

Trump campaign accuses UK Labour Party of “foreign interference” in US election

Thomas Scripps
23 October 2024

In a dramatic example of the problems posed to the European ruling class by the US elections, Republican candidate Donald Trump has filed an official complaint against Britain’s ruling Labour Party alleging “blatant foreign interference”.

The letter was prompted by the despatch of 100 Labour Party staffers to America to aid the campaign of Democratic candidate Kamala Harris.

Trump’s complaint, submitted to the Federal Election Commission, alleges that “the relationship between the Harris campaign and the Labour Party create a reasonable inference that the Labour Party has made, and the Harris campaign has accepted, illegal foreign national contributions.”

It cites reports from the *Washington Post* that “strategists linked to Britain’s Labour Party have been offering advice to Kamala Harris about how to earn back disaffected voters”, and from *The Daily Telegraph* that “Morgan McSweeney, the Prime Minister’s chief of staff, and Matthew Doyle, director of communications, attended the convention in Chicago and met with Ms Harris’ campaign team” and “Deborah Mattinson, [prime minister] Sir Keir’s director of strategy, also went to Washington in September to brief Ms Harris’ presidential campaign on Labour’s election-winning approach.”

The *Telegraph* reported on a LinkedIn post by Labour’s head of operations advertising, “I have nearly 100 Labour Party staff (current and former) going to the US in the next few weeks heading to North Carolina, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Virginia. I have 10 spots available for anyone available to head to the battleground state of North Carolina—we will sort your housing.”

According to the paper, “Labour activists who want to help with the Harris campaign have been told they

will need to pay for their own flights and car hire but that Democrat volunteers would provide accommodation... any staff intending to travel are expected to book annual leave for the duration of their trip.”

Unpaid volunteer work by foreign nationals has previously been ruled legal by the Commission, which is why the Trump campaign alleges financial contributions.

Starmer responded on this basis by waving the matter aside, telling reporters that Labour volunteers were “doing it in their spare time, they’re doing it as volunteers, they’re staying, I think, with other volunteers over there. That’s what they’ve done in previous elections, that’s what they’re doing in this election and that’s really straightforward.”

Except there is nothing “straightforward” about this election for the British ruling class. Whether the work is legal and usual is not the issue. What matters is that Starmer has found himself attacked—in the Republican’s usual absurd fashion—as a “far-left” inspiration for “Kamala’s dangerously liberal policies and rhetoric” by the team around the man he is working desperately to please as the potential next president of the United States.

In fact, as *Politico* reports, the Labour Party is mostly advising the Democratic Party how to shift further to the right on immigration, scrap any green pretensions, mix “pragmatism with patriotism”, “temper uncompromising activist positions” and “shed the far-left stigma”, with reference to the purges against Jeremy Corbyn’s supporters.

The Republicans’ complaint against the Labour Party even invokes the American War of Independence against its activities: “When representatives of the British government previously sought to go door-to-

door in America, it did not end well for them.”

Yet Starmer’s only answer to a question about whether the row would damage his relationship with Trump was to point to his fawning meeting with the would-be dictator in New York last month: “We established a good relationship. We’re grateful for him for making the time... for that dinner... We had a very good, constructive discussion and, of course, as prime minister of the United Kingdom I will work with whoever the American people return as their president in their elections, which are very close now.”

The British in particular, but all of Europe’s ruling classes and their governments are caught in a painful limbo as the US election draws nearer.

Having invested a lot of time, immense resources and diplomatic cachet to secure the UK’s place as American imperialism’s right-hand man in the war against Russia in Ukraine, the Labour government is deeply concerned by the change of course threatened by a Trump government—one which might cut America’s European allies adrift altogether. For a British imperialism who’s clout on the world stage depends so heavily on its partnership with the US, the concerns are the most severe.

There is no question that the Labour government would prefer a Harris victory, and the perhaps unusually close involvement of key Labour strategists in her campaign shows the strength of that feeling.

But at the same time it desperately needs to keep Trump sweet to prepare the close relations it would seek with a Republican presidency. For all the talk about the Harris and Starmer campaigns jointly flying the flag of “liberal values”, Starmer would aim to strike that relationship with a President Trump whatever the means by which he enters the White House—by election, or judicial or military coup. This would be not only in pursuit of British imperialism’s predatory interests, but in unity with Trump against the response that would develop in the working class.

The difficulty for the Labour leader is that the Trump campaign is uninterested in meeting him halfway, or even partway. In previous US election contests, a degree of playing both sides from the UK government was accepted as part of the normal business of politics. But Trump’s motto is “My way or the highway”. The UK prime minister and his team have failed to fully grasp the message and its implications.

Responding to the Trump campaign’s complaint, a Labour official told *Politico*, “It says a lot about the current level of political discourse on both sides of the Atlantic that an innocuous LinkedIn post from a party staffer has turned into a diplomatic event.”

It says rather more about the Labour leadership’s political nous that it fails to understand why.

Starmer is, even in a crowded field, a standout political incompetent—given the halo of a wholly unearned parliamentary majority. But his fumbling only highlights the foreshocks, affecting all of Europe, of the politically seismic election coming on November 5.

Trump’s bullish attitude towards “foreign interference” from Europe is not just a matter of campaigning style, but of policy to be continued into his presidency. It is, moreover, only the most naked form of an America First economic programme which has been continued in all essentials by the Biden administration and would be maintained by Harris.

The closer the election gets, the more the conflicts between US and European imperialism, coupled with efforts to work out a new *modus vivendi*, can be expected to come to the fore—manoeuvres all fundamentally made at the expense and in opposition to the struggles of the working class in Europe, American and around the world.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact