

James Dickens

What is or has been your connection with or interest in the Labour Party?

I was a consistent Labour voter until the rise of Tony Blair's 'New Labour'. I subsequently became a member of the Green Party, disgusted by New Labour's lack of principle and collusion with corporate lobbies.

Please describe any form of antisemitism, islamophobia or other racism that you have experienced or observed within the Party?

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What is your understanding of the Party's ethics, rules and procedures for dealing with any form of inappropriate language or conduct?

I understand that the official Labour Party policy is to deal fairly and decisively with any form of inappropriate language or conduct.

Have you any positive suggestions for the future, including training, codes of conduct, rules and discipline for members, candidates and representatives of the party?

1. It is vital not to confuse anti-Semitism with criticism of Israel. This repeatedly done by extreme pro-Zionists in the Labour Party, such as John Mann, who have adopted a politically motivated definition of anti-Semitism, intended to outlaw support for Palestinian rights: <http://jfjfp.com/?p=41734>. In 2013, Mr. Mann appeared together with then Labour MP, Denis MacShane, as a witness on Mr. Fraser's behalf at the 2013 Ronnie Fraser vs. UCU employment tribunal hearing, in which Mr. Fraser accused the University lecturers' union, the UCU, of anti-Semitism. The tribunal ruling commented: "Mr Mann led for them and the more conciliatory tone of Dr MacShane gave way to a somewhat hostile display in which Mr Mann made no bones about his view that the union was operating in an anti-Semitic way and that those at its head must address the problem. He did not explain what the anti-Semitic behaviour was supposed to have consisted of besides referring to the boycott debate and characterising any boycott of Israel or Israeli institutions as itself anti-Semitic. [...] when it came to anti-Semitism in the context of debate about the Middle East, he announced, "It's clear to me where the line is ..." but unfortunately eschewed the opportunity to locate it for us: <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/JCO/Documents/Judgments/eemployment-trib-fraser-v-uni-college-union-judgment.pdf>. Examples of this kind of abuse of anti-Semitism include an attempt was made by JSoc [Jewish Society] in 2014 to ban from speaking at my university the well known Jewish supporter of Palestinian rights, Max Blumenthal, on the grounds that he was 'anti-Semitic'.

2. It is vital that the Labour Party gives its members freedom to speak out against oppression and discrimination without being branded racists because others oppose their views. It was partly New Labour's ruthless closing down within the Labour Party of open debate about issues of justice which destroyed my belief in the Labour Party as a force for good. In recent weeks, the governments of the Netherlands, Sweden and Ireland have all affirmed the rights of their citizens to support the movement for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) in support of Palestinian legal rights (as determined under international law): <http://mondoweiss.net/2016/05/governments-sweden-speaking/>. 356 European human rights organisations, church groups, trade unions and political parties have also called on the EU to support their right to boycott: <http://www.eccpalestine.org/352-european-human-rights-organisations-church-group-trade-unions-and-political-parties-call-on-the-eu-to-support-their-right-to-bds/#sthash.OMBXb08v.dpuf>