

UK: Anti-Semitism witch-hunt provokes backlash in Labour Party

By Robert Stevens
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The latest crude frame-up of Labour Party members as anti-Semites has provoked a furious backlash in Liverpool. But the refusal to oppose the Blairite liars has opened the way for members of the Wavertree Constituency Labour Party to be victimised for the “crime” of moving a no confidence motion against their MP, Luciana Berger, who has been named as a leading figure in a plot to form a right-wing pro-European Union breakaway party.

Last Monday, the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) passed a motion giving Corbyn a week to tackle alleged cases of anti-Semitism in the party and report back on the handling of any disciplinary action.

One of the main instigators was Berger—one of 66 Labour MPs who in December 2015 supported the bombing of Syria after being allowed a free vote on the issue by Corbyn and a key figure in every attempt to remove him as leader by the PLP. In the leadup to the PLP meeting, she issued further statements, including in a public speech and in a column in the anti-Corbyn *Times* denouncing the Labour leadership for “turning a blind eye to hatred towards Jews.”

Days after the PLP vote, Labour members in Berger’s constituency party used their constitutional right and called for a vote of no confidence in Berger, with four branch members noting that she had done nothing but sabotage Corbyn since he became leader.

This attempt by Labour members to drive out a leading Blairite saw deputy party leader Tom Watson accuse members of the Wavertree branch of “bullying,” while demanding the suspension of the entire constituency party. The *Guardian* reported that Berger was being targeted on an anti-Semitic basis, writing that “Local members” had told its reporters “that one of Berger’s critics had posted on Facebook that the MP should be ‘exposed for the disruptive

Zionist she is...”

The unindicted war criminal Tony Blair, interviewed in *Sky News*, said of Watson’s call to suspend the Wavertree party, “I back him 100% on it.” That Berger “should even be subject to a confidence motion is shameful for the Labour Party.”

Under pressure, the two resolutions were withdrawn, as was the vote of no confidence and the meeting at which they were to be discussed cancelled. At Watson’s instigation, an investigation was then held into the branch.

The Wavertree party rejected the attacks on its democratic rights, with its executive stating that allegations of anti-Semitism were “false and slanderous.” The executive of the branch being accused of an anti-Semitic witch-hunt, Dr. Alex Scott-Samuel, is himself Jewish.

Following the investigation, on Sunday Labour’s pro-Corbyn General Secretary Jennie Formby confirmed that there were no grounds to take any disciplinary action and that neither of the two motions “make any mention of antisemitism but which instead refer to Luciana’s lack of support for the Leader of the Opposition. I have also seen the statement from the Executive of the CLP which states: ‘...we as an Executive have always and continue now to express total solidarity with Luciana as a victim of misogyny and of antisemitism—coming mostly from the far right. Our Chair himself is Jewish.’”

Formby’s report notwithstanding, the attack on the Wavertree branch could only have proceeded with the connivance of the Corbyn leadership, with his ally Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell responding by calling on local members “to sit down with Luciana and actually say ‘how can we support you? How can we work together in the future?’ And then overcome

the present difficulties.”

Asked by a listener last week on the LBC radio station when exactly he and Corbyn were going to oppose the smear campaign of the right, McDonnell opposed any fight saying, “I’ve seen the threats made against some of our Jewish members and MPs so it isn’t a smear campaign and we have to face up to it.”

While Blair, who can no longer even speak before a Labour party audience, feels free to intervene and denounce Corbyn as a facilitator of anti-Semitism, Corbyn hasn’t uttered a single word in defence of the Wavertree CLP.

The opposition of Corbyn et al. to all attempts to expel the right-wing once again handed the initiative to the Blairites, despite Labour’s membership in overwhelming numbers hating everything they say and do.

Even in confirming that no action would be taken against the Wavertree branch, Formby gave Berger carte blanche to continue her provocative actions, and pathetically told her opponents in the party to lay-off... apparently because Berger is pregnant! Formby warned, “I welcomed the withdrawal of the motions as with Luciana being nearly nine months pregnant, and under pressure from continuous abuse and threats, I felt they were ill-judged.”

On Saturday, the *Liverpool Echo* reported that the Wavertree branch right-wing have framed a motion calling for the resignation of the CLP executive. Grotesquely culling some of the language used in the original motion to remove Berger, the right declared, “Instead of fighting for a Labour government our CLP executive is continually using the media to criticise our hardworking MP and bringing our CLP into disrepute.”

McDonnell has only *seen* what he has been shown by the Blairites, whose sole intention is to ensure that the Tories remain in power. The entire destabilisation campaign against Corbyn is being mounted by at most a few dozen filthy provocateurs, who will stop at nothing—including working with the Israeli intelligence agency, Mossad, to disseminate anti-Semitic material to attribute it to “Corbyn supporters” and the wider left.

Last month, the Electronic Intifada (EI) web site published a report that it had documented “10 fake Twitter profiles posing as Corbyn supporters who have been posting virulent anti-Semitism.” It added, “The

accounts share sufficient similarities to indicate that the same person—or group—is running them.”

The 10 accounts had fake names and profile photos and seven of them had been removed by the time the EI reported its findings.

The anti-Semitism slander campaign has the same significance in the modern era as the Zinoviev Letter, the infamous forgery which in 1924 was used to prevent the election of a Labour government.

Capitulations on this scale have consequences. There is growing anger among Labour members at the astounding level of Corbyn’s deepening retreats before the right on every issue. On Twitter last week, before being persuaded by other members to stay, one Labour member commented, “Sorry but Corbyn, as amazing as he is, comes across as too weak to attack back [against] what they say about him and also not protecting members from the MPs. I am done with Labour. I have been unhappy for a while with the way Jeremy Corbyn just accepts abuse and expects us to.”

Workers and youth must ask if the Corbynistas refuse to oppose this filthy right-wing witch-hunt, based on smears, lies and innuendo, then what of their professed statements that in government they will take on big business and oppose austerity and war?

As the Socialist Equality Party warned in its 2018 congress resolution:

“...it has been Corbyn, and his supporters within the Labour Party and the trade unions, who have sought to smother the fight against the right-wing, including vetoing mandatory selection at Labour’s conference... The SEP has lent critical support to the efforts waged by Labour members against the Blairites, urging them to ‘Drive out the right-wing!’ This call is directed not to Corbyn, but to the rank-and-file. It is an appeal to Labour members to reject Corbyn’s soporifics and take up an independent political struggle. While solidarising with this struggle, the SEP warns that Corbyn and his coterie would rather see their own supporters expelled, than break with the Blairites.”

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