



Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Wednesday 28th March 2018

Dear Mr Corbyn,

Thank you for your letter of 26 March, setting out your detailed views on the problem of antisemitism in the Labour Party.

We are sure you saw the strength of feeling in the mainstream Jewish community that was expressed in our open letter and in Parliament Square on Monday. These were unprecedented steps on our part and we hope you understand the seriousness of such a communal action. It arose from more than two years of cumulative anger and despair in the Jewish community at repeated, numerous cases of antisemitism in the Labour Party and failures to deal with them in a decisive, swift and public manner. For whatever reasons, you have not, until now, seemed to grasp how strongly British Jews feel about the situation. Your letter was a welcome change in this regard, but only if it marks a new era of consistent and strong action and leadership to tackle the problem.

Consequently, we appreciate your apology for the pain caused by antisemitism in the Labour Party and for your prior comments regarding the antisemitic mural; and your acknowledgement that this is not just “a matter of a few bad apples”, but represents a particular way of thinking. For the situation to meaningfully improve, rather than keep worsening, this understanding will require embedding across the Party.

Any meeting between us must produce concrete, practical outcomes to be implemented by the Party; there is no point in meeting if the situation remains the same or continues to worsen. In this spirit, and to enable a meeting to take place, we propose an agenda of actions for discussion:

Leadership

The Party leadership, and you personally, must be seen and heard to lead this work. Only your voice can persuade your followers that this a necessary and correct course of action. If



actions need to be passed by the NEC or other Party bodies, you need to take personal responsibility for ensuring this happens.

Antisemitism disciplinary cases

Outstanding and future cases to be brought to a swift conclusion under a fixed timescale. An independent, mutually agreed ombudsman should be appointed to oversee performance, reporting to the Party and to the Board of Deputies and Jewish Leadership Council.

Relations with suspended members

MPs, councillors and other party members should not share platforms with people who have been suspended or expelled for antisemitism and CLPs should not provide them with a platform. Anybody doing so should themselves be suspended from membership; in the case of MPs, they should lose the party whip.

Education

The Party should circulate the IHRA definition of antisemitism, with all its examples and clauses, to all members and branches. The Party should work with mainstream Jewish community organisations to develop and implement education about antisemitism. This should include a clear list of unacceptable language, such as the use of 'Zio' and 'Zionist' as terms of abuse, based on the full IHRA definition and on the examples included in your letter of 26 March.

Engagement

Public confirmation that the Party will seek to understand and engage with the Jewish community via its main representative groups, and not through fringe organisations who wish to obstruct the Party's efforts to tackle antisemitism.

Process

These changes must be sustained and enduring. There needs to be an agreed process to monitor the progress and implementation of these actions in the future.

To conclude, your personal pledge to be a "militant opponent" of antisemitism and to always be our ally are vital statements: the situation demands it and we would expect nothing less. In this light, there is an urgent matter that we need you to address. People inside and outside the Jewish community are repeatedly subjected to abuse and insults for raising the issue of antisemitism in the Labour Party. This even affects those Labour MPs



who showed their solidarity with the Jewish community on Monday. This is a disgrace: nobody should be vilified for opposing antisemitism. Those Labour Party members and Labour-supporting blogs pushing the abuse are largely doing so in your name. They need to hear you say, publicly and in your own voice, that we had every right to protest about antisemitism, and that Labour MPs had every right to support us; that our concerns about antisemitism are sincere and not a “smear” as has been widely alleged (including on your own Facebook page); and that anyone directing abuse, intimidation or threats at those of us who oppose antisemitism is damaging your efforts to eliminate it and to start rebuilding trust. We firmly believe that this must happen urgently, and certainly before we meet.

We hope this can be the start of a process of constructive anti-racist work in the Labour Party, one that will help to rebuild the relationship between the Party and the Jewish community. The Party and the Jewish community deserve nothing less.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Goldstein
Chair
Jewish Leadership Council

Jonathan Arkush
President
Board of Deputies of British Jews