

Thousands facing suspension?

CAMDEN's Labour Party branches are among the many nationwide undergoing a "civil war" since the general secretary forbade discussion on issues such as the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition, anti-Semitism and Jeremy Corbyn (*CNJ*, December 3).

To enforce the diktat Angela Rayner has threatened to suspend thousands more Labour Party members.

In these strange circumstances it would be easy to miss the woods for the trees.

Namely, since 2016 the British establishment has been weaponising alleged anti-Semitism in order to maintain the Labour Party's pro-Israel policy commitment.

This long-time policy has been veiled behind deference to "the Jewish community", a homogeneous construct equated with pro-Israel institutions such as the Board of Deputies.

The Corbyn leadership was accused of making the party "an unsafe space for Jews", really meaning discomfort for pro-Israel Jews.

The general secretary's recent diktat is officially justified as "zero tolerance of anti-Semitism", necessary to create "a safe space for Jews".

The Labour Party now feels unsafe for its numerous Jewish (and other) pro-Palestine members who have been suspended or fear that they too will be.

Such Jews do not count in the dominant narrative.

In those ways, "the Jewish community" has been constructed as a doubly racist stereotype.

Firstly, it conflates Jewish identity with Israel, so that anti-Israel statements become "hurt to the Jewish community" (or even anti-Semitism).

Secondly, with reinforcement from the IHRA mis-definition of anti-Semitism, this accusation is thrown at any effort to identify the racist basis of Zionist colonisation, thus protecting it from criticism.

The British establishment needs the stereotype as a shield for its UK-Israel partnership, supposedly necessary to protect Jews.

Last year the current Labour Party leader declared, "I support Zionism without qualification."

So his enforcement role was to be expected.

When the accusations of "endemic anti-Semitism in the Labour Party" escalated in 2017, accusers rarely mentioned Israel.

Since the Corbyn leadership has gone, the accusers no longer need the pretence. Now they often say that anti-Zionism is a central test of anti-Semitism.

Supporters of Palestinian rights will need to make judgments on how best to oppose the UK-Israel partnership and the Labour Party's support for this racist agenda.

LES LEVIDOW
Jewish Network for Palestine

A purge of pro-Palestinian members

WELL said John Gulliver (What's happening to the right to free speech? December 3): namely that when you take away free speech, "you end up with a political dictatorship, and a politically lifeless body".

And now *The Morning Star* has just reported that two Constituency Labour Parties have had motions ruled out of order for supporting a charity bike ride raising funds for Palestinian children.

The Labour Party's disciplinary process has been corrupt for some time: we know, we were under investigation for helping to draft an open letter asking critical questions of the Jewish Labour Movement because they undermined the possibility of an election victory (An affiliate organisation is saying don't vote for the Labour Party, *Letters*, July 19 2019).

The Governance & Legal Unit did not tell us who complained,

What's happening to the right to free speech?

Is there a flaw in the way the suspension of Jeremy Corbyn as a member of the Parliamentary Labour Party is being reported generally in the media?
Carefully read the reports of reports and they all set out to show why Corbyn was suspended, who else has been suspended, and what their political differences were.
This week two "collective" of Hampstead and Kilburn Labour Party, one female and budget Dunne, were suspended after a



Professor Moshe Machover

alarming debate on Thursday on a motion to restore the "whip" removed from Corbyn by the general secretary, David Evans, and the party leader Sir Keir Starmer.
To add another name, I can now include Professor Moshe Machover, a well-known mathematician who was suspended on Thursday from membership of Hampstead and Kilburn Labour Party for comments in an email deemed to offend party rules.
I do not intend to repeat the

John Gulliver December 3, with Moshe Machover pictured

who was investigating, nor the nature of the complaint.

Instead, even though we are Jewish, we were invited to incriminate ourselves as being anti-Semitic!

So with our friend and colleague Professor Moshe Machover, despite (or because of) being Jewish, Israeli, and left-wing, the party insinuated that he and those he associates with might be anti-Semitic.

Their "evidence": that Professor Machover attended a protest of the

JW3 because it had been advertised as hosting a fundraiser for a foreign military (How is this recruitment fundraiser for the IDF possible? *Letters*, April 25 2019).

Indeed, the two people that Labour allege he may have associated with there, were not in fact present.

We should know – the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network UK organised that protest.

It's not the first time: in 2017 Professor Machover was expelled

and then reinstated within weeks (people were outraged and campaigned against such an injustice) – the party had, again, got its "facts" wrong.

A few days ago he told *The Electronic Intifada* that party bureaucrats were conducting a "Stalinist purge of the Labour Party".

Other Jewish people who have been expelled or suspended include: Bridget Dunne, Tony Greenstein, Jackie Walker, Naomi Winbourne-Idrissi, and many others who do not accept the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of anti-Semitism and are critical of Zionism – as are most people in the world. We accuse the Labour Party of a purge of pro-Palestinian members, beginning with those of us who are Jewish.

MICHAEL KALMANOVITZ
SAM WEINSTEIN
International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network UK

Unceasing hostility

I JOINED the Labour Party in autumn 2015 to support Jeremy Corbyn and the values that he stood for.

I was totally unprepared and completely taken aback by the unceasing and ongoing hostility of the local Labour Party establishment towards Corbyn, and towards the new members, a battle reflected in the news and letter pages of the *CNJ* over the past five years.

Among the constant charges against Corbyn supporters were that we were "not interested in government", "only interested in fighting internal Labour Party opponents", and a "cult, based around the dear leader".

In the past 10 days Labour has been criticised by Gary Neville for watching from the grandstand, rather than opposing on the pitch, Sir Keir Starmer's deputy leader Angela Rayner has threatened to expel "thousand and thousands of members" for voicing support of Corbyn, and David Evans, the Labour Party general secretary has banned Labour Party branches from criticising him or Sir Keir in any way.

Is this an example of what the psychologists call projection? I'm not an expert in psychology but I can see that the supporters of Tony Blair and Sir Keir are behaving exactly as they accuse others of.

As I write, EU negotiations are continuing, and I also can't help thinking of Sir Keir's role in the Conservative win of 2019, where his insistence on a second referendum did so much to enable the Conservative landslide.

An insistence that disappeared as soon as he became Labour Party leader.

GARETH MURPHY
Bellina Mews, NW5

Restore party democracy

AS members of Hampstead and Kilburn Constituency Labour Party we are extremely concerned at the reported suspension of two of our officers.

The two officers were simply carrying out the wishes of the local party in allowing a discussion around the issue of the whip withdrawal from Jeremy Corbyn.

It is both unfair and extremely undemocratic that our CLP officers were

suspended for carrying out our wishes.

The decision to remove the whip from Corbyn was a political decision and we have every right to discuss and debate that issue.

To hold local officers responsible for carrying out our wishes is indefensible.

We call on the party to withdraw all of those suspensions, and restore democracy to our party.

ANGIE BIRTILL, CATH ATLEE, MIKE BARSON, JOE BLACK, IAN FERRIE, DAWN SALLY HOLDER, LUKE HOWARD, MARIE LYNAM, ANTHONY MOLLOY, AARON O'CONNOR, CHRISTINA PAINE,

SAM RAGUNATHAN, NANCY STRANG, SEAN TAYLOR, STEVEN TAYLOR

False reports

AS members of Hampstead and Kilburn Constituency Labour Party we are writing to correct the false reports that have been circulating in the *Evening Standard*, the *Jewish Chronicle*, and social media of a meeting held on November 26 of the GC – general committee – of our CLP, when we passed a motion calling for the whip to be restored to our former

leader, Jeremy Corbyn. We were present at the meeting and can vouch for the fact that far from being "chaotic", as has been reported, it was an orderly, well-run, meeting. Present was a regional officer who told us not to discuss the motion.

After listening respectfully to the regional officer, members were kindly allowed by the chair to decide for themselves what to do and voted to discuss the issue.

Members then voted by a large majority for the

whip to be restored to Jeremy Corbyn and that all those CLP officers and members elsewhere who had been suspended for passing similar motions should be reinstated.

This is democracy. Members should not be gagged. Sir Keir Starmer and David Evans, the Labour Party general secretary, should restore the whip and get on with the real business of opposing the Tories and their gross incompetence and creating a better future for the CLP.

NINETEEN CLP MEMBER SIGNATORIES

been vilified by pro-Israel supporters because of his support for Palestinian rights. Starmer should restore the whip to him immediately.

SABBY SAGALL
Chair, Camden Palestine Solidarity Campaign (personal capacity)

email letters@camdennewjournal.com

opponents inside and outside the party, as well as by much of the media."

However the EHRC report did not find Labour guilty of institutional anti-Semitism.

It "found that the Labour Party breached the Equality Act 2010 by committing unlawful harassment through the acts of its agents in two of the complaints we investigated".

The commission investigated a number of complaints of anti-Semitism made against Labour Party members.

Overall the investigation found only four cases, two cases of harassment related to race, and two cases of indirect discrimination potentially worthy of disciplinary action.

The report identified a further 18 "borderline" cases of "unlawful harassment" where there was insufficient evidence to conclude that "the Labour Party was legally responsible for the conduct of the individual".

The report suggested that there was a "culture within the party which, at

best, did not do enough to prevent anti-Semitism and, at worst, could be seen to accept it".

But its findings clearly do not indicate a high level of anti-Semitism in the party.

Now, until the spring of 2018, Labour Party headquarters was controlled by a fiercely anti-Corbyn team.

According to the internal report of the Labour's General and Legal Unit leaked last March (being investigated by the Forde Inquiry), these officials ignored anti-Semitism complaints, seeking to undermine Corbyn because of his left-wing views, including his support for Palestinian rights.

Shortly after Corbyn took over as leader, Corbyn commissioned Shami Chakrabarti to investigate anti-Semitism in the Labour Party.

Her report made clear, as she stated in the foreword, that "the Labour Party is not overrun by anti-Semitism, Islamophobia or other forms of racism".

Added to this, a home affairs select committee report concluded similarly that anti-Semitism was not more prevalent in the Labour Party than in other parties.

The Chakrabarti report was immediately kicked into the long grass although Corbyn several times requested its implementation.

The EHRC report concedes that improvements in the disciplinary process did occur over time but fails to highlight that this followed the appointment of a Corbyn ally, Jennie Formby, as general secretary in the spring of 2018.

Formby also released figures in February 2019 indicating that of 673 accusations of anti-Semitism received between April 2018 and January 2019, 96 were suspended, 12 were expelled, and six received sanctions.

The 12 expulsions represent 0.1 per cent of the party membership. The EHRC report is deeply flawed. Corbyn has

EHRC report deeply flawed

DAVID Cheeseman's letter (Commission deadline, November 26) fails to grasp the shortcomings of the Equality and Human Rights Commission report into anti-Semitism in the Labour Party.

He states that Jeremy Corbyn should have accepted its findings and apologised for anti-Semitism. In fact, on November 10 Corbyn posted on his Facebook page a statement fully supporting Sir Keir Starmer's decision to accept all the EHRC recommendations. He also said he regretted the pain the issue had caused the Jewish community and said concerns about anti-Semitism were neither exaggerated nor overstated. Corbyn had also said: "One anti-Semite is one too many, but the scale of the problem was also dramatically overstated by political reasons by our

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