

MOMENTUM

WALTHAM FOREST

A STATEMENT ON THE SUSPENSION OF DAVID WATSON FROM THE LABOUR PARTY

Momentum condemns the suspension of David Watson from the Labour Party, which was first made known on 6 May by an unnamed Party “spokesperson” in the Jewish Chronicle newspaper.

This is symptomatic of a lack of due process in this case, and the failure to apply the principles of natural justice. Journalists were briefed about the suspension before David was informed. The Labour Party did not post the notice of administrative suspension to David until 9 May, after days of inaccurate and inflammatory media coverage.

David Watson is a longstanding socialist and anti-racist campaigner, well known for his charitable and fundraising work for progressive causes. He has worked with the Anne Frank project on Holocaust awareness and was part of a delegation with Jewish activists to Israel and Palestine. So forthright has he been in challenging anti-Semitism that he has himself been subject to anti-Semitic abuse.

We have seen evidence to suggest that elements within the Labour Party opposed to Jeremy Corbyn generated this campaign against David. When he stated that criticism of Israel was not anti-Semitism, a local Labour member whose abuse of Labour and its leader is incessant, tweeted, “What are you doing about anti-Semites in the Party? This guy is Walthamstow CLP fundraiser”. This started a series of published attacks on various sites based on highly selective quotes trawled from his Facebook and Twitter accounts.

The sensationalist article that appeared in the Jewish Chronicle is highly misleading and attributes to David views he has not expressed, including distortion of mainstream media articles posted on his Facebook page.

Momentum condemns the conduct of figures in the local Labour Party including that of an MP who reposted the Jewish Chronicle article implying endorsement and its accuracy. This happened before any for-

mal notification of suspension or the basis for it was issued. These actions created a presumption of guilt even before any process had taken place. They have associated David with anti-Semitism even though the Labour Party itself had not made any formal allegation of this nature.

David and others' support for the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and empathy with oppressed Palestinians is a legitimate activity, as is his support for Israeli socialists and peace activists. There must exist in our Party the freedom to discuss in a comradely manner the Palestine-Israel conflict. We remind Party members that Fatah, the main part of the PLO, is Labour's sister Party in the Socialist International.

Momentum totally condemns anti-Semitism and supports Jeremy Corbyn's launch of an inquiry led by Shami Chakrabarti. We welcome his robust response to the handful of cases of alleged anti-Semitism and other offensive conduct in our Party.

To fight anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in Waltham Forest we need comradely self-criticism, education, and awareness raising of these complex issues. We oppose a McCarthyite atmosphere being created by some elements within the Party which can undermine such efforts. The UNITE leader Len McCluskey is correct to condemn such actions as “nothing more than a cynical attempt to manipulate anti-Semitism for political aims, because this is all about constantly challenging Jeremy Corbyn's leadership.”

Momentum calls for David's suspension to be lifted and his case addressed swiftly through a fair and transparent procedure, we are confident that David has no case to answer. Momentum calls for new rules to be put in place by the Party to govern the handling - and the press briefing - of sensitive disciplinary matters, and for all suspensions to be agreed in advance by NEC members after the person concerned has the right to make representations.

Coordinating Committee, Waltham Forest Momentum

National Executive Committee 2016



Campaigning for a Labour victory in 2020

Ann Black

The Tories are undermining public services, attacking the labour movement and damaging democracy itself. However, surging membership can help us win back lost ground. I am committed to mutual respect as the way to party unity, a kinder politics, a more caring society and success in Scotland, Wales, England and Europe. Labour must build homes, support our councillors, protect the environment, promote peaceful international solutions, and defend pensioners, disabled people, the young, the exploited and the unlucky.



I report regularly on www.leftfutures.org and welcome views at annblack50@btinternet.com / 07956 637958.

Ann is Secretary of Oxford East CLP and a member of UNISON and Open Labour. Membership No A353890.

Rhea Wolfson

Britain needs a Labour Party that can deliver a confident and credible democratic socialist agenda; an alternative to the inequality of conservatism and the inertia of nationalism – with fairness and equality at its heart. Labour must be the party that stands against austerity and it needs to be strong and united.



I will work to empower members, local parties, and activists; to fight for a more democratic party to deliver change – and ultimately victory.

I am Women's Officer of Scottish Young Labour, a member of the Young Labour National Committee & a full-time GMB Scotland branch secretary. I was previously President of Oxford University Jewish Society & Secretary of London Young Labour.

Rhea is a member of Eastwood CLP. Membership number L1205274.

Christine Shawcroft

As a longstanding supporter of Jeremy Corbyn, I was delighted by his election and welcome the new and returning members who have joined since last May. For too long, the Party has accepted Tory parameters of debate, with predictable and dire consequences at the last two General elections. Now we have to reframe the political argument – oppose austerity, challenge racism and Islamophobia, challenge the demonization of working people, support defence diversification and oppose Trident renewal, and defend public services and welfare. Practically everyone receives some kind of benefits at some time in their lives, that doesn't make us scroungers!



Christine was a councillor for 13 years and is a member of Nottingham South CLP. Membership No. A490373.

Claudia Webbe

Given the Tory government's attack on the poor, Labour needs to win the next General Election, with Jeremy Corbyn and our strong support. Jeremy's platform and popularity is based on a clear anti-austerity message – a firm break with the previous consensus. I reject divisive, negative politics. We must challenge concentrations of power, inequality and social injustice. As an equalities grassroots campaigner, I've been a progressive voice; championing civil liberties, challenging racism, opposing the scapegoating of migrants and refugees, standing up for trade union rights and defending public services and council house-building.



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Claudia is a councillor & cabinet member. She is a member of Islington South and Finsbury CLP. Membership No. A011847.

Darren Williams

Jeremy Corbyn's election showed that Labour's members and supporters want a bold, radical platform that presents a clear alternative to Tory austerity. To consolidate his victory and turn Labour around, we need to open up the party to genuinely democratic policy-making and accountability and we need an NEC committed to change.



In 26 years' active party membership, I have consistently campaigned for greater democracy and socialist policies. I've held office at branch, CLP and all-Wales levels and served on the party's National Policy Forum for five years. I'm a full-time officer for the PCS union and a Cardiff city councillor.

Darren is a member of Cardiff West CLP. Membership No. A024240.

Peter Willsman

I am privileged to be an NEC member, serving our members to the best of my ability. Since 1981 I have uniquely served on all four of our Party's national committees.



We must all unite behind Jeremy and build for victory in 2020. I worked with Jeremy in NUPE. Jeremy's dedication and integrity is exceptional. The Oldham by-election was a better result (share of the vote) than 1997.

My record proves I have the necessary energy, enthusiasm and commitment to play a full part on the NEC as we build for 2020.

Peter is a member of Oxford East CLP. Membership No. A071448.

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