November 2021

Open Letter to Members of Labour Against the Witchhunt and Labour-in-Exile-Network

Dear Friends & Comrades,

LAW was founded at the end of 2017 as the witchhunt under Jeremy Corbyn was beginning to take off. At first just a few notable individuals were sacrificed to appease supporters of the Zionism – Tony Greenstein, Jackie Walker, Marc Wadsworth and Ken Livingstone. As time went by more and more victims were demanded. Unfortunately Corbyn and Formby offered up Chris Williamson, Pete Willsman and others in a vain attempt to appease the lobby. Today we see where that has led under Starmer. If you are Jewish you are 5 times more likely to be suspended or expelled!

LAW was the only socialist group to consistently and openly oppose the witchhunt and it did valiant work, though in retrospect it achieved little. Today the attack on the Left has taken on altogether different dimensions. Corbyn himself has lost the Whip, having been suspended and virtually every figure of note on the left has been expelled or suspended. It seems that the Starmerites intend to take out the more outspoken members of the Socialist Campaign Group such as Zara Sultana and Apsana Begum.

The proscription of LAW, LIEN, Socialist Appeal and Resist demonstrate that the witchhunt has now become a general offensive against the Left. The pretext of 'anti-Semitism' is no longer needed.

Labour-in-Exile-Network has been active for less than a year. It came directly out of LAW, shared many of the same members, including on its Steering Committees and has been the more active of the 2 organisations.

We believe that the time has come when it makes sense for both organisations to consolidate into one single organisation with 1 Steering Committee. In practice there isn't much left that LAW can do to fight the witchhunt inside the party, not only because very few of its members are Labour members but because, in the words of Ken Loach, democracy has been abolished in the party.

LIEN was set up with the idea of creating Shadow CLPs. It organised the successful demonstration outside Labour Party HQ on July 10. The task of organising locally is a critical one if we are to create a national movement consisting of some of those now flooding out of the Labour Party or who have already left.

The opposition to a merger, led by Labour Party Marxists, is wedded to the idea that the Labour Party remains unchanged from a century ago. That all that is necessary is for a mass Marxist party to arise spontaneously and the Labour Party will change into a 'united front of a special kind'. The result of this ideological fantasy is that the left should remain passive and await events whilst doing nothing to build a socialist movement outside Labour.

We reject this approach and believe that we have to start from where we are now. The defeat of the Corbyn Project was a major blow to hopes of seeing a different society. We should try and ensure that the best elements regroup rather than simply being passive spectators on events. We therefore ask you to join with us in attending the 2 All Members Meetings of LIEN and LAW at 6 pm on Friday 26 and Saturday 27 November respectively.

It is particularly important that people attend the LAW meeting because the Steering Committee itself is opposed to the merger. If you are not already a member of LAW please join.

In solidarity,

Tony Greenstein