

Your Party's factional warfare: The real issue for workers is reformist delusions or revolution

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The founding conference of Your Party (YP) is scheduled for the weekend of November 29-30, in Liverpool. But it will now take place amid factional infighting that will split it in two and may even prevent it from taking place at all.

The scale of the crisis is immense. This month, Your Party announced to great fanfare that 50,000 members have joined, making it “by far the largest socialist party in Britain for generations”. But few drew comfort from these numbers. The bitter conflict between a cabal around former Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn—proclaimed as Your Party’s natural leader, and Zarah Sultana, the former Labour MP determined to be its co-leader—has drained away savagely initial public support for what was seen as a means to fight Keir Starmer’s pro-business, pro-genocide and pro-war government.

By the end of August, 850,000 people had signed up to support Your Party. But this enthusiasm quickly proved to be misplaced.

Month after month, Corbyn had refused all entreaties to set up a new party, even after his de facto expulsion from Labour in May 2024. He preferred to stand as an independent in his Islington North constituency and then, after Labour’s election, formed a parliamentary block with a group of Muslim independents elected based solely on their opposition to Labour’s defence of the Gaza genocide. He ignored the entreaties of his inner circle to call for a new party, speaking instead of working alongside former allies such as John McDonnell and Diane Abbott, who had made clear their continued loyalty to Labour, and pledging to support any “progressive” measures by the Starmer government while he focused on building a “grassroots” organisation.

Sultana bounced him into action after she quit the Labour Party in July, but this only laid the ground for infighting that has raged ever since—especially after she unilaterally declared a membership drive to secure her position against Corbyn’s backers.

They retaliated with legal action that impacted loyal Corbyniters (Andrew Feinstein, Beth Winter and Jamie Driscoll) who had stewarded MoU Operations—a private company which received membership subscriptions and donations after Sultana’s announcement. Corbyn’s backers reported MOU’s “unauthorised” use of data to the Information Commissioner’s Office, making them liable for massive fines for raising funds in Your Party’s name.

The Corbyn faction is demanding that MoU immediately hand over £850,000 in donations collected toward the launch of Your Party. At the same time, they insist that MOU’s directors maintain responsibility for the estimated £500,000 in membership subscriptions from Sultana’s initial sign-up drive, which it alleges was fraudulently secured. The directors of MoU resigned, explaining that to transfer funds this way would expose them to greater legal jeopardy. MoU is now in Sultana’s hands alone.

Sultana has repeatedly attempted to find a compromise with Corbyn. However, this has become increasingly untenable. After she was accused of potentially sabotaging the founding conference for not handing over the cash and data, Sultana proposed this week to hand over £650,000—including an initial tranche of £200,000 to pay for the founding conference, arguing that the rest should be retained in case of future legal or administrative expenses.

Corbyn’s faction reiterated their accusation of sabotage and accused Sultana of retaining the money to fund a leadership challenge against Corbyn to be held next year.

The Your Party stitch-up

This sordid conflict is a devastating indictment of Britain’s pseudo-left groups, who all insisted that a new party led by Corbyn was the necessary and inevitable next stage in the development of the British working class. Only such a reformist party, led by Corbyn, Sultana and hopefully other prominent “lefts” defecting from the Labour Party or the trade union bureaucracy, would have the popular support and acceptance necessary to mount a struggle against Starmer, in parliament, local councils and protest actions “on the streets.”

The only alternative to such an initiative, they insisted, was the further rise of Reform UK and the far-right. To call for the building of a revolutionary alternative was denounced as the height of sectarian folly. The best that could be achieved was to fight for their right to join Your Party to argue for more “left” measures while proclaiming a personal belief in revolution.

This schema was already in tatters following the publication of Your Party’s proposed programme and constitution, consisting of a handful of anodyne commitments to equality, peace, etc., combined with a proposed ban on anyone joining who is a member of another national party.

But for weeks the pseudo-left focused on promoting and organising preparatory regional assemblies they know will have no actual say over party policy, where they have proposed various measures to democratise Corbyn’s bureaucratic political vehicle, above all reversing the de facto ban on their own membership. They have urged an end to factional warfare so that Your Party’s “vast potential” is not undermined—with large numbers turning away in disgust and over 100,000 joining the Green Party under new leader Zack Polanski. “The future of Your Party still to play for”, wrote the *Socialist Worker*, provided that socialists “push for real democracy and political debate” within its ranks.

Such is the scale of the debacle that several regional assemblies have

only taken place at all thanks to the legwork of these groups. The *Weekly Worker's* letters' page report on Greater Manchester explains that just 125-150 members met at a "hastily organised event". The few who turned up were listed as including representatives of the Greater Manchester Left Caucus, the Democratic Socialists and RS21, the SWP, Socialist Alternative, Anticapitalist Resistance, Socialist Party of England and Wales, Counterfire and the Revolutionary Communist Party, representing nobody but themselves.

Just 100 people attended the West Yorkshire assembly and 200 the South Yorkshire Assembly in Sheffield. Another *Weekly Worker* report painted this event as "a model of transparency, open debate, participation, democracy and control from below," before admitting that this was only because the YP national leadership left them to fend for themselves. After hours of deliberation, an emergency motion was passed, "focused on the need to democratise the foundation process, as well as the party more generally".

None of this will play any role in shaping the character of Your Party, its constitution and policies, which have already been set down by the unelected and sometimes unidentified cabal around Corbyn, and which cannot be amended except by individual online suggestions vetted by a drafting committee and then presented to a congress of individuals chosen by sortition rather than by democratic political mandate. The regional assemblies were never intended to be anything other than a pseudo-democratic rubber stamp for this process.

This was confirmed by the contemptuous response of Corbyn's main organiser Karie Murphy to questions posed on November 6 by various local YP representatives. In answer to a question on the unaccountability and often anonymity of Your Party's unelected leadership, Murphy replied that "the vast majority of people who are involved in Your Party do not want their name to be shared" because of "a lot of the negativity" and that the group of five independent MPs led by Corbyn (which excludes Sultana) were "stewarding the founding process to conference"—So "what I don't really want to read tomorrow is, oh, it's all been done in secret, and oh, it's all top-heavy, and all this baloney."

One pseudo-left group member asked deferentially about "what looks like a proposed ban on left parties". Murphy replied that, pending conference approval, she was personally opposed to letting in the SWP, the Socialist Party, "or any other, you know, smaller organization."

The pseudo-left looks to Zarah Sultana

All hopes among the pseudo-left tendencies now rest on Sultana providing an alternative to Corbyn. On November 8, she appealed to them directly on X, "If you believe Your Party should be explicitly socialist, radically democratic, rooted in mass movement and led by our members, not MPs — join me and back these democratic demands."

Her proposals include a sovereign delegate congress, binding decisions on elected representatives, an elected executive with no reserved positions for MPs, and allowing dual membership of other parties. "We cannot have a Labour Party 2.0, no backroom deals, no fiefdoms, no coronations," she declared. This was accompanied by a link to join "Team Zarah", which features an open appeal for finances. There was no reference to Your Party.

The *Socialist Worker* responded November 10 by declaring, "The fight is on for democracy in Your Party." Without naming Corbyn, he was portrayed (referencing instead his attack dog Karie Murphy) as representing one of two contending visions, "sluggish and top-down", opposed by the "insurgent and democratic" vision of Sultana—"Socialist Worker supports Sultana's campaign for democracy and will be fighting

for it at the regional assemblies and conference."

Not one of Britain's pseudo-left groups can explain why someone they promoted for years when leader of the Labour Party, even as he led a rout in capitulating to the party's right-wing—and who they then cited as justifying why Your Party was the wave of the future—has been replaced in their political affections by Sultana, a 32-year-old with no political record of struggle whatsoever, and who has done nothing but manoeuvre during her conflict with Corbyn.

A revolutionary party, not reformist bureaucrats

The essential question is not which bureaucrat is backed by the pseudo-left, nor is it a case of "breaking" from them when they inevitably betray. What is necessary is for workers and young people to reject all efforts to subordinate their struggles to a reformist agenda.

When the factional warfare between Corbyn and Sultana erupted in September following her launching a membership drive, the Socialist Equality Party explained:

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...

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.

Writing "An open letter to supporters of Corbyn's Your Party", 22 October 2025, we elaborated:

Your Party's "broad principles" are suspended in thin air, outside of time and place. There is not a single reference to any of the concrete political events and experiences worldwide or in Britain which make necessary and urgent a mass socialist and internationalist party of the working class.

Trump's efforts to erect a fascist dictatorship in the United

States, the promotion of far-right parties across Europe, and the worldwide eruption of imperialist military violence, including Israel's ongoing genocide of the Palestinians to forge Trump's "New Middle East", point to the violent reality of capitalism: a ruling class that will stop at nothing to defend its wealth and power against foreign rivals and against the working class at home.

In opposition, we insisted:

Yes, a mass socialist party of the working class is needed urgently. Such a party must be international, linking British workers with their class brother and sisters worldwide; it must be based on the political independence of the working class from the capitalist class and its servants in the labour and trade union bureaucracy; and it must encourage the growth of rank-and-file organisations in every workplace and neighbourhood to mobilise the working class to expropriate the wealth of the oligarchy, break the resistance of the state, and place economic and political power in the hands of the working class, the overwhelming majority of the population.

The advocates of building new "broad left" reformist parties are at the same time the champions of political amnesia. Justifying their schemes depends on the deliberate promotion of political ignorance of history and especially of the consequences of their backing for Syriza in Greece, Podemos in Spain, Bernie Sanders in the United States, and of Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party. Each experiment ended in political disaster that strengthened the far-right.

Nothing different can be expected if workers and young people are persuaded to place their trust in left-talking capitalist politicians such as Zarah Sultana, Zohran Mamdani, or Zack Polanski for that matter. It is time to break from reformist illusions and take up the necessary struggle to build the revolutionary internationalist leadership of the SEP.



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