

Your Party's purge of socialists: the rotten end of the Corbyn project

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With its majority vote to proscribe nominally socialist organisations from Your Party and purge “dual members” belonging to them, Jeremy Corbyn’s factional allies on the Central Executive Committee (CEC) stand exposed as witch-hunters against the left who have effectively self-destructed their organisation.

More than a year after 800,000 people expressed support for a new mass socialist party to fight Labour’s pro-war, pro-austerity and genocide-enabling government, Corbyn’s “The Many” faction has confirmed its central remit in building a Labour Party Mark II, one bitterly hostile to the socialist aspirations of workers and youth.

Corbyn’s clique, with a comfortable majority on the CEC, tabled their plans for a purge of socialists at a meeting of the CEC on Sunday, April 12. It was the main item of business, based on proposals set out in a 7-page document titled “Dual Party Membership Eligibility”.

A list of parties that “don’t meet the criteria for dual membership” was presented to the CEC, set out in bullet points: “Socialist Workers Party, Alliance for Workers’ Liberty, Socialist Party, Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, Communist Party of Great Britain (Provisional Central Committee), Scottish Socialist Party, Socialist Equality Party, Revolutionary Communist Party.”

This list, the CEC explained, was “not exhaustive”. In support of its mission of building “a broad left party”, the CEC voted to ban all “small self-described revolutionary parties that operate according to principles of democratic centralism”. All of these had “strategic objectives” that were “incompatible with the values and constitutional framework of Your Party.”

The CEC also voted for a “due diligence” regime to identify YP members who are members of banned organisations. Ineligible members could “self-report”, or they would be identified by YP officials through “public political affiliation [obtained by trawling social media], election candidate disclosures, or information submitted by members [encouraging Stasi-like informing]”. Those failing to evidence their eligibility under the new rules would be “terminated administratively”.

Your Party’s witch-hunt was announced later that day in an email to members signed by party chair “Jenn” Forbes (a former Communication Workers Union bureaucrat and Labour Party candidate in Wales) under the header: “Invitation to all socialists and socialist parties”. With nauseating smugness, she wrote: “All those willing to join Your Party’s mission are welcome!”

The new eligibility rules reflected YP’s “core values” of “democracy, accountability and transparency”, delivering a “member-led socialist party” where “members take decisions together”, while “advancing views openly on an equal footing”.

Corbyn’s hand-picked bureaucrats, including Karie Murphy (his former Chief of Staff as Labour leader), Forbes, Laura Smith, and Independent MPs Shockat Adam and Ayoub Khan, have in fact worked to suppress members’ democratic rights, blocking any challenge to the creation of a Labour Party Mark II.

Corbyn’s party seeks to divert anti-capitalist sentiment into parliamentary channels to prevent a developing break by the working class with Labour from acquiring a mass socialist and revolutionary character. His guiding star remains *The British Road to Socialism*, the postwar programme of the Stalinist Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), which insisted on socialism’s achievement through parliament via the election of a left-wing Labour government.

While bureaucrats like Murphy have spent months decrying the “Marxist sects” and their supposedly clandestine activities within YP, Corbyn’s CEC has presided over an internal regime even more anti-democratic than Labour’s National Executive Committee (NEC).

Neither the identity nor the number of YP CEC members who voted for the dual membership ban is known—not even by CEC members! A secret ballot was introduced for this purpose, justified as a means of preventing leaks. Forbes simply declared each motion carried. Once the ban on socialist groups had passed, Pontius Corbyn arrived on cue, having left the dirty work of purges and proscriptions to others.

Labour’s fear of communism

With their anti-socialist purge, the Corbynites are the true inheritors of the Labourite tradition.

The Labour Party developed as a pillar of the capitalist order in bitter struggle against the growing influence of communism. In September 1920, amidst a mass upsurge of the working class following the Russian Revolution, Labour’s NEC rejected the Communist Party of Great Britain’s (CPGB) application to affiliate. It ruled that CPGB’s “objects do not appear to be in accord” with the party’s constitution, principles, and programme, which rejected the dictatorship of the proletariat (i.e., a workers’ state).

In November of that year, delegates to Labour’s London conference opposed affiliation by little more than a hundred votes (380 to 283), reflecting broad support for communist ideas among class-conscious workers. The ban was reaffirmed at Labour’s national conference in Brighton in June 1921. In 1923, some 430 communist delegates attended Labour’s annual conference, and more than 100 local trade union branches (and trades and labour councils) favoured affiliation, which was again denied.

Active and constant combat against revolutionary socialism became part of Labour’s DNA, and the ruling class left nothing to chance. The Zinoviev letter, forged by British intelligence and published by Viscount Rothermere’s *Daily Mail* in October 1924, purported to show that Labour supported a Bolshevik-style revolution. It was an early example of the “red scares” used to discipline and shape the Labour and trade union bureaucracy, making it “fit for government”.

From the late 1950s, Labour's right-wing organised a succession of witch-hunts against the British Trotskyists led by Gerry Healy, seeking to crush the movement's growing influence among party members and rank-and-file trade unionists.

By 1962, the Socialist Labour League, founded in 1959, had won support across the Labour Party's youth movement, the Young Socialists, and its newspaper *Keep Left*. The Labour Party under Harold Wilson responded in 1964 with mass expulsions, but Healy fought back, and the YS split from the Labour Party, becoming the youth movement of the SLL. Healy's victory, with meagre resources but an educated and determined cadre, stands as an indictment of Corbyn's abject capitulation to the Blairites in 2015-20.

But Corbyn did not merely capitulate. Behind the scenes, he supported Jon Lansman's campaign to expel "Trotskyites" from campaign group Momentum, facilitating the mass purges organised by Labour's Compliance Unit codenamed "Operation Icepick".

Corbyn threw his own supporters, including Ken Livingstone, Jackie Walker and Chris Williamson, under the bus of the "left antisemitism" witch-hunt. He appointed Laura Smith, daughter of his Special Political Advisor (the Stalinist Andrew Murray-Smith), to serve on Labour's complaints unit. A Labour source told the *Independent* in 2019 that Smith would be providing "administrative support" because "Ensuring complaints on antisemitism are processed quickly is an absolute priority".

Corbyn's "mission accomplished"

The collapse in support for Your Party—now polling at 0 percent in YouGov's latest voter intention survey, down from 18 percent last summer—will not perturb Corbyn in the slightest. Content on Labour's backbenches or delivering moral sermons as an Independent, he has worked to throttle any genuine socialist challenge to Labour. In 2015, with power in his hands, he did everything he could to block a mass movement to oust the Blairites, handing leadership to their anointed successor, Keir Starmer, less than five years later.

Corbyn remained in the Labour Party even after it backed the genocide in Gaza, only resigning after the NEC disendorsed him as the party's candidate in Islington North. Elected comfortably as an Independent in July 2024, he delayed the launch of a new party for another 12 months. He dabbled with his Peace & Justice Project until his hand was forced again. He has, through all of this, ceded initiative to the right.

Despite his miserable record, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), Counterfire, the Revolutionary Communist Party and similar petty-bourgeois pseudo-left groups, insisted that only "Jeremy" could lead a mass socialist party to challenge Labour. They are now busily rewriting history, hoping to conceal their manifold contributions to Corbynism 2.0 and the right-wing cesspit they helped build.

Rewriting history

In the SWP's *Socialist Worker*, Tomáš Tengely-Evans reported YP's expulsion of SWP members on April 12, declaring: "The witch-hunt of the left stands in the worst traditions of Labour—and comes after a campaign of sabotage by the clique that runs Your Party".

"There was never much democracy within Your Party", he pontificated, adding: "*Socialist Worker* always said revolutionary socialists had to maintain our political and organisational independence while building

Your Party."

The SWP's professions of independence are laughable. At the SWP's Marxism 2025 festival, coinciding with the new left party announcement by Zarah Sultana MP on July 3, Corbyn was given a hero's welcome. SWP National Secretary Lewis Nielsen declared ecstatically that "the starting gun" had been fired for a mass mobilisation. SWP members joined YP in droves, helping to set up proto-branches across England.

The SWP's support for Corbyn as leader, then co-leader with Sultana, was absolute. Even after Nielsen and his comrades, Samira Ali and Hector Sierra, were expelled from YP's founding conference, Nielsen declared, "I'm filled with the possibility of hope... we can turn Your Party into a force that can work."

Tengely-Evans now offers his party's wretched excuses for supporting Corbyn: "*Socialist Worker* supported Sultana's more radical and insurgent vision, while arguing that unity [with Corbyn] was necessary to get the show on the road."

He writes, "A mass left reformist party to the left of Labour would have shaken up British politics. It could have popularised socialist arguments to millions of people and given working class people confidence to strike, protest and organise."

But how can a left reformist (i.e., capitalist) party strengthen the working class? His statement exposes the reactionary class standpoint of the SWP. Socialist arguments advanced by reformist parties *weaken* the working class, promoting illusions that capitalist austerity and imperialist war can be halted through parliament and the peaceful reform of the British state.

Having been kicked in the teeth by Corbyn's CEC, the SWP responds in the manner of Oliver Twist, "Please, Sir, can I have some more?" Tengely-Evans writes, "We want to keep working with those we have built Your Party alongside". He then "welcomes" the CEC's self-serving statement that "Your Party looks forward to standing alongside" (those socialist parties it has just purged!) "on the many issues where we agree. Facing the threat of the far right, we must and will work together."

Any such alliance will be on terms dictated by Corbyn's CEC majority, reflecting the interests of the labour and trade union bureaucracy, which they serve.

Lessons of the 1926 General Strike

While the RCP has remained silent on its early embrace of Corbyn's Your Party, no political tendency was more frenetic in its efforts to hustle young people behind the Corbyn project. Fiona Lalli's cringeworthy open letter to "Jeremy and Zarah" gives the flavour.

Alan Woods spelt out the underlying rationale for the RCP's embrace of Corbyn's project in his July 28, 2025, article, "Jeremy Corbyn's new party: what does it mean, and what attitude should communists take towards it?"

Describing the vacuum created by Labour's right-wing policies, Woods wrote, "Given the weakness of the forces of genuine Marxism at the present time, that vacuum could only be filled by some kind of left reformist alternative."

Expanding on this idea, he explained: "The weakness of the subjective factor means inevitably that, in the next period, the radicalisation of the masses will express itself in the rise and fall of new left reformist formations and leaders. It was therefore quite natural that it should be filled by former Labour leader and left reformist, Jeremy Corbyn."

The SWP argued along similar lines. Calling in July 2024 for a new left party under Corbyn's leadership, *Socialist Worker* editor Charlie Kimber outlined the SWP's role as follows: "we are too small in the Socialist

Workers Party to be as effective as we ought to be” and must therefore provide “the revolutionary socialist spine to all the movements that we so desperately need.”

The positions of the SWP, RCP and similar groups repeat those advanced by Joseph Stalin’s faction of the Comintern in the period prior to and during the British General Strike of 1926. In the period 1924-26, the Stalinists argued that the British Communist Party was too small to open a path of struggle for the working class. On this basis, the Comintern directed the CPGB into an alliance with the trade union “lefts” on the newly formed Anglo-Russian Committee.

During the general strike, the entire line of the CPGB was directed toward pressuring the “left” trade union leaders on the Trades Union Congress General Council, blocking any challenge by the working class to the betrayal being prepared.

As Trotsky later explained, “The point of departure of the Anglo-Russian Committee... was the impatient urge to leap over the young and too slowly developing Communist Party. This invested the entire experience with a false character even prior to the general strike.”

Stalin and Zinoviev, explained Trotsky, saw in the Anglo-Russian Committee, “an instrument for the systematic revolutionisation of the English working masses, and if not the gate, at least an approach to the gate through which would stride the revolution of the English proletariat. The further it went, the more the Anglo-Russian Committee became transformed from an episodic alliance into an inviolable principle standing above the real class struggle. This became revealed at the time of the general strike.”

Writing in 1931, Trotsky recalled how the Stalin faction, “sought to replace the weak British Communist Party by a ‘broader current’ which had at its head, to be sure, not members of the party, but ‘friends,’ almost Communists, at any rate, fine fellows and good acquaintances.” Stalin’s clique rejected the vanguard role of the Communist Party and its responsibility to advance a revolutionary programme “to win the confidence of the masses step by step”.

This road, Trotsky wrote:

appeared too long and uncertain to the bureaucrats of the Communist International. They considered that by means of personal influence upon Purcell, Hicks, Cook and the others (conversations behind the scenes, correspondence, banquets, friendly back-slapping, gentle exhortations), they would gradually and imperceptibly draw the ‘left’ opposition (‘the broad current’) into the stream of the Communist International. To guarantee such a success with greater security, the dear friends (Purcell, Hicks and Cook) were not to be vexed, or exasperated, or displeased by petty chicanery, by inopportune criticism, by sectarian intransigence, and so forth... But since one of the tasks of the Communist Party consists precisely of upsetting the peace of and alarming all centrists and semi-centrists, a radical measure had to be resorted to by actually subordinating the Communist Party to the ‘Minority Movement.’ On the trade union field there appeared only the leaders of this movement. The British Communist Party had practically ceased to exist for the masses.

“The SEP has already made the case”

While Corbyn’s CEC has voted to proscribe the Socialist Equality Party (SEP), our members have not joined Your Party. The SEP has oriented to the many thousands of youth and workers who expressed initial

enthusiasm for a new left party to fight austerity, authoritarianism and war, but intervened from the start to explain that “Your Party is not that party.”

So clearly and unambiguously have our positions been argued that Your Party Voices (associated with the Grassroots Left faction in YP) published a review of the SEP’s stance on Your Party, concluding that the SEP’s position was “unique”. Their review was part of a series analysing the relationship of Britain’s “left” (including the SWP, RCP, Socialist Party) toward dual membership.

Their review concluded:

In every other article in this Members’ Voices series, the case for dual membership boundaries has required establishing, from external analysis, that a particular organisation’s aims, structures, and strategic orientation are incompatible with Your Party’s founding vision. That work has been necessary because the organisations in question have not always been forthcoming about the nature of the incompatibility; they have used the language of solidarity, constructive engagement, or practical support while pursuing distinct and sometimes competing goals.

The SEP has not been similarly coy. It has stated plainly that Your Party is a reformist project leading workers toward betrayal and demoralisation. It has stated that the correct response to Your Party’s existence is not to join it, engage with it constructively, or attempt to push it toward a better programme, but to expose it, to use its failures as evidence for the SEP’s own analysis of why reformism is insufficient and why workers should instead join the revolutionary party. Its entire engagement with Your Party is, by its own description, adversarial in purpose: not hostile in a personal sense, but structured around demonstrating that Your Party represents a wrong turn.

This is, in effect, the most complete and explicit incompatibility statement in this entire series. The SEP has not only concluded that it cannot work with Your Party. It has published that conclusion, with detailed reasoning, on multiple occasions, and has actively encouraged workers to draw the lesson and join a different organisation. The dual membership question—can a person simultaneously be a committed member of the SEP and a committed member of Your Party—is answered by the SEP’s own analysis. It cannot. Your Party is, in the SEP’s framework, the obstacle, not the vehicle.

The SEP is proud of the stance we have taken. The clarity and correctness of our response to Your Party is derived from the theoretical traditions of Marxism and the decades-long struggle of the Trotskyist movement. These are embodied in the programme of the International Committee of the Fourth International and the daily analysis and perspective of the *World Socialist Web Site*. Our positions were not developed from the sidelines, but as the spearhead of the SEP’s fight in the class struggle, charting a road forward for the working class.

To socialist-minded workers and young people, we say: draw the necessary conclusions from the Your Party debacle. Take your part in the fight to construct a revolutionary leadership in the working class for the momentous class battles ahead. Join the Socialist Equality Party!



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

