# Jeremy Corbyn criticises Keir Starmer’s ‘island of strangers’ phrase and pushes for social justice at Wide Awake Festival



Jeremy Corbyn has recently taken centre stage at the Wide Awake Festival in Brockwell Park, London, where he strongly challenged Sir Keir Starmer's controversial use of the phrase “island of strangers” in a significant immigration announcement. As the former leader of the Labour Party, now an independent MP after his removal from the party's whip, Corbyn’s critique of what he described as divisive rhetoric shines a spotlight on the growing discontent among voters regarding Labour's direction. His assertion that the UK's richness lies in its diversity—“Let’s hear no more of this nonsense about this being a country of strangers”—echoes a wider call for political discourse that genuinely embraces community rather than exclusion.

Starmer's comments not only invite scrutiny but also reveal a troubling trend for the Labour Party—a drift towards language that some might consider eerily reminiscent of past xenophobic statements. The rhetoric reflects a party grappling with its identity at a time when many feel that it has lost touch with the electorate’s concerns over immigration and national identity. Corbyn’s statement that “our community, our strength, our joy… is our diversity” serves as a powerful reminder of the need for a narrative that champions integration and unity, particularly in a dynamic city like London.

In addition to his immigration critique, Corbyn utilized the platform to push for broader social justice initiatives, urging the festival-goers to voice their opposition to British arms sales to Israel amidst ongoing conflicts. His passionate call to action, “please be there, raise your voice. It matters by giving inspiration to those people going through the most ghastly times of their lives,” rightly aligns with the pressing need for ethical foreign policy—an area where the current government appears markedly lacking.

Moreover, Corbyn proposed a dramatic overhaul of economic policy, advocating for increased taxation on the wealthy to fund vital public services. “You can’t achieve equality and justice if you extol the virtues of billionaires and do nothing about taking money off them,” he contended, challenging the neoliberal ideologies that have long dominated UK politics. This sharp critique invites a necessary discussion about the fiscal responsibilities of the wealthy and reflects the frustrations of many who feel abandoned by a political class prioritising corporate interests.

The Wider Awake Festival, despite its cultural appeal featuring an eclectic range of musical genres, also found itself under scrutiny from local residents displeased with its environmental impact. The festival's significant occupation of Brockwell Park has sparked legal challenges against Lambeth Council, claiming they sidestepped necessary planning regulations. A recent High Court ruling deeming the council’s actions as “irrational” highlights the ongoing tensions between urban development and local activism, casting a critical light on the governance from the new Labour administration.

Corbyn's address underscores the powerful intersection of cultural events and political discourse, reinforcing how public platforms can galvanise dissent against mainstream narratives. The evolving conversations around immigration, social justice, and local activism reveal the complexities of contemporary British society, where sentiment is increasingly contested, showcasing the urgent need for a credible opposition that truly reflects the concerns of the public.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/jeremy-corbyn-criticises-starmers-island-of-strangers-speech-at-festival-NSL3XCAUPFMF5JJYD2OMDV5DPQ/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/jeremy-corbyn-criticises-starmers-island-of-strangers-speech-at-festival-NSL3XCAUPFMF5JJYD2OMDV5DPQ/> - Jeremy Corbyn criticized Sir Keir Starmer's use of the phrase 'island of strangers' in an immigration announcement at the Wide Awake Festival in Brockwell Park, London. Corbyn emphasized the UK's diversity and unity, contrasting Starmer's remarks with Enoch Powell's 1968 'rivers of blood' speech. He also called for an end to British arms sales to Israel and advocated for higher taxes on the wealthy to fund public services.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/culture/music/wide-awake-festival-review-dance-rock-brockwell-park-london-b1003100.html> - A review of the Wide Awake Festival in Brockwell Park, London, highlighting its second edition in 2022. The festival featured a mix of dance and rock genres, with headliners like Bicep and Primal Scream. The event aimed to blend underground post-punk music with dance and techno, showcasing a diverse lineup and innovative genre cross-pollination.
4. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/wide-awake-2025-tickets-1296704922329> - Eventbrite listing for Wide Awake 2025, an independent festival in Brockwell Park, London, scheduled for May 23, 2025. The festival aims to showcase emerging talent across genres like leftfield indie, post-punk, electronica, and techno. The lineup includes artists such as Kneecap, CMAT, English Teacher, Peaches, and Daniel Avery.
5. <https://www.nme.com/blogs/festivals-blog/wide-awake-festival-south-london-caroline-polachek-3450008> - An article discussing the Wide Awake Festival 2023, emphasizing its unique lineup and bold booking choices. The festival featured artists like Caroline Polachek, Shygirl, Daniel Avery, and Molchat Doma. It aimed to stand out in a crowded festival scene by offering a diverse and unconventional lineup.
6. <https://www.efestivals.co.uk/festivals/wideawake/2023> - eFestivals page for Wide Awake 2023, detailing the festival's date, location, and lineup. Scheduled for May 27, 2023, at Brockwell Park, London, the festival featured acts such as A Place To Bury Strangers, Alex G, Caroline Polachek, and Black Country New Road. The event focused on genres like leftfield indie, post-punk, electronica, and techno.
7. <https://wideawakelondon.co.uk/> - Official website for Wide Awake Festival, an independent music festival held in Brockwell Park, London. The site provides information about the festival's history, lineup, and ticketing. It highlights the festival's commitment to showcasing emerging talent across various music genres, including leftfield indie, post-punk, electronica, and techno.