

LABOUR JEWS ASSERT:

The Labour Party does not have a ‘problem with Jews’

We are witnessing a wave of hysteria over claims that the Labour Party is rife with antisemitism and has a “problem with Jews”. We know this is not true. But there is indeed a problem. Some people – Jewish and otherwise, inside and outside the party – are wielding ‘antisemitism’ allegations as a stick to beat the Corbyn leadership, regardless of the damage caused.

Jeremy Corbyn and others have done their best to respond, rightly asserting their impeccable anti-racist credentials, treating specific allegations of antisemitism seriously, investigating them and taking appropriate measures. This is no more and no less than should happen with allegations of racism or discrimination of any kind. In fact Corbyn has gone further, setting up an independent commission of inquiry.

But this has not satisfied those sections of the pro-Israel lobby orchestrating the attacks. They have targeted Malia Bouattia, the first Muslim woman to be elected president of the National Union of Students, on the thinnest of pretexts and despite her consistently principled stance.

Within the Labour party, casualties continue to mount.

- Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) founder member and lifelong anti-racist Tony Greenstein, SUSPENDED without being informed of the charges against him
- Naz Shah MP, SUSPENDED on the basis of a few inappropriate social media posts which she evidently regrets
- Former London mayor Ken Livingstone SUSPENDED for ill-chosen words when defending Shah
- Jackie Walker, Vice Chair of the National Steering Committee of Momentum, black, anti-racist activist and an Executive Committee member of the Labour Representation Committee, SUSPENDED for alleged antisemitism.

Make no mistake – this campaign of vilification is intended to undermine the Corbyn leadership and crush support for the solidarity movement working to achieve for Palestinians basic rights that are endorsed by international legal bodies. We need to resist this witch hunt and assert the right to campaign in solidarity with all oppressed people, including Palestinians.

We urge labour movement and other anti-racist organisations to:

Reiterate our strong commitment to combating all forms of racism and to defending those who are subjected to it. This means opposing Islamophobia, prejudice against migrants and racism against ethnic and religious minorities, including anti-Jewish racism.

Reject the suggestion that questioning the Zionist ideology of the Israeli state and its supporters, both Jews and non-Jews, entails anti-Jewish prejudice. Not all Jews are Zionists. Not all Zionists are Jews. Campaigning to end the injustices inflicted by Israel on the Palestinian people is in the very best traditions of the British Labour movement.

Urge the leaders of our organisations to:

- listen to the many Jews who are outraged by the lie that Jews are not safe in the Labour Party;
- cease victimising those who work for justice for Palestine;
- adhere to fair practice and transparency when investigating charges against members;
- call to order Labour Party members who bring the party into disrepute by spreading calumnies about widespread antisemitism in the party.

Free Speech on Israel is a new network of labour, trade union and other anti-racist activists, mainly Jews, united in countering the attacks on our movement.

For more material and actions, see our new website, www.freespeechonisrael.org.uk

Contact freespeechonisrael@gmail.com to request speakers

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