

The murky world of the UK's Blairite anti-Corbyn coup plotters

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The attempt to remove UK Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn is being spearheaded by right-wing supporters of former Labour leader Tony Blair. These forces, who aim to either take over or destroy the Labour Party and set up a new right-wing party, are working in intimate collusion with the security services in Britain and the United States.

The plot was enacted immediately after the June 23 referendum vote for Britain to leave the EU. The organisers of the putsch seek to reverse the referendum result and re-fashion the Labour Party as the central tool to carry this out.

Among those playing a leading role against Corbyn is Labour MP Ruth Smeeth. She was elected as a Labour MP at the 2015 general election, after working in public relations at multinational food and facilities management company, Sodexo. She later worked in public relations for Nestlé. In between, she held a post with the pro-Israel lobby group, Britain Israel Communications and Research Centre (BICOM).

On June 27, Smeeth resigned her position in Corbyn's shadow cabinet as Parliamentary Private Secretary for the shadow Northern Ireland and Scotland teams. This was part of more than 60 coordinated resignations from Corbyn's shadow cabinet organised by the plotters, with the aim of precipitating a no-confidence vote and forcing his resignation.

Corbyn refused to resign.

On June 30, Smeeth staged a stunt at a press conference where Corbyn was launching a report into the manufactured claims from Labour's right wing that the party under his leadership was anti-Semitic. Smeeth stormed out of the meeting, with her office later claiming she had been reduced to tears. She made an official complaint to the party after claiming, "a Jeremy Corbyn supporter" had "used traditional anti-Semitic slurs to attack me for being part of a 'media conspiracy'"—a reference to a statement that she was working with the

Daily Telegraph.

Smeeth claimed that under Corbyn, Labour was not a "safe space for British Jews". She called on Corbyn to stand down as leader "immediately and make way for someone with the backbone to confront racism and anti-Semitism in our party and in the country."

Smeeth describes herself as "a lifelong Labour Party campaigner," a former trade union officer and activist.

What is generally not known is that she was identified by WikiLeaks, via a US embassy diplomatic cable, as a "strictly protect" US informant.

The cable, dated April 24, 2009, was one of more than 251,287 made public by WikiLeaks and is headed "UK POLITICAL SNAPSHOT". It notes, "Labour Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Burton [the seat she contested and lost, prior to winning another in 2015] Ruth Smeeth (strictly protect) told us April 20 that [former Labour Prime Minister Gordon] Brown had intended to announce the elections on May 12, and hold them after a very short (matter of weeks) campaign season."

The cable ends: "(Note: This information has not been reported in the press.)"

The cable testifies to the intimate connections that Labour's plotters have to the US state and intelligence agencies. However, it is just the tip of the iceberg.

Ruth Smeeth is married to Michael Smeeth, a member of the executive body of the British-American Project (BAP). The BAP describes itself as a "transatlantic fellowship of over 1,000 leaders, rising stars and opinion formers from a broad spectrum of occupations, backgrounds and political views."

A November 2004 *Guardian* article noted that the BAP, which was essential in the formation of Blair's New Labour, "has been described as a Trojan horse for US foreign policy."

The article reported that following Blair's first election victory in 1997, BAP released a private circular

headlined, “Big Swing To BAP.” The circular stated, “No less than four British-American Project fellows and one advisory board member have been appointed to ministerial posts in the new Labour government.”

These included Mo Mowlam, Chris Smith, Peter Mandelson, Baroness Symons, George Robertson, Jonathan Powell, Geoff Mulgan, and Matthew Taylor.”

Mandelson was Blair’s closest adviser. Powell was Blair’s chief of staff and was previously posted at the British Embassy in Washington in 1991. Robertson, now a life peer as Baron Robertson of Port Ellen, was Blair’s Defence Secretary. He became NATO Secretary General from October 1999 to January 2004. Symons was Blair’s Minister for the Middle East, International Security, Consular and Personal Affairs in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The *Guardian* named another Blairite, Douglas Alexander, then Foreign Office and Trade Minister, as a BAP member. David Miliband, the brother of Ed Miliband, Corbyn’s predecessor as Labour leader, was another BAP member.

The BAP includes a number of prominent UK and US journalists and broadcasters among its membership. A UK journalist, Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, told the *Guardian* of one BAP conference: “The amount of drink, the way you were treated, the dinners with everyone who was anyone. ... Jonathan Powell [Tony Blair’s chief of staff] used to come a lot. I remember having many an argument with him beside swimming pools in white towelling dressing gowns. ... It was money that I’d never seen at any conference before. We [the participants] used to joke, ‘This is obviously funded by the CIA.’”

The BAP is certainly well financed. Journalist John Pilger wrote in a December 2007 article published in the *New Statesman*, “Since 1985, BAP ‘alumni’ and ‘fellows’ have been brought together courtesy of Coca-Cola, Monsanto, Saatchi & Saatchi, Philip Morris and British Airways, among other multinationals.”

The BAP was established in 1985 under the US Republican administration of Ronald Reagan with a mission “to perpetuate the close relationship between the United States and Britain.” Reagan said, “A special concern” being addressed by the BAP was cultivating the “successor generations, as these younger people are the ones who will have to work together in the future on defence and security issues.”

Pilger notes, “Attending this ceremony [where Reagan spoke] in the White House Situation Room were the ideologues [media oligarch] Rupert Murdoch and the late James Goldsmith.”

Labourite Nick Butler was central to the BAP’s formation. The *Guardian* article states that he “was treasurer of the influential left-leaning pressure group the Fabian Society and a promising junior player in the Labour party.” It cites Butler as saying, “The UK was in a bad state. ... America seemed much more dynamic, full of ideas, open”.

He continued, “My perspective then was that my generation—I would have been described as ‘rightwing’ in the 1982 Labour party—were totally stifled here. No prospect of being in power.”

Between 1982 and the BAP’s first conference in 1985, Butler secured the support of Sir Charles Villiers, a liberal Tory businessman; the US embassy in London, “which gave Butler a grant to go to Washington to test reactions to the BAP idea; and the Pew Charitable Trusts, a very large and wealthy American foundation.”

Butler spent 29 years with the BP, including five years as Group Vice President for Policy and Strategy Development from 2002 to 2006. The *Guardian* notes that such was the “warmth of its relations with Downing Street” that “during his time as BP”, it “become known as ‘Blair Petroleum’.”

Efforts to depose Corbyn were ramped up this week, with three quarters of Labour MPs voting for the renewal of Britain’s Trident nuclear weapons system. In the debate, various Blairites lined up to make clear that Labour is an unswerving ally of US imperialism and an advocate of nuclear war.

Smeech stated that Britain had to embrace “our responsibilities as a permanent member of the UN Security Council and as a founder member of the NATO alliance. ... From Major [Clement] Attlee’s support for Churchill in our country’s darkest hour to the founding of NATO under Ernest Bevin, our party has always stood up first and foremost for the security of our nation—we do now, and we always will.”



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