



c/o Finchley and Golders Green Labour Party, 38 Church Lane, London, N2 8DT

Andy Kerr

Chair, Labour's NEC
The Labour Party
105 Victoria Street
London
SW1E 6QT

17th July 2018

WITHOUT PREJUDICE

Dear Andy and the NEC,

We wrote last week expressing our extreme concern that the NEC had unanimously accepted a new definition of antisemitism under the pretence that the Jewish Labour Movement had approved the documents, which was not the case.

The Jewish Labour Movement ask you to formally reject the three papers passed at NEC Organisation Sub-Committee last week, and request that they are re-drawn with the complete involvement and official sign off from the Labour Party's Jewish affiliate of 98 years.

Sadly, the battle over antisemitism has once again been played out over the pages of our national media. This is no surprise as the Jewish community are united in rage and disappointment.

JLM has attached to this letter a specific legal note on the code of conduct from a Legal academic which has been validated as accurate by an eminent QC. In its assessment of the flaws in the new proposed definition it states "The Party has [therefore] exposed itself to a well-founded allegation of institutional racism, and potentially legal action." This letter is without prejudice, we are not yet instigating a legal dispute.

JLM also attaches to this a letter signed by 68 leading British Rabbis, including the spiritual heads of five denominations of Judaism, which has appeared in the Guardian. Collectively, the signatures represent hundreds of thousands of members of our community. The signatures are drawn from across the religious and political spectrum. Some signatures are current members of our Party, some former, and some have no connection to socialism. They are however, unified, in concern as to how the Labour Party is treating their congregants and members. This should be fair warning as to how serious the situation between the

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Jewish community and the Labour Party is and passing the three papers will make this infinitely worse.

Alongside our spiritual leaders, our communal leaders have also spoken out. Hannah Weisfeld, founder and Director of Yachad, a left-wing Jewish charity focussing on opposing the occupation and bringing an end to the Israel-Palestine conflict, said “while trust remains at rock bottom between the Jewish community and the party, it would have helped build confidence. Instead, it is now all too easy to believe that Labour has refused to adopt the full IHRA definition because it does not want to confront antisemitic members of the party.” We’d strongly encourage you to read her piece, it reflects the opinion of many left-wing Jews. Yachad has not once shied away from criticising the Israeli government but has always felt the IHRA definition reflects the vast majority of Jewish opinion. It makes it explicitly clear that it does not see harsh criticism of Israel as antisemitic. It is entirely possible to criticise Israel and fight antisemitism at the same time.”

Additionally, the Jewish Leadership Council, Board of Deputies and Community Security Trust issued a statement saying the code of conduct was “not fit for purpose” and had provoked “widespread anger” among British Jews. We urge you to listen to the Jewish community.

Furthermore, Mark Weitzman the author of the IHRA definition, which the Labour Party has assumed they know better than, said the failure to adopt the full definition is a “clear signal of the party’s refusal to deal with the reality of anti-Semitism in its ranks”. The chair of IHRA’s committee on antisemitism and Holocaust denial is an expert in the field. He cannot be ignored.

The Jewish Labour Movement would like to thank the Parliamentary Labour Party for overwhelmingly passing a motion in support of IHRA last night. It is heartening to see that there are elements of the Labour Party who are willing to listen to their Jewish comrades and support them in the struggle against the racism they face. We pay tribute to the Jewish MPs who have faced unimaginable abuse and carrying on speaking out. They are the very best of our Party, and we are honoured to have them on JLM’s Parliamentary Council. The Jewish Labour Movement encourages the NEC to follow the lead of the PLP.

Time and time again the Jewish Labour Movement has engaged with the width and breadth of our Party, as honest brokers, to try and build bridges between our Party and our community. We are Jewish socialists, bound together by faith and politics. The Labour Party is forcing us to pick between our community and our Party. This has to stop.

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The NEC today have one final chance to actually listen to our community and start mending the relationship between the Jewish community and the Labour Party. The Jewish Labour Movement strongly recommends that the three papers at passed at the NEC Organisation Sub-Committee are formally rejected, and the IHRA definition, in it's full and unamended form is used solely as the Labour Party's definition of antisemitism, as passed in December 2016.

Yours sincerely,

The Jewish Labour Movement

cc

Jennie Formby—General Secretary, Labour Party

Laura Murray—Stakeholder Manager, Leader of the Opposition

John Cryer MP—Chair, Parliamentary Labour Party



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