

Zarah Sultana speaks in Sheffield as Britain's pseudo-left reaffirms full support for Jeremy Corbyn's Your Party

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Zarah Sultana, co-founder of Your Party, was the featured speaker at a 400-strong meeting on Wednesday night hosted by Sheffield Trades Union Council. It was her first public appearance since last week's eruption of factional warfare pitting Sultana against former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn and his group of Independent Alliance MPs, threatening to split Your Party before it had even begun.

Sultana used her appearance to mend fences and confirm Your Party's launch, based on appeals for left unity. She found a willing audience.

Just six days earlier, Sultana defied Corbyn, launching a membership registration portal without his prior approval. She emailed Your Party's database—more than 850,000 sign-ups—asking them to join. A second email, a few hours later, signed by Corbyn and his group of Independents (Ayoub Khan, Adnan Hussain, Iqbal Mohamed, and Shokat Adam) declared that Sultana's email was “unauthorised”. They wrote: “Legal advice is being taken... If any direct debits have been set up, they should be immediately cancelled.”

Sultana fired back that she had instructed specialist defamation lawyers, condemning “politically motivated” attacks against her. She said she was being frozen out of decision-making by a “sexist boys' club”, citing Corbyn's backers, led by his former Chief of Staff Karie Murphy, with sole financial and constitutional control “over our conference”. She called for a meeting with Corbyn to agree on procedures for a founding conference, demanding, “No stitch-ups, no coronations: the members must decide.”

But on Sunday, Sultana fell on her sword. She announced she had withdrawn legal proceedings and was “determined to reconcile”. She was engaged in “ongoing discussions with Jeremy”, stating, “Both Jeremy and I

remain committed to making this project a success—and we can all confirm that the conference will go ahead as planned in November.”

In Sheffield, Sultana's audience of left-talking trade union bureaucrats, middle-class community activists, retirees, a large turnout of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), Socialist Party (SP) and other pseudo-left groups, and some students made clear that all was forgiven.

Sultana told them, her voice wavering, “The past few days have been truly regrettable, and I do want to say sorry for the part that I have played in that.” This was all her audience required. They responded with sustained applause, cheering, stamping of feet, and even a standing ovation.

The desired rapprochement was already in motion.

A new membership portal launched by Corbyn earlier that day confirmed his faction's control. Corbyn, who rejected any fight against his Blairite opponents while Labour leader, shows no such timidity or cowardice toward the left. His registration portal announced a ban on members joining from other political parties, later amended to “national political parties”. It is a measure aimed at blocking what Murphy has venomously decried as “the Marxist sects”: groups whose “class struggle” rhetoric, despite their constant professions of loyalty, is not in line with Corbyn's central message of seeking “peace” and “justice” through community activism.

Frozen out by Corbyn's backers, Sultana is pitching to Corbyn's left, addressing a combative popular mood among broader sections of workers and youth who are breaking away from the Labour Party. Alongside vague left-populist calls for “a politics of hope, a politics of solidarity, a politics of fighting back,” she insists the new party must be class-based, socialist, internationalist, anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist, anti-fascist, and pro-trans.

She presents herself as a leader championing grassroots democracy, declaring, “If we don’t democratise the party, how will we democratise the economy?”

But Sultana’s fundamental loyalty to Corbyn—and to the labour and trade union bureaucracy which he defends—was exposed in her response to several key questions at the Sheffield meeting.

Tina Becker, from the “Why Marx?” group and a member of the Your Party “proto-branch” in Sheffield, asked Sultana about the anti-democratic “sortition” method being imposed by Corbyn’s “Organising Committee” to select delegates to the founding conference. Becker explained it meant “We can’t put forward motions, we can’t put forward amendments. There will be a lottery system to choose delegates.” She asked Sultana, “Should the regional meetings be able to vote and have amendments? Should we not be the ones who decide how Your Party should be run and not the six MPs, and what are you trying to do to change that?”

Sultana replied, “I too am quite critical of sortition, but that is what has been announced for the conference, and so we need to make sure it’s democratic. And I think there’s a way to still do that.”

Her remarks made clear there would be no organised challenge to Corbyn’s anti-democratic stitch-up. She did not and could not explain how delegates randomly selected based on “gender, region and background” could be “made democratic”. Sortition is being employed to block members from exercising democratic control, preventing them from nominating delegates who are accountable and who best reflect their views, suppressing any political challenge to Corbyn’s (and Sultana’s) unelected cliques.

Alistair Tice, a leading SP member in Sheffield, queried the new party’s ban on members joining from other parties. He said the SP had “campaigning for a new workers’ party for around 30 years, so my God, we welcomed this development. But I was a bit disturbed today when I read the email suggesting that maybe I wouldn’t be able to become a member... Zarah, if you can clarify: Is it a member of any other political party, or is it only a member of any political party that stands candidates against your party, or what? I want to know whether I can be a member of Your Party.”

Sultana replied, “I don’t agree with that. I think we need to unify the left.” But as with sortition, she advanced no strategy to oppose the ban. Casting herself as a lone voice at the top advocating for a more inclusive left-wing party, she appealed to the audience, “It can’t just be me. I

need all of you to help me with that.” This would apparently be done by the excluded using their social media presence to advocate for change.

The SWP’s report of Wednesday’s meeting, headlined “Zarah Sultana says join Your Party, but fight to shape it”, sums up the stance of Britain’s pseudo-left tendencies. While Corbyn is barring their entry—and without a single policy having been announced—they are falling over themselves to join, promoting the myth that members will be able to “shape” the new party’s programme and leadership.

Maxine Bowler of the SWP told Wednesday’s meeting she had won more than 2,000 votes in Sheffield Brightside and Hillsborough during last year’s general election, in which she stood as an “independent socialist for Palestine” and said nothing else of substance. Hers was a calling card on behalf of herself and the rest of the SWP, offering their services as publicists and recruiters for Your Party—providing them with socialist bona fides while concealing the anti-democratic machinations of Corbyn and Sultana’s factions.

The SWP reported: “The Independent Alliance MPs, apart from Corbyn and Sultana, do not have a broader set of socialist politics.” This is a political con job. Sultana has made abundantly clear that her rhetoric commits her to nothing. Moreover, it is Corbyn who is utilising the Independent Alliance MPs which he leads as a weapon against the left. He aims to block the adoption of genuine socialist policies, opposing any fight to mobilise the working class against capitalism, and against the genocide, war, austerity and fascism which capitalism breeds.



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