

14th August 2016, *Sunday Times*: <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/labour-blacklists-1-000-a-day-r3lbling85>

Labour blacklists 1,000 a day

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LABOUR officials have been identifying up to 1,000 suspected "entryists" a day as they try to stop members of rival parties and hardleft factions influencing the party leadership contest.

Staff are trawling through the social media accounts of 180,000 "registered supporters" who have paid £25 to vote, a majority of whom are believed to back Jeremy Corbyn.

The scale of the operation has been revealed after Tom Watson, the deputy leader, provoked a bitter row with Corbyn when he raised concerns about "Trotskyist entryists" last week. The Labour leader's team accused Watson of "peddling conspiracy theories".

However, the verification process for new members and registered supporters, or "Trot hunting" as Labour moderates have dubbed it, had thrown up about 10,000 suspected entryists by late last week.

Many of those were new members who lost the right to vote on Friday, when the Appeal Court ruled Labour had the power to stop those who joined the party after January 12 taking part in the election.

Party staff face a race against time to vet the army of registered supporters who can vote, before ballot papers are sent out on August 22.

Anyone suspected of belonging to a rival party, not supporting Labour's aims and values, or accused of abusive or threatening behaviour is referred to two panels that decide whether to take away their vote.

The process is being applied "significantly more systematically" than last year, according to party insiders, in order to ensure that only those who should be taking part can vote for Corbyn or his challenger, Owen Smith.