

NUS President Shaima Dallali sacked on bogus allegations of anti-Semitism—Oppose the witch-hunt!

International Youth and Students for Social Equality (UK)
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The decision by Britain’s National Union of Students (NUS) to sack elected president Shaima Dallali based on trumped-up allegations of anti-Semitism is a shameful capitulation to a state-orchestrated witch-hunt.

Accusations of “left anti-Semitism”, equating opposition to Zionism and the Israeli state with anti-Jewish hatred, have been used by the right-wing of the Labour Party, the Conservative government and Zionist organisations to spearhead an attack on socialist and anti-war politics since 2016. Their aim is to censor the political left by outlawing opposition to the criminal treatment of Palestinians by the Israeli state.

A years-long campaign over a manufactured anti-Semitism crisis in the Labour Party was used to remove Jeremy Corbyn as leader and expel large numbers of left-wing members. It has since been expanded into every area of political and cultural life, with the universities a key focus.

Corbyn refused to oppose and even participated in this witch-hunt of his own supporters. Dallali’s expulsion was likewise facilitated by the NUS, which capitulated to a coalition of the Union of Jewish Students (UJS), the government, and leading Blairites in keeping with the organisation’s role as a careerist training ground for Labour politicians and trade union bureaucrats.

Democratic rights under attack

On November 1, NUS UK Director Kat Clark announced that, following an “independent KC [Kings Counsel]-led investigation into allegations of antisemitism,” the organisation had terminated Dallali’s contract. Clark added that the NUS would “not be sharing any further details on the investigation into the President,” assuring that the process had been “incredibly robust”.

Dallali is considering “all available legal remedies”. A November 2 statement by solicitors Carter-Ruck explained, “Ms Dallali has repeatedly made clear her opposition to all

forms of racism, including antisemitism, while continuing to campaign to denounce the plight of the Palestinian people.”

Neither the NUS nor Kings Council Rebecca Tuck have provided a shred of evidence to students about the substance of the anti-Semitism allegations against Dallali. Nor have they explained what parts of the NUS Code of Conduct she is alleged to have breached. Her summary dismissal—the first sacking of an NUS president in its 100-year history—has been carried out in the manner of a kangaroo court. It will be used as a precedent for a wider crackdown on individual students and societies on campuses across the country.

The allegations against Dallali plastered across the national media make clear she is being defamed based on the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism conflating opposition to the Israeli state’s crimes with hatred toward Jews. The NUS adopted the IHRA definition in 2017 and the government, with Labour’s backing, has been pushing its adoption by university institutions.

Cited examples of Dallali’s alleged anti-Semitism include a tweet with the popular slogan, “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” and social media posts condemning Israel’s violent suppression of the Palestinians.

A tweet she made in 2012 as a teenager, dredged up by the Zionist front group Labour Against Antisemitism, refers to the Battle of Khaybar fought between Muslim and Jewish armies in the year 628 AD. Her apology in March that “I was wrong to see the Palestine conflict as one between Muslims and Jews” did nothing to stop the witch-hunt that followed.

On April 12, the UJS, which receives funding from the Israeli government, wrote to the NUS Board of Trustees demanding an investigation into Dallali’s fitness to be NUS president and an external investigation into “anti-Semitism within NUS”.

A private version of the UJS’s letter was signed by 21 past presidents of the NUS, including Blairite former Foreign Secretary Jack Straw and current Health Secretary Wes Streeting. Straw is an unindicted war criminal who helped Tony Blair to “harden up” his government’s “dodgy dossier” against Iraq that was used to launch the US-led invasion in 2003 that

killed an estimated one million Iraqis.

One day later, the NUS Board voted for an inquiry into the allegations against itself and Dallali. The UJS was to be involved in the appointment of an external legal expert and in drafting the investigation's terms of reference, based on the IHRA.

The pre-determined outcome was supplied, according to her lawyers, to "at least two national news websites before Ms Dallali had even been informed of the decision". The Tory government and Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer also received the news before Dallali. She learned of her sacking via Twitter.

Anti-Semitism and the far-right

In libelling socialist politics, the campaign against "left-wing anti-Semitism" conceals the real threat to the Jewish people and the entire working class posed by the growth of the far-right.

While Dallali has been sacked, chair of the government regulator for further and higher education James Wharton has been protected after speaking alongside notorious anti-Semite Zsolt Bayer. Wharton, a Tory peer in the House of Lords and head of the Office for Students (OfS), attended the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Hungary in May. He praised Hungary's far-right Prime Minister Victor Orbán and declared the event a chance to "reconnect with friends across the world."

Bayer, who spoke on the same day as Wharton, has described Jews as "stinking excrement", and Roma as "animals unfit to live among people". He was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Hungarian Order of Merit by Orbán in 2016. Other CPAC speakers included Donald Trump (who has made the anti-Semitic Great Replacement conspiracy theory central to his re-election campaign); Trump's January 6 coup conspirator and anti-Semite Jack Prosobiec; Orbán and Nigel Farage.

Orbán has led a crusade to rehabilitate the country's wartime leader Admiral Miklós Horthy, who allied with Adolf Hitler to invade the Soviet Union. Horthy's regime deported 424,000 Jews in 1944 and by the end of the Holocaust 565,000 Hungarian Jews had been murdered.

A formal complaint against the OfS chair by the Public and Commercial Services Union has disappeared into thin air. Neither the union nor the Department for Education who received the complaint will confirm whether any investigation took place. Questioned about Wharton in parliament, Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi declared his "support" for his work.

After UJS representatives met with Wharton, they declared themselves "reassured by his commitment to future engagement and the sincerity of his apology and hope to continue to work together to support Jewish students."

What is at stake

The lie that the threat of anti-Semitism comes from the left is being ramped up on the universities in the context of NATO's war against Russia in Ukraine. Britain, alongside the United States, is funnelling billions in military assistance to a Ukrainian government allied with fascist organizations such as the Azov Battalion, which trace their origins to the mass murderer of Jews in Ukraine during World War II, Stepan Bandera, and his Nazi collaborationist Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists.

The UJS launched its campaign against the NUS after it invited rapper and Palestinian rights activist Lowkey to speak at its conference in March. It singled out Lowkey's factually correct statement that "the mainstream media has weaponized the Jewish heritage of Zelensky, the president of Ukraine, to try and stave off these genuine enquiries into the nature of the groups fighting in Ukraine like the Azov Battalion, C-14 and others."

While Lowkey is attacked for exposing NATO's collaboration with fascists and anti-Semites, Wharton is shielded by the government and the UJS over his consorting with open anti-Semites.

The fraudulent campaign against "left-wing anti-Semitism" undermines the ability of the working class and youth to conduct a struggle against fascism and anti-Semitism where it really exists. It is carried out in service to the imperialist warmongers who back the reactionary policies of the Israeli state to the hilt.

On Sunday December 10, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) is holding a global online rally under the banner, "For a mass movement of youth and students to stop the war in Ukraine!" The purpose of this meeting is to lay the political foundations for an international socialist movement against war and the rise of the far-right, based on the fundamental lessons of the struggle for socialism in the 20th century. We urge students to register for and help promote this important event.



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