



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

TO: THE SHADOW CABINET

19 July 2019

Dear Shadow Cabinet member

I write ahead of your unprecedented meeting of the Shadow Cabinet to discuss the crisis of anti-Jewish racism in the Party.

That this meeting is happening at all is heart-breaking and would have been beyond comprehension four years ago. The Jewish community is in despair that the Party has proven so unable and unwilling to deal effectively with this problem. Its history and its values have been intertwined with that of the Labour Movement since the Party's inception; indeed, this is reflected in JLM's proud history of 99 years of affiliation.

Yet earlier this year our membership seriously contemplated severing this link and the question of affiliation still remains on the table for us.

At that time, you urged us to stay and fight. This solidarity was appreciated; but since then the situation has just worsened, culminating in the dreadful revelations of Panorama, and the equally abysmal reaction of the Party in seeking to muzzle whistle blowers (rightly inviting charges of hypocrisy) and shoot the messenger.

Nothing served better to reinforce the message of the programme that political allies and fellow travellers are protected from justice than this reaction. It told us that Labour's leadership was more interested in covering up racism, rather than cleaning it up.

As well as immediately desisting from the attacks and legal threats directed at whistle blowers, who deserve an apology, there must be accountability in the wake of Panorama. Given the severity of the allegations against senior members of staff in the Leader's Office and Southside, we must see suspensions and a full, independent investigation into those individuals accused.

Since Panorama we have seen more whistle blowers come forward. Labour peers, the Tribune Group of MPs and Party staff and their unions, have all urged concerted action. Indeed, the day after you meet, the NEC will consider a motion calling for "radical change and fresh thinking in our disciplinary rules to swiftly and fairly root out the evils of racism in our party and restore confidence in our processes".

We endorse this resolve and commend the motion's proposals for rule changes which would mean automatic exclusion of a member from the party where there is irrefutable evidence of racism, sexism, misogyny, homophobia or transphobia and establishment of an independent process to deal with disciplinary matters involving any such discrimination.

I hope the NEC also repeats its demand to see the Party's submission to the Equalities and Human Rights Commission. It should concern every member of the Party that its governing body - up to and including its Chair - which is responsible for ensuring the party meets its statutory and regulatory duties, has been refused sight of such a key document by party staff. In any other organisation, trustees would not brook such side-lining. Sadly, the factional majority on the NEC, would prefer to see no evil than fulfil their duties to their members.

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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Whilst the NEC provides the administrative leadership of the Party, you, the Shadow Cabinet, provide its political leadership. We are sorely in need of real leadership on antisemitism, having lacked any up to this point. This is your chance to lead.

JLM, our supporters and the wider Jewish community despair at the lack of resolve, the repetition of worn words with no effort or intention to act. This hasn't improved since the current General Secretary was appointed. Indeed, our referral to the EHRC came as a last resort, as we found the Party has continued to act in bad faith, to ignore our counsel and undermine our status as the sole Jewish affiliate.

The Party says the cases it has seen represents only 0.06% of the membership. Putting aside the fact that people have so little confidence in the process that they do not report, or that they leave the Party, the question must be asked - if it is such a small proportion, why has the action taken proven so ineffective?

Whilst the Party trumpets its fourfold increase in the speed of dealing with cases, we can have no confidence in this figure, given the complete opacity of all data around the disciplinary process. It is meaningless, and we have no confidence in it, or that Party's other statistics.

We are confident, however, the EHRC will find that the Party is institutionally racist against Jews. For, as much as policies and process are important, at its heart this a question of leadership and culture.

Whilst we ask why the Party cannot efficiently expel racists, the more fundamental question is why they join in the first place. Why do left conspiratorial antisemites and cranks now regard Labour as their natural political home? Unless and until this question is resolved, this moral stain on the Party and its proud history of fighting discrimination will be indelible.

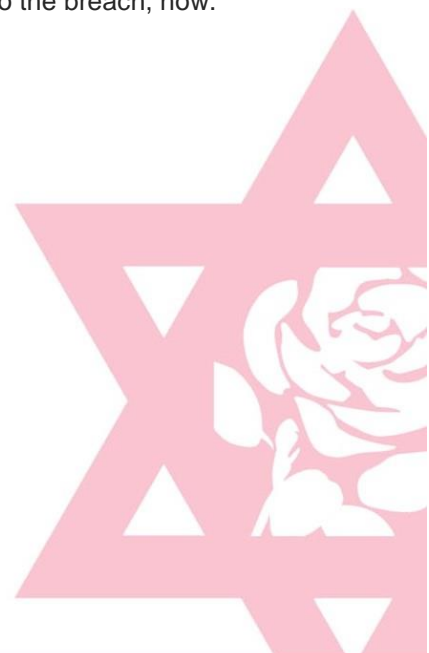
Irrespective of the EHRC's verdict, we are fast approaching a point of no return - for not just JLM, nor the Jewish community, but for the country at large. Polling released this week from Hope not Hate shows that 42% of voters say that Labour antisemitism is a serious and genuine issue and nearly one in two (49%) say the Party should do more to tackle it.

Harold Wilson said the Party is a moral crusade or it is nothing. Never more has moral and political leadership been needed, nor found wanting. You must show real resolve and step into the breach, now.

Please don't be a bystander in this fight for the soul of the Party.

Yours sincerely

Mike Katz
National Chair, Jewish Labour Movement



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