

Jeremy Corbyn: A Devil in Israel, a Hero to the Arabs

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Featured image: UK Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn visits Baqa'a, the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan, on 23 June 2018 [File photo]

Israel is seeking with all its weight and supportive lobby to demonise Jeremy Corbyn. He is facing a campaign in Britain accusing him of anti-Semitism and arrows are being shot in his back from the right side of his party, the Labour Party, represented by the heirs and orphans of the former British Prime Minister Tony Blair and from circles loyal to Israel. These two groups are also targeting both the left wing trend he has adopted and his support for the rights of the Palestinian people.

Anti-Semitism and Palestinian advocacy are often confused deliberately in the ranks of the European left wing in general and in Britain in particular. Many people classify Corbyn as part of the radical left wing. He faced a so-called coup within the Labour Party, which he heads, after Britain voted to leave the European Union.

Jeremy Corbyn, born in 1949 in Chippenham, was elected to the British House of Commons in 1983 as an MP for London's Islington North district. He was arrested in 1984 outside the South African embassy after violating a protest ban during Apartheid.

In 2015 he was elected to head the Labour Party, winning 59.9 per cent of the vote, reaching the minimum number of votes needed to win during the first round. He moved from the backbenches in the House of Commons, where he served 32 years, to the forefront of the party in a surprise move that still stuns many.

As soon as Corbyn's victory was announced, the Israeli media fiercely attacked him, accusing him of being anti-Semitic and criticising him for not considering Hamas a terrorist organisation. They also criticised his promise to impose a ban on selling arms to Israel if he is elected prime minister.

Israel's *Yedioth Ahronoth* newspaper noted Corbyn's call for conducting international investigations to convict Israel of war crimes against humanity in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon, as well as his vow to issue an apology for his country's participation in the Iraq war under Tony Blair's leadership. He also said it was time for the Labour Party to apologise to the British people for dragging them into a war in Iraq based on a ploy and to the Iraqi people for the devastation caused. He also called for involving Hamas and Hezbollah in the peace negotiations in the Middle East.

The first decision made by Corbyn after his victory was announced was to participate in a protest supporting refugees organised by various organisations and movements. He called on the government to "open your hearts and open your minds and open your attitude

towards supporting people who are desperate, who need somewhere safe to live, want to contribute to our society, and are human beings just like all of us". He rejected harsh treatment of immigrants, saying they contributed to the development of Britain. He supported the reception of refugees and called on the government to help them, taking his cue from Germany.

Corbyn is considered a peace activist and a member of the Stop the War Coalition and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament Campaign. He quoted senior military figures describing his country's nuclear weapons as militarily useless.

In his speeches Corbyn focuses on his support towards the poor and the marginalised, supporting the country's social welfare system, the party's unity in the coming phase and his willingness to cooperate with everyone so that the party will once again lead be victorious in the elections.

The Labour Party saw a strong turnout in the run-up to the party's presidential election, a move many attributed to the ability of Corbyn and his programme to attract various popular and youth segments of the party.

However, this did not prevent his opponents, even inside the party, from taking positions against him. Many analysts continued to ask questions regarding the party's future in light of his unconventional new leadership and if he would be able to win in the general elections scheduled for 2020 and then form a government and govern the country. They raised questions of whether he would move strongly to the left, leaving the centre to the ruling conservatives to expand into, while the Labour Party moves back to the second or third level.

The party passed its first test after Corbyn's victory in the form of the election of the party's candidate, Muslim MP Sadiq Khan as Mayor of London, beating the Conservative Party's Boris Johnson who won the position in 2008. However, Corbyn was accused of failing in the referendum conducted regarding Britain's remainder in the European Union even though the Labour Party is considered to be among the most prominent supporters of Britain's continued membership in the EU.

Some members of the party and others outside the party considered the result of the vote to be catastrophic for Labour. Internally, the voices opposed to Corbyn are leading a group considered by the British media to be an attempt at a coup.

Corbyn did not come from the traditional background of British politics, as he belongs to a family known for their human rights activism. Even growing up, he did not get involved in political work as much as he got involved in human rights activism. He is known for his adoption of the far-left ideology, which prompted him to dedicate his career to defending the working class and the rights of minorities and the marginalised in British society. Despite the fact that he is not financially or socially classified as working class, some in Britain call him a working class hero.

Corbyn has grown accustomed to going against the current, as after he graduated from secondary school he joined a local British newspaper and did not focus on his studies at university. He did not graduate from a prestigious British university like Oxford or Cambridge, but instead left university to volunteer in Jamaica for two years. He then started his career in human rights until he was voted in as an MP in 1984.

Before attending his first session he appeared before the House of Commons to respond to the criticism by other MPs because he did not wear a “proper suit” when he went to parliamentary meetings. He said he was wearing a jacket his mother sewed for him herself and there was no need to spend time and money on choosing his clothes and a proper suit because, as he said, the British parliament is not a club for elegant men, but a place where MPs represent their constituents – the British people.

The man who comes from outside the limelight and outside the Downing Street elites on the shoulders of the unionists and the supporters of the traditional left wing who are frustrated by the policies of Tony Blair and his successors, is preparing for Britain’s leadership while Teresa May, leader of the Conservative Party and the prime minister is preparing to leave 10 Downing Street.

In the event of May’s departure the British people will be faced with two non-traditional British politicians. The first is her rival in the party, Boris Johnson, who is a part of the right wing that leans towards extremism. He is known for his hostility towards Muslims and is very similar to US President Donald Trump and the leaders of the populist wave that have swept the world recently. The second is Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the Labour Party, who comes from outside the traditional elite, and who is well known to us in the Arab world as a friend and politician who is extraordinary, honest and courageous.

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