



PERSPECTIVES

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Insights from the UK Labour Anti-Semitism Debate

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Over the past two and a half years a major debate has developed about anti-Semitism in the British Labour party. Jeremy Corbyn, the party leader, is a supporter of murderous and even genocidal terrorists and is a supporter of Holocaust deniers and distorters. He is furthermore an anti-Israel inciter and part-time anti-Semite. Many insights can be gleaned from the Labour anti-Semitism debate, and several are crucially important to the UK and the Western world at large.

Over the past two and a half years a major debate has developed about anti-Semitism in the British Labour party. Jeremy Corbyn, the party's leader since September 2015, is a supporter of murderous and even genocidal terrorists, some of whom he has called his "friends" and "brothers." He is a supporter of Holocaust deniers and distorters. Corbyn is also an anti-Israel inciter and part-time anti-Semite. Many insights can be gleaned from the lengthy debate about anti-Semitism in Labour. While they are important to the UK and the Western world at large, they have been largely ignored in the media and elsewhere in the public domain. The following is a listing of important issues that can be learned from the debate so far.

- Corbyn's extreme misdemeanors are not a hindrance to many British citizens who continue to support Labour. Some recent polls show that if parliamentary elections were held now, Labour would stand a good chance of winning. If the terrorist supporter Corbyn were to become British prime minister, this could undermine Western efforts to confront worldwide terrorism, including the terrorism that originates in Muslim societies. It would be nearly impossible to withhold all confidential information the UK has about terrorism and its perpetrators from Corbyn and some of his pro-terrorist associates. This includes intelligence obtained from other countries. Corbyn and some of his associates are a potential Trojan horse for the West's battle against terrorism.

The fact that the implied terrorism risk has received so little attention in the British media or anywhere else is a subject for analysis in itself.

- If Corbyn becomes prime minister, this may force various Western countries to rethink what confidential information they are prepared make available to British intelligence services.
- Former socialist leaders elsewhere, such as the late Swedish PM Olaf Palme, Greek PM Andreas Papandreu, and French President François Mitterrand, made extreme anti-Semitic remarks about Israel. Anti-Semites exist in a variety of European socialist parties as well. But never since WWII has there been anything like the broad exposure of anti-Semitism in a Western socialist party similar to that which currently exists in Labour.
- The arguments of Labour defenders and whitewashers of Corbyn and Labour anti-Semites provide unique insights into British anti-Semitism. This may enable a better deciphering of anti-Semitism elsewhere in Europe, in particular in socialist parties. A significant percentage of Labour party members support this whitewashing.
- Extreme anti-Semitic remarks by a number of elected Labour representatives were already made under Corbyn's predecessor, Ed Miliband. These statements did not get much attention in the party or the British media. The percentage of Muslim perpetrators was far larger than their presence in British society or probably in the Labour party itself.
- Left-wing anti-Semitism usually expresses itself as anti-Israelism. The Labour party debate has shown how widely classic anti-Semitism can manifest itself in a social democratic party.
- Even if the definition of anti-Semitism of the International Holocaust Remembrance Association (IHRA) is accepted by the party's National Executive Committee, the Labour leadership would probably still not be capable of adequately dealing with the large number of complaints about anti-Semitic statements of Labour members. The problem may be structural.
- Several Jewish Labour parliamentarians and one non-Jewish MP have been subjected to attacks by left-wingers that are usually attributed to extreme right-wingers, neo-fascists, or neo-Nazis.
- The British Jewish community, which represents only 0.4% of the total citizenry, has traditionally tried to avoid frontal conflicts with powerful forces in British society. It has sought to advance its interests through developing good contacts with the authorities and other powerful bodies. The multiple facets of Labour anti-Semitism and the way it is being handled in the party have forced the Jewish community into open conflict with this major power. The lack of experience of British Jewry with this type of confrontation has made it impossible for them to develop a clear strategy. Thus anti-Semitism has become the main Labour problem debated in the British public domain for a long period. Had the Jewish community a strategy, a major aim of it should have been to emphasize that anti-Semitism is part of a far wider array of Labour

misdemeanors, the most crucial being Corbyn's friendship with and support for terrorists. The exposure of the party in this way would have encouraged a much wider discussion about Corbyn in Britain.

- The British Jewish community may well have to pay a price in future for its confrontation with the powerful Labour leadership. That price is likely to be higher if Corbyn becomes prime minister. But even if he does not achieve this goal, his party leadership may still lead to a significant impact on British Jewry. Some indications can be seen from reactions of Corbyn sympathizers to an article by former Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks in which he stated that Corbyn is an anti-Semite.
- A major discussion has been opened in the Jewish community about whether Jews can safely stay in Britain if Corbyn becomes prime minister. This development is unprecedented. It remains unclear, however, whether a Corbyn premiership would in fact lead to significant Jewish emigration from the UK.
- Social democratic parties abroad have paid little attention to the anti-Semitic developments in British Labour. The Dutch Labour party (PvdA) has openly ignored them. The party's chairperson, Nelleke Vedelaar, is a declared supporter of Corbyn. The party leader, Lodewijk Asscher, was warned about Corbyn's anti-Semitism in an open letter from the pro-Israel organization CIDI but gave an empty answer. At Asscher's invitation, Corbyn visited the Netherlands and spoke at a PvdA meeting at which there was a violent incident against a Jewish protestor.

In the course of time additional insights resulting from the debate about anti-Semitism in Labour are likely to become clear.

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