

[My Account](https://secure.telegraph.co.uk/secure/account/)



**The Telegraph**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/>

ALL SECTIONS

News **Politics**

More

[Home](#) > [News](#) > [Politics](#)

## Labour MP Ruth Smeeth shielded from activists by 40 MPs at anti-Semitism hearing

# Labour MP shielded by MPs at anti-Semitism hearing

Follow

By **Jack Maidment**, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT and **Harry Yorke**, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

25 APRIL 2018 • 1:27PM



**M**ore than 40 Labour MPs formed a human shield around their Jewish colleague [Ruth Smeeth](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/ruth-smeeth/) this morning as she arrived at a disciplinary hearing of an activist accused of being anti-Semitic towards her.

Flanked by dozens of her colleagues, Ms Smeeth, an outspoken campaigner against anti-Jewish hatred in [the Labour Party](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/labour-party/), was heckled by far-left activists demonstrating outside the hearing in Westminster.

She was due to give evidence against Marc Wadsworth, a [Jeremy Corbyn](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/jeremy-corbyn/) supporter who is alleged to have accused her of colluding with the media during a press conference on anti-Semitism two years ago.

[The exchange, which took place at the launch of Labour's Chakrabarti report, resulted in Ms Smeeth breaking down in tears](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2018/03/27/baroness-chakrabarti-must-first-scalp-corbyn-clampdown-anti/)

Mr Wadsworth was condemned afterwards by Baroness Chakrabarti, who said he had behaved "incredibly rudely". He was later suspended pending investigation.

## MP storms out after attack by Corbyn supporter

---

He is facing allegations of bringing the Labour Party into disrepute, as the charge of anti-Semitism was not included in Labour's rulebook at the time of the alleged offence.

However, Labour's MPs joining Ms Smeeth this morning expressed anger at the situation, adding that it was "unacceptable" that they should have to shield her from demonstrators gathered at the entrance.

Standing in front of the entrance to the hearing, as many as 30 activists from Labour Against the Witch-Hunt, a fringe group set up to protest the expulsion of party members, chanted calls for Mr Wadsworth to be reinstated.

Asked why they were demonstrating, one activist who refused to give their name said Mr Wadsworth's case was part of a "conspiracy" to undermine Jeremy Corbyn and campaigners protesting against Israel.

Another accused Ms Smeeth of using her "privilege" to bring the charges against Mr Wadsworth.

Labour party activist Marc Wadsworth arrives at a Labour party disciplinary in London

Speaking to The Telegraph, an insider added that Ms Smeeth had been asked to “go in through the backdoor” to avoid a scene outside of the hearing, but had refused.

[Wes Streeting, MP for Ilford North](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/wes-streeting/) (<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/wes-streeting/>), said: “Victims of abuse giving evidence shouldn’t have to walk through a protest to do so.

“I’m proud of Labour MPs and Peers who stood by Ruth Smeeth this morning. That it was necessary to accompany her through a protest is an appalling state of affairs.”

Tempers also boiled over when it emerged that Chris Williamson MP, a close Corbyn ally, had entered the hearing to support Mr Wadsworth, with sources claiming that he is due to act as his character witness.

One Labour MP, who spoke anonymously, said they were “disgusted” by Mr Williamson and believed he should have the whip withdrawn by the Labour leadership. “Like that’s going to happen though,” they added.

## Labour and anti-Semitism | Read more

<p><b>Janet Daley:</b> The old Stalinist gang is back in charge of Labour</p> 	<p><b>Charles Moore:</b> How on Earth did our civilisation get from Jesus Christ to Jeremy Corbyn?</p> 	<p><b>'Anti-Semitic' activist</b> selected as Labour candidate</p> 
---	--	--

Mr Williamson has also sparked controversy in recent months for his own handling of anti-Semitism, having chosen to share a platform with Jackie Walker, a well-known activist also suspended by Labour.

He was this morning criticised by Barry Gardiner, Labour’s shadow international trade secretary, who said it was wrong that “Chris...share a platform with somebody who has expressed the views that she has”.

It came after Jewish community leaders have accused Jeremy Corbyn of “shrugging his shoulders” at anti-Semitism as they

criticised the Labour leader for failing to show enough leadership on the issue.

Mr Corbyn met representatives of the Jewish Leadership Council (JLC) and The Board of Deputies on Tuesday (<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2018/04/24/jewish-leaders-say-corbyn-failing-take-concrete-action-anti/>) but the groups said he had failed to agree to take any “concrete” action.

Jonathan Goldstein, the chairman of the JLC, was even more damning in his verdict on Wednesday as he attacked the Labour leader for using newspaper articles to defend himself rather than the kind of “passionate” speeches he had given in relation to other subjects like the Windrush scandal.

Mr Goldstein took aim at Mr Corbyn’s leadership as he questioned why the Labour leader was “always finding someone else to come and speak out on his behalf”.

Members of the Board of Deputies (left to right) Gillian Merron, Jonathan Arkush, Jonathan Goldstein, and Simon Johnson speak to the media on College Green following the meeting CREDIT: JONATHAN BRADY/PA

Tuesday’s meeting was billed as an attempt by Mr Corbyn to build bridges with Jewish community leaders amid an increasingly damaging row over allegations of anti-Semitism within the Labour Party.

But the Labour leader’s bid to assuage concerns fell flat as he was accused of failing to turn words into actions.

Mr Goldstein told BBC Radio 4’s Today programme: “Last week we had the terrible debacle of the Windrush scandal - a very, very poor situation in British politics.

“Within five days Mr Corbyn on Sunday made a headline speech at the Welsh (Labour Party) conference, a passionate speech, very impressive speech, and we are asking him to do the same in relation to anti-Semitism.

“Instead, what we get are articles. He doesn’t seem to want to own the words. Not in the way that he does with other cases.

“We are confused as to why that is the case. Why is it him not coming out and doing the press conference after yesterday’s meeting? Why is he always finding someone else to come and speak out on his behalf?

“The problem is... at the end of the day when you ask him to do something he is shrugging his shoulders at us.”

## Corbyn's 'white man's guilt' made him the author of Labour's anti-Semitism problem

 [Read Tom Harris's article here](#)

After more than two hours of talks with the Labour leader, the Board of Deputies and the JLC said their meeting was a "disappointing missed opportunity" to address the issue (<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2018/04/24/jewish-leaders-say-corbyn-failing-take-concrete-action-anti/>).

An insider account of the meeting, published by The Jewish Chronicle, quoted a source as saying “the bottom line is that we got nothing from the meeting, not a thing”.

The report claimed that Mr Goldstein challenged Mr Corbyn over why he had not treated tackling anti-Semitism with the same “passion” as he had shown for tackling the Windrush scandal.

The Labour leader is alleged to have shrugged.

The JLC and The Board of Deputies said Mr Corbyn had failed to adopt any of the measures they had proposed following last month's demonstration outside Parliament against anti-Semitism in Labour.

Mr Corbyn said in a statement he was "absolutely committed" to rooting out anti-Semitism in the party and had instructed new general secretary Jennie Formby to overhaul its disciplinary procedures to ensure complaints were dealt with "swiftly and fairly".

## IHRA working definition | Anti-Semitism

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance hopes that providing a strict definition of anti-Semitism will help organisations to combat it. The definition is as follows:

**“Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”**

The IHRA gives examples such as:

Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.

Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.

Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, eg. by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.

Applying double standards by requiring of Israel a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.

Using the symbols and images associated with classic anti-Semitism (eg. claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.

Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.

Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

*Source: [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance](#)*

"We will lay out the further steps we are taking in the coming weeks. We will continue to engage and work with Jewish community organisations to deal with this issue. Our party will not fail our Jewish brothers and sisters," he said.

One of the measures proposed by Jewish community leaders was to ban MPs from sharing a platform with people who have been suspended or expelled from Labour for anti-Semitism.

Mr Gardiner said: "One is, in this country, still innocent until proven guilty. It is right when somebody has been found guilty nobody should share a platform."

He said Mr Corbyn and "many of us are ashamed of the fact that it has taken so long in the Labour Party to deal with this but it is being dealt with".

## The all-new politics newsletter, Front Bench

Direct to your inbox, every weekday morning

Sign up [View newsletter](#)

Contact us

[About us](https://corporate.telegraph.co.uk/) (https://corporate.telegraph.co.uk/)

Rewards

[Archive](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/archive/) (https://www.telegraph.co.uk/archive/)

[Reader Prints](http://telegraph.newsprints.co.uk/) (http://telegraph.newsprints.co.uk/)

Branded Content

Syndication

Guidelines

Privacy

Terms and Conditions

[Advertising terms](http://spark.telegraph.co.uk/toolkit/advertising/terms-and-conditions/) (http://spark.telegraph.co.uk/toolkit/advertising/terms-and-conditions/)

© Telegraph Media Group Limited 2018