

What is Wrong with Jeremy?



JEREMY CORBYN has faded somewhat from public view. He's become a blurry figure, reaching definition only in the minds of his enemies. For them, he's an ultra-leftist, a Marxist, and above all, an antisemite. In truth, of course, Jeremy Corbyn is none of these things. He's certainly not a Marxist, he's not a revolutionary, and he's does not exhibit any particular

animus against Jews. It is true that he has kept company with the anti-Jewish groups, Hamas and Hezbollah, and he does have the habit of using the rather sinister phrase, “Our Jewish friends”. Unfortunately, this has the ring of yesteryear of those who used to habitually referred to Jews as: “Those of the Hebrew persuasion”, but in truth this is not compelling evidence of antisemitism.

However, Jeremy does not think that hatred of Jews was, or is, a serious problem for the Labour Party, and for this opinion he has been soundly trounced by Labour’s centre-right. However, Jeremy’s hostility towards Zionism, and the failure of most of his leftist supporters to distinguish clearly between their hatred of Jewish nationalism, and of Jews in general, has inevitably added fuel to the fire. This is because, the broad left, including Jeremy, are enthusiasts for Palestinian nationalism, and remain solidly onside with the Arabs of the West Bank and Gaza, even when their hatred of Israel, and Jews in general, morphs from nationalism into Islamism.

In refusing to see the problem of antisemitism on the left, Jeremy has proved to be extraordinarily dumb, and ruthlessly stubborn. This is of a piece with his persistent advocacy of “a two-state solution” to the war between Arabs and Jews in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. Yet, he surely knows that the idea of sharing the territory between two sovereign states is dead in the water. So, it is plain for all to see that Jeremy’s relentless commitment to the imaginary ‘two-states’ is simply a way of camouflaging his solid support for the Arabs against Zionism and the State of Israel.

As long as the broad left, and Jeremy, support Palestinian nationalism, while steadfastly denying the legitimacy of Jewish nationalism, the charge of antisemitism will swirl around Labour’s left. Jeremy Corbyn will be stuck with antisemitism, regardless of how often he insists that he is opposed to “racism in all its forms”, and expresses his solidarity and comradeship with “our Jewish friends”.

So, antisemitism is given as the principal reason for chucking Jeremy out of the new model Labour Party. But in truth, the overall reason for getting rid of Corbyn is his socialism, which the Labour Party does not want to be associated with in any form. As a result, Keir Starmer will oppose the selection of Jeremy Corbyn as the party's candidate in Islington North, and regardless of any inner-party wrangles, the leadership will prevail. This means that if Jeremy stands as an 'Independent' or a 'Green' in the constituency in the coming General Election he will be promptly expelled from the Labour Party.

This approaching 'car crash' will throw much of the left into a quandary. This is because if they publicly support Corbyn's election against an official Labour candidate they will be immediately expelled from the party.

Given that most of the left threw their lot in with Labour on Jeremy's assumption of the party's leadership in 2015, the removal of Corbyn from the party is disastrous for the far left. Although Jeremy was removed from the leadership in 2020, the left has hung on in throughout Keir Starmer's campaign against Corbyn and his allies. Revolutionary groupuscules, from the Socialist Workers Party downwards, regardless of their view of Starmer's swing to the centre-right, will feel dutybound to call for a Labour victory at the next General Election. This will be the case even when Jeremy loses his fight to represent Labour for Islington North, the constituency that he has held for the party for the past forty years.

Momentum, the left-wing group in the Labour Party formed in association with Jeremy Corbyn's rise to the leadership, will face a dilemma they share with the rest of the left, because if they openly support Corbyn's election against an official Labour candidate their members will be immediately expelled from the party, and membership of Momentum itself will become grounds for expulsion.

Consequently, the crisis of the left looks like being terminal. Momentum will either desert Corbyn or leave

the Labour Party, while the entire left, inside and outside the party, will continue to eat humble pie, and campaign for a Labour victory at the polls.

Of course, there is nothing new about this. The entire socialist left has, for well over one hundred years, from the Moscow Communists to the Trotskyists, tailed the Labour Party line, with grandiose, schemes, programmes, and rallies, irate leaflets and furious articles in the *Daily Worker*, *Morning Star*, *Black Dwarf*, *News Line*, *Socialist Worker*, *Militant*, *Workers Weekly*, *the next step*, *Living Marxism*, and the clumsiest of all, *Fight Racism Fight Imperialism*. The British left has fought the good fight without ever breaking from the Labour Party. At times some have launched blistering attacks on the party, and even run their own candidates in Parliamentary and local elections here and there, but with little or no success (The Moscow Communists briefly won a Parliamentary seat in the 1920s, and a couple in the forties). At times revolutionary groupuscules have attempted to affiliate to the party, they've even sought to subvert it, by joining and eating away at its insides, but mostly they've simultaneously engaged in attacking and supporting of the party they've always loved to hate.

Random groups of anarchists and some Trotskyists have attempted to maintain an independent perspective, but without much success. Instead, the entire left has routinely acted as a militant adjunct to the Parliamentary Labour Party, from fighting for the unemployed, and defeating Mosely's Black Shirts in the nineteen thirties, to rocking against racism in the seventies, or standing firm with pickets from the Miners' Strike to the present day. The British left has always lived in a symbiotic relationship with the Labour Party, at times an irritating parasite, but mostly as a bird sitting on the back of the hippopotamus, pecking at problems beyond the Parliamentary Party's remit.

This is where Jeremy Corbyn appeared to mark a radical departure for the left. For a time, it seemed

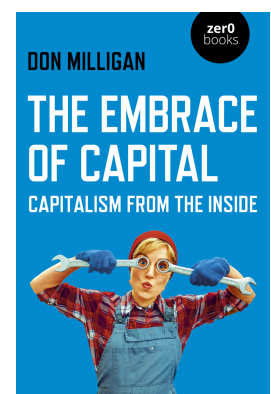
that the left might actually win control of the Labour Party. Jeremy's idea of fighting for "the many not the few", fell upon the left like manna from Heaven. There was a groundswell of support pulsing throughout the entire left, sweeping all and sundry into Labour Party membership – even members of revolutionary groupuscules who remained outside were swept by Corbyn mania as almost all came to believe that Jeremy might not only transform the Labour Party, but actually win an election and enter Downing Street with a socialist programme for change.

This was a daydream – an enchantment.

The belief that Corbyn could win power and hold onto it, without literally millions on the streets, without the active support of the majority of workers, including the mass of the lower middle class was absurd. The idea of Jeremy being in charge of our NATO membership, of MI5, the army, and the entire state apparatus, contradicted everything that the socialist left has always said and known. Unless the leaders of the capitalist class were forced to confront an active and *overwhelming* mass movement spreading from the poorest workers to the professions, there was simply no prospect of Jeremy implementing his policies, even if he won an election.

The left surely knew this, but for a time, they had taken leave of their senses.

Now, when all is lost, when Jeremy Corbyn, and anybody supporting him is going to be forced out of the Labour Party the socialist and revolutionary left has nowhere to go. It really is the end of the line for us. Therefore, it is not the time to ask: "what's wrong with Jeremy?", but "what's wrong with the working class?". Why have they always rejected the socialist and revolutionary left? Why, despite periodic waves of strikes and militancy, has the far left won little or no support amongst the mass of working people. Until, we can answer that question we really do not have a future.



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