

UK Labour mounts purge of party based on accusations of anti-Semitism

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The Labour Party is utilising accusations of anti-Semitism to launch a McCarthyite witch-hunt.

Last Thursday, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn authorised the suspension of his long-time ally, former London Mayor Ken Livingstone, from the party. Livingstone spoke out against the suspension, a day earlier, of Naz Shah, Labour MP for Bradford West, after she was also accused of anti-Semitism.

In the week since, a campaign led by right-wing Labourites, the Conservatives and Zionist groups, has raised a banner of supposedly “rooting out” anti-Semitism from Labour’s ranks.

After suspending Livingstone, Corbyn then authorised an inquiry, to report back in two months, into anti-Semitism. He also plans to pass a new “code of conduct” on racism at Labour’s national executive committee in May.

Labour has since suspended three councillors who made social media postings about Israel. Once again their Facebook postings were brought to prominence by the right-wing blogger Guido Fawkes, who performed the same role regarding Shah.

Like Shah, Nottingham councillor Ilyas Aziz and ex-Blackburn mayor Salim Mulla shared Facebook posts stating that Israel should be relocated to the United States as a solution to conflict in the Middle East.

Shah Hussain, a councillor from Burnley, sent a message to the Israeli footballer Yossi Benayoun in which, referring to Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians, he wrote, “you and your country doing the same thing that hitler [sic] did to ur [sic] race in ww2.”

According to the *Telegraph*, a “senior source” within Labour said the party’s “compliance unit” has suspended 50 members in the past two month over “anti-Semitic” and “racist” comments. Up to 20 have been suspended in the last two weeks alone.

While the press and TV feature blanket coverage of what they present as a seething mass of anti-Semites flourishing within Corbyn’s Labour Party, there is nothing said about the anti-socialist, racist and anti-Muslim sentiments animating the right-wing “accusers.”

In a diatribe against Corbyn and his supporters published in the *Guardian*, columnist Nick Cohen said of Bradford, a city with a large Muslim population, “A politician who wants to win there cannot afford to be reasonable. ... They have to engage in extremist rhetoric of the ‘sweep all the Jews out’ variety or risk their opponents denouncing them as ‘Zionists.’”

A few individuals within the Labour Party, with a membership of around half a million, have made clearly anti-Semitic statements—often in reference to Israel’s brutal treatment of the Palestinians. But these have been seized on by the most right-wing sections of the party and the media to conflate them with anyone who makes any criticism either of Zionism or the Israeli regime.

A political amalgam has been established that equates any criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism, with the aim of charging the entire “left” with this crime—on the absurd basis that all Jews identify with the State of Israel. Any criticism of the historical actions of the Zionist movement, and above all, any equation of Israel’s brutal treatment of Palestinians with that suffered by Jews under fascism, is outlawed.

In this way, not only is Labour being cast as a pro-Zionist party, but one in which any socialist sentiment in the membership is to be stamped out.

For the purposes of achieving this goal, no slander is too great. In a filthy opinion column, under a strap, “Ken Livingstone’s anti-Semitist outburst is just an example of the ‘obscene’ racism in left-wing politics,”

the politically deranged ex- *Guardian* columnist and born-again Zionist Julie Burchill attacked the “British Left” for its “ugly, anti-Jew rhetoric and accompanying Islamophilia.”

She continues, “The strange fruit which was allowed to blossom by a Labour Party, smug in its anti-racist credentials, has turned the party into a rotting edifice fatally riddled with the ancient disease of anti-Semitism.”

Labour, said Burchill, now supports “a sexist, homophobic, nihilist death cult—Islamism—just because the majority of those who practice it are dark skinned and the majority of Jews white.”

Corbyn is well aware that he too could be charged under the ongoing witch-hunt, as he once wrote in an article, now deleted from his web site in an act of self-censorship, “Just what more illegal acts does Israel have to commit before it is condemned? Israel’s argument about living space convinces some that they have the ‘right’ to continue to take Palestinian land and water.”

But this has not stopped him from allowing the well-oiled anti-democratic machinery of the Labour apparatus to be used against his own co-thinkers. The pro-Tory *Daily Telegraph* notes the difficulties Labour is having in executing a frenzied operation in which every social media posting of anyone suspected of “anti-Semitism” is being meticulously trawled. Its Labour source said, “There are just six people in the compliance unit with one more joining after the [European Union] referendum and frankly, it’s nowhere near enough. They can’t cope with the number of new members that have joined since Jeremy became leader, they need more resources.”

The Compliance Unit, Labour’s version of Orwell’s Thought Police, has its origins in an earlier purge from the party, carried out under Neil Kinnock in the 1980s, of anyone associated with the pseudo-left Militant Tendency (now the Socialist Party).

It came to more recent prominence last summer, when the Blairite wing of the party mounted an unprecedented campaign seeking to exclude from membership as many as possible of the thousands who signed up as Labour supporters in order to vote for Corbyn in the leadership contest. The Compliance Unit led a sustained offensive by the entire full-time staff of the Labour Party, constituency party branches and

University Labour Clubs in what was dubbed informally as “Operation Ice Pick,” after the weapon used by the Stalinist assassin of Leon Trotsky.

John McDonnell, Corbyn’s main ally and Labour’s Shadow Chancellor, called for the abolition of the Compliance Unit as recently as February. His proposal was opposed by John Woodcock, a Blairite warmonger, who said its abolition would “give paedophiles, terrorists anti-Semites and anyone else a free run to join up and tarnish our party.”

As on every other issue of principle, Corbyn, McDonnell, et al. surrendered as soon as they were challenged by the right in the face of this slanderous attack on ordinary Labour party members led by Labour backers of austerity, militarism and war, such as John Mann, (Lord) David Blunkett and Woodcock.

Yesterday, after at first denying that the party was in crisis, and faced with talk of a leadership challenge as soon as this month, or possibly after the June 23 referendum on UK membership of the EU, Corbyn finally spoke out.

“We have a party under attack from much of the media in this country like it has never been under attack before,” he said, urging his supporters to “reach out through social media in a massive way” to “begin to reframe political debate.”

His reframing was cast as simply emphasising housing, poverty, National Health Service cuts, low wages, etc.

This is a shameless political evasion. Labour is not merely under attack from the media, but a rabid Blairite clique intent on purging all those who looked to Corbyn to change its right-wing pro-business and warmongering policies.

If Corbyn was truly intent on tackling what he referred to as “the devastating crisis of inequality in our society,” then he would be urging a political struggle to purge these forces from the Labour Party rather than cooperating with them in their shameless provocation. Without such a struggle, all talk of opposing austerity is so much hot air.



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