

# Report by Julie Hyland to the Third National Congress of the Socialist Equality Party (UK)

Julie Hyland

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*We are publishing here the report to the Socialist Equality Party (UK) Third National Congress given by SEP Assistant National Secretary Julie Hyland on October 29, 2016. Hyland moved the second resolution, "Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party: The strategic lessons."*

*SEP National Secretary Chris Marsden delivered the opening report to the congress on October 28, 2016.*

This weekend, Left Unity is holding their conference in Liverpool. It is basically a winding up exercise.

Last weekend *International Viewpoint* posted a statement on behalf of Alan Thornett's Socialist Resistance, which was the main initiator of Left Unity. Under the heading "*Corbynism*" and the challenge for the left it states, "The Corbyn movement is the most significant development on the left in British politics that has occurred in the course of most of our political lives. It is certainly the radicalisation with the best possibility of a breakthrough in reshaping politics on the left and making a difference at the level of government."

It describes Labour's growing membership as enhancing its chances "of becoming the largest party in the British Parliament after the next general election and, hopefully, of forming a government through a progressive alliance with other parties."

Socialist Resistance writes that the battle with Blairism and other right-wing strands within the Labour Party "remains unresolved—the Labour Party contains two distinct parties in a single framework," before concluding only that "The fight to turn Labour outwards, and at the same time limit the damage by the right, will remain an ongoing struggle over the months ahead.

No call is made to drive the right wing out, of course. The only problem they are concerned with is "team Corbyn's attitude to Scottish independence, to the electoral system, and to electoral alliances."

No mention whatsoever is made of war, of the retreat on Syria, on Trident.

Among the "successes" cited are promises to ban fracking, to end the right to buy social housing, and Corbyn's pledge to "a socialism for the 21st century." On this basis Socialist Resistance declares, "Corbynism is now (overwhelmingly) the main focus of political radicalisation in England and Wales today" so that "we have come to [the] unavoidable conclusion that the space that Left Unity occupied to the left of Labour is not only rapidly closing down, but is being occupied by the Corbyn wing of the Labour Party itself ...

"We have therefore taken the decision to move our political centre of gravity into the 'Corbyn movement' in order to fight more effectively for a Corbyn led anti-austerity government at the next election."

This is, they add, "not a break with the idea, which we have long defended, of building radical left parties to the left of social democracy across Europe; rather it is the continuation of such a policy by a different route."

In other words, the founders of Left Unity have liquidated into Momentum on the basis that the Corbyn/McDonnell movement is the one

they were trying to build in the first place!

The Pabloites in Thornett's group sum up the standpoint of the entire pseudo-left. Their goal is "making a difference at the level of government"—a difference that has nothing to do with the working class or opposition to capitalism (neither of which are mentioned) but is based on minor adjustments within the framework of bourgeois politics that express the concern and interests of a privileged section of the petty-bourgeoisie.

## The social and political physiognomy of the pseudo-left

We were well prepared for this development. A central element of our political work was our appraisal of the pseudo-left. This has been brought together in *The Frankfurt School, Postmodernism and the Politics of the Pseudo-left*, in which David North sets out a detailed but precise characterisation of its social and political physiognomy. Explaining that the pseudo-left denoted organisations and ideological tendencies that utilise populist slogans and democratic phrases to promote the socioeconomic interests of privileged and affluent strata of the middle class, we sum this up in our own congress resolution:

"The pseudo-left organisations constitute a professional *anti-Trotskyist* detachment of the petty-bourgeoisie. The term denotes 'political parties, organizations and theoretical/ideological tendencies which utilize populist slogans and democratic phrases to promote the socioeconomic interests of privileged and affluent strata of the middle class.' The pseudo-left 'is anti-socialist, opposes class struggle, and denies the central role of the working class and the necessity of revolution in the progressive transformation of society.' It 'promotes "identity politics," fixating on issues relating to nationality, ethnicity, race, gender and sexuality in order to acquire greater influence in corporations, the colleges and universities, the higher-paying professions, the trade unions and in government and state institutions, to effect a more favourable distribution of wealth among the richest 10 percent of the population.' It is 'pro-imperialist, and utilizes the slogans of "human rights" to legitimize, and even directly support, neo-colonialist military operations'."

## The role of Syriza in Greece and Bernie Sanders in the US

This definition could be so concrete because it was informed by the reactionary role played by these tendencies in the events of the Arab Spring, in the drive of the imperialist powers to war and especially the role played by Syriza in Greece.

I want to remind comrades of our first statement made on January 27,

2015, when Syriza—the model for the Pabloites’ new supposedly anti-capitalist coalitions—came to power. We wrote:

“Syriza and its leader Alexis Tsipras were able to exploit the mass discontent produced by the brutal austerity measures imposed since 2010 on the Greek population. But Syriza’s election victory does not express a political development, a step forward, progress or anything of the kind by or for the working class.

“In its origin, social composition and politics, Syriza is a bourgeois party—one of many, including the Democrats under US President Barack Obama—that come to power making promises of “hope” and “change” and then impose policies of austerity and war. It will inevitably betray, sooner rather than later, the aspirations for an end to social hardship and suffering that it has cynically exploited.”

Pointing to the significance of the choice of its coalition partner, as the right-wing nationalist Independent Greeks, it continued:

“Syriza has come to power based upon a programme that articulates the interests of a powerful section of the Greek bourgeoisie and more privileged sections of the upper-middle class. It makes its appeal to yet more powerful forces: the imperialists of Europe and the United States. ... The International Committee of the Fourth International rejects with contempt the political excuse offered by the petty-bourgeois pseudo-left to justify support for Syriza and its pro-capitalist agenda—that a Tsipras government is a necessary ‘experience’ for the working class, from which it will somehow come to understand the necessity for genuinely socialist policies.

“Such sophistries are advanced only to oppose the emergence of a revolutionary movement of the working class, a development possible only through a relentless political exposure of Syriza.” [The significance of the election of Syriza in Greece, January 27, 2015]

In April that year, Bernie Sanders announced his campaign for the presidential nomination of the Democratic Party. In our article reporting this on May 1, we stated that this announcement:

“... marks a new stage in one of the longest-running political frauds in American history.

“In formally seeking the presidential nomination of the Democratic Party, Sanders is only admitting publicly what has always been a reality. His ‘independence’ is as much of a sham as his ‘socialism.’

“The Sanders candidacy follows in the footsteps of similar efforts to give a left cover to the increasingly right-wing policies of the Democratic Party. Al Sharpton and Congressman Dennis Kucinich played that role in the 2004 campaign, with Kucinich coming back for a re-run in 2008. ... The decision by Sanders to seek the Democratic Party nomination for president is the culmination of a protracted process over four decades, during which Sanders, despite never formally belonging to the Democratic Party, never ventured beyond what passes for the party’s ‘left’ flank, using the term ‘socialist’ only to suggest an illusory difference with his (infrequent) Democratic Party challengers.

“His role in the campaign will be to use his reputation as a politician of the ‘left’ to disguise the ever more right-wing orientation of the Democratic Party: its abandonment of even a nominal commitment to social reform, its embrace of war, assassination, mass surveillance and an increasingly dictatorial role for the American imperialist state, both internationally and at home.” [Bernie Sanders to seek Democratic presidential nomination, May 1, 2015]

### **Corbyn elected Labour leader after general election disaster**

In the resolution, we speak of the “vindication of the Marxist method, which analyses political tendencies not on the basis of what they call

themselves but on the basis of their history and programme and the social interests they represent.” It is from this standpoint that we analysed events in the Labour Party.

In May 2015, Labour lost its second election in a row. Austerity-lite was unable to defeat a hated Tory government that had imposed five years of brutal austerity, despite the collapse of the Liberal Democrats. Two processes were involved: the 2003 Iraq war and the 2008 financial crash, which had thoroughly discredited New Labour, and the neo-liberal agenda on which it was based.

This collapse, which showed that Labour was heading the same way as PASOK in Greece, had enormous implications for the bourgeoisie. The Labour Party has been the principal political prop of British imperialism and the main obstacle to socialism for more than 100 years. Under conditions of the worst collapse in wages and living standards outside of Greece, they were sitting on a powder keg.

In our statement on the election result, we warned:

“The events of May 7 were long in gestation and do not lend themselves to a quick fix. ... Labour’s rout is far more than the failure of just one party. It is the failure of an entire political perspective and of all the parties and organisations based on it. Across Europe, the former social democratic organisations are disintegrating. Having long ago abandoned their reformist pretensions in response to economic globalisation and capitalist breakdown, whether in Britain, France, Greece or elsewhere, they have become the ruthless exponents of austerity and war...

“A road out of this nightmare depends on the building of a genuinely socialist party. There is no way forward through a return to national reformism, only a shift to a new axis of struggle—that of socialist internationalism. The productive forces of society must be freed from the fetters of the profit system and the division of the world into competing nation states. World economy must be run on the basis of planned production to meet social need, not private profit.” [The death of British Labourism, May 11, 2015]

In Scotland, following their role in promoting nationalism and the Scottish National Party in the 2014 referendum, the pseudo-left groups set about the formation of a “Scottish Syriza.”

These were the conditions in which Labour’s dwindling left was reluctantly forced to make a stand, with Corbyn announcing his candidacy in the Labour Party leadership contest, opened up by the resignation of Ed Miliband, on June 6, 2015.

The leading Labour “lefts” admitted that they believed they had no hope of winning, but they had to make a fist.

Two weeks later, a quarter of a million people demonstrated in London against austerity under the banner of the People’s Assembly—organised by Unite, Unison, the National Union of Teachers and the Rail, Maritime and Transport union and backed by the Communist Party of Britain (CPB), the Greens and the pseudo-left.

With the government committed to greater austerity, and the Blairites using the leadership contest to move Labour further right as shown by the fact that all the main contenders intended to vote in favour of the government’s welfare cuts, the mood among these layers was desperate. Green Party MP Caroline Lucas appealed for a Progressive Alliance and for Labour MPs to “see the light.”

The role of the unions in Corbyn’s rise to prominence is critical. His main support has come from Unite’s Len McCluskey and the TSSA trade union, which provided the headquarters for his challenge and for Momentum.

We noted that 2015 had seen the number of working days lost due to industrial action drop to 170,000 compared with 788,000 in 2014. The 2015 figure was the second lowest annual total since records began in 1891. The number of strike ballots had fallen to 568, compared to 650 the previous year. Interestingly, the vote in favour of industrial action in those ballots that went ahead rose steadily—so that nearly 90 percent were in

favour of walkouts.

This does not take into account the disputes we have seen over the last year, including the junior doctors' strike that resulted in an unprecedented series of walkouts involving 50,000 people and which included the withdrawal of emergency cover for the first time in the history of the National Health Service. The British Medical Association is a professional body and is not affiliated to the Trades Union Congress (TUC), which might account for the fact that the action ever got off the ground—although it did not stop it being betrayed. There is also the bitter dispute at Southern Rail and the actions being taken by teaching assistants in several areas—some of the poorest paid sections of workers who are being hammered by Labour councils cutting their pay by 25 percent.

### Workers and youth hit by social crisis

The situation for the younger generation is dire and getting worse. Students in England graduate with higher debts, on average, than their peers in any other English-speaking country, including the US, with the poorest running up debts in excess of £50,000 after completing their degrees. At the same time, their overall employment prospects are declining.

In the last five years, young workers have seen a fall of £1,800 in earnings. The typical hourly rate for 16- to 20-year-olds is approximately £6 per hour. Many don't even earn that. Apprenticeship schemes for those aged below 20 are at just £3.40 per hour.

Nearly 1 million are employed on zero-hour contracts, which have leapt by 20 percent in one year. The investigation into Sports Direct found that of 3,200 people working in its warehouse, just 200 were direct employees. Some 80 percent of the remainder were supplied by temping agencies on zero-hour contracts, while others were on short-term contracts of just 336 hours a year.

The Dickensian conditions of work were underscored by evidence presented by the Unite union. There were 110 ambulance callouts to the warehouse, it reported, over the last two years. Some 50 occasions involved "life-threatening" conditions, including chest pains, convulsions and strokes. Five involved birth and miscarriage-related matters, including the instance in which an employee gave birth in the toilet.

One of the intended consequences of the attack on welfare is that nearly 5 million people are now defined as "self-employed," with no rights to pensions, holidays and sick pay and no working rights. In the last 14 years, the numbers of full-time self-employed have risen by 25 percent. The numbers of part-time self-employed have risen by 88 percent.

The trade unions are far removed from these conditions of life, with the proportion of employees earning less than £250 per week who are trade union members at just 13 percent. In 2014, just 4 percent of those aged 24 and under and 17 percent aged 25 to 34 years were members of a trade union.

The support of some of the most significant unions, often led by the pseudo-left, for Corbyn is motivated by their demand for what the TUC has described as "A National Plan for British Jobs and British Industry." It calls for a "task force of national, regional and local government, unions and business" that "should monitor the situation in sectors and regions, to provide early warning of problems, and lay the foundations for a changed approach."

In a prominent section of the report, "Recognising how trade unions can help Britain succeed," it states, "The government must recognise that trade unions have a constructive role to play in the post-referendum environment"—citing Germany and the corporatist collaboration between management and trade unions as its model.

### The support of the pseudo-left for Corbyn

In addition to the trade unions, Corbyn enjoyed extensive links with the Green Party, the CPB [Communist Party of Britain] (for which he wrote regularly in the *Morning Star*) and the pseudo-left groups, especially Thornett's Left Unity, entryist groups such as Socialist Action and others. One of Corbyn's chief advisers is Simon Fletcher, who previously worked as one of four Socialist Action members playing a key role in then-London Labour Mayor Ken Livingstone's administration.

Other prominent supporters include John Rees, formerly of the Socialist Workers Party and now Counterfire and a national officer of the Stop the War Coalition—of which Corbyn was chair—and Andrew Murray of the CPB and chief of staff of Unite. Murray's daughter, Laura, is a key activist in Momentum and was recently employed on £40,000 a year as adviser to Corbyn's shadow cabinet. Also employed is Corbyn's son, Seb, on £45,000.

James Schneider, 28, is the public face of Momentum. The son of a disgraced multi-millionaire property magnate, he is the former president of the Liberal Democrats at Oxford and voted Green in the general election.

There is also Paul Mason, the *Guardian* journalist (formerly of Workers Power), Seamus Milne, another *Guardian* journalist and one-time leader of Straight Left, the hard-line Stalinist faction of the old Communist Party of Great Britain.

Jon Lansman, the initiator of Momentum and editor of the Left Futures blog, was a leading Bennite. He is associated with Foundation Property & Capital, run by his brother and son, which provides office space for Momentum and Left Futures.

Jill Mountford and Michael Chessum, on Momentum's steering committee, are associated with the Alliance for Workers Liberty of Sean Matgamna, as is another leading organiser, Liam McNulty.

### Socialist Party seeks affiliation to Labour

This inner coterie is reinforced by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Socialist Party (SP). While the SWP maintains a certain organisational distance, only to better corral workers behind the Labour Party, the SP is asking to be allowed to affiliate to the Labour Party.

This week's *Socialist* publishes a letter signed by 60 current and former leading members of the Socialist Party/Militant Tendency. Boasting that the names listed have a combined period of Labour Party membership of over 800 years, they say that they must be admitted in order to "consolidate Jeremy Corbyn's victory and to transform Labour into a democratic, socialist, anti-austerity party."

The letter states: "Some of us were expelled 30 years ago or more; others were excluded from membership during the recent leadership election. Because many of us who found ourselves outside the Labour Party rightly continued the struggle for socialism through membership of other organisations, we know that our applications for re-admittance will be denounced by the establishment media as 'left-wing infiltration.' But we have no wish to hide our background.

"We urge the NEC to boldly undercut the media's attack not only by admitting us into membership as individuals but by deciding favourably on requests for affiliation from any socialist organisation that so applies."

The first signatory is Peter Taaffe, leader of the Socialist Party, followed

by its deputy general secretary Hannah Sell and all its full-time and leading members.

We state in our resolution that the pseudo-left constitute a “professional anti-Trotskyist detachment of the petty-bourgeoisie.” They have made a career of going from one betrayal and one organisation to another. They resemble nothing more than a dodgy salesman, who repeatedly closes one store and opens another under a new name so that those ripped off last time round have no come-back.

None of this is to suggest that these forces were wholly, or even primarily, responsible for Corbyn’s victory. They tapped into something far broader than they expected so that they were able to draw in large numbers of former Labour members that left in protest at the Iraq War and found a resonance among young students and some young workers. We have covered a number of their events, and those you speak to—especially among the youth—clearly consider themselves to be socialists and regard Corbyn’s election as a breach with the neo-liberal politics that are all they have ever known. But the reality is that they are being pushed behind a right-wing party of state that is completely integrated into the plans for militarism, war and a further savage attack on the conditions of workers and youth.

The Blairites and their backers have no intention of accepting a Corbyn-led Labour government, especially at a time of immense crisis of capitalism internationally and of the British bourgeoisie in the wake of the Brexit referendum.

We are now getting an indication of what constitutes the “progressive alliance” advocated by *Socialist Resistance*, with the demands that Labour must not contest the Richmond by-election, forced by the resignation of the Tory MP Zac Goldsmith—that it should line up behind the Liberal Democrats, Greens and even stand a joint candidate with them. Everything is determined by securing the requirements of the British bourgeoisie post-Brexit. There is little mention made of social conditions, insofar as they affect the broad mass of workers and youth and all of this is topped with massive doses of divisive and reactionary identity politics.

We deal in the resolution with Lenin’s attitude toward the British Labour Party, a favourite staple of the pseudo-left in trying to confuse and disorient workers and youth. We also reference the position taken by Trotsky and sum up the changes introduced in our tactical line in response to the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the globalisation of production.

### **Labour: A bourgeois party of state**

I want to deal with the question of Labour as a bourgeois party of state, the emergence of New Labour and its collapse in this context. There is much more that could and should be done on this question because it is very much integral to our position that the possibility of reforming or capturing this organisation in the interests of social justice and peace “is as bankrupt as the illusion that the financial oligarchy can be peacefully persuaded to agree to a fairer redistribution of wealth.”

As noted, even in Lenin’s time the reactionary bourgeois character of the Labour Party—and of social democracy as a whole—had become clear through its role in supporting the First World War. This was followed by the National Government in 1931 and then the National Unity Government during the Second World War.

In the aftermath of the Second World War—which is usually proclaimed as Labour’s socialist peak—it played a lead role in helping reorganise Western imperialism, under the domination of the United States and against the Soviet Union—including in the creation of NATO.

A question was asked in pre-congress discussions on our citing, in point 12, of the coup against Corbyn being instigated in collusion with the US

and British military/intelligence apparatus. What follows here is only a brief outline of these relations. This is a vast and important area and I would encourage comrades to undertake independent study that can contribute to painting a broader picture.

There is a long history of the Labour right working with the British and US state, especially its military, defence and intelligence apparatus. This goes from the Information Research Department (IRD), set up in the Foreign Office in 1948 for a “propaganda offensive” against the left, which was secretly funded by Parliament.

Domestically this concentrated on aiding the Labour and trade union right against the left. According to reports, Christopher Mayhew, the Foreign Office minister who set up the IRD, passed on accounts to his boss, Labour’s Ernest Bevin, of his arrangements with Herbert Tracey, public secretary of the Trades Union Congress, “for the dissemination inside the Labour movement at home of anti-Communist propaganda which we are producing for overseas consumption.” A vast network of journalists was used to ensure this, most particularly at the *Observer*.

The CIA and MI5 were heavily involved throughout the 1950s behind the leadership of future Labour leader Hugh Gaitskell at a time of growing opposition to nuclear armament. One part of this was the CIA-backed *New Leader* publication, of which future Labour chancellor Denis Healey was for a time its London correspondent.

MI6 and the CIA helped organise and fund the World Assembly of Youth (WAY), whose Friends of WAY Society included former Labour Prime Minister Clement Atlee.

The British Youth Council, which began as the British section of WAY, was variously chaired by Peter Mandelson and Charles Clarke. Clarke was Neil Kinnock’s chief of staff at the time of the witch-hunt of the Militant Tendency in the 1980s. Mandelson was appointed by Kinnock as the party’s director of communications at the same time. Tom Watson, the current witch-finder general and deputy leader of Labour under Corbyn, cut his teeth in the Kinnock purge.

Significantly, it was under Kinnock that Labour’s hitherto majority-opposition to the European Economic Community was overturned to support greater integration into the European Economic and Monetary Union.

The Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), a body whose declared purpose was “to defend freedom and democracy against the new tyranny sweeping the world,” was set up in 1950 with the help of the “left” anti-communist Melvin Lasky. CCF included Gaitskell, Healey and Anthony Crosland, whose book *The Future of Socialism*, was adopted as the manifesto of Gaitskell.

Also at this time there was the New York-based American Committee on United Europe, whose leadership included General Donovan, wartime head of the OSS (the forerunner of the CIA), George Marshall, the US secretary of state, and Allen Dulles of the CIA. It helped finance the European Movement, set up by Winston Churchill in 1948. Among the founding patrons of its British division were Gaitskell and Healey.

Britain’s TUC was affiliated to the CIA-backed International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). According to one account, by the mid-1950s nearly a quarter of the TUC’s annual budget was going to the ICFTU.

Another front was the Campaign for Democratic Socialism (CDS), which was behind the efforts to ensure that the Labour Party returned to its support for NATO at the party conference in 1961. This was around the time of the witch-hunt against the British Trotskyists in The Club, later to become the Socialist Labour League.

The Labour Committee for Transatlantic Understanding was set up in 1976 by former Labour attaché at the US embassy and close associate of Gaitskell, Joe Godson. It was a continuation of the Trades Union Committee for European and Transatlantic Understanding (TUCETU), which was funded by the National Endowment for Democracy. This in

turn was connected to the *Atlantic Council*, which recently published the hair-raising report on the future of the US Army. Its international advisory board includes Rupert Murdoch and Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, former secretary general of NATO and Defence Secretary under Blair. Its British arm has included as patrons Gordon Brown, Dr David George Clark MP, the former secretary of defence under Blair, and Baroness Ramsay, foreign adviser to former Labour leader John Smith and later a member of Britain's Intelligence and Security Committee.

Its patrons also include former Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron and his Liberal Democrat coalition partner Nick Clegg, but its main work has been to recruit the layers that made up New Labour, whether directly under its auspices or through numerous other networks, such as TUCETU. John Reid, former Minister of State for the Armed Forces and chairman of the Labour Party, spoke at a TUCETU conference; Peter Mandelson wrote a pamphlet for it based on a speech he gave to its 1996 conference.

The British-American Project for the Successor Generation, BAP for short, was founded in 1985 "to perpetuate the close relationship between the United States and Britain." Its title derives from the speech by Ronald Reagan in 1983 calling for "successor generations" on both sides of the Atlantic to "work together in the future on defence and security matters." Attending its founding ceremony in the White House Situation Room were Murdoch and the late James Goldsmith.

On BAP's US board is Diana Negroponte, the wife of John Negroponte, Bush's national security chief, and Paul Wolfowitz. The 1997 Blair government was stuffed with BAP associates, including five ministerial positions and three other appointees, including Mo Mowlam, Peter Mandelson, Jonathan Powell, Chris Smith, George Robertson, Baroness Symons, Geoff Mulgan and Matthew Taylor. Other leading figures include Douglas Alexander (Foreign Office), Baroness Scotland, Julia Hobsbawm and Adair Turner, and broadcasters James Naughtie and Jeremy Paxman.

This crosses into the Tories including, Steve Hilston, David Willetts, Stephen Dorrell, Alan Sked (UK Independence Party founder) and former *Daily Telegraph* editor Charles Moore. Its sponsors include Coca-Cola, Unilever, Monsanto, Saatchi & Saatchi, Philip Morris, Coopers & Lybrand, American Express, Apple, British Airways, BP, Cadbury Schweppes and Camelot.

Blair and Brown were not officially members of BAP, but they didn't have to be. Brown and his adviser Ed Balls were at Harvard. David Miliband, Blair's head of policy, was at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Jonathan Powell, Blair's foreign policy adviser, had worked in the British embassy in Washington.

### **The role of the Fabian Society**

BAP crosses over into the Fabian Society, which also plays a lead role in the anti-Corbyn moves. A key player in the British initiative for BAP is Nick Butler—formerly of BP and a treasurer of the Fabian Society. Fifteen shadow secretaries of state and nine shadow ministers who resigned from Corbyn's opposition cabinet all have affiliations to, or are involved with, the Fabian Society. If you want to know why female Labour MPs are playing such a lead role in the witch-hunt, one of its specialities is piloting women into leading roles on the basis of women-only short-lists. These include leading Corbyn opponents such as Jess Philips.

Conor McGinn, Labour MP for St. Helens North, was accused of coordinating the shadow cabinet resignations. He is a senior figure in the Fabian Society and was part of the cross-party pro-EU Britain Stronger in Europe—as opposed to the separate Labour campaign—alongside Hilary

Benn. Britain Stronger in Europe was led by Will Straw, son of Jack Straw, another intelligence asset.

Straw junior is director of Left Foot Forward Ltd, which campaigns against Corbyn. His co-director, Marcus Roberts, has previously spent time in the US working on the Al Gore, John Kerry and Barack Obama presidential campaigns and is director of Zentrum, a political consulting agency. Zentrum was contracted to the Labour Party to refound the brand between 2011 and 2015.

Roberts was then also deputy general secretary of the Fabian Society.

During that time Zentrum was co-managed by Frank Spring, a US-based political campaign consultant who is a political partner at the Truman National Security Project—the Democrats' version of the neo-cons.

Then there is Progress—the Blairite think tank funded by Lord Sainsbury with money left over from the original campaign to make Tony Blair leader of the party. The supermarket tycoon is the largest political donor in Britain. He was one of the 100 signatories of the right-wing Limehouse Declaration in February 1981, in opposition to then Labour leader Michael Foot, and a founding member of the Social Democratic Party (SDP). He rejoined Labour in 1996. He was made a Labour life peer in 1997 by Blair and was the third longest serving minister in the Labour governments besides Blair and Brown. Sainsbury bankrolled the Britain Stronger in Europe campaign, giving more than £2 million each to Labour and the Liberal Democrats in the months before the European Union referendum. The donations mean that the former supermarket chairman gave more than £8 million to pro-Remain groups ahead of the vote, more than any other individual, including UKIP-supporting insurance millionaire Arron Banks.

Among Progress's leading figures is Tristram Hunt. Now an MP, he was previously Lord Sainsbury's personal spokesman. A former chair of Progress is John Woodcock, the MP who has viciously attacked Jeremy Corbyn on a number of issues. Liz Kendall and Chuka Umunna are also supporters as is Margaret Hodge, who sits on the Board of Patrons of Progress. It was Hodge, Blair's minister of state at the Department of Trade and Industry, who tabled the motion for a vote of no confidence against Corbyn on June 24. Hodge's motion was backed by fellow Blairite, Ann Coffey, a parliamentary private secretary to Blair in 1997 before holding several junior ministerial positions in Blair's government under Alastair Darling.

That's before we get into the US/Israeli connections behind the anti-Semitism witch-hunt. I would point out that in April, Progress chief Richard Angell launched an "8 point action plan on anti-Semitism," part of which demanded that all National Executive Committee members be "trained on modern anti-Semitism" by the Jewish Labour Movement (JLM). The JLM is affiliated to the UK Labour Party, Israeli Labour Party and the World Zionist Organisation.

Central to this training is the outlawing of any criticism of Israel and Zionism as anti-Semitic. This is a European-wide initiative. The European Council on Tolerance and Reconciliation (ECTR) was set up by Russian-born businessman Moshe Kantor, President of the European Jewish Congress, and the former president of Poland, Aleksander Kwasniewski (who is also on the International Advisory Board of the Atlantic Council). It promotes the Model National Statute for the Promotion of Tolerance, which it has submitted to Brussels to be made mandatory across all EU states. The exceptions to tolerance include burqa wearing, according to the draft, which it argued provided an obstacle to crime prevention.

Who is the chairman of the ECTR? None other than Tony Blair, who was appointed in June 2015 after he stood down as Middle East Envoy.

The Jewish Labour Movement, which is to run the proposed training sessions on tolerance suggested by Progress, works closely with BICOM, the Britain Israel Communications and Research Centre, which has played a leading role in the anti-Semitism smear campaigns through such personages as Ruth Smeeth—its former director of public affairs identified as a US protected asset by WikiLeaks. It also works very closely with the

Labour Friends of Israel, of which Sainsbury is a patron, and whose leading figure is Hodge, who is also vice president of the Fabian Society.

I haven't dealt extensively with Portland Communications, another Blairite, neo-liberal group involved in the public denunciations of Corbyn. Set up by Tim Allan, a former adviser to Blair and director of communications at BSkyB, it includes many leading advisers to Blair and Brown—such as Alastair Campbell. The point I want to stress is that none of this represents a takeover of Labour by outside forces. Neither MI5/MI6, the CIA, nor the financial oligarchy had to artificially slot people into the party, or buy them off because they share the same fundamental ideological and social concerns.

### **Britain's political right and the Henry Jackson Society**

I also gathered a lot of material on the Henry Jackson Society. These are British and American neo-cons closely associated with the Iraq War, such as Richard Perle, former US Assistant Secretary of Defence, and William Kristol, founding editor of the neo-conservative *Weekly Standard*, and co-founder of the notorious pro-Bush pro-war think tank, the Project for a New American Century. Prominent British signatories include four Conservative MPs: Michael Gove, Ed Vaizey, David Willetts, and Michael Ancram. The first three would go on to become senior ministers in Cameron's government. Signatories also included Labour MPs Denis MacShane, Gisela Stuart (who led the Leave campaign with Boris Johnson), and former MI6 chief Sir Richard Dearlove.

The Henry Jackson Society is one of the prime proponents of the xenophobic demonising of Muslims. There is a distinctly fascist element, with Douglas Murray, its associate director complaining that London has become "a foreign country" because "there aren't enough white people around" and announcing, "We long ago reached the point where the only thing white Britons can do is to remain silent about the change in their country."

William Shawcross, former Henry Jackson director now in charge of the UK's Charity Commission, has written that Europe is "threatened by a vast fifth column—that there are thousands of European-born people, in Britain, in France, in Holland, in Denmark, everywhere—who wish to destroy us." These people are "Islamofascists who are united in hatred of us."

These are the intellectual origins of the Prevent strategy in schools and the common cause made with the Blairites against Corbyn's supporters utilising charges of anti-Semitism. Another Henry Jackson fellow is Raheem Kassam. Formerly managing editor at the extreme-right Breitbart UK web site, he was Nigel Farage's campaign manager and is currently running for the UKIP leadership.

The leading Tory donor Michael Ashcroft's Biteback Publishing is behind the release of *The Left's Jewish Problem: Jeremy Corbyn, Israel and anti-Semitism*, written by Dave Rich and who is speaking at a Henry Jackson Society sponsored event.

This is the real character of the Labour Party which the pseudo-left are defending, trying to enter and which they claim is the arena for "the most significant development on the left in British politics that has occurred in the course of most of our political lives."

As David North explained in his excellent lecture in Frankfurt, the postmodernists and the adherents of the Frankfurt School advance an absurd politics not because their philosophy is absurd. Rather, the crass absurdities of their philosophy arise from their reactionary petty-bourgeois politics. One simply cannot understand either the Frankfurt School or postmodernism without recognizing that the rejection of Marxism, and the perspective of socialist revolution based on the working class, constitutes

the underlying political impulse for their theories. That applies of course to the pseudo-left who are steeped in these theories.

### **The principled struggle of The Club and Socialist Labour League**

As we explain in the Socialist Equality Party historical foundations document, all these organisations have their roots in the various petty-bourgeois liquidationist tendencies that emerged either from within the Fourth International or in direct opposition to it.

We were concerned in drafting our resolution at how to present the Healy group's intervention into the Labour Party because the issue of entryism was not the point of difference between the orthodox Trotskyists and the Pabloites as it is often presented by the pseudo-left—usually accompanied by routine denunciations of "sectarianism." What determined the entryism of the Pabloites was the demoralised outlook of social layers who considered it impossible and impermissible to break the influence of social democracy and Stalinism over the working class.

The important work conducted by The Club and then the Socialist Labour League within the Labour Party between 1947 and the expulsion of the Young Socialists from the Labour Party in 1964 was the product of the struggle against Pabloism, directly countering its efforts to liquidate the Trotskyist movement into the Stalinist and social democratic parties.

Whereas the enemies of Trotskyism invoked tactical considerations of maintaining a base in the Labour Party to justify political prostration before the bureaucracy, what characterised Healy's work was his determination to seize every opportunity to encourage the independent political activity of the working class.

In conclusion, I would like to draw comrades' attention to the appraisal made by David North in his obituary of Healy:

"The power of the British Trotskyists' intervention in the crisis of Stalinism was derived from the clarification which had been achieved through the struggle against Pabloite revisionism. Precisely because the British section had rejected conciliation with and capitulation to Stalinism, Healy was able to achieve important breakthroughs within the Stalinist ranks—particularly among a section of Communist Party intellectuals such as Cliff Slaughter, Tom Kemp and Peter Fryer, the latter being won to Trotskyism after observing, as the Stalinist *Daily Worker*'s correspondent in Budapest, the crushing of the Hungarian Revolution in November 1956.

"The crisis in the Communist Party and the recruitment of significant new forces into the Trotskyist movement enabled Healy to put into motion two projects that were to play an important role in the future political and organisational development of the British section: the *Newsletter* greatly strengthened the independent political activity of the Trotskyists within both the trade unions and the Labour Party, where, to the consternation of the right-wing social democratic and trade union bureaucrats, the influence of the revolutionary Marxists was steadily growing. The second rapidly established itself as the premier organ of international revolutionary Marxism. ...

"It would not be difficult, however, to discover weaknesses and mistakes in the entry work conducted by Healy between 1947, when the RCP [Revolutionary Communist Party] minority entered the Labour Party, and the formation of the Socialist Labour League in 1959. Entry work, by its very nature, places the revolutionary cadre in a political and organisational milieu that is utterly hostile. The constant threat from the right-wing bureaucrats of proscription and expulsion inevitably restricts its freedom of movement. The inescapable need to form alliances with non-Marxist elements so that revolutionary work can be conducted within the parameters of the hostile organisation always carries with it the risk

that unavoidable concessions may proceed further than originally intended. Healy did not always manage to avoid political mishaps as he navigated the treacherous waters of the Labour Party. Nevertheless, Healy's work was conducted under the banner of revolutionary Marxism, and constitutes a chapter in the history of the Trotskyist movement which, with both its strengths and weaknesses, remains to this day a rich source of political experience. ...

“While Healy's work inside the Labour Party deserves critical study as an important part of the Trotskyist experience in Britain, of far greater and more enduring historical significance is the role he played in the aftermath of the 1953 split in the struggle to defend the program of the Fourth International against the reactionary assault of petty-bourgeois revisionism. And here it must be said that the struggle conducted by Healy and the British Trotskyists against the unprincipled reunification of the Socialist Workers Party with the Pabloites ranks among the most important contributions to Marxism in the twentieth century. At a time when the vital threads of revolutionary continuity could have been severed, the stand taken by Healy against the renegacy of the SWP [Socialist Workers Party] saved the Trotskyist movement from the immediate danger of political liquidation into the revisionist swamp of Stalinist, bourgeois nationalist and petty-bourgeois radical politics. Healy and the Socialist Labour League insisted that the fundamental problem confronting the workers movement was what they called, in an especially well-chosen phrase ‘the persistence of opportunism in the present stage of imperialism development’.” (David North, *Gerry Healy and His Place in the History of the Fourth International*, pp. 28-31, available from Mehring Books)



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