

Do Most Corbynites Hate the Rich?

By Paul Austin Murphy (June 2018)



Why is it that so many supporters of Jeremy Corbyn (Britain's "radical socialist" Leader of the Opposition) have such a big problem with what they call "posh" and "rich" people? Is it because so many of them are posh and rich people themselves? Or is it because the "rich people" they criticise dare to be even more wealthy than they are?

It's certainly the case there are many (to use Corbyn's term for himself) "radical socialists"—specifically in the London area—who have nannies, cleaners and gardeners (indeed many of these "helpers" are underpaid and also immigrants). In more

general terms, the Radical Left is also chockablock with public-school boys and girls. Some of these radicals even send their own kids to private schools and to the best grammars ([Seumas Milne](#) and [Shami Chakrabarti](#) are good examples of this).

The Radical Left (at least its leaders and activists) is also almost entirely made up of middle-class professionals; many of whom earn loads of dosh. And the Rad Left is chockablock with students who're hoping to make loads of dosh in the future too.

To paraphrase: *Many Corbynites don't love the poor. They just hate the rich.*

Of course it can't be said that every single supporter of Jeremy Corbyn "hates the rich"—just most of them do. This is especially prevalent on social media, when it comes to Momentum activists and to those people with more sympathy for Corbyn than for the Labour Party itself. (It's worth reading Richard Seymour's [Corbyn: The Strange Rebirth of Radical Politics](#) here because this former Socialist Workers Party member despises the Labour Party at the very same time as simply adoring Jeremy Corbyn.)

Of course it can be asked how I know that so many Corbynites hate the rich. Then again, how do other people know that Corbynites don't hate the rich? This is the philosophical problem of "other minds" writ large. So all one can do is interpret the words and behaviour of Corbynites. And the behaviour and words of Corbynites leads me to the conclusion

that it's just as much a question of good old-fashioned hatred as it is of moral or political opposition.

To put all this another way: many on the Left are forever talking about "haters," "hatred" and the rest. I'm simply arguing that Corbynites most certainly haven't miraculously escaped from the biological/human net in these respects.

Another thing which needs to be said here is that some/many people "support Corbyn" simply because they've always supported the Labour Party. And they also want to "get rid of the Tories." So I certainly wouldn't class all of these Labour Party people as *ideological Corbynites*.

Envy, Jealousy and Hate?

So what about envy and jealousy?

I personally don't believe that Jeremy Corbyn himself is driven by an envy of—or jealousy towards the rich. However, many Corbynites and other Radical Socialists most certainly are.

As for Corbyn and hate, I think that hate is part of the Corbyn story. However, hate is almost the whole story when it comes to John McDonnell—the Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer. After all, he did say that his favourite past-time is "generally fermenting the overthrow of capitalism." McDonnell has also made many other [vicious and hateful remarks](#)

directed at the wealthy and at many others too.

This obsession with “the rich” and with “public-school boys” (which is often displayed by rich leftwing public-school boys) could be seen when the Eton-educated Conservative MP Jacob Rees-Mogg was recently photographed in Greggs (which is the largest bakery chain in the UK). Corbynites classed it as a “cheap PR stunt.” Yes, a PR stunt a bit like Jeremy Corbyn wearing Primark shorts, a Lenin cap, and carrying a plastic bag. Corbyn, of course, went to a private preparatory school, was brought up in a large house with seven bedrooms, had wealthy (Trotskyist) parents, has lived most of his life in a posh part of Islington, and has very many public-school friends; many of whom are communists and Trotskyists in the Stop the War Coalition which he led until 2015. (The leading public-school boys in the Stop the War Coalition included and still include its Chairman Andrew Murray, as well as Tony Benn, Tam Dalyell, Chris Nineham, Charlie Kimber, Alex Callinicos, etc.

The Top 1%?

There also seems to be a logical flaw when Corbynites say that they “simply want the rich to pay their way” through “fair taxes”. In other words, Corbynites claim that it’s not about vindictiveness or envy. However, surely if the tax policies which Corbynites want were ever brought into play, then there would simply be no rich people left. Corbynite tax policy is effectively a way of stopping the rich from being rich. Isn’t that what “socialist equality” is all about?

This means that Corbynites are, after all, against the rich. Their policies would obliterate this section of society. "Fair taxes" and *socialist equality* will result in there being no rich people (except for, perhaps, the leaders of the Socialist State and Party leaders). Thus Corbynites are indeed against the rich; even if not all of them "hate the rich".

There is some dishonesty apparent here.

In a collectivist society based on socialist equality, there would be no room for "fair taxes" for the rich or for a "benign wealthy." The idea that Corbynites or Radical Leftists just want to tax the rich more is very dishonest.

It's also the case that Corbynites never stop talking about "the top 1%."

If you look at the socialist/communist regimes of the 20th century, it was never only the *top 1%* which got smashed in the face. Vast sections of society did. The Kulaks, for example, were wiped out for being "bourgeois" or "counter-revolutionary." There were the "NEPmen" who suffered too. Some peasants who had an extra plot of land were even persecuted by the Soviet state or by party functionaries. Finally, under the Khmer Rouge, wearing glasses was seen as being a sign of being "bourgeois" or "rich."

Even today, Marxists have a problem with *all* businessmen and owners of capital—very few of whom are in the top 1%. "Socialist equality" is, after all, *socialist equality*. Not

only would the top 1% be wiped out, so would all “class distinctions” . . . or, at least, the class distinctions noted by the middle-class Vanguard Class or by the Socialist State. That means that Party leaders, the rulers of the Socialist State, leftist/Marxist academics, lawyers, and functionaries, etc. would still earn a hell of a lot more than the average worker—as was the case in all socialist/communist states.

Another point is that the average member of the middle- and upper-middle-class Radical Left still earns a lot more than the average worker. However, that inequality is fine. It’s the inequality between the middle-class Left and the top 1% that members of the former can’t stomach.

Philanthropy and Charity

Despite all the above, some—though certainly not all—supporters of Corbyn say that they aren’t “against the rich” or “against wealth”. They say it’s “what people do with their wealth that matters”. They hint that Rad Socs do good things with their wealth. Though they never say, exactly, what it is they do with it. And I can’t think of any examples myself.

As for the philanthropy of generous Radical Socialists, the Radical Left has always seen philanthropy as being “counter-revolutionary” in that if individuals spread their wealth, then that would work against the revolution or against “radicalisation”. It also means that philanthropy stops the Socialist State itself spreading the wealth. Either way, individuals spreading their wealth is a bad thing for Radical

Socialism.

Traditionally, the Rad-Soc position on charity has been even more critical. After all, it's the Socialist State and the Socialist State alone which must make it the case that there's simply "no need for charity".

Thus both philanthropy and charity work against Radical Socialism.

So, instead, what many Corbynites have done with their wealth is send their kids to private schools, employ foreign nannies/cleaners/gardeners, go on many foreign holidays, buy extra cars, perhaps even invest (as Seumas Milne did), etc.

Thus the bottom line is this:

If you're rich, posh and socialist—then that's fine.

If you're rich, posh and not socialist—then that's not fine.

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