

# Corbyn assailant jailed, but significance of his attack still minimised

By Chris Marsden  
27 March 2019

The jailing of John Murphy for “common assault by beating” confirms the warning made by the Socialist Equality Party of the serious implications for the working class of the March 3 assault on Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn.

The SEP warned that the attack on the 69-year-old politician by the burly 31-year-old must be taken as “a serious warning of the dangerous right-wing political climate being whipped up by Britain’s ruling elite and its media outlets.”

Corbyn was in the Finsbury Park Mosque’s Muslim Welfare House, when Murphy smashed an egg in his clenched fist into the side of the Labour leader’s head while he was sitting down eating with his wife, Laura.

The media responded universally by downplaying the incident, referring constantly to an “egging,” or someone throwing an egg, even though Shadow Home Secretary Diane Abbott explained that Murphy had effectively punched Corbyn leaving a livid red mark.

Video footage, which can be viewed [here](#), confirms Abbott’s account of a violent and serious assault. Yet the media has not changed its tune. The main news channels, the BBC and ITN, both refer to an “egging” when reporting Murphy’s 28-day sentence. This is despite Chief Magistrate Emma Arbuthnot, at Westminster Magistrates’ Court, calling Murphy’s actions “an attack on the democratic process,” as she sentenced him to 14 days behind bars, to be on licence for the next year and to pay a £115 victim surcharge.

Arbuthnot continued, “The impact on Jeremy Corbyn has been considerable, he says he was very shocked and surprised and he had always previously felt safe. Mr Corbyn wouldn’t have been able to anticipate being hit, or that the assault would stop after one hit. Mr Corbyn was particularly vulnerable because of his position as Leader of the Opposition.”

In his own impact statement, Corbyn said he has been forced to review his personal security, and that his wife and family had been left “stressed and distressed.”

In a perspective comment, the *World Socialist Web Site* explained that Murphy had screamed, “When you vote you get what you vote for,” referring to Corbyn’s acceptance of a possible second referendum on Britain leaving the European Union. We wrote, “The impulse for Murphy’s attack is the toxic atmosphere generated by Brexit, and the relentless and hysterical state campaign against Corbyn and the ‘left.’ There is a sinister and deadly logic to these attacks.”

The WSWS noted that on June 19, 2017 Darren Osborne drove a rented van at a group of worshipers on the street outside the same Finsbury Park Mosque and the Muslim Welfare Centre, injuring 12 people and killing Makram Ali. He had admitted planning to murder Corbyn and London’s Labour Mayor Sadiq Khan at a June 18 Al Quds protest in central London. One year earlier, the fascist Thomas Mair murdered pro-Remain Labour MP Jo Cox while screaming, “Britain first!”

The SEP reiterated these warnings at the March 17 launch meeting in London’s Foyles bookshop of “Why are they back?” which deals with the re-emergence of fascism in Europe. The meeting took place just two days after the slaughter of 50 Muslim worshipers in Christchurch, New Zealand by the Australian fascist Brenton Tarrant. Explaining in his manifesto how he had been radicalised in Europe, Tarrant also threatened to murder Labour Party Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, and names Osborne as a co-thinker. He described Brexit as “the British people firing back at mass immigration, cultural displacement and globalism, and that’s a great and wonderful thing.”

*Daily Mirror* Associate Editor Kevin Maguire

suggested that Murphy's sentencing had been too harsh, tweeting, "OK, might be unpopular but wouldn't community service be better than jailing this stupid egg-stremist?"

In fact, it has emerged that Murphy was a far more dangerous individual than was made apparent during his trial and that his sentence was very lenient—especially in the context of the Christchurch events.

It was left to Corbyn's son, Tommy Corbyn, to reply to Maguire by posting a screen shot of an explicit death threat made on Facebook by Murphy against opponents of Brexit. Murphy wrote: "So surreal that people are so fucking deluded they think ignoring a democratic vote and inciting their own deaths at the hands of a democratic mob is a sensible idea. And in case you're wondering, yes, this is a death threat."

Others reported similar comments. The Young Liberal Society noted that on its Facebook group, Murphy had "threatened to murder anyone who 'approved of Good Friday' [the agreement ending the Civil War in Northern Ireland]; threatened to shoot "traitorous Islamist c\*\*\*s at Mosques; threatened violence towards several anti-Brexit members; told members to be afraid for their lives if they campaign against Brexit."

A member of the group added, "He outright said he would kill people at [last year's pro-Remain] march. Directly TO people not just generic threats."

None of this appears to have been taken account of in the sentencing of Murphy.

This is in line with the mass media's efforts to minimise the threat from the far-right, when to address it honestly would mean confronting the key role played by their own efforts to demonise Corbyn and the "left."

In the comment section of the *Daily Mail*, for example, can be found such statements as, "Brick would have been better", "Should have used a brick", "Shame it wasn't a brick or iron bar actually," "Pity it wasn't a grenade" and "...he [Corbyn] is a Leninist! So jail a gulag or firing squad for all those who disagree with him."

BBC News comments add "a bloody sledge hammer" to this list of weapons. ITN has more of the same, including a disparaging reference to how "Corbyn looked so comfortable there hanging out enjoying a meal with his friends in the mosque."

Other comments refer to the slanders of the Blairites and the Tories that Corbyn is a "Jew-hater" and a "traitor," who should be imprisoned himself. On the Facebook site *Jeremy Corbyn Watch*, ex-soldier and admirer of Tommy Robinson, Stewart Stain, asks, "Does anyone know Corbyn 's home address? I'm heading to London this week and want to visit."

Politically deranged elements such as Tarrant and thugs like Murphy are being given succour by the entire gamut of official politics, especially the anti-Muslim sentiment that pervades the Tory Party and the anticommunism that unites the Tories with the Labour right. The SEP reiterates the necessity for heightened political vigilance and security regarding fascist provocateurs, combined with a determined political counteroffensive for socialism against all those forces giving succour to the far-right. This includes Labour's right wing, which Corbyn has protected from expulsion by the party's rank and file.

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