive Statement was sold to conference as opposing Trident renewal while protecting jobs. It says the question of nuclear weapons is *first of all* a moral issue, but morals are sacrificed at the first challenge to jobs. Would we really defend *any jobs at any price*?

## Trident = Jobs Destroyer

Len defends his stance as putting members' jobs first. However, Trident replacement means job losses in the defence sector. The MoD says Trident employs up to 11,500 workers in the manufacture, maintenance and decommissioning of missiles and submarines. The estimated £205 billion lifetime cost of Trident replacement could pay £34,500 for each job for 500 years! Spiralling costs are eating more and more of the overall defence budget.

In 2011 the government announced an order for thirteen Type 26 frigates to be built on the Clyde in a "frigate factory" with export potential of 35 further ships. After promising job security if Scotland remained in the UK, the order has been cut to eight ships, immediately threatening 800 jobs, and potentially 3,500 more with two yards. The prime reason for the cuts is Trident's increasing share of the defence budget.

Cancellation with no loss of jobs would allow us to fight for job diversification into socially useful products such as energy renewables where skills can be transferred with decent wages, terms and conditions. Achieving this requires the cancellation of Trident replacement.

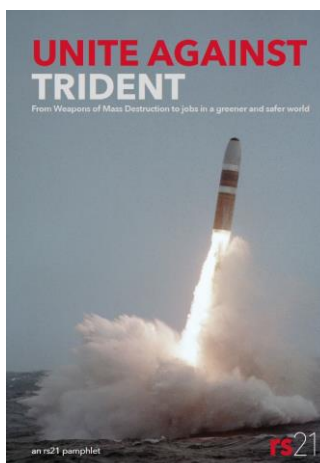
## No more Executive fudge!

### revolutionary socialism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

(rs21) is a group of activists who recognise that the left needs to update its ideas to fight effectively in the world as it is today.

Particular areas of focus include workplace struggle, fighting oppression, imperialism and questions of organisation.

rs21.org.uk is a news, comment, analysis and campaigning website. We produce the £3 rs21 magazine 4-5 times a year.



At conference rs21 members are selling a new, "**Unite Against Trident**" pamphlet making the case for more and better jobs through diversification into socially useful industries. Pick up a copy for £2.