

Craig Murray's election campaign for Galloway's Workers' Party of Britain implodes

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Craig Murray's agreeing to "toss a coin" to decide whether he or independent Adnan Hussain should stand as general election candidate in Blackburn, England, offers the working class an object lesson in the electoral opportunism of Murray and of George Galloway's Workers' Party of Britain (WPB).

Murray announced his offer to a coin toss "for Palestine" on Thursday.

Under the heading, "The Leaving of Blackburn", he wrote on his blog: "I feel I am letting down all those who helped and crowdfunded me, and all our local supporters", adding somewhat jarringly, "The amazing support is swelling every day".

Murray announced he was contesting Blackburn with an article on his blog in April, "I stand in Blackburn". He wrote:

"1) I am standing because of the Genocide in Gaza. 2) I am standing because of the appalling pro-Genocide stance of the Labour Party and Keir Starmer's continued support of arms exports to Israel. 3) I am standing because the Blackburn Independent Councillors and the Workers' Party invited me to."

He explained: "While Gaza motivated me to stand, it is by a long way not the only issue on which the voters of Blackburn deserve an alternative choice."

"Labour has abandoned working people" he declared, proclaiming his determination to oppose its pledge to increase military spending at the expense of health, education and welfare, and its anti-immigrant policies and defence of the super-rich.

Murray was seeking election "as part of a wider movement in England which is seeking to challenge the two-party conservative duopoly... Informal organisation is developing. I expect the Workers' Party to have a slate of hundreds of candidates, while Andrew Feinstein spoke alongside me in Blackburn on Saturday and will be challenging Keir Starmer directly in the election. Jeremy Corbyn will romp back into parliament in Islington North."

He promised, "We are going to give Starmer a roasting, we are going to take on the zionist monopoly of power, and it is going to be great fun!"

Boasting that his candidacy was backed by Amaar Hijazi, Deputy Foreign Minister of Palestine, Murray later spoke of volunteers arriving from Turkey, the US, Australia, Italy, Germany and Lithuania to join him on the hustings. A public meeting in Blackburn on June 13 was addressed in-person by Pulitzer Prize-winning US-based journalist Chris Hedges.

Support from these quarters is for Murray's vague and reformist proposals for the "fundamental reform of laws around the formation and ownership of capital", with Murray adding: "For that reason, I am happy to ally with the Workers' Party, which recognises this truth."

Murray, a member of the Scottish nationalist Alba Party headed by Alec Salmond, has (in his own winged phrase) "allied with" Galloway's pro-Brexit Workers' Party of Britain, whose manifesto combines opposition to the Gaza genocide with a populist defence of the British nation-state and its military and police force, advancing opposition to mass migration "on behalf of British workers".

His jumping-in with Galloway's party was agreed by Salmond, demonstrating that Scottish nationalism can happily co-exist with the promotion of British nationalism when the need arises.

If Murray was forced to justify his embrace of Galloway's party—telling supporters in Scotland that Workers Party candidates would not contest seats against Alba—any awkwardness was a small price to pay. After Galloway's landslide election victory in Rochdale in February, Murray had his sights set on a higher purpose: a seat in the House of Commons.

Speaking on the *Not the Andrew Marr Show* on June 11, Murray explained how his candidacy was decided: "Back in March, I came over and met with George Galloway, The Muslim Vote people and the independent councillors in George Galloway's office in Rochdale shortly after he won the election. They all agreed that I would be the candidate here..."

"We had a big public meeting where I was endorsed and all the independent candidates for the council were there with George Galloway. We endorsed them for the local elections, and they endorsed me for the general election."

This horse-trading, in Murray's account, was off to a swimming start until Hussain, "much to my astonishment", broke the alliance, announcing his intention to contest Blackburn. He was supported by the "independent councillors", who had resigned from Labour over Gaza, and by The Muslim Vote, a group recommending candidates in each electorate based on their nominal opposition to the Gaza genocide and support for a ceasefire.

Murray told *Not the Andrew Marr Show* in no uncertain terms: "The people who are behind him [Hussain], who are putting him up, and backing him, and providing him with money and support for his campaign, are all the people who were behind [Labour Foreign Secretary] Jack Straw and his candidacy, including Jack Straw's previous agent.

"So I strongly suspect that this is a Labour Party thing to split the Independent-Workers Party vote and help get the Labour Party back in. I think this is redolent of Labour Party dirty tricks. I'm pretty sure that's what's going on."

Murray speaks from first-hand experience. In 2005 he stood against Tony Blair's Foreign Secretary in Blackburn following the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Straw's then campaign manager, Ibrahim Master, has suddenly reappeared as campaign manager for Hussain, Murray reports.

Labour is leaving nothing to chance. It has not waged a near decade-long purge of the party's left-wing membership to allow protest candidates to walk through an open door. Its campaign against Corbyn, waged in collusion with British and US intelligence agencies, Zionist lobby groups and the mainstream media, was Labour's preparation for office amid the deepest capitalist crisis since the 1930s and imperialist war targeting the Middle East, Russia and China.

The manufactured campaign against "left-wing antisemitism", which Corbyn refused to challenge as Labour leader, has since morphed into a frontal assault on the right to protest and free speech targeting all those opposing the genocide in Gaza.

Murray's response to Labour's alleged dirty tricks operation against him in Blackburn, is, like that of Corbyn's response to the witch-hunt, one of utter prostration. His three-paragraph announcement last Thursday concluded: "As I was unable to agree in a late night meeting with their young candidate yesterday who should step down, I find myself obliged to agree to a coin toss in the wider interest of the Palestine movement."

Murray justifies his willingness to make way for Hussain as preventing "the real danger that Genocide Labour will win". But he does so for a candidate he has accused of fronting a spoiler operation mounted by the Blairites!

A newly released audio recording of the May 23 meeting between Murray and the independent councillors underscores the opportunist character of their abortive "alliance".

Murray explains "the most important question" in Blackburn is "who can win", and argues he is best placed to capture both the Muslim vote and those of "indigenous" residents. He would

appeal to the "left-wing socialist tradition in Blackburn", while also possessing a CV that "in some ways appeals to Tory voters".

During the meeting he repeatedly assures the councillors that he is not a member of Galloway's party, is not a "party man", and would split from Galloway if necessary. He was running under the party badge because it would attract more votes. "George was very anxious for me to stand with his party badge" because if the WPB receives 150,000 votes and sends two MPs to the Commons, the party will be entitled to government funding. Finally, and for all his denunciations of Labour, Murray told the meeting: "I'm doing this because I think we have a moment here, where we can really change politics, where we can force the Labour Party to maybe go back eventually to representing the people".

The shambolic fate of Murray's election campaign in Blackburn flows from its unprincipled political foundations: the cobbling together of an electoral alliance based on the lowest common denominator irrespective of the class aims of its component parts. Similar horse trading has taken place throughout Britain as Galloway has assembled candidates who have recently split from the Labour Party, Liberal Democrats, the Tories and worse in an effort to rescue their political careers from the fallout from Gaza.

Murray and his allies are seeking to leverage the anger of Muslim workers and youth over the Gaza genocide for the purpose of corraling them behind their own petty-bourgeois, pro-capitalist and nationalist programme. But this is not confined to Galloway's party. The Corbynite Collective group, alongside No Ceasefire, No Vote and the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), are all advocating permutations of the same reformist and pro-capitalist perspective.

The Gaza genocide is rooted in the violent worldwide eruption of imperialism, which Lenin and Trotsky described as the death agony of capitalism. Imperialism gives rise to world war and to revolutionary struggles by the international working class that pose the urgent necessity for socialism.

The working class does not need an improvised cross-class alliance of political bankrupts and dilettantes, but disciplined revolutionary parties built on the foundation of great principles, tested by history. That party is the Socialist Equality Party, the British section of the International Committee of the Fourth International. Its candidates in the general election are Tom Scripps in Holborn and St Pancras and Darren Paxton in Inverness, Skye and West Ross-shire.

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