

UK legal ruling finds Professor David Miller was discriminated against and sacked for anti-Zionist beliefs

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In a landmark decision with powerful political implications in Britain and internationally, an Employment Tribunal has ruled that Professor David Miller was discriminated against by University of Bristol and wrongly sacked in 2021 after he expressed anti-Zionist views.

Professor Miller, who worked as a political sociologist at the university from September 2018 to October 2021, argued successfully before the Tribunal that his belief that Zionism is “inherently racist, imperialistic, and colonial” was a “protected characteristic” under the Equality Act.

The Employment Tribunal was held in Bristol in October and November last year under Regional Employment Judge Rohan Pirani. In a 108-page judgment it ruled unanimously that Miller’s anti-Zionist beliefs qualified as a protected philosophical belief under section 10 of the Equality Act (2010). It found that University of Bristol was guilty of “direct discrimination” against Miller due to his anti-Zionist beliefs, contrary to Section 13 of the Equality Act, both in its decision to dismiss him on October 1, 2021 and in its rejection of his appeal against dismissal on February 23, 2022.

The ruling in Miller’s favour is the first successful challenge to the manufactured allegations of antisemitism that have been used to hound opponents of the state of Israel from their employment. It is a body blow to the global campaign of ruling elites everywhere—in collaboration with the Zionist regime in Jerusalem—to redefine anti-Zionism as antisemitism.

Since 2015, a well-funded, state-backed campaign was initiated to criminalise opposition to the Israeli government’s genocidal repression against the Palestinian people, backed by the imperialist powers. This campaign centred on enforcing the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s (IHRA) definition of antisemitism on political parties, government bodies, workplaces and universities. The IHRA definition equates criticism of Israel with antisemitism, most notoriously in its list of 11 “examples”.

The Employment Tribunal’s ruling stands contrary to everything done in aid of this right-wing political campaign in Britain over the last decade, including the expulsion and driving out of thousands of left-wing members of the Labour Party and the persecution of countless workers and youth who opposed the Zionist regime and its political backers in Britain’s main parliamentary parties.

Miller, whose academic work in the field of propaganda and Islamophobia also examines corporate and state lobbying, won a significant following in recent years for his public interest investigations and journalism. He was relentlessly hounded by Zionist organisations and their backers with the aim of having him sacked. His removal, as documented in the ruling, had the backing of leading figures in the ruling Conservatives and the opposition Labour Party.

The election of “left” MP Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader in September 2015 saw a ramping up of the campaign by Zionists to outlaw

criticism of the state of Israel. A political and media witch-hunt was launched alleging that Jews in Britain faced an existential threat from “left antisemitism” in the form of Corbyn and his millions of unwitting or malevolent supporters.

Corbyn did not challenge the witch-hunt. On the contrary, in 2016 Labour, with Corbyn’s support, adopted the IHRA’s working definition of antisemitism but without the listed examples that effectively outlaw criticism of the Israeli government such as:

- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a state of Israel is a racist endeavour.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.

In July 2018, the party’s National Executive Committee (NEC) also adopted the official IHRA definition of antisemitism as part of Labour’s Code of Conduct, again with Corbyn’s backing. In September 2018, Corbyn and his supporters on the NEC capitulated on all fronts by adopting the IHRA definition of antisemitism including all 11 examples. Corbyn even agreed to withdraw an accompanying “clarification.”

Corbyn’s political cowardice emboldened the witch-hunters. In 2019, Zionist groups and MPs launched a campaign to force the University of Bristol to sack Miller. After a lecture in February 2019, during which he described the Zionist movement as a source of Islamophobia and showed a diagram of Zionist lobby groups in Britain, one of these groups, the Community Security Trust, lobbied the university to act. The Union of Jewish Students (UJS) also pushed to have Miller fired. The university’s Jewish Students Society (JSoc) claimed Miller’s identification of Israeli lobbying was akin to the antisemitic trope that Jews wield covert influence on political affairs. The university initially rejected their complaint on the basis that his lecture could not be considered antisemitic because it did not contain any material hostile to Jews.

JSoc responded with a hysterical and contrived campaign claiming its members felt “unsafe and unprotected” on campus. This was backed by the *Jewish Chronicle*, Jewish Board of Deputies and Rupert Murdoch’s *Times* newspaper. Over 100 parliamentarians wrote to the university accusing the professor of “inciting hatred against Jewish students” and of promoting an “anti-Semitic conspiracy fantasy.” The Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA) began a legal suit against the university, claiming it had breached its duty of care to students and was “liable in its own right, for unlawful conduct in breach of the Equality Act.”

Miller told the Tribunal his university did not defend him against persecution by Zionist political opponents. This is borne out by the record detailed in the ruling.

In March 2019, the university launched an investigation into complaints against Miller that ended with his sacking on October 1, 2021. At no stage did the university allege or prove that Miller had made any antisemitic statement or carried out an antisemitic action. His words “did not constitute unlawful speech”, said the university. Removing him on the grounds of gross misconduct, the university claimed it was acting on statements and comments Miller made in February 2021, including during a public event titled “Building the Campaign for Free Speech” and in an article, “We must resist Israel’s war on British universities”, on *Electronic Intifada*. The university ruled his commentary “did not meet the standards of behaviour we expect from our staff”.

The Tribunal found that Miller’s beliefs met the requirements of a “protected philosophical belief” under the Equality Act. He presented evidence that by the late 1990s, his beliefs about Zionism were fully formed, telling the judge, “I have at all times since that date believed Zionism to be a settler-colonial and ethno-nationalist movement that seeks to assert Jewish hegemony and political control over the land of historic Palestine”.

The judge found that Miller “was clear in his evidence that his anti-Zionism is not opposition to or antipathy towards Jews or Judaism.”

The Tribunal cited his testimony about “what he regards as the overtly racist and colonial framing within the works of Zionism’s founding ideologues. He also references the fact that Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have found Israel to be ‘an apartheid state’. The Claimant gave examples in his evidence of what he regards as ‘racist laws’ which he claims are a necessary corollary of Zionism and Israel’s laws regarding emigration or ‘return’”.

Speaking on the significance of the Tribunal’s decision, Miller’s lawyer Zillur Rahman said it “marks a pivotal moment in the history of our country for those who believe in upholding the rights of Palestinians”. The ruling would be “welcomed by many who at present are facing persecution in their workplaces for speaking out against the crimes of the Israeli state, and the genocide taking place in Gaza”.

In keeping with his determination to continue the fight, Miller issued a video statement explaining, “Over many years, anti-Zionists have faced harassment and censorship in Britain due to the efforts of the Israel lobby. Many people have faced disciplinary procedures and lost their jobs for manifesting their anti-Zionist beliefs. Before I took my case, it was unclear whether a belief in the idea that Zionism is a racist, imperialist, and colonial ideology could be protected under the Equality Act 2010 as a philosophical belief.

“I’m proud to say that, with this case, we have proven that anti-Zionist beliefs, of the sort that I articulated, should be protected. I hope this case will become a touchstone precedent in all the future battles that we face with the racist and genocidal ideology of Zionism and the movement to which it is attached.”

He concluded, “This verdict is also a vindication of the approach I have taken throughout this period, which is to say that a genocidal and maximalist Zionism can only be effectively confronted by a maximalist anti-Zionism.”

Corbyn’s silence

Miller’s legal victory against the Zionists brings into sharp relief the betrayal of Corbyn and his backers in the Socialist Campaign Group of Labour MPs (including John McDonnell, Diane Abbott and Richard Burgon) who refused to challenge the bogus “left antisemitism” campaign spearheaded by the Blairites.

With far fewer resources than those available to Corbyn, Miller and his

legal team took on and defeated the forces ranged against them—Zionist lobby groups such as the CST, Blairite MPs such as John Mann, and corporate and state media outlets—all of which enjoyed complete freedom of navigation during Corbyn’s leadership of the party from 2015.

Corbyn opposed any appeal to his millions of supporters to drive the Blairites out of the party, insisting on Labour unity at all costs. This extended to Corbyn’s backing of the expulsion of close allies Ken Livingstone, Marc Wadsworth and Chris Williamson on manufactured antisemitism charges, in a hopeless effort to appease his attackers in the media, state and military-intelligence agencies.

After Corbyn’s 2019 general election defeat—with a Zionist cabal plotting day and night for that outcome and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo having pledged to “push back” to prevent a Corbyn premiership—he meekly handed the leadership to avowed Zionist and warmonger Sir Keir Starmer.

A few months later, Starmer repaid Corbyn by expelling him from the parliamentary party on bogus antisemitism charges and declaring he will never be allowed to stand as a Labour candidate. In the more than three years since his expulsion, Corbyn has remained steadfast in his refusal to wage any fight against the Zionists and their backers in the state.

Following his legal victory, Miller posted a statement on X, which has been viewed 708,000 times, thanking his supporters and declaring: “The self-justifying and defensive approach of the sort illustrated by many on the left and even in the Palestine Solidarity movement will not work. The Zionist movement cannot be negotiated with. It must be defeated.” He concluded, “Now we need to spread the campaign to #DismantleZionism all around the world—wherever the Zionist movement raises its ugly head.”

Among those congratulating Miller was left-wing Scottish artist Daniel Fooks, who addressed an X post to Corbyn, who has remained silent on the ruling. Fooks asked: “Are you going to congratulate [Miller] about his historic legal win today? He has put his livelihood on the line defending anti-Zionism as a political belief. If only you had...”

His thread has been viewed over 202,000 times with Corbyn refusing to answer.

What followed was a pile on by Corbyn’s supporters protesting that such criticism was out of order as there was nothing that poor Jeremy could have done to fight the “all-powerful” right-wing. This conceals Corbyn’s role during his time as leader in blocking any challenge to Labour’s right-wing, upholding the state conspiracy against the democratic rights of the working class aimed at laying the ground for war.

To Miller’s credit, he replied to Fooks’ post, challenging the Corbynites’ threadbare justifications for capitulation:

The strategy adopted by Corbyn at the behest of his many Zionist and ‘soft-on-Zionism’ advisers was ‘apologise’ and move on. That was a disastrous strategy which ended with Corbyn having no-one left to support him because:

1. A system for dealing with (overwhelmingly fake) anti-semitism complaints was adopted which centred Zionist assumptions and took on the false idea that there was a specific ‘problem’ of anti-Semitism on the left.

This system was responsible for massively accelerating the witch hunt *after* the left took control of the party machinery under Jennie Formby.

2. One by one his strongest supporters were thrown under the bus (on his watch). In the end, inexorably, Corbyn had no-one left to support him.

The strategy for the left, the anti-war movement and the Palestine solidarity movement must now be: no apologies, take on the Zionist movement directly. If my case shows anything, it is

that they can be confronted and defeated. .

While Miller’s legal victory is a blow to reactionary state efforts to silence critics and opponents of Zionism, it is a precedent that can be overturned by the Employment Tribunals which, as every class conscious worker knows, are a tool of the employers and an integral part of the capitalist state.

Indeed, the University of Bristol said that while acknowledging “the judgment of the Employment Tribunal” it was “disappointed with its findings” and would review the “tribunal’s lengthy judgment carefully”. The Community Security Trust said it was “extremely concerned” about the ruling, and the Campaign Against Antisemitism said it hoped the university would appeal the decision.

The British government is right now intensifying state repression of mass protests against Israel’s genocide in Gaza, branding opposition to Zionism as “left-wing extremism” and targeting socialist and left-wing activists under anti-terror laws, complete with pre-dawn police raids and banning orders aimed at controlling freedom of movement and speech.

The defeat of Zionism—including the genocidal war in Gaza backed by the imperialist powers—can be accomplished only through the global struggle of the working class for socialism. The essential lesson from Miller’s victory is the need for the working class to reject the slavish politics of Corbyn and his pseudo-left backers, which is aimed at suppressing the class struggle and which functions as a vital prop for state repression, and take up the fight for a genuine mass socialist party of the working class by joining the Socialist Equality Party.



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