

## RIC-EDINBURGH STATEMENT FOR JUNE 8<sup>th</sup> GENERAL ELECTION



Theresa May's forthcoming general election is not a normal election. It is being called in defiance of the Tories' own 2011 Fixed Term Parliament Act. It bears a strong resemblance to a presidential-style plebiscite. But in the absence of actual presidential powers, such as those now wielded by Trump in the USA, May still wants to be able to override Westminster, Holyrood, Cardiff Bay and Stormont altogether.

To do this she needs a supine parliament of nodding-head Tories, quite happy to go meekly through the government lobbies. In return they will be able to pocket their large salaries and many 'fringe benefits', whilst also making big killings from second (and more) jobs, the rewards of business lobbying and by directly employing their families. Furthermore, in Scotland, David Mundell and Ruth Davidson have already shown they will do whatever May tells them.

The Tories are in the reactionary European Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists, along with Erdogan's Turkish Justice and Development Party. May hopes to emulate Erdogan's concentration of personal power after his recent rigged referendum. However, unlike Erdogan she doesn't need to rewrite the UK's constitution since it doesn't exist in a written form. Instead she wants full control of the Crown's armoury of anti-democratic powers. Thus armed, May hopes to cement the British ruling class behind her hard Brexit. In the face of ongoing global economic and political crises, she seeks to ensure that the ever-rising costs are

borne by others, so 'our' rulers can continue to live in the manner to which they have become accustomed.

To counter any remaining ruling class opposition to Brexit, May is offering them a mouth-watering deal. There may still be some "bespoke" EU deals for the City and selected corporations. However, to compensate for other possible losses, the Tories are preparing the ground for a major attack on workers' pay, conditions and remaining trade union rights. They want to step up austerity, which falls most severely on women's shoulders, and ensure remaining welfare benefits are fully subjected to punitive sanctions administered by ruthless private companies. More than 2 million workers from the EU are to be subjected to the draconian legislation, already in place for other migrants, so that British firms have access to a highly segmented workforce, divided by pay, conditions and residency rights, with the illegal lowest tier subjected to super-exploitation and to act as scapegoats. Civil rights will be further eroded. There is to be an increased militarisation of policing and state surveillance is to be stepped up. Our environment will continue to be sacrificed to corporate profits, as May's support for fracking in England shows. New trade deals are to be signed with Trump to open up the NHS to full privatisation. The UK is to sign up fully to all US wars for the benefit of the British arms industry, thus bringing untold misery across this planet.

Scotland is in the frontline of May's attacks. The British ruling class wants finally to see off Scotland's attempted democratic revolution of 2014, where 97% of people registered to vote and 85% actually did so. This level of political engagement is without precedent in UK politics. Furthermore, this and the massive surge in support for Scottish independence, from 30% in 2012 to 45% in 2014, was done in defiance of the UK state, the EU bureaucrats, the US State Department and the British media, including the BBC. Open political, social and cultural meetings and events across the length and breadth of Scotland, supplemented by new independent media sources, massively contributed to this.

This why the real purpose behind the Unionists' shrill 'No to IndyRef2' is to shut down this mass participation, so that things can return to normal - politics run by self-serving careerists, subservient to the British establishment and corporate power. This is one reason why Tories, Labour and Lib-Dems all cynically tried to hijack the recent Scottish local council elections to deny the Scottish people the right to hold the referendum agreed by Holyrood on March 27th, on the basis of prior election commitments.

However, May wants to go even further. The Tories, having played Labour for fools in Better Together during IndyRef 1, now want to finish them off as a major electoral party. May will also undermine the existing devolution arrangements in Scotland and Northern Ireland and take whatever harsh measures are needed to deal with the consequences. To achieve this, May will fall back on the Crown's Supreme Court ruling that she, with supine Westminster backing, can override any devolved assembly powers. Cameron's, Miliband's and Clegg's pretended liberal unionism is to be buried by May's very real reactionary unionism. UKIP's and the DUP's politics have been mainstreamed by May's Tories. Sadly Jeremy Corbyn, loyal to British Labour and Westminster above all else, just can not see this.

The Radical Independence Campaign (RIC) has members in the SNP, Greens, socialist organisations, Labour supporters of Scottish independence, and a majority in no party at all. Therefore, as in the 2015 Westminster and the 2016 Holyrood elections (when RIC-Edinburgh held hustings), we will not be making specific voting recommendations for the June 4th general election.

Nevertheless, we call on RIC supporters to recognise May's attempt to turn this election into a personal plebiscite to centralise UK state power in her hands, to be wielded on behalf of her big business backers. A prime target is the democratic right of the Scottish people to exercise our right to self-determination. Brexit is to be used to reinforce all the most reactionary features of Britishness. Instead of a Brexit fiasco we need an Ex-Brit (or break-up the UK) strategy to help us break free from the UK. In RIC's spirit of internationalism from below, this involves the people of Northern Ireland, Wales and England too. Therefore, we call for the rejection of all Unionist candidates.

We also recognise that the Tories want to use the UK's profoundly anti-democratic powers to mount a major attack on the overwhelming majority. We will continue to work in and with trade unions, community organisations and all those campaigns we have supported to prepare both a defence against the planned attacks and to create a new society based on RIC's 5 Principles:-

- 1) For a social alternative to austerity and privatisation
- 2) Green and environmentally sustainable
- 3) A modern republic for real democracy
- 4) Committed to equality and opposition to discrimination on grounds of gender, race, disability, sexuality or age
- 5) Internationalist and opposed to war, NATO and Trident

We remain adamant that Another Scotland, Another Europe and Another World are Possible.

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