

UK Labour leader Keir Starmer uses bogus anti-Semitism accusation to sack Rebecca Long-Bailey

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On Thursday, Labour Party leader Sir Keir Starmer sacked his nominally “left” Shadow Education Secretary Rebecca Long-Bailey.

The move confirms that no criticisms of the Israeli government will be allowed in the Labour Party, and that Starmer will deal decisively with the Corbynite “left” rump in the parliamentary party.

The *Sun* had editorialised on June 9, “Starmer must choose. To look like a potential Government, Labour can no longer indulge jumped-up Twitter trolls on its backbenches, or their extremism. He should expel the lot, as Kinnock did Militant. It would be the making of him.” Neil, now Lord Kinnock, was Labour leader from 1983–92.

Angela Rayner, who is now Starmer’s deputy, abased herself before the right-wing even before April’s Labour leadership campaign began. This left Long-Bailey, who is a flatmate of Rayner, to be trumpeted as the “continuity Corbyn” candidate against Starmer. In substance, however, Long-Bailey was as keen as Rayner to make her peace with the Blairites.

After repeatedly denying any particular loyalty or debt to her mentor, Jeremy Corbyn, Long-Bailey was rewarded with the relatively minor position of shadow education secretary by Starmer as he cleared out the rest of the Corbynites in the shadow cabinet and brought in the Blairites. Long-Bailey had no problem assuming the position of token “left.”

Her grovelling secured a front-bench role for less than three months. Long-Bailey was sacked within just three hours of tweeting a link to an interview by Maxine Peake with the *Independent*, in which the actress criticised Israel, stating, “The tactics used by the police in America, kneeling on George Floyd’s neck, that was learnt from seminars with Israeli secret services.”

Peake is the cultural figure most associated with the Labour left and presented a 2017 general election campaign video backing Corbyn. In her interview, she said that those who had not voted Labour in last December’s general election because they were opposed to Corbyn had broken her heart. “I didn’t like Tony Blair, but I still voted Labour because anything’s better than the Tories,” she said. Peake’s interview ended with an appeal for everyone to continue supporting Labour. Asked her thoughts on Starmer, she replied, “I think people will get behind Starmer, won’t they? He’s a more acceptable face of the Labour Party for a lot of people who are not really left wing. But that’s fine. Whatever. As long as the Tories get out, I don’t care anymore.”

It was this appeal for continued loyalty to Labour as it careens to the right that earned Peake the endorsement of Long-Bailey, who retweeted her article and called her “an absolute diamond”. However, Peake’s sole comment about Israel was denounced as an “anti-Semitic conspiracy theory” and seized on by Starmer as an excuse to sack Long-Bailey.

Descriptions of Peake and Long-Bailey as anti-Semitic, as on so many other occasions in which the right has targeted other “left” leading Labourites, are slanders. Israel’s role in developing brutal policing techniques and training police forces all over the world in their use is well documented; including training dozens of Minneapolis police officers in “counter-terrorism” and “restraint” techniques at a conference in Chicago in 2012, as reported by Jonathan Cook on *Middle Eastern Eye*.

Long-Bailey’s response to being targeted could have been anticipated. She rolled over, writing, “I retweeted Maxine Peake’s article because of her significant achievements and because the thrust of her argument is to stay in the Labour Party. It wasn’t intended to be an

endorsement of all aspects of the article.”

But all entreaties were rejected by Starmer, who booted her out to the obvious glee of numerous Labourite Zionist scoundrels. Margaret Hodge MP—who at the height of the anti-Semitism campaign screamed in Corbyn’s face in the Parliament chamber that he was a “f***** racist and an anti-Semite,”—tweeted after Long-Bailey’s dismissal, “This is what a change in culture looks like. This is what zero tolerance looks like. This is what rebuilding trust with the Jewish community looks like.”

It must be stressed that Long-Bailey had bought her way onto Starmer’s frontbench by her embrace, during the leadership campaign, of the official narrative of the Labour right that has effectively outlawed criticism of the Israeli regime.

Long-Bailey signed up to “10 Pledges to end the anti-Semitism crisis” put forward by the Board of Deputies of British Jews (BoD). She followed up by declaring herself a Zionist. She also signed up to the continued witch-hunt of Labour’s “left” by agreeing during debates that it was indeed “anti-Semitic” to “describe Israel, its policies, or the circumstances around its foundation as racist.” Long-Bailey has now become the first high profile victim of the witch-hunt she helped Starmer to relaunch and escalate.

The most politically revealing issue in this sordid affair is not Long-Bailey’s sacking, which was only a matter of time, but the total prostration of the Corbynites. Long-Bailey herself declared, “I am clear that I shall continue to support the Labour Party in Parliament under Keir Starmer’s leadership.”

Corbyn, chief coward among a gang of cowards, has still not uttered a single word of criticism in public.

Former shadow chancellor John McDonnell claimed that he had always maintained that criticism of the practices of the “Israeli state is not antisemitic.” McDonnell never made even such a pro-forma statement when the Blairites were busy driving his and Corbyn’s allies out, for fear of endangering Corbyn’s efforts towards ensuring “party unity” and stifling rank-and-file opposition to the right-wing. Chris Williamson, who was expelled after being falsely accused of anti-Semitism, tweeted, “If only John [McDonnell] and the @socialistcam [Socialist Campaign Group] had stood in solidarity with me, Jackie Walker, Ken Livingstone, Marc Wadsworth, Tony Greenstein, Cyril Chilson and the countless other victims of the witch hunt, we wouldn’t be here today.”

McDonnell linked to a petition of just 12 words in length, which makes sure not to issue single word of

criticism of Starmer, stating only, “We believe Rebecca Long Bailey should be reinstated as Shadow Education Secretary.” Labour’s membership is estimated at around half a million but by the end of Friday just over 12,000 people had signed.

Amid talk of Ian Lavery MP being a future leadership challenger to Starmer, the first response of the latest “saviour” of the left was to issue a video stating that he was aware of reports “that many people are deciding to leave the party because of the *apparent* [!] new direction under the new leadership. I’m pleading with you, it’s not the right thing to do... remain in the party.”

The Socialist Campaign Group (SCG) of Labour MPs makes up just 34 members of the Parliamentary Labour Party out of 202 MPs, after five years of the “left” running the party! Richard Burgon, the group’s leader, tweeted of the “important role” Long-Bailey has still “to play in Labour’s future,” adding, “I don’t think she should’ve been sacked for sharing the Independent’s interview with Maxine Peake.”

On Friday, a delegation of SCG members, including Corbyn and McDonnell, met with Starmer for a Zoom meeting. Starmer gave them short shrift, with the Labourist website noting that “A new Shadow Education Secretary is expected to be appointed in the coming days.” The SCG said there was still “significant disagreement” on the decision, but stressed, “This was a business-like exchange of views which took place in a mutually respectful manner.”

The fundamental problem facing the Corbynites is not that Starmer will not listen to their appeals for unity, but that millions of workers have seen through their game of fake opposition. The Corbynites want Long-Bailey to be reinstated, so they can continue to provide a figleaf for Starmer, et al. But Labour’s haemorrhaging of support in the working class will continue, regardless of such pathetic efforts.



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