# Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer bars Jeremy Corbyn from Parliamentary Labour Party as witch-hunt intensifies

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**18 November 2020**

Just hours after former leader Jeremy Corbyn was reinstated to the Labour Party after a 19-day suspension, party leader Sir Keir Starmer intervened Wednesday morning to effectively reverse the decision.

Starmer and the chief whip, Nick Brown, removed the whip from Corbyn, meaning he is unable to rejoin the parliamentary party and sit as a Labour MP. Starmer tweeted, "Since I was elected Labour leader, I have made it my mission to root out antisemitism from the Labour Party… The disciplinary process does not have the confidence of the Jewish community. That became clear once again yesterday."

He continued, "I'm the Leader of the Labour Party, but I'm also the Leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party. Jeremy Corbyn's actions in response to the EHRC [Equality and Human Rights Commission] report undermined and set back our work in restoring trust and confidence in the Labour Party's ability to tackle antisemitism… I have taken the decision not to restore the whip to Jeremy Corbyn. I will keep this situation under review."

Corbyn was readmitted to the party Tuesday evening after being suspended on October 29. He had said on that date, immediately after the publication of the EHRC's "Investigation into antisemitism in the Labour Party", that "the scale of the problem was… dramatically overstated for political reasons by our opponents inside and outside the party, as well as by much of the media."

Ahead of Tuesday's meeting of a panel of Labour's National Executive Committee that was to discuss his case, Corbyn made public a statement retracting his previous criticisms, declaring, "To be clear, concerns about antisemitism are neither 'exaggerated' nor 'overstated'". The *Guardian* noted, "The statement is understood to have been prepared in the days after his suspension on 29 October, and submitted to the party as part of the investigation process."

As events have proved, no amount of grovelling and self-abasement could ever have saved him from a political conspiracy—involving the Blairites in the Labour Party, the right-wing media and Tory government, the US and UK intelligence agencies and the Israeli state—determined to secure his removal and the mass expulsion of thousands of his supporters.

The panel's decision to reinstate Corbyn clearly went against the wishes of Starmer. According to the *New Statesman*, while "Keir Starmer does have a reliable majority on the NEC as a whole, he does not have a reliable majority in its various subcommittees, and the panel deciding this matter was 'hung', featuring two impeccable Corbynites and two Starmer loyalists in addition to Alice Perry, who is regarded as a swing voter on the NEC."

Starmer immediately registered his disappointment with the verdict, tweeting, "I know that this has been another painful day for the Jewish community and those Labour members who have fought so hard to tackle antisemitism…" He added, "Jeremy Corbyn's statement in response to the EHRC report was wrong and completely distracted from a report that identified unlawful conduct in our tackling of racism within the Labour Party. This should shame us all."

This was the cue for all those right-wing and Zionist forces—who orchestrated the false claims that Corbyn is an anti-Semite who allowed "left-wing anti-Semitism" to flourish—to condemn the decision to readmit him, smoothing the way for Starmer to subsequently withdraw the whip.

At least one Labour MP, thought to be Margaret Hodge, threatened to resign if Corbyn was allowed back in. Hodge, a leading figure in the witch-hunt, confronted Corbyn, in July 2018 in Parliament's chamber and screamed in his face that he was a "f****** racist and an anti-Semite".

She declared on his reinstatement, "I simply cannot comprehend why it is acceptable for Corbyn to be a Labour MP if he thinks antisemitism is exaggerated and a political attack, refuses to apologise, never takes responsibility for his actions and rejects the findings of the EHRC [Equality and Human Rights Commission] report."

Former Labour MP Dame Louise Ellman, denounced Corbyn's readmittance as a "backward step" and demanded, "What Keir Starmer and the chief whip should do now is to refuse to restore the whip to Jeremy Corbyn… to rid the party of this dreadful stain."

Board of Deputies of British Jews President Marie van der

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Zyl, Jewish Leadership Chair Jonathan Goldstein and Community Security Trust Chief Executive Mark Gardner issued a joint statement declaring Corbyn's reinstatement "a retrograde step for the party in its relations with the Jewish community". The group signed off with the warning that "Labour's mountain to climb to win back the trust of our community just got higher," aimed at ensuring Starmer acted to remove Corbyn for good—as an essential step towards "winning back the trust" of these self-appointed representatives of the Jewish community.

The Labour Party-affiliated pro-Zionist Jewish Labour Movement (JLM) described Corbyn's statement retracting his comments as "insincere and wholly inadequate."

This gang of reactionaries was joined by Conservative Party co-chairman, Amanda Milling, who wrote to Starmer demanding, "You have claimed that Labour is 'under new leadership', but now is the moment to prove it—Mr Corbyn should be expelled permanently."

The pro-Tory *Daily Telegraph* editorialised Wednesday that "[C]orbyn presided over a culture that allowed anti-semitic tropes to persist among a group of extreme Left-wingers whose obsession with the Palestinian issue and anti-americanism dragged his party into the gutter of politics." It concluded that Starmer should have thrown Corbyn "out for good."

The response of Corbyn and his allies to his initial readmission was to offer fulsome thanks and promises of loyalty to his persecutors. Corbyn declared in a tweet, "Our movement must now come together to oppose and defeat this deeply damaging Conservative government."

Len McCluskey, the general secretary of the Unite trade union and Corbyn's closest supporter among the union bureaucracy, described the reinstatement a "correct, fair and unifying decision".

Corbyn's former Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell declared, "As we said in our [Socialist Campaign Group] statement calling for Jeremy's readmission, the priority now must be for the party to unite and step up the fight for the socialist policies needed to undo the harm the Tories are inflicting on our country."

Even after Starmer threw these words back in their authors' faces, the degrading chorus of pleas for "party unity" continued.

In response to Starmer's removal of the whip, McDonnell once again got down on his hands and knees to beg, "This is just plain wrong & will cause more division & disunity in party… I appeal to everyone that surely it's time to move on & start working together to implement the EHRC."

Richard Burgon, the secretary of the Socialist Campaign Group, a rump of 34 MPs who describe themselves as "left-wing", stated, "Jeremy should immediately have the whip restored. At a time of national crisis, division in the Labour party serves nobody but the Tory Gov't."

Just 18 MPs in the SCG signed a letter on November 5 opposing Corbyn's suspension. Twenty-seven have called for the whip to be restored to him, on the grounds that its removal "severely undermines efforts to unite to defeat antisemitism and fully implement the EHRC recommendations and to challenge and defeat this disastrous Conservative government."

McCluskey has likewise tweeted, "The unity of the Labour Party around the need to implement the EHRC recommendations in full is being recklessly undermined."

The Labour right are only emboldened by this obscene show of political cowardice. Gemma Bolton, a new pro-Corbyn NEC member, has been put under investigation—just days after being elected—for a 2018 tweet describing Israel as an apartheid state and defending the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign.

According to the *Guardian*, 827 Labour members have already been investigated in connection with alleged anti-Semitism since Starmer became leader and a third of them thrown out of the party. Those suspended include officers in the Bristol West Constituency Labour Party who organised a motion last week condemning Corbyn's suspension.

Thousands more—including Corbyn himself, who is on borrowed time—will follow. The *New Statesman*, the house organ of the Labour right noted yesterday, "The EHRC's statutory powers mean that rule changes will be made and a roster of complaints by the Campaign Against Antisemitism and others against Corbyn and 13 other sitting Labour MPs will once again go through the party's processes." The Campaign Against Antisemitism and JLM were the original complainants against the Corbyn leadership to the EHRC.

Starmer has promised "an independent complaints process as soon as possible in the new year." This will be a process entirely in the hands of Starmer's leadership and the JLM.

Labour will not survive its McCarthyite dragnet. The register of members eligible for last week's NEC elections show that the party has lost nearly 57,000 members since Starmer was elected leader. According to the Skwawkbox blog, fewer than 130,000 people bothered casting votes in the NEC election, fewer than the votes cast for the Conservative leadership election and less than half the total cast in a Labour NEC by-election earlier this year.

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