

Ged Grebby  
Show Racism the Red Card  
The Linskill Centre  
North Shields  
Tyne & Wear  
NE30 2AY

13<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Dear Mr Grebby

I hope this letter finds you well.

Further to your recent conversation with our Interfaith and Social Action Officer Anthony Silkoff, I am writing on behalf of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, which represents the Jewish community in Britain.

As you are aware, we are very concerned about your appointment of Ken Loach as a judge for Show Racism The Red Card's school competition. We find this particularly disappointing, given the support we have previously provided you, for example in this article<sup>1</sup> that I wrote last year.

As I wrote in that piece, *"it cannot be left to the black community alone to call out anti-black racism. It cannot be up to Jews alone to call out antisemitism. What is needed is solidarity."* I stand by those words, and trust that this letter will be considered by you and your trustees in that same spirit of solidarity.

Ken Loach is a poor choice of judge for an anti-racism competition. Dave Rich, Head of Policy at the Community Security Trust, has summarised some of the main concerns about Mr Loach as follows:

- In 1987 Mr Loach directed a play called *Perdition* that alleged Zionist/Nazi collaboration. It was denounced as wildly inaccurate by leading historians and as grossly antisemitic by many in the Jewish community.

As David Cesarani explains<sup>2</sup>, there is no doubt about the play's malign intentions. Its author Jim Allen said that the play "touches at the heart of the most abiding myth of modern history, the Holocaust. Because it says quite plainly that privileged Jewish leaders collaborated in the extermination of their own kind in order to help bring about a Zionist state, Israel, a state which is itself racist." Cesarani explains that antisemitic tropes go to the very heart of the play, which portrays Jews as an "all-powerful" force which could have, but chose not to, resisted the Nazis, in Berlin, Budapest or Washington. And this is reinforced throughout the play by ascriptions of Jewish cruelty, callousness, expediency and ruthlessness, all in the pursuit of Zionism.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/jewish-and-black-communities-must-line-up-together-on-football-racism/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-349-11262-3\\_5](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-349-11262-3_5)

As a result of the condemnation, the play was cancelled, and Mr Loach was furious. Mr Loach said: "I hadn't tangled with the Zionist lobby before... What is amazing is the strength & organisation & power of their lobby."<sup>3</sup> They have "extraordinary arrogance".<sup>4</sup>

In the same interview with Newsline, the paper of the Workers Revolutionary Party, Mr Loach complained about "the generalised sense of guilt that everyone has about the Jews."<sup>5</sup>

- In 2009 the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency reported an increase in antisemitism in Europe. Mr Loach said this antisemitism was "understandable" given Israel's actions, and called the report a "red herring" designed to "distract attention" from Israel.<sup>6</sup>
- Last year Mr Loach was asked whether it was unacceptable to debate whether the Holocaust happened or not. "History is there for us all to discuss" was his answer.<sup>7</sup>

In the same interview he said there is "no validity" to stories of antisemitism in Labour and when MPs raise it they are "mischief-making".

He later clarified his view: the Holocaust did happen but claims of antisemitism in Labour are "exaggerated or false". He insisted that "We will not be intimidated".<sup>8</sup>

In addition, as we already highlighted ourselves, Mr Loach has said of Members of Parliament who protested against antisemitism, "those are the ones we need to kick out."<sup>9</sup>

For all these reasons, Mr Loach is a wholly unsuitable judge of any anti-racism competition. We urge you to reconsider his appointment.

As was agreed between yourself and Anthony Silkoff, please share this letter with your trustees, and we look forward to hearing their decision by the end of February.

Yours sincerely,



**Amanda Bowman**  
Vice-President

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<sup>3</sup> <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/DbxvCOgXkAAhch9?format=jpg&name=360x360>

<sup>4</sup> <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/DbxvEZYW4AA2chQ?format=jpg&name=360x360>

<sup>5</sup> [https://pbs.twimg.com/media/DbxvR1\\_W4AAebWr?format=jpg&name=small](https://pbs.twimg.com/media/DbxvR1_W4AAebWr?format=jpg&name=small)

<sup>6</sup> <https://normblog.typepad.com/normblog/2009/03/an-understandable-hatred.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-politics-41404925/ken-loach-on-false-anti-semitism-claims-by-labour-mps>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/13/opinion/ken-loach-holocaust-anti-semitism.html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/kick-them-out-ken-loach-demands-removal-of-labour-mps-who-attended-antisemitism-rally-1.462090>