

## Killing Corbyn

By [Media Lens](#)

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Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

*The 'Brexit' referendum vote, split 52% to 48% in favour of leaving the European Union, has been exploited by the 'mainstream' media to launch yet another assault on Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn. 'Impartial' BBC News, directed by former Murdoch editor James Harding, has been one of the worst culprits.*

Consider the wave of resignations of Labour shadow ministers which was heavily promoted in advance on the [front page](#) of the BBC News website: ' "Half" of Labour top team set to resign...the BBC's Laura Kuenssberg understands'. When the Labour resignations started to roll in, Kuenssberg could be heard virtually gloating over Corbyn's predicament:

'A bad day at the office. A very bad day.' (BBC Weekend News, BBC1, June 26, 2016)



She [wrote](#) on the BBC website:

There have been concerns about Jeremy Corbyn's performance for months and months. But it was his role, or lack of role, in the campaign to keep the UK in the EU, and his sacking of Hilary Benn in the middle of the night, that has given members of the shadow cabinet the final reasons to quit. Corbyn

The laughably biased reference to 'months and months' and 'final reasons to quit' were intended to portray Labour MPs as exasperated and understandably at the end of their tether. Clearly reaching for some kind of 'smoking gun' to finish Corbyn, Kuenssberg added:

documents passed to the BBC suggest Jeremy Corbyn's office sought to delay and water down the Labour Remain campaign. Sources suggest that they are evidence of "deliberate sabotage".

But, as Carlyn Harvey [wrote](#) on *The Canary* website, the 'evidence' - a sparse selection of leaked emails that the BBC deigned not to show to the public - was bogus:

The emails themselves are not sent from Corbyn's office and are not published in the BBC article. The broadcaster merely handpicks a few select quotes from them, and allows Kuenssberg to let rip in her analysis of the cache'

Harvey summarised: 'Is this the level of analysis we should tolerate from the BBC?'

Kuenssberg concluded her attempted hit piece by observing that Corbyn ‘has had persuasive and vehement backing from the party’s members’:

But as the Labour Party reels from Thursday’s result, it is not clear that support will be as solid as it was. MPs report that some of their members are contacting them to say they’ve changed their minds about Mr Corbyn. We’ll see. It’s possible that within days, both of our two main political parties will be looking for a new leader.

These anonymous ‘MPs’ were the same [Blairite coup plotters](#), of course. No balance was included in the original article, no response to the damning allegations, no recognition that these were indeed cynical Blairite plotters seeking any excuse to be rid of Corbyn. Indeed the word ‘Blairite’ does not appear in Kuenssberg’s piece, just as it didn’t in a [supposedly impartial Observer analysis](#). Honest commentators, of course, understand that the word ‘Blairite’ is crucial for anyone trying to make sense of the relentless attacks on Corbyn. Thus, former *Guardian* journalist [Jonathan Cook](#):

Corbyn and his supporters want to revive Labour as a party of social justice... This is nothing more than a class war to pave the way for a return of the Blairites to lead Labour.

The BBC later added balancing comments, after receiving complaints.

The following morning, BBC News misinformed the public that Tom Watson, deputy leader of the Labour Party, had told Corbyn that he must resign. This was false. BBC News quietly retracted the claim without admitting their error. Indeed, as [captured](#) by a Labour activist, BBC News had *threesignificantly* different headlines in just *twenty* minutes.

‘Labour’s Watson tells Corbyn to quit’

became:

‘Tom Watson tells Jeremy Corbyn to consider his position’

which became:

‘Tom Watson tells Jeremy Corbyn he faces leadership challenge’

It looked as though the BBC’s desire to be rid of Corbyn had raced ahead of the facts.

A couple of days earlier, in common with other corporate news media, the BBC pushed a manufactured story about Corbyn being heckled at Gay Pride. The staged incident was also given significant coverage on ITN and Sky News, and even front-page treatment in the *Guardian*. In fact, as Craig Murray [observed](#), the ‘heckler’ turned out to be [Tom Mauchline](#) who works for the public relations firm Portland Communications. Mauchline had also previously worked on the Liz Kendall campaign for the Labour leadership. Portland’s ‘strategic counsel’ is the notorious Alastair Campbell, Blair’s former media chief who helped

to sell the illegal invasion-occupation of Iraq. None of this was spelled out in the [Guardian report](#) by Heather Stewart, the paper's political editor. Instead, there was a single cryptic line that concealed more than it delivered:

Allies of the Labour leader said the confrontation at Pride had been staged by anti-Corbyn activists who were attempting to undermine the leader's position.

There was no further explanation or context. When challenged on Twitter, Stewart [responded](#):

Story makes clear it was regarded as staged by Corbyn backers; but if part of plot to destabilise him it's news.

This was a facile reply. Craig Murray himself then [asked](#) her:

- 1) why does it not make clear that Mauchline is a PR man for Portland Comms?
- 2) How did you become aware of the story?

As far as we can see, the *Guardian's* political editor simply ignored the awkward questions.

Meanwhile, BBC News ran a [live feed](#) on their home page with the headline, 'Corbyn crisis and Brexit'. Brexit was almost an afterthought; it certainly seemed to be playing second fiddle to the 'Corbyn crisis'. Anyone seeing this could be forgiven for asking about the BBC News editorial agenda and its setting of priorities. It was as though we were to forget that Prime Minister David Cameron had announced his resignation three days earlier; and that Cameron and the Tory party had led the country into a referendum that had [resulted](#) in the FTSE 100 index falling more than 8%, and the pound falling against the dollar by 10%; and that a number of Tories were scrambling to become the new leader, including the warmongering, climate-denying Boris Johnson. But, true to form, BBC News was happy to hammer on about the 'Corbyn crisis'; this despite the [fact](#) that 'Labour persuaded two-thirds of its supporters to vote remain'.

It was actually surreal to read a post-Brexit BBC [article](#) on June 28, 'Conservative leader: Who might succeed David Cameron?', reminding readers of Johnson's 'unique brand of charisma making him a household name... he is regarded as being an electoral asset', while Michael Gove was 'reforming, if controversial' and 'is still respected on both the Remain and Leave wings of the party'. No serious criticism of either politician was included, despite their deep responsibility for the Brexit crisis. By contrast, as we saw above, the BBC was only too happy to include damning judgements of Corbyn.

Perhaps the worst example of an anti-Corbyn attack, post-Brexit, was in the *Mail on Sunday*. A [piece](#) by Dan Hodges was illustrated by a Photoshopped image of a malevolent vampiric Corbyn in a coffin with the [despicable headline](#), 'Labour MUST kill vampire Jezza'. That this should appear just ten days after Labour MP Jo Cox was brutally murdered is almost beyond belief.

When challenged by readers, Hodges responded with the [standard cop-out](#):

'Sorry, but I don't write the headlines.'

It is true that sub-editors write newspaper headlines. But Hodges could still have indicated that he recognised the callousness and irresponsibility of the headline and photo.

One reader fired off this rational follow-up [challenge](#):

'But are you condoning the headline? Do you agree with it? Or is just no comment from you?'

Hodges did not reply; understandably enough. In March, a [tragi-comic announcement](#) was issued: 'Britain's best political columnist DAN HODGES joins the Mail on Sunday.' A lucrative contract for Hodges, to be sure, and one he would be reluctant to jeopardise by criticising his paymasters. 'It's hard to make the sums add up when you are kicking the people who write the cheques', as the BBC's Andrew Marr once observed. (Andrew Marr, 'My Trade - A Short History Of British Journalism', Macmillan, 2004, p.112)

In a blog piece, Craig Murray rightly [noted](#):

The demonstrable public contempt of the public for the political class has been mirrored these last few days by the demonstrable contempt of the political class for the public. This has been obvious in the response to the Brexit vote, and in the Labour parliamentary party's move against Corbyn. Both are evidence that the political class feel that they should not be directed by a wider public

This explains why the corporate media have avoided mentioning that Corbyn won last year's leadership election by a 'landslide', [winning 60% of the vote](#), more than all the rest of the candidates combined. Despite noting that Angela Eagle is the likely leadership contender, the media have also ignored a February YouGov [poll](#) that found that 60% of Labour members would vote for Corbyn in a new leadership race, with 15% supporting Hilary Benn and just 6% supporting Angela Eagle.

Murray continued:

Everybody knows that the Labour parliamentary party is well to the right of both the membership and the trade unions, and has been itching to get rid of Corbyn from day one. For those who have constantly stabbed him in the back for a year to criticise his effectiveness in fighting their opponents is ridiculous.

Investigative journalist Nafeez Ahmed [points out](#) that:

The latest coup attempt against Jeremy Corbyn within the Labour Party is being led by an elitist Blairite network who have always seen his sudden rise to leadership as a threat to their waning control of the party.

Attempts to unseat Corbyn have been supported by Left Foot Forward Ltd, a company set up by Will Straw, which runs the country's 'No. 1 left-wing blog' of the same name. Straw is

the son of Jack Straw who served as Home Secretary and Foreign Secretary under Tony Blair. Ahmed notes that Will Straw is:

among a network of longtime Blairite stalwarts trying to “re-found” the Labour Party – a project demolished by Jeremy Corbyn’s landslide victory in the Labour leadership elections in September 2015.

The independent journalist Steve Topple [highlights](#) the links between coordinated attacks on Corbyn and a network of Labour figures with direct links to the PR company, Portland Communications (mentioned above). The PR firm was set up in 2001 by a former adviser to Blair. Its clients include the World Economic Forum, the EU, the UK government, Barclays Bank and large companies, including Morrisons and Nestle.

Two weeks ago, the Daily Telegraph [reported](#) that:

‘Labour rebels hope to topple Jeremy Corbyn in 24-hour blitz after EU referendum’.

The article continued:

By fanning the flames with front bench resignations and public criticism they think the signatures needed to trigger a leadership race can be gathered within a day.

BBC News – in particular, its political editor Laura Kuenssberg – continues to play a disreputable role in fanning these flames. In a BBC News [article](#) on Tuesday, Kuenssberg pointed to two more Labour figures who have called on Corbyn to resign as ‘signs that his backing away from Parliament could be starting to fray.’ Extrapolating wildly, she concluded:

‘The wave of enthusiasm he built outside Parliament may be starting to recede.’

This is all part of a bigger picture of how the BBC has put ‘its full weight behind the Corbyn coup’, as Carlyn Harvey [notes](#). Readers may recall that Kuenssberg helped to [orchestrate](#) the on-air resignation of a shadow Labour minister earlier this year: another attempt to undermine Corbyn’s leadership.

The [‘Guardian view’](#) is that the ‘Corbyn experiment is effectively over at Westminster’. This casual dismissal comes from the ‘liberal’ paper which opposed Corbyn from the start, and which makes no mention of the relentless media wrecking campaign against him, including its own ugly role. The ‘Corbyn experiment’ is an experiment in real democracy; something which the Guardian has sought to destroy. A responsible newspaper would relentlessly expose the truth about society; namely, that ‘politics is the shadow cast on society by big business’, as the American philosopher John Dewey [said](#).

Nobody should be surprised at the shameful performance of the corporate media, especially [BBC News](#). Any threat to the ‘natural order’ of power brings the schism between

private interests and public interests into sharp focus. The heightened, almost farcical, attacks on Corbyn are thus entirely predictable. Rather than feeling anguished at this state of affairs, we can regard it is a sign of how nervous and vulnerable the establishment is when an awakened public challenges elite power.

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