

Your Party's leadership elections

## Corbyn's anti-socialism, Sultana's reformism and the necessary revolutionary alternative

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Elections to Your Party's collective leadership body have seen Jeremy Corbyn emerge as a naked anti-socialist witch-hunter.

His main rival for leadership, Zarah Sultana, was the first to announce her "Grassroots Left" slate, whose programme declares, "Our goal is to bring an end to capitalism... the profit motive and private ownership of the means of production, and replace it with a socialist society organised to meet people's needs, not generate profit."

It continues, "We support the Palestinian people and reject successive British governments' collusion with Israel. We support immediate withdrawal from NATO."

It also supports the right of various tendencies, most notably the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Socialist Party (SP), to organise in Your Party, proclaiming "freedom for members to organise into factions, tendencies and platforms" and "opposing any ban on dual memberships or proscriptions against members based on political views or affiliations."

### The Many and Jeremy Corbyn's anti-socialism

Corbyn was horrified at Sultana's attempt to associate him with such positions, briefing the *New Statesman* that he was "very upset" about being endorsed by Grassroots Left despite not being a member of its slate.

He and his faction, "The Many", have since set about waging a right-wing assault on any programme for Your Party which makes even a verbal declaration of anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism.

The Many's launch statement in *Tribune* magazine was largely devoted to attacking Grassroots Left. Corbyn's faction would "get Your Party back on track" by rejecting "purity tests, infighting and navel-gazing" and the "sectarian approach" of "others in this election" which "prefers speaking to the left rather than the country."

This approach, wrote Jennifer Forbes and Fadel Takrouri in *Tribune*, "has been tried many times before and has failed just as many times. We fear that if Your Party takes this path, it will become another in a long line of failures—a fringe party scrapping at the margins, leaving the field open to Reform, and posing no real threat to the establishment."

Starting the morning of the founding conference, Corbyn's allies, who control Your Party's apparatus and finances, have been busy expelling Sultana's supporters. Candidates have been barred from standing or expelled by an unaccountable clique led by Corbyn's longtime ally Karie Murphy.

From the beginning of his time as Labour leader in 2015, the Socialist Equality Party identified Corbyn as the chief political obstacle to the development of a socialist movement in the UK, in opposition to every

other left tendency that presented his time as leader as an opportunity for the socialist transformation of the Labour Party.

As leader, Corbyn betrayed the mass support he had won and capitulated on every political issue to the Blairite right, including accepting NATO membership and the Trident nuclear weapons system. He turned a blind eye while Labour's Blairite apparatus purged left-wing members, then colluded in the expulsion of many of his leading supporters on lying charges equating anti-Zionism with antisemitism.

This was met with one apologia after another insisting that Corbyn was a well-intentioned victim of the Blairite right-wing—which he had, in fact, protected from all efforts to expel them from the party. When he was finally driven out and replaced by Starmer, tendencies such as the SWP, SP and the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) still upheld him as the natural leader of a left breakaway party—a course of action he opposed for years.

Under the pressure of mass hostility to the Labour Party and the government of Keir Starmer, Corbyn finally accepted his coronation as leader of what became Your Party in July last year. He did so only to mount a vicious campaign against his nominal co-leader Sultana and her backers, employing the full playbook of the Blairites to ensure that Your Party would function as a tame electoral vehicle whose sole purpose is the election of a handful of MPs to act as Labour's "conscience".

Corbyn's Independent Alliance group in Parliament is made up of Muslim Labourites and Liberal Democrats who stood against these parties in the July 2024 general election solely on the question of opposing the Gaza genocide. Corbyn's allies want to extend this model going forward, focusing Your Party's efforts on local campaigns particularly targeting constituencies with a large Muslim community to provide the core of a party advocating the same mixture of minimal reforms and populist democratic sloganising as did Labour between 2015 and 2019.

Forbes and Takrouri declare, "Your Party is not just a legacy of Corbynism, it also emerged from the surge of independent victories over the past two years—among them Shockat Adam and Ayoub Khan—often in Muslim communities where a simmering sense of abandonment boiled over when Britain's political class made itself complicit in Israel's genocide. Provided we don't blow this chance, Your Party can still be the vehicle for that alliance," which they claim has underpinned "some of the most successful left initiatives" since the turn of the century.

Socialists have a duty to oppose the torrent of anti-Muslim prejudice being whipped up by the ruling class, used to justify the Gaza genocide and facilitate attacks on social and democratic rights at home by sowing divisions in the working class. But experience has demonstrated repeatedly that political alliances with Islamic tendencies or other religious groups are a means of opposing the struggle to win workers to socialist politics based on class.

This has been the case most recently with the Palestine Coalition, which has demoralised a giant movement against the Gaza genocide with its policy of moral appeals to the government. And it is more grotesque still in the case of Corbyn's Independent Alliance, which includes Adnan Hussain and Iqbal Mohamed—whose politics is so right-wing they abandoned Your Party entirely last November—and Ayoub Khan, who infamously called for the army to be used to break the Birmingham bin strike.

#### **Zarah Sultana and Grassroots Left: reformist illusions in revolutionary times**

Nothing is left of the pseudo-left justifications of Corbyn's betrayals, claiming that his hands were tied by the Blairites. But today, the SWP, SP and RCP pursue the same politics in a different guise. Having backed Corbyn while his "broad church" housed a political inquisition against the left, they now back Sultana, whose own "broad church" offers a home to Corbyn while he does the same.

Sultana continues to proclaim her unity with Corbyn while he expels her supporters because she agrees with him on the fundamental question. However much Sultana declares against a "Labour Party 2.0", that is exactly what she is arguing for—a party advancing a programme of parliamentary reforms, albeit more extensive than Corbyn—that opposes a revolutionary struggle against capitalism.

It is on this fundamental issue that Sultana's claim to offer an alternative to Labour and her factional disputes with Corbyn must be judged.

The Socialist Equality Party has explained the emergence of New Labour under Tony Blair, the transformation of the trade union bureaucracy into strike breakers who have presided over a decades-long series of defeats, and why Corbyn failed to reverse the party's transformation into a naked advocate of capitalism as follows:

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.

This appraisal was confirmed above all by the abject failure of all attempts to build a reformist alternative to the old parties, like Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain, which instead implemented equally right-wing policies the moment they came to office.

For this reason, the SEP warned of Corbyn's Labour leadership, and has repeated of all factions of Your Party, including Sultana's, that they cannot provide a solution to the crisis facing the working class.

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

"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.

We countered:

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.

Corbyn's assumption of leadership of the Labour Party, despite all his retreats, was met with army generals threatening mutiny, soldiers using a picture of his face for target practice, a vast "antisemitism" slander campaign and threats of financial Armageddon. A struggle against capitalism—in today's context where small groups of direct action protesters are being branded terrorists in Britain—would be met with the type of civil war Donald Trump is now waging in the United States.

Sultana and the Grassroots Left propose no new programme of struggle for the working class to counter this threat. Their perspective, however much her supporters might speak privately of revolution, is for parliamentary reforms powered by protests on the streets, led by the same forces which backed Corbyn and today confine themselves to appeals to Keir Starmer's Labour government: the pathetic remnants of the Labour "left", sections of the trade union bureaucracy, the Stop the War Coalition, Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Stand Up to Racism and similar groupings.

This is merely Corbynism with a left face. Besides her attitude to Corbyn, there are many clear indications of where Sultana's politics ends, including her championing the newly elected Mayor of New York, Zohran Mamdani as an example of "what socialist representation looks like".

Elected due to growing left-wing sentiment in the city, it has taken Mamdani less than three months to betray that promise, pledging to "work together" in a "partnership" with Trump, endorsing billionaire-defending Democratic Governor of New York Kathy Hochul, and defending New York City Police Department Commissioner Jessica Tisch to the point of praising police after they shot and seriously injured a mentally ill person.

In the upcoming Gorton and Denton by-election, Sultana blamed delays in the formation of local Your Party structures for not being able to field a candidate. But she then extended "critical support" to the Green Party candidate Hannah Spencer, insisting that "the left is strongest when it is united. Our real opponents are not one another. They are Reform and the far right."

Sultana has made clear the criteria by which Your Party will in fact subordinate socialist sentiment among workers and young people to an alliance with the Greens (and by extension the "Labour left"), despite her electoral slate promising, "Grassroots Left will not lend unconditional support to the Green Party candidate, because the Greens are a pro-

capitalist, pro-Nato party and have been enforcing cuts in councils all over the country.”

Jean-Luc Mélenchon’s *La France Insoumise* (France Unbowed-LFI), with a vastly larger support base, played the same role in France through the New Popular Front. Through the actions of the LFI—which Sultana also cites as a model—the Socialist Party were put in a position to prop up Emmanuel Macron’s reactionary presidency, which is now preparing the way for the far-right National Rally.

### **The Socialist Equality Party and the political independence of the working class**

The Socialist Equality Party bases its attitude to political leaders not on their own claims about their politics, but an examination of their programme, practice, history and associations and in the context of the objective situation. Our analysis is based on Trotskyist principles derived from a century’s experience of struggle against Stalinism, bourgeois nationalism, social democracy and petty-bourgeois radicalism.

We make this analysis to aid the working class in recognising their misleaders and developing a new, genuinely socialist leadership. As we wrote in our first statement on Your Party, our aim is “to ensure that illusions in Corbynite reformism are dispelled as quickly as possible in preparation for the revolutionary class battles ahead.”

Corbyn’s discrediting has taken a decade thanks to the political cover provided him by the dominant forces in Britain claiming to offer a socialist perspective: the SWP, RCP and SP. In that time, the dangers for the working class have grown enormously. Workers cannot afford the same experience with Sultana. These next years must be used build an alternative—the Socialist Equality Party.

The class struggle will grow in force and scope, but this poses even more sharply the need to overcome the political obstacles which have kept the working class suppressed for decades: the trade union bureaucracy and various national reformist or petty-bourgeois protest organisations. As Leon Trotsky explained in *The Third International After Lenin*: “Not blissful ‘optimism’ but intransigence, vigilance, revolutionary distrust, and the struggle for every hand’s bread of independence”—these are the essential traits of Bolshevism.”

The sharpening crisis of the Starmer government—in the crossfires of conflict between Europe and America, squeezed by international creditors, and tasked to implement vast increases in military and cuts to social spending—will provide ample opportunities for workers and young people in Britain to take up this political challenge.



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