



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

Ruth George MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

15 May 2019

Dear Ruth

Last week the Jewish Chronicle reported on the election of Cllr Rachael Abbotts in the recent local elections and references action you took in relation to her sharing of clearly antisemitic, Holocaust revisionist material, and your subsequent support for her ([Labour activist shared neo-Nazi material, is still embraced by local party - and now elected councillor](#), Jewish Chronicle, 8 May 2019).

I am writing in light of this report on behalf of JLM's National Executive Committee, to explain why this case is so serious, why it has caused such upset within the Jewish community and to ascertain what steps you have and will take to address this.

As I am sure you will be aware, details of this story emerged in the Jewish Chronicle on Tuesday 19th February 2019, causing great distress to Jewish members of the Labour Party, and the Jewish community more widely. This included sharing a claim that "people seem to forget that it was the Jews who declared war on Germany".

Cllr Abbotts also posted a screenshot of an article on this subject from the *Wintersonnenwende* website, a site known for its Holocaust revisionism. The Jewish Chronicle's research makes clear this material came from virulently neo-Nazi, Holocaust denying sources. As I am sure you can imagine, the origin and content of this post are hugely offensive to Jewish people.

To be clear, the idea that as Jews, we brought the Holocaust on ourselves, is one of the most sickening and disturbing ways in which modern antisemitism expresses itself. The sharing and promoting of this theory, particularly through a neo-Nazi website, stands out as one of the more shocking cases of antisemitism in the Labour Party in recent years.

It's important to note the dangers of sharing such information online. In addition to the severe pain and anguish it causes Jewish people, especially the many who lost loved ones in the Holocaust, it also normalises the theories involved. This can lead to comments or actions in real life towards Jewish members which makes them feel unsafe in meetings or whilst campaigning. This is not an abstract argument about twentieth century history. It is real and present in the dangers it creates for Jewish people and the toxic atmosphere it creates in the Party for Jewish members.

I hope you can now understand why this case is so egregious.

Given the seriousness of this case, can you set out your reporting of the incident to both the local CLP/Local Campaign Forum and national Party - how you satisfied yourself that the former bodies were able to make an informed judgment on the case; and that Labour Party Head Office had received and were processing your complaint? Also, was there consideration and contact with the local Labour Group Leader and Chief Whip of putative action?

The Jewish Labour Movement represents over 2000 Labour supporting members of the Jewish community and has been affiliated to the Labour Party since 1920.



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Given that you were clearly aware of the nature of the material shared, irrespective of the outcomes (or lack thereof) of any investigating process, it is extremely disappointing that you failed to call out the hate shared publicly and use your leadership role both within the Party and your local community, to stand clearly in solidarity against anti-Jewish racism.

To that end, I would urge you to publicly support the new investigation by the national Party into Cllr Abbotts's activity (reported in the Jewish Chronicle article); and to call for the suspension of Cllr Abbotts from the Labour Group, pending the outcome of this investigation.

More widely, I would ask you to consider ways of showing solidarity now to Jewish Labour Party members and to the Jewish community; and what steps you are taking to demonstrate a much greater understanding of antisemitism, for instance by undertaking the Yad Veshem online course. Will you make a clear statement of support for the full International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism; and, now that Labour runs your local authority, encourage the council to sign up to the IHRA definition, as many Labour councils across the country have already done?

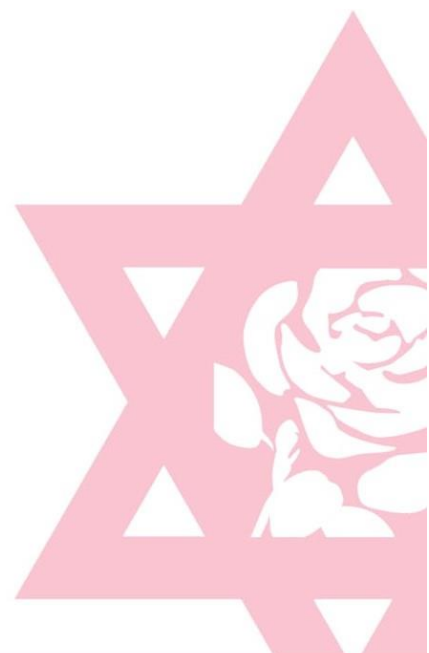
I would be happy to meet you with JLM colleagues to discuss what is a sensitive case. However, we do need to be clear that we expect real solidarity from Labour MPs when facing anti-Jewish racism, as we trust they would give to addressing any other form of hate or discrimination - which means calling it out clearly amongst our own membership whenever and wherever it occurs.

Thank you in advance for your help in this matter. I am copying this letter to the Chief Whip, PLP Chair and Deputy Leader and, due to the significant public interest in this incident, I am making a copy of this letter public.

Yours sincerely

Mike Katz
National Chair, Jewish Labour Movement

cc Tom Watson MP
Rt Hon Nick Brown MP
John Cryer MP



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