

Corbyn nominates arch Blairite Tom Watson for British House of Lords

Robert Stevens
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Before outgoing Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn disappears to the backbenches to resume his long career as a loyal non-entity, he is bringing his capitulation to the Blairites to a new level of self-abasement.

As one of his final acts, Corbyn has nominated eight political figures to be elevated to the House of Lords as life peers. Chief among these is Tom Watson, a bitter critic of Corbyn and a leading figure of the Blairite right, with a career going back 20 years.

Corbyn also nominated the pro-European Union former speaker of the House of Commons, John Bercow, who started his career as a prominent member of the Conservative Party's Monday Club, advocating the "repatriation" of immigrants from Britain.

Corbyn's final outreach to Watson is a fitting end to his fraudulent claim to represent an alternative to the Blairites. Watson has led the campaign to remove Corbyn and drive the hundreds of thousands of Labour members and supporters who elected him out of the party.

Watson started his political career as the chair of the right-wing National Organisation of Labour Students from 1992 to 1993. He was then employed by Labour as the national development officer for youth and as the deputy coordinator in the 1997 general election campaign, which brought Labour to power with Tony Blair as prime minister.

Watson was seconded to various highly important tasks, including ordering an IKEA sofa for the office of Blair's key adviser, Peter Mandelson. He then became national political officer of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union, and four years later was elected MP for the safe seat of West Bromwich East.

Watson voted for the illegal war against Iraq and then opposed an investigation into the lies used to justify the war. He was appointed assistant government whip in September 2004. He was responsible for a filthy racist Labour leaflet that year in a Birmingham by-election, which read, "Labour is on your side—the Lib Dems are on the side of failed asylum seekers."

In 2006, in order to rescue the hated Labour government,

Watson signed a letter urging Blair to stand down. He became a leading figure in Gordon Brown's 2007 government. In an interview with the *Guardian* last December, the newspaper said Watson described his move against Blair as "one of his great regrets."

With the backing of the Blairites and Brownites, Watson won the deputy leadership of the party when Corbyn won the leadership in 2015.

In a perfect illustration of Corbyn's political stupidity and the ruthlessness of his Blairite opponents, Watson told the *Guardian*, "We had just won the leader and deputy leader ballots, and we were in this room on our own, and the first thing he said to me was, 'We've got our party back.' I remember thinking to myself, I've never really lost this party. We're going to have a bit of fun here, Jeremy."

The conversation served as the template for everything to follow, with Corbyn acting as the "left" figurehead for a right-wing party, whose character as a pillar of British imperialism was not changed one iota by his election as leader.

The right wing was given everything it wanted by Corbyn from the get-go. Watson was one of the 66 Labour MPs who in December 2015 voted to bomb Syria after Corbyn gave MPs a free vote on the issue, allowing bombing raids to start within hours of the vote. Watson also abstained on a Labour motion withdrawing British support from the Saudi Arabian-led war in Yemen.

Following the 2016 defeat of the Remain campaign in the Brexit referendum, the Blairites launched a coup against Corbyn on the basis that he was only lukewarm in campaigning to remain in the European Union. More than 50 MPs resigned from Corbyn's front bench, and 172 MPs in total, the vast majority, supported a vote of no-confidence in him.

The deputy leader is elected to support the leader, but Watson publicly called for Corbyn to stand down. In his *Guardian* interview, Watson said, "I thought Jeremy should have resigned and he nearly did."

In the subsequent leadership election, Watson secretly

backed the Blairite candidate, Owen Smith, admitting this only three years later in his *Guardian* interview.

With Watson fulminating against “Trotskyists” (Trotskyists) seeking to take over the “Labour party as a vehicle for revolutionary socialism,” a purge was then organised by Labour’s National Executive Committee, of which Watson was a member, to throw out Corbyn supporters and deny them a vote. This campaign was called “Operation Icepick”—after the weapon used by the Stalinist assassin of Leon Trotsky. But despite thousands being undemocratically denied a vote, Corbyn was able to defeat the Blairites for the second time.

Central to the moves against Corbyn and his supporters was the bogus claim that they were anti-Semites because they opposed Israel’s repression of the Palestinians.

Last year, following the BBC airing of its *Panorama* programme “Is Labour anti-Semitic?”—a platform for politically hostile former Labour Party staff members to air their allegations—Watson declared, “Very serious questions now have to be answered.”

He demanded that the party’s rule book be changed, with automatic exclusion from the party of members accused of anti-Semitism. This was a de facto call for criminal prosecutions, with the Blairites working with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to launch an investigation into Labour’s handling of the manufactured “anti-Semitism crisis.”

Last February, seven right-wing MPs resigned from the Labour Party, including Luciana Berger and others who played a critical role in the anti-Semitism campaign. While thousands of Labour members were celebrating their departure, Watson declared, “I would like to place on record my complete respect for Luciana and my understanding of the decision to which she has been driven.”

Labour, he claimed, had been “slow to acknowledge we had a problem and even slower to deal with it.” He put out a video defending the seven renegades, saying, “I do not regard those who have resigned today as traitors,” and attacking the “hard left” for forcing them out. Berger and the less than magnificent seven formed the Independent Group for Change, alongside three pro-EU Tories. She, Chukka Umunna and Angela Smith then joined the Liberal Democrats, with all failing miserably to win a seat in last December’s general election.

Last March, Watson founded his Future Britain faction. Its inaugural meeting in parliament was attended by former Labour leader Neil Kinnock and Blair’s chief adviser, Mandelson (clearly still thankful for the IKEA settee choice), Blair’s home secretary David Blunkett and his deputy prime minister, John Prescott. The 90 MPs and peers present also included right-wingers Caroline Flint, Hilary

Benn, Rachel Reeves and Liam Byrne—the Birmingham MP who was elected with the help of Watson’s anti-asylum seeker leaflet. One MP said of the meeting, “This is about a coming together of the TBs [Tony Blair supporters] and GBs [Gordon Browns].”

There was no depth to which Watson would not sink and nothing that would prompt action against him by Corbyn—the Blairite’s protector in chief from Labour’s rank-and-file.

In the run-up to Labour’s conference last September, with attempts being made by constituency Labour parties to vote out and “de-select” right-wing MPs, Corbyn intervened to prevent a vote to abolish Watson’s post of deputy labour leader. This had been moved on the National Executive Committee by Jon Lansman, who leads the pro-Corbyn Momentum group, to make a show of opposition. The vote was delayed and then pulled—at Corbyn’s instruction.

Last November, Watson decided to quit the party leadership and resign as deputy leader, citing “personal” reasons, before whining to the *Guardian* a month later that he had been forced to quit by the “brutality and hostility” he faced from the left “day to day.”

Thousands of Labour members and supporters celebrated Watson’s demise, whereas Corbyn penned him a veritable love letter, asserting, “Few people have given as much to the labour movement as you have and I know that many thousands of members and trade unionists that you have inspired and worked with over the years will be very sorry to see you go.”

Watson is now preparing to don ermine robes and claim his £305 per day attendance allowance on top of his substantial parliamentary pension as an MP. Thanks to Corbyn, he will be able to use his seat on the Lords benches as a platform from which to continue his campaign against the “left.”

He has already announced the imminent publication of *The House*, trailed as a “political thriller” set in “a world where virtue is seen as a rare commodity.” Nobody is better equipped than Watson to understand the absence of “virtue,” within both parliament and the rotting corpse of the Labour Party, whose control of the working class Corbyn has done everything possible to protect.



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