

Smearing of Corbyn as an anti-Semite prepares right-wing breakaway from Labour

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The campaign by an alliance of the Labour Party's right-wing, Zionist groups and the Conservative Party to portray party leader Jeremy Corbyn and his supporters as anti-Semites has reached new levels of ferocity.

The immediate focus of the latest assault has been to damage the otherwise certain victory of the Corbyn-supporting Momentum slate of nine candidates for Labour's ruling National Executive Committee, to be announced August 30.

A tape leaked to the *Jewish Chronicle* recorded Peter Willsman, a pro-Corbyn NEC member and Momentum candidate, denouncing the anti-Semitism smear.

Stating that those behind it "can falsify social media very easily," he said that "some of these people in the Jewish community support Trump. They're Trump fanatics."

He asked of the 70 rabbis who had supported the campaign: "Where is your evidence of severe and widespread anti-Semitism in this party?"

Amid demands by the Labour right, amplified throughout the media, for Willsman to be removed from the Momentum slate, and even expelled from the party, Murdoch's *Times* newspaper opened a second front.

It "discovered" that while a backbencher, Corbyn hosted a 2010 event at the House of Commons on Holocaust Memorial Day, under the title, "Never again for anyone—Auschwitz to Gaza."

The *Times'* attack is politically depraved.

The headline speaker at the 2010 event was Auschwitz survivor and anti-Zionist Hajo Meyer, who died in 2014 aged 90. Born in 1924 in Bielefeld, Germany, Meyer fled to the Netherlands after Hitler came to power and in 1944 was caught by the Gestapo. He was interned in Auschwitz-Gleiwitz-1 concentration camp, Poland, for 10 months until it was liberated by the Soviet army when he was 20 years old.

Meyer was conducting a tour speaking on "The Misuse

of the Holocaust for Political Purposes" in which he explained movingly:

"I am pained by the parallels I observe between my experiences in Germany prior to 1939 and those suffered by Palestinians today... The various forms of collective punishment visited upon the Palestinian people—coerced ghettoization behind a 'security wall'; the bulldozing of homes and destruction of fields; the bombing of schools, mosques, and government buildings; an economic blockade that deprives people of the water, food, medicine, education and the basic necessities for dignified survival—force me to recall the deprivations and humiliations that I experienced in my youth. This century-long process of oppression means unimaginable suffering for Palestinians. It is not too late to learn a different lesson from Auschwitz."

The anti-communist underpinnings of this campaign were spelled out by Murdoch's *Sun*. Under the heading, "Party of hate," it contemptuously baited Corbyn's supporters as "'progressive' millennials," asking, "how do you like this racist party you've joined? Or is Jew-hatred cool, like bringing back Communism and its inevitable horrors?"

Far from expressing anti-Semitism, Willsman's comments are factually correct. There have been numerous instances of fake postings to malign pro-Corbyn supporters. Moreover, some of those leading the accusations of "left-wing anti-Semitism" are indeed Trump supporters.

The president of the British Board of Deputies, Jonathan Arkush, caused outrage when he congratulated "Donald Trump on his election victory." Arkush was only repeating the stance of the American Jewish Committee.

Numerous complaints did not prevent the Zionist Organisation of America (ZOA) turning over the platform of its annual gala in November 2017 to then-Trump aide and Breitbart chair Steve Bannon. The fascistic strategist

called on the ZOA to join the “insurgency movement against the Republican establishment,” which he blamed for concluding a bad “nuclear deal” with Iran that Trump subsequently ripped up.

Likewise, criticism of the Holocaust memorial event is made up of whole cloth. Labour MP Louise Ellman professed to be “absolutely appalled” to hear about Corbyn’s involvement. But, as revealed by the SKWAWKBOX website, Ellman was not only among a number of MPs present at the same event, she “stayed far longer than Corbyn... [and] had witnessed an interruption by a rowdy pro-Israel protest...”

None of this has stopped a host of Labour right-wingers queuing up to denounce Corbyn and Momentum, including Deputy Labour Leader Tom Watson, who tweeted that Willsman “is and always has been a loud-mouthed bully. He disgusts me.”

The barely concealed aim of this stream of manufactured outrage is not only to silence criticism of Israel’s murderous apartheid-style actions and US/British strategic objectives in the Middle East. The right-wing cabal of Blairites is working directly with the Tories to prevent any possibility of a Corbyn-led Labour government, while shifting official politics sharply to the right.

So emboldened are the Blairites that they make barely any attempt to conceal their broader political agenda. Andrew Grice, writing in the *Independent*, noted that preparations for a split by the Blairite majority in the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) were well advanced.

“Antisemitism is not their only concern,” he wrote. “Some pro-EU MPs are furious that Corbyn has not opposed Theresa May on Brexit more vigorously. Others believe his instincts on foreign and defence policy make him unfit to lead the country...”

Of the various scenarios being “discussed by Corbyn’s critics,” he adds, the most likely is a “declaration of independence from Corbyn Labour” by much of the PLP, who “could stake a claim to be the official opposition—perhaps as ‘Real Labour.’”

Outrage over these attacks is widespread in the Labour Party and among Corbyn’s many young supporters. But the advantage enjoyed by the right wing is that Corbyn and the “left” have no intention of mobilising against them.

Corbyn instead issued an apology for the “concerns and anxiety” caused by his involvement in the Holocaust memorial event and for sharing platforms in the past “with people whose views I completely reject.”

Some of his allies went further still, openly lining up behind the Blairites and Tories, including former Corbyn aide Matt Zarb-Cousin, Ash Sarkar and *Guardian* journalist Owen Jones, who tweeted, “there’s no way I’ll vote for Pete Willsman for Labour’s NEC... I won’t vote for someone who undermines the struggle against the disgusting disease of anti-Semitism.”

Willsman himself apologised and announced he would undertake a course of equality training, “so I can better understand how to approach discussions of such issues in a respectful way.” Nonetheless, Momentum then announced that it had dropped Willsman from its NEC re-election list, meaning the vacant spot will almost certainly be taken by a Corbyn critic. This confirms a pattern in which anyone specifically targeted by the right--Jewish-Black activist Jackie Walker, former London mayor Ken Livingstone, Labour Party black sections founder Marc Wadsworth--is unceremoniously thrown to the wolves.

Corbyn’s appeasement of the right wing represents a grave danger for the working class. It serves to demobilise opposition to the escalating attacks on jobs, wages and social conditions by the Tories and the employers, while facilitating the creation of a quasi-legal mechanism for censoring and criminalising the left and whipping up anti-Muslim sentiment by portraying anti-Zionist opposition to the state of Israel as anti-Semitism.

These constant retreats are rooted in Corbyn’s central declared aim of securing a Labour government that would supposedly bring an end to decades of austerity and rampant militarism. This has proved to be a political disaster. Instead, in the name of maintaining the unity needed to get the party elected, the right wing continues to dictate a policy of austerity, militarism and war, while working openly to keep the Tories in office. This demonstrates the futility and falseness of a perspective based on pushing the Labour Party to the left and somehow transforming this party of British imperialism into an instrument for progressive change.

Everything now depends on workers and young people decisively rejecting Corbyn’s saccharine appeals for compromise and mounting a determined political struggle against all these forces and for socialism.



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