



GRASSROOTS BLACK LEFT

Labour African, Caribbean and Asian Socialists

NEWS RELEASE

May 14, 2018

Labour Party chiefs spark membership backlash over Wadsworth expulsion

Labour Party officials face a legal challenge to its expulsion of anti-racist campaigner, Marc Wadsworth due to growing opposition from members.

Supporters of the former Party member have pledged to donate £25,250 to a legal case through a crowdfund website with nationwide rallies likely to boost funds.

Leading solicitors firm Birnberg Pierce and a top QC from Doughty Street Chambers are building a case to be heard at the High Court that multiple breaches of its own rules and the law by Party officials.

Celebrity Alexei Sayle, suspended member and Jewish, anti-racist Jackie Walker and reinstated member and lecturer Moshe Machover will take part in the first rally in central London on 15 May. Further rallies in May take place in Liverpool, Chester, Birmingham and Sheffield. Other public meetings are being planned for Swansea, Bristol, Leeds and Manchester.

Alexei commented: "The Party should walk over broken glass to beg people of Marc's calibre to work with them - they are very few and Marc is one of the best. There is a battle going on to destroy and reverse the unexpected and amazing gains the left has made in the last three years. Marc is a casualty in that battle and I am joining the fight to see him re-instated to the front line."

A meeting of Ealing North Constituency Labour Party and xx CLP recently passed motions on calling for Marc's reinstatement. XXX wards have also voted on motions supporting Marc that will be debated at their CLPs.

The justice four Marc campaign is also being backed by Party members in Grassroots Black Left, Labour Against the Witchhunt, Labour Representation Committee and Jewish Voice for Labour. His expulsion was opposed by MPs Chris Williamson, Clive Lewis and Keith Vaz.

More follows

Labour Party chiefs spark membership backlash...

As a Croydon North constituency Labour Party member, Marc Wadsworth, was expelled after a hearing by a three-person panel on 25 April for 'bringing the party into disrepute'.

The disciplinary panel heard that pro-Israeli MP, Ruth Smeeth, felt Marc was antisemitic at the launch of the Chakrabarti report after he said he saw her working with a right-wing journalist. He also complained about the underrepresentation of black people among reporters and Party workers.

A video of the incident demonstrates that Marc did not verbally attack, bully, heckle or reduce to tears the MP Ruth Smeeth as press reports alleged and neither did he say anything antisemitic.

Marc Wadsworth commented: "The Labour Party would embarrass itself and lose their case in a court of law. The new party general secretary Jennie Formby has said the process used to hear the case is not fit for purpose.

"I've been overwhelmed by a tsunami of support since my expulsion. People are outraged by the injustice."

Co-chair of Grassroots Black Left, Mohammed Hassan said: "Marc has become a sacrificial lamb to a McCarthyite environment created by the Party's right-wing and the media. The black community needs voices like Marc's in the Party not outside it.

A spokesperson for Jewish Voice for Labour said: "We condemn the expulsion of Marc Wadsworth from the Labour Party, and the procedures that led up to it, on the back of a scurrilous campaign to damage his reputation by falsely branding him as an antisemite. We fully support the campaign for his reinstatement."

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NOTES

1. National Tour

- London, Tuesday May 15, 6.30pm; Indian YMCA, Games Room, 41 Fitzroy Square, W1T 6AQ; with Alexei Sayle, Jackie Walker and Moshe Machover
- Liverpool, Wednesday May 16, 6pm; Crawford House Community Enterprise Centre, Upper Warwick Street, L8
- Chester, Thursday May 17, 7pm; St Werburghs Parish Centre.
- Birmingham, Friday May 18, 7pm; Committee rooms 3 & 4, Birmingham Council House, 1 Victoria Square, B1 1BB
- Sheffield, Wednesday May 23, 6.30pm; DINA, 34 Cambridge Street, S1 4HP (upstairs)

- With Martin Mayer (secretary Sheffield Trades Council and former member of Labour Party NEC), Lee Rock (Sheffield Left List) .

2. Labour Party wards or branches make up a constituency party. Wards that have passed motions supporting Marc Wadsworth include:

3. A witness at the launch of the Chakrabarti report and Marc's hearing, David Rosenberg said: "I was absolutely astonished to hear and read news reports just hours after this event which claimed that Ruth Smeeth MP had walked out of the event in tears and that there had been an antisemitic incident at the launch of the report from the Labour Party's inquiry into antisemitism. I had not witnessed any such incident and she did not walk out in tears...I was proud to be one of the witnesses Marc called to try to prevent this injustice, and I was motivated to do so above all, because I detest dishonesty and manipulation...I was dismayed but not surprised at the outcome. It was a grave injustice in an atmosphere in of 'guilty until proved innocent'."

<http://nyebevannews.co.uk/i-was-proud-to-be-one-of-the-witnesses-marc-called-to-try-to-prevent-this-injustice-and-i-was-motivated-to-do-so-above-all-because-i-detest-dishonesty-and-manipulation/>

4. House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee report October 2016
Report: Antisemitism in the UK:

Despite significant press and public attention on the Labour Party, and a number of revelations regarding inappropriate social media content, there exists no reliable, empirical evidence to support the notion that there is a higher prevalence of antisemitic attitudes within the Labour Party than any other political party. We are unaware whether efforts to identify antisemitic social media content within the Labour Party were applied equally to members and activists from other political parties, and we are not aware of any polls exploring antisemitic attitudes among political party members, either within or outside the Labour Party. The current impression of a heightened prevalence of anti-Semitism. (paragraph 120)

https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaff/136/13609.htm#_idTextAnchor055