

# The UK's "Your Party" implodes—build the Socialist Equality Party

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Factional warfare that has wracked the UK's "Your Party" project since its inception erupted publicly on Thursday.

Since MP Zarah Sultana quit the Labour Party in July, the understanding was that the new left party would be co-led, at least initially, by her and former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn. That plan has now unravelled spectacularly.

At 11 a.m. Thursday, Sultana announced that Your Party would now be registering official memberships prior to an already publicised founding conference in November, providing a registration link.

Within a couple of hours, she posted that 20,000 people had joined, setting up standing orders of £5 pounds a month, meaning an annual total of over £1 million. Her message included the assurance that "Right-wing bad faith actors are desperate to claim this link is fake. It isn't. It's safe and secure!"

An hour later, a statement was posted from the Your Party account declaring, "This morning, an unauthorised email was sent to all yourparty.uk supporters with details of a supposed membership portal hosted in a new domain name. Legal advice is being taken. That email should be ignored by all supporters. If any direct debits have been set up, they should be immediately cancelled."

The statement was signed by Corbyn and his fellow Independent MPs Ayoub Khan, Adnan Hussain, Iqbal Mohammed and Shockat Adam, with Sultana's name absent, confirming that the message was directed against her.

Sultana responded 30 minutes later admitting she had, "after being sidelined" by the group above and "effectively frozen out of the official accounts", taken "the step of launching a membership portal so that supporters could continue to engage and organise."

She said in justification that she had been "subjected to a sexist boys' club" and that she did not "believe members will accept Karie Murphy [Corbyn's chief of staff while he was leader of the Labour Party] and her associates having sole financial control of members' money and sole constitutional control over our conference."

Appealing to "Jeremy to meet with me and agree to make public all agreed structures, processes and decision-making protocols," she concluded, "No stitch-ups, no coronations: the members must decide."

At 7 p.m., the Corbyn faction posted another statement from the Your Party account explaining that "the data controller has reported the matter to the Information Commissioner's Office. We

will cooperate with the Information Commissioner in full," adding that they had "duties under the law."

Sultana's "unilateral decision" was cited and her allegations denied, with Murphy defended as "a trusted and dedicated volunteer."

The reaction of Corbyn and Sultana's supporters—from online publications like Novara Media, The Canary and Skwawkbox to parties like the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP)—was a howl of despair at how the explosion of factional conflict had undermined the huge "potential" of the Your Party project.

An appeal was made to the Corbyn and Sultana factions to recognise the urgency of the situation, with the far-right waiting in the wings, put aside their differences and move forward with organising the founding conference—though with Sultana holding the balance of their sympathies.

Fiona Lali, national organiser for the RCP, tweeted, "This party had and has potential. Announce the date of the conference. Adopt a revolutionary programme."

The SWP declared that "history will forgive neither side in Your Party if this blows up the project before it is even set up." Your Party should "unite around some basic socialist principles", abandon "electoralism" and ensure that its elected representatives are "subjected to party discipline over basic principles."

None of this is on the table.

Thursday was stark confirmation that there will be nothing democratic, let alone socialist and revolutionary, about Your Party.

The pose of outrage and surprise of the pseudo-left is duplicitous. Firstly, all of them knew that Your Party was being run by rival and entirely unaccountable cliques.

Secondly, what has happened is not some dramatic reversal of the Corbynites' otherwise principled record: it is an essential aspect of their opportunist, pro-capitalist politics.

Corbyn's years' long resistance to forming a new party opposed to Labour is legendary. The role played by his inner circle through Momentum in neutering left-wing sentiment in the party when he was Labour leader is also well known. As are the right-wing politics of his Independent MP allies.

Commenting on the first announcement of Your Party, the Socialist Equality Party, basing itself on a Marxist examination of this history explained:

The character of the party is shaped above all by its leadership. It has been developed over the last months under the direction not only of Corbyn, but many of the staff from his time as leader of the Labour Party, including Karie Murphy (his former chief of staff) and Pamela Fitzpatrick, who heads Corbyn's Peace and Justice Project.

To this old guard is added Sultana, representing the new generation of Corbynite MPs that entered parliament in 2017, and Corbyn's Independent Alliance of four other MPs elected based solely on their opposition to the Gaza genocide and not on any record of struggle for leftist policies. One of these, Ayoub Khan MP, notoriously asked Labour's Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner whether the army could be used to clear Birmingham's streets during the ongoing refuse collectors' strike.

This apparatus will be charged with managing the inaugural party conference so that only a lowest-common-denominator programme is adopted, largely based on the minimal social reforms included in Labour's 2017 and 2019 general election manifestos under Corbyn.

The SWP, RCP and others have helped to cover these issues up to promote the bona fides of Your Party among workers and youth, while courting Corbyn and Sultana with the aim of securing a niche within the prospective party apparatus.

Corbyn and his allies are working to place the new organisation—the massive support for which has alarmed them—firmly under their thumb. Their response to Sultana's action—taking just a few hours to set her up for legal prosecution under data protection laws—is despicable.

But Sultana has acted throughout the months since Your Party's launch to pull the wool over its supporters' eyes about the people in charge, complaining only to the extent that her passage into a leadership role has been opposed.

Rather than politically challenge Corbyn's blocking of a new party, she bounced him into agreeing by declaring its launch upon her resignation July 3 from Labour. Later stating that Corbynism "capitulated" over the antisemitism witch-hunt, she calibrated her remarks to try and prevent an open rift by blaming his advisers.

Her launch of the membership portal was another attempt to bypass Corbyn's intransigence without letting it be known more widely. But he and his allies have called her bluff and thrown her under the bus.

Although some entirely unprincipled reconciliation is not impossible, it is extremely unlikely. Moreover, the debacle has already blown a hole in the side of the Your Party project. Workers and young people will be appalled and many who saw the initiative as a way forward will be disappointed.

The socialist response is not to join in the pseudo-left's chorus of despair, but to draw the essential political lessons and act accordingly.

It is not a question of taking sides in this unprincipled scrimmage. There are no innocent parties involved, somehow upholding the democratic rights of members. In a polemic with the RCP, the SEP has cited Leon Trotsky's description of Labour lefts

of an earlier period as "the expression of a shift but also its brake."

Trotsky's stress then, and ours now, is on the role of the Corbynite "left" as a political brake on the working class.

Under the leadership of the Corbynites—and no one has even suggested there will be any other leadership—this is not a party that can be pushed to adopt "basic socialist principles," still less a "revolutionary programme", as the SWP and RCP claim. Both the Corbyn and the Sultana factions—despite her more militant rhetoric—are advocates of a Labour Party Mark Two, a party of a few mild reforms which only serves to politically disarm the working class.

The right-wing transformation and collapse of Labour and all the social democratic parties was not the result of bad leaders, but of shifts in world capitalism which rendered national reformism obsolete.

Globalisation, declining rates of profit and the massive, cancerous growth of financial speculation mean that meaningful social reform can no longer be reconciled with a defence of the profit system. The order of the day for world capitalism is trade and military war for the control of essential resources and markets and class war at home to impose the brutal levels of exploitation and destruction of essential services to make this global conflict possible.

Fighting back demands the independent political mobilisation of the working class, freed from the dead hand of the "left" representatives of the Labour and trade union bureaucracy, in a struggle against capitalism and for socialism.

A party capable of carrying out such a struggle must be rooted in the lessons of history and forged in decades of struggle for socialist political principles. It is time to take up the fight for world socialist revolution by joining the Socialist Equality Party, British section of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

*Click here to read the Socialist Equality Party's Statement of Principles.*



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