

Tory-media witch-hunt claims Labour's Corbyn was a spy

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A filthy anti-communist campaign has been mounted by Rupert Murdoch's the *Sun* and the *Times*—along with the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Telegraph*—claiming that Jeremy Corbyn was a paid informer for the Czech secret service in the 1980s.

The lies against Corbyn have been taken up by Prime Minister Theresa May, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson and other top Tories with the aim of discrediting and delegitimising Corbyn under conditions of an acute governmental crisis that raises the prospect of him forming the next government.

The *Sun* editorialised, "Jeremy Corbyn has shown shocking judgment in 'briefing' a Soviet spy—and he cannot be allowed the keys to No 10."

The campaign against Corbyn relies exclusively on claims made by a former spy for the Statni Bezpecnost (StB) secret police, Lt. Jan Sarkocy, who in the 1980s served as a diplomat under the name Jan Dymic.

The *Sun* reported that it had uncovered files in Czech archives showing that Corbyn had met with Sarkocy several times in 1986 and 1987, including twice in the House of Commons and once in the then-backbench MP's Islington North constituency office. Sarkocy claimed that Corbyn was a paid informant, assigned the codename "Agent Cob". "He was our asset. He had been recruited. He was getting money from us." He asserted that Corbyn warned him of MI5 clamping down on foreign spies—three years before Sarkocy was expelled from the UK by Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Sarkocy then extended his allegations to cover 15 Labour MPs who he claimed were paid informants—including current Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell and former London Mayor Ken Livingstone. MPs, he claimed, were paid between £1,000 and £10,000 for information and "wanted big bucks to give us help."

Corbyn acknowledges meeting with the ambassador,

whom he knew as Dymic, on the occasions recorded, but has denied knowledge of his being "an agent, asset or informer for any intelligence agency." McDonnell and Livingstone flatly deny any meetings with Sarkocy.

Sarkocy's claims are transparently false and stupid.

He claims that Corbyn was recruited with the cooperation of Russia, who rated the backbencher "number 1." He says the supposedly secret recruit then visited Czechoslovakia's embassy twice a year, where he was reassured that "he could go live in Russia" if he ever got in trouble. "Corbyn's money was given by another person who is currently a prominent MP. The check-in took place under Russian protection," said Sarkocy.

More bizarre still, he told Slovakian media sources that Corbyn gave him information about what "[Prime Minister Margaret] Thatcher would have for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and what she would wear [the] next day." Expanding on his own role, Sarkocy claimed to have personally organised the Live Aid concert in 1985, or possibly the Free Nelson Mandela event at Wembley Arena in 1988—he is vague on which one.

Svetlana Ptacnikova, director of the Czech Security Forces Archive, has stated that Corbyn "was neither registered [by the StB] as a collaborator, nor does this [his alleged collaboration] stem from archive documents." Corbyn would not have known Jan Dymic was a secret agent, she confirmed, because this was concealed from him.

"The files we have on him are kept in a folder that starts with the identification number one. Secret collaborators were allocated folders that start with the number four. ... He stayed in that basic category—and in fact he's still described as that, as a person of interest, in the final report issued by the StB agent shortly before he [Sarkocy] was expelled from the UK."

None of this has stopped the Tories from joining the media witch-hunters.

May said Corbyn must be “prepared to be open and transparent” about the allegations against him. MP David Morris said Corbyn should be questioned by the Foreign Affairs Select Committee. MP Ben Bradley tweeted that “Corbyn sold British secrets to communist spies,” before being forced to withdraw the slander by Corbyn threatening libel action.

The most sinister response was Williamson’s. Speaking at a NATO meeting in Brussels last week, the defence secretary fuelled the allegations, declaring: “That he met foreign spies is a betrayal of this country.”

Corbyn warned that Williamson was giving credence to “entirely false and ridiculous smears, which as we know from Darren Osborne, can have a potentially deadly effect.” Osborne was jailed last month for murder and attempted murder after he drove a hired van into worshippers outside a Finsbury Park mosque. He admitted during his trial that he had wanted to kill Corbyn as well as Mayor of London Sadiq Khan.

Amid their allegations that Corbyn was an agent, the Tories and the media are seeking to demonise Corbyn for his opposition to war—citing his more radical pronouncements during the 1980s as proof that he is a traitor, whether or not he took money from the StB.

The *Sun*, for example, seized on the StB’s files summarising Corbyn’s political outlook in 1986, portraying his views as tantamount to treason: “Negative towards USA, as well as the current politics of the Conservative Government” and “supporting the Soviet peace initiative.”

The nominally liberal media have fully supported this attack on Corbyn’s radical past, focusing their own vitriol on Corbyn’s anti-war stance. The *Independent* editorialised that his real crime was that he was “too willing to go out on a limb for some vague notion of ‘peace’ and internationalism” in his dealings with the Stalinist regimes. It made a point of raising with derision “the supposedly cuddlier Trotskyist version of communism some misguided souls favour.” The *Guardian*’s house Tory, Matthew d’Ancona, pontificated on the same theme, writing that Corbyn had forgotten that “For all its errors and terrible interventions, the west was always preferable to the totalitarian alternative. ...”

However, the Tories are not merely returning to the political struggles of three decades ago.

Within weeks of Corbyn winning leadership of the Labour Party, Chief of the Defence Staff Sir Nicholas Houghton told the BBC that Corbyn’s statement that he

would not authorise the use of nuclear weapons “would worry me if that thought was translated into power.”

Houghton’s comments were defended by Prime Minister David Cameron as “reasonable.”

A few weeks earlier, an anonymous “senior serving general,” whose career profile read like Houghton’s, told the *Sunday Times* that Corbyn becoming prime minister would bring “the very real prospect” of “a mutiny. ... You would see a major break in convention with senior generals directly and publicly challenging Corbyn over vital important policy decisions such as Trident, pulling out of NATO and any plans to emasculate and shrink the size of the armed forces.”

This latest offensive by the Tory Party escalates the earlier threats made by senior military figures that Corbyn must not be allowed to form a government. It can be understood only in the context of growing military aggression directed against Russia and China, which demands unquestioned readiness to press the nuclear trigger, and under conditions where this war drive, the Brexit crisis and the prospect of a second economic crash demand a still deeper descent into right-wing authoritarianism.

Broad sections of the ruling elite see in Corbyn not the pliant political figure he has proved himself to be on so many occasions, but as a living indication of an ongoing radicalisation of the working class. They see in Corbyn’s rise a shift to the left that threatens to go way beyond the reformist platitudes he advances, posing a direct threat to a social order that offers nothing but growing social hardship, militarism and war and which is raising the socialist spectre they thought had been buried forever. It points to the ruthless reaction such a challenge will provoke and the necessity for the working class to respond accordingly.



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