

Dear Jewish Labour Movement,

I would like to put on record my support for the work of the Jewish Labour Movement, which has such a proud tradition in supporting and representing members of the Jewish community in the Labour Party for many years.

I am thankful to have worked with JLM on equalities issues. In my former role as Shadow Minister for Diverse Communities and in my current role as Shadow Minister for Women and Equalities, I have had representatives from Jewish Labour sit on my advisory boards, where they have provided me with invaluable advice and support.

I provided a position for a member of JLM to shadow me and I have ensured that my constituency of Brent Central was one of the first to have training provided by JLM, and we also organised a separate discussion with JLM and other Jewish groups which was a well-attended and comradely discussion. So it is about actively engaging and not just talking about it.

There is no doubt that Labour has badly let down the Jewish community in recent years. Labour did not act quickly enough and did not have robust processes in place early enough to combat the anti-Semitism we saw. It's right that Labour Party representatives apologised. Given our historic mission of fighting for equality for all and against bigotry, our failure in this area is particularly devastating. People, rightly, expected more from us.

I want to be clear that I am committed to doing all I can to eradicate anti-Semitism from British society in general and the Labour Party in particular. The Labour Party should be a safe place and the natural home of the Jewish community.

I know more action is needed to tackle it and win back the trust of our Jewish brothers and sisters and as Deputy Leader, I will work closely with JLM and other representative organisations to solve this problem. I know that my decision to not sign the 10 Pledges of the Board of Deputies has attracted some attention, but I urge everyone to please consider my reasoning on this. I am very experienced in developing disciplinary procedures. I have worked on trade unions and most recently the parliamentary award-winning Independent Complaints and Grievance System.

If I thought that signing these 10 pledges would help solve the problem, I would do it. I endure racism on a daily basis so I know what it feels like. I have dedicated my career and life to fighting racism. That's how I know that the easy route is not always the productive route for systemic change. I fear that signing the pledges without further discussion will result in no positive change and I fear it will just be a token gesture. I will give an example, some candidates were talking about seeing every case on their desk on a Monday morning, they were clapped loudly for this. I had to point out that this would be interfering in an independent system. It may not have been popular, but it is correct.

I also do not think it is prudent that we pre-empt the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) investigation into the Labour Party. The EHRC investigation is unprecedented – we are the only party other than the BNP to be investigated which brings shame on us all. That's why I have pledged unequivocally to implement the recommendations of the EHRC's report in full. I don't want anything to distract from this.

It would be wrong to sign up to any pledge before the EHRC has reported its findings since we have no idea how compatible the recommendations will be with the pledges we're being asked to sign. We need a sustainable and substantial solution to a longstanding problem. So I would rather wait and do what makes sense in the fight against anti-Semitism rather than what is expedient for my campaign.

What I can commit to is working with the Jewish community and organisations, including the Board of Deputies, to discuss this issue and to look at implementing the 10 pledges once we begin the process of implementing the EHRC's recommendations. That would be the appropriate approach to take.

I have offered on several occasions to meet with the Jewish Labour Movement to discuss anti-Semitism in the Labour Party, and most recently following my statement on the Board of Deputies

10 pledges. I think this meeting needs to happen as engagement with Jewish Labour is vital if we are to make progress on this issue as a party.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to accommodate my request for a meeting during the general election campaign. However, I have since written to JLM on 17th January to offer a meeting and while I have not yet received a response, my offer to sit down and discuss these really important issues remains open.

Socialists have a proud tradition of standing firm against bigotry and prejudice; there is a feted tradition within the Jewish community of making alliances with other oppressed groups and working within the socialist movement. I always remember the fact that, when my family first came to this country from Jamaica, they suffered horrendous racism and discrimination and it was the local Jewish families who would check up on them and make sure they were OK. This always reminds me of the fact that we are all in it together and I will always stand up for the Jewish community. I vow to do everything in my power to make sure we do.

While it is so imperative that we tackle anti-Semitism and get our own house in order, it is also vital that we have a Deputy Leader who can win and deliver the transformative change that this country needs. I believe I am that candidate.

It's time for Labour to unite and focus on the only thing that matters, which is returning to power so we can build on our 2017 and 2019 manifestos and deliver a transformative programme in Government.

I have a proven record of being a team player who puts the party first. I'm the only candidate in this race who has served in a Labour Government under two Labour Prime Ministers, as well as in the Shadow Cabinet holding the Government to account and forcing U-turns. As Deputy I will work constructively with whomever the party chooses as Leader. However, I have also demonstrated my principles, such as when I was one of the few MPs to vote against the Welfare Reform Bill. I am determined to ensure that we stay an anti-austerity party.

I'm a proud trade union activist and I know how to come back from defeat. In 2015 I won back my seat with a 28.4% swing - the biggest in the country. With half of that swing nationally we will see a Labour government once again. I'll use my experience of coming back strong from defeat to help secure a Labour government.

As a working-class feminist and socialist with a track record of fighting and delivering, I have the experience to help unite the party and prepare for power. My C.O.R.E. strategy - Campaign, Organise, Recruit, Educate - is ready to go and this will be the basis of our fightback.

I made history when I became the first ever elected black woman to become a government minister. Together we can make history again and it would be an honour if I were to receive the endorsement of JLM in this campaign.

In solidarity,

Dawn Butler MP