

Jewish Labour MP Ruth Smeeth runs gauntlet of protest

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Labour Party



Ruth Smeeth, left, arriving with colleagues at the disciplinary hearing
STEFAN ROUSSEAU/PA

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A Jewish Labour MP was protected by a parliamentary human shield yesterday as she walked into the disciplinary hearing of a party member accused of being antisemitic towards her.

Dozens of colleagues flanked Ruth Smeeth as she walked past demonstrators chanting “Reinstate Marc Wadsworth!” on her arrival to

give evidence at Church House in Westminster.

Ms Smeeth burst into tears after clashing with Mr Wadsworth, a black rights activist, in 2016 at the publication of the Chakrabarti report into tackling anti-Jewish behaviour in Labour's ranks. He accused her of working "hand in hand" with the right-wing media.



Marc Wadsworth, a black rights activist, has denied the allegation of antisemitism
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The MP for Stoke-on-Trent North said after the event: "I was verbally attacked by a Momentum activist and Jeremy Corbyn supporter who used traditional antisemitic slurs to attack me for being part of a 'media conspiracy'." He has denied the allegation of antisemitism.

Labour Against the Witch-hunt, a controversial left-wing fringe group that opposes the suspension of party members, turned up yesterday to support him. About

two dozen protesters bearing placards chanted “Free Palestine” and demanded that disciplinary proceedings against him be dropped. Mr Wadsworth told reporters he was not guilty.

Patricia Sheerin, 69, a retired housing worker, was present as a witch replete with a pointed black hat, orange wig and cape. She said: “I am one of the witches. I was suspended from Labour during the 2016 leadership election . . . I’m being investigated again. Now it’s antisemitism — they went through my Facebook account and highlighted anywhere I’ve used the word ‘Israel’. That’s the stage we’re at now.”

Wes Streeting, the MP for Ilford North, who convened colleagues to march from Parliament with Ms Smeeth in solidarity, called the atmosphere outside the hearing “intimidating”. He 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.”

Labour insiders expressed anger at reports that the MPs Chris Williamson, a key ally of Jeremy Corbyn, and Clive Lewis had agreed to act as character witnesses for Mr Wadsworth. Mr Lewis told *The Daily Telegraph*: “I’ve known him for 20 years. He’s an anti-racist campaigner. I watched that video and I don’t think that warranted being expelled from Labour.”



Mr Wadsworth supporters oppose his suspension and claim he’s the victim of a witch-hunt
BEN STEVENS

A Labour frontbencher also poured scorn on Mr Williamson over his reported plans to appear on a platform with Jackie Walker, another activist suspended from Labour following allegations of antisemitism, which she has denied.

Barry Gardiner, the shadow international trade secretary, told BBC Radio 4: “Chris is wrong to share a platform with somebody who has expressed the views that she has.” He added that the steps to address the problem of

anti-Jewish behaviour in the party were “far too late” and Mr Corbyn had “acknowledged that”.

Ms Smeeth was among Jewish MPs who spoke out in an emotional Commons debate on antisemitism this month to explain their personal experiences of racial abuse. After the session, the Labour leader sent a generic message to those who spoke, while the prime minister’s letters were personalised, *The Times* understands.

As Labour’s problems with antisemitism intensified last night, Jamie Susskind, a former speechwriter for Ed Miliband and ex-chairman of the Oxford University Labour Club, resigned from the party. He said his continued membership had become an “insult” to the Jewish community and his heritage.

Mr Corbyn met the chairman of the Jewish Leadership Council and the president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews on Monday night. They said that he had failed to agree the “minimum level of action” needed to tackle antisemitism in the party. A source close to Mr Corbyn said that some of their demands were difficult to approve from a legal perspective.

The Labour leader said the meeting had been “constructive and positive” and another was scheduled for July. Labour is about to appoint a general counsel to preside over complaints about anti-Jewish behaviour.

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Exceptio 56 minutes ago

Anti racist in the context of Wadsworth refers to

racism directed at blacks. He shares the concept of professional blacks such Jesse Jackson and the black victim industry in South Africa that proclaims that blacks can't be racist because they don't have power. Anti Semitism can't be racist because "what's wrong with it?"

Recommend Reply

Kat | 1 hour ago

Whether it's this lot or hysterical bullies outside hospitals ... When did this country become so overrun with thugs?

5 Recommend Reply

Stillfly | 1 hour ago

Is he one of the Windrush generation who, we are assured, have contributed so richly to our society?

Recommend Reply

Wyn Ford | 1 hour ago

Wadsworth's supporters chanted 'Free Palestine' outside the hearing into his alleged anti-semitic behaviour. They somehow thought Israel was relevant because a complainant is Jewish. What a vile bunch.

6 Recommend Reply

ShockDiamond 2 hours ago

Totally bewildering in all this, indeed sinister, the garrulous Jenny Manson, co-chair of the the impressively sounding, strongly pro-Corbyn, Jewish Voice of Labour, the cadre which she recently set up to FIGHT the "allegations of anti-semitism" in the Labour Party - including organising an "emergency rally" to counter the Parliament Square demonstration against antisemitism, and voicing support for Ken Livingstone. Promoted heavily by

the Labour leadership, John McDonnell says he hopes she will become the Labour Candidate for Finchley & Golders Green. Her recent interviews on Radio 4 and LBC (Iain Dale 24th April 2018) have been some of the most incredulous ever broadcast, very much "nothing to see here", "anti-semitism is a right wing problem" "I don't think Labour has a problem with anti-semitism"et al

Recommend Reply

MK390 2 hours ago

And the best way for an innocent person to demonstrate his innocence is to have his accuser intimidated?

7 Recommend Reply

2Twin 2 hours ago

Four or more million votes versus 300,000 or less?
Anti-semitism works for them!

Recommend Reply

Mohandas 2 hours ago

So, Corbyn learned quite a lot from his motorcycle tour to East Germany all those years ago. Who would have known? Next step, show trials of Jews and hello National Socialism?

1 Recommend Reply

MassiveKitten 2 hours ago

"After the session, the Labour leader sent a generic message to those who spoke, while the prime minister's letters were personalised"

I am guessing they were sent by Jeremy's spokesman. The spokesman has been the most

vocal in all this.

Recommend

Reply

Blah blah 2 hours ago

As anyone who has viewed footage of the incident can see, Wadsworth accuses Smeeth of working hand in hand with the Telegraph. How can that possibly be described as anti-semitism?

She also leaves absolutely dry-eyed, so why claim to be reduced to tears?

For the record — as the Times is meant to be a paper of record — YouGov polls show the Telegraph also has some of the most anti-semitic readers in the country, which suggests that political expediency makes strange bed-fellows.

The same polls, in 2015 and 2017, also show anti-semitism is a much bigger problem in the Conservative party — as Tweets from Cambridge council candidate George Stoakley illustrate. But curiously, you have not covered that story.

Anti-semitism is vile and should not be tolerated — but seeing slurs where there are none, and ignoring real problems where they exist, can only make matters worse.

3

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Counterpoint 6 hours ago

Labour denying anti sematism yet the scenes outside that hearing looked like a snapshot from World War Two Germany.

2

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Avicenna 7 hours ago

Wadsworth maybe an anti racists campaigner but that does not act as a counter weight to allow him to express religious hate speech worthy of a Nazi. Wadsworth needs to be expelled for life in disgrace and sued into poverty in a civil case.

3 Recommend Reply

Stephen G Spencer 8 hours ago

Says it all about Labour's blind spot, it's very own prejudice problem, which it appears unable to even accept.

4 Recommend Reply

Maya Patel 8 hours ago

Guess us Hindus and Buddhists are next.

4 Recommend Reply



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