

**Motion to LAW conference, February 2 2019**  
**Submitted by LAW's steering committee**

## **The slow coup against Jeremy Corbyn**

1. Jeremy Corbyn's election as Labour leader on September 12 2015 was a body blow to the rightwing. It opened up the possibility of thoroughgoing democratisation and transformation of the Labour Party into a genuine party of the working class that would commit itself to fighting for global socialism.
2. Corbyn's longstanding record of backing strikes, opposing austerity and anti-war campaigning makes him totally unacceptable to Britain's establishment. Above all Corbyn is considered a threat to the strategic alliance with the United States, symbolised by his critical attitude towards Israel and his solidarity with the Palestinians.
3. The US has a particular interest in controlling the Middle East because of its oil and geopolitical position. That means shoring up the thoroughly corrupt Saudi Arabian regime and the barely disguised military dictatorship in Egypt. However, the most reliable strategic asset the US possesses in the Middle East is Israel. Israel's ongoing settler-colonialism is inevitably opposed and bitterly resented by the Palestinian natives and the wider Arab nation. Consequently, the most important political question is security. The majority of the Israeli-Jewish population enthusiastically supports the country's alliance with the US.
4. The war of attrition against Corbyn as Labour leader, carried out by an alliance of the majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party, the Party bureaucracy, the Israeli state, the pro-Israel lobby and the mainstream media, began even before he was elected. Corbyn was portrayed as a terrorist sympathiser, a security risk and an all-round danger to society.
5. Thousands of socialists and leftwingers were investigated, suspended and expelled under former general secretary Iain McNicol. The charges leveled against these comrades were often trivial. Many were found guilty of supporting unaffiliated political groups. There was much talk of dangerous 'reds under the beds'.
6. However, the most potent weapon in the hands of Corbyn's enemies proved to be false accusations of anti-Semitism. Anti-Zionism was equated with anti-Semitism. This approach worked not least because Corbyn and his allies allowed it to. Rather than standing up to the right and exposing the baselessness of allegations that the Labour Party is riddled with anti-Semitism, Corbyn chose to appease the Labour right and the Zionist lobby.
7. The investigation run by Shami Chakrabarti was supposed to put an end to the allegations, but it was only a new stage. Every time Corbyn and his allies conceded a demand, every time they took a step back, the right wing and Zionist lobby were further emboldened. This culminated in the NEC's adoption of the much-criticised International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of anti-Semitism and all eleven of its illustrations (including the one which labels as anti-Semitic the description of Israel as a "racist endeavour"). But the IHRA definition conflates anti-Semitism with anti-Zionism.
8. This policy of appeasement has proven disastrous not just for Corbyn, but for many hundreds accused of being anti-Semites. The vast majority are no such thing. Social media accounts have been trawled, comments taken out of context and the forwarding of posts taken as evidence of agreement. As a result, reputations have been ruined, good leftwingers have been blocked from standing for positions and, just as importantly, the party as a whole has been brought into disrepute.

9. Labour Against the Witchhunt has two main roles: Firstly, we are a campaigning organisation that fights to radically transform the disciplinary procedures in the Labour Party. We defend all those unjustly suspended, expelled or put under investigation. We welcome the ending of automatic and instant suspensions and expulsions by the new general secretary Jennie Formby – one of our founding demands. Nonetheless, the NEC's adoption of the IHRA definition has massively expanded the grounds being used for false allegations of anti-Semitism.

10. We call on the NEC to implement the proposals coming from Shami Chakrabarti's report in regards to natural justice and due process. In particular, we call for the abolition of Appendix 6 of the party's rulebook, which is the LP's disciplinary code. We demand its replacement by a code that guarantees the rights of the accused and ensures that the whole disciplinary process is seen to be fair and above board. That anyone accused has the right to legal representation, especially if the Labour Party itself is represented legally. And that the LP should be paying for such representation if someone cannot afford to pay.

11. We will continue to campaign for the abolition of the first part of rule 2.1.4.B, which bars from Labour membership anybody who "joins and/or supports a political organisation other than an official Labour group or other unit of the party" and has exclusively been used against left-wingers.

12. We will continue to organise lobbies of Labour NEC meetings, organise our own events and meetings and - after a successful intervention at Labour Party conference 2018 - will plan for another intervention at the 2019 Labour conference.

13. Secondly, and equally important, is the need to lay bare the role of the Labour right, the Israeli state and Zionist organisations in fabricating the anti-Semitism 'crisis' in the Labour Party.

14. The best way of combating backward attitudes and political views - which undoubtedly exist in the Labour Party - is through political education, discussion and joint participation in campaigning. However, giving those with the most backward attitudes and political views prime responsibility for political education is a travesty. We therefore treat with contempt and reject the so-called 'training sessions' organised by the Jewish Labour Movement, an openly Zionist organisation. We do not accept that an organisation which supports a racist project of colonisation is capable of providing anti-racist education.

15. Unity between the socialist left and the pro-capitalism right is illusory. The left must win the battle for freedom of speech and democracy - in the Labour Party, trade unions and society at large. Political ideas, including different attitudes towards Israel, must be debated freely, not silenced, not hedged with all manner of bureaucratic ifs and buts. We shall fight to end the current culture of fear and self-censorship.