

# Blairites and Zionists escalate witch-hunt of Labour MP Chris Williamson

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The filthy witch-hunt of suspended Labour Party MP Chris Williamson by the Blairite right-wing and Zionist forces is being escalated with basic democratic rights under threat.

Over the weekend, the Labour Party-run Manchester City Council agreed to pull the power supply to prevent Williamson from speaking at a March for Democracy rally as part of the 200th anniversary commemorations of the Peterloo Massacre taking place in the city.

This followed events in Brighton where Williamson, who is suspended from the party over bogus claims he supports anti-Semitism, was barred from speaking at three indoor venues.

Last year, Williamson described the Blairites' attacks on Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn over his handling of anti-Semitism allegations in the party as "proxy wars and bullshit." He correctly stated: "Many people in the Jewish community are appalled by what they see as the weaponisation of anti-Semitism for political ends."

A Labour member for over 40 years and an MP for seven, Williamson was first suspended from the party on February 27. Four months later, on June 26, a three-member panel of Labour's National Executive Committee—the National Constitutional Committee—sanctioned Williamson for breaching party rules. They issued him a formal warning, effectively lifting his suspension.

In response, the Blairites and Zionists ramped up their hysterical attacks, and two days later he was suspended from the Labour Party for a second time.

Williamson had planned to speak in Brighton about "A democratic, socialist economy." A cartoon signed by *Guardian* cartoonist Steve Bell, which the newspaper had refused to publish, was scheduled for auction. It featured Labour's right-wing deputy leader Tom Watson depicted as an "anti-Semite finder

general."

The first venue to cancel Williamson's Brighton event was the Brighthelm Centre. The August 8 meeting was booked on July 23 but cancelled by the venue the next day. According to Greg Hadfield who booked the event, a journalist at the local *Argus* newspaper informed him the meeting was cancelled after an intervention "by a little-known organisation called the Sussex Jewish Representative Council (SJRC)". The SJRC's action was seized on by right-wing Labour MP for Hove Peter Kyle, who made the defamatory statement that, "Our city should not be a welcoming place for people who bait the Jewish community or sow seeds of division."

The Holiday Inn on Brighton seafront agreed to hold the event, but on the day it was advertised they also pulled the booking. Two individuals visited the hotel threatening staff that if Williamson's event went ahead, "there will be consequences."

On the day of the event, a booking agreed with the Quakers' Brighton Friends Meeting House was also cancelled. Only last year, Williamson addressed a full-capacity meeting at the same venue on the subject: "What socialist councillors can achieve."

On August 9, an email from the Quakers' national communications head, Jane Dawson, revealed that "Brighton Meeting [Friends Meeting House] were forced to cancel the event due to threats of violence."

It was known that the Zionist Board of Deputies, Jewish Leadership Council (JLC) and Sussex Jewish Representative Council were planning to protest in Brighton if Williamson's event went ahead. A small anti-Williamson protest proceeded outside Brighton Town Hall during the evening of August 8, even though at that stage it was unclear whether Williamson would be able to speak anywhere in the city.

In the end, denied a meeting venue, Williamson was forced to address an outdoor rally of around 150 supporters in Brighton's Regency Square.

Less than 10 days later there followed attempts to prevent Williamson from addressing a rally in Manchester's main Albert Square.

On August 15, the Manchester edition of the *Jewish Telegraph*, published a frontpage article headlined, "Electric shock for Williamson." It gloated that Williamson was "due to speak at an event commemorating the Peterloo massacre in Manchester's city centre on Sunday ... But Manchester City Council has refused to give a power supply and other resources to the event as it is 'being classed as a protest'."

The newspaper cited Board of Deputies vice-president Amanda Bowman: "Chris Williamson's power seems to be draining away, so it is appropriate that Manchester City Council are considering cutting the electricity on an MP who has been suspended for his despicable conduct towards the Jewish community."

In the event, Williamson was only able to address the rally after the Fire Brigades Union provided audio from the fire engine used as a platform for the day's events.

The events of the past two weeks raise serious issues for the working class. An elected politician has effectively been stripped of his right to address the public. Threats of violence by unknown persons against venue owners and staff are being used to close down prominent left-wing meetings. Where will this end?

It has been confirmed that images of the men who threatened hotel staff at the Brighton Holiday Inn were captured on CCTV camera. Yet there is no sign that anyone has been questioned, let alone arrested or charged.

The violent methods deployed against Williamson are not simply the work of a few Zionists or far-right hoodlums. Those seeking a way to fight this attack must face facts. The Blairites who control the Parliamentary Labour Party are leading the efforts to drive Williamson and his supporters out. But they have succeeded only because of Jeremy Corbyn's active collusion.

Corbyn has refused to issue a single public word in defence of his former shadow cabinet minister. Despite Williamson having toured dozens of cities over the past 18 months promoting the alleged "socialist" credentials

of a future Corbyn government, the leader of the Labour Party has turned his back.

Had Corbyn come to Williamson's defence, a venue of his choosing would have been made available to Williamson in both Brighton and Manchester. But Corbyn has once again sacrificed fundamental principles on the altar of Labour Party "unity," ceding all initiative to the hated right.

Not a single one of Corbyn's nominally "left" colleagues—including Dianne Abbott and John McDonnell—has come to Williamson's defence.

Last week, Williamson announced he was taking legal action to oppose the "unconstitutional" decision to "re-suspend me from the party I love." Within five days, rank-and-file members pledged over £38,000 towards a £75,000 legal defence fund, pointing to the groundswell of support. But Williamson's response is a carefully calibrated one. He knows that any genuine fight against the right will also come into conflict with Jeremy Corbyn.

Williamson is the architect of his own downfall. In Brighton, the *Argus* noted that he "stayed largely away from alleged anti-Semitism within the party, and spoke at length about socialist policies and grassroots campaigning to 'carry Jeremy over the threshold of number 10'." In Manchester, where he was warmly applauded by a crowd of several thousand—who would have welcomed a political fight against the Blairites—Williamson did not make a single reference to the filthy campaign being mounted against him.

Definite political conclusions must be drawn. If Jeremy Corbyn refuses to defend Williamson—one of his closest supporters—what would be the scale of capitulation by a Corbyn Labour government? If Corbyn won't stand up to a handful of miserable Blairites like Tom Watson, how will he respond to the demands of big business, the military and intelligence agencies for a massive intensification of the policies of austerity, militarism and war carried out by every government over the last four decades?



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