

ADVISORY POSITION PAPER FOR TRADE UNION AND LABOUR PARTY MEMBERS & DELEGATES ON ANTISEMITISM, TRAINING AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Who We Are - Free Speech On Israel (www.freespeechonisrael.org.uk)

Free Speech on Israel is a network of labour, green and trade union activists in the UK, mainly Jewish, who came together in April 2016 to counter attempts by pro-Israel right wingers to brand the campaign for justice for Palestinians as antisemitic. Many of us are members of Jews for Justice for Palestinians, Jews for Jeremy, Jewish Socialists' Group, Independent Jewish Voices, Jews for Boycotting Israeli Goods, Young Jewish Left and Jewdas.

- We do not believe there is a wave of antisemitism in the Labour Party
- The attacks form part of two highly orchestrated campaigns: one is to undermine the Jeremy Corbyn's leadership of the Labour Party. The other is to suppress the pro-Palestinian voices of Jews, Muslims, Christians, and others of many faiths and none, campaigning for freedom, justice and equality, of which Jeremy Corbyn has been a leading spokesperson.
- We 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 antisemitism.
- We reject the suggestion that questioning the current Zionist ideology of the Israeli state and its supporters, both Jews and non-Jews is antisemitic. Not all Jews are Zionists. Not all Zionists are Jews. Zionism is a political ideology, it is not an article of religious faith nor is it intrinsically a part of Jewishness.
- In the very best traditions of the British Labour movement we campaign to end the injustices inflicted by Israel on the Palestinian people.

The Jewish Labour Movement

- The JLM is affiliated to the World Zionist Organisation (WZO), a major funder of the illegal settlements.
- The JLM is an affiliate of the World Labour Zionist Movement (WLZM), supporting its Jerusalem Programme - which claims its homeland to be Eretz Yisrael (Great Israel), i.e. all the land from the sea to the Jordan river, thus appropriating the whole of the Occupied Palestinian Territories.
- The WLZM claims all of Jerusalem as its capital, which means expelling the Palestinians from East-Jerusalem.
- The purpose of the JLM is to justify the actions of the Israeli state, whomsoever is in power.
- The JLM's parent party is the Israeli Labour Party, which has never condemned the occupation. Labour's Premier, Herzog, recently stated, "I wish to separate from as many Palestinians as possible, as quickly as possible...we'll erect a big wall between us". There are 1.4 million Palestinians who live in Israel itself.

Leading Israeli Cabinet members have made the following statements:-

- Speaking of Israeli Arab members of Parliament, Defence Minister Lieberman said, "The fate of the collaborators in the Knesset will be identical to [...] those who collaborated with the Nazis [...] executed after the Nuremberg trials at the end of the War. I hope that will be the fate of collaborators in this house." And, "When there is a contradiction between democratic and Jewish values, the Jewish and Zionist values are more important."
- Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked, posted on Facebook during Israel's 2014 attack on Gaza, "The entire Palestinian people is the enemy [...] including its elderly and its women, its cities and its villages, its property and its infrastructure."
- The JLM makes no criticism of these statements nor disassociates itself from them. In fact Herzog sought to join his Israeli Labour Party to Netanyahu's coalition government.

For these reasons many Jews in the Labour party do not accept that the JLM can represent us.

The Proposed JLM Rule Change

The motion: "A member of the Party who uses antisemitic, Islamophobic, racist language, sentiments, stereotypes or actions in public, **private, online or offline**, as determined by the NEC, shall be deemed to have engaged in conduct prejudicial to the Party."

"The NCC shall not have regard to the mere holding or expression of beliefs and opinions, **except in instances involving antisemitism, Islamophobia or racism**"

"Where a member is responsible for a hate incident, being defined as something where the victim or anyone else think it was motivated by hostility or prejudice based on disability, race, religion, transgender identity, or sexual orientation, the NEC may have the right to impose the appropriate disciplinary options."

Observations

- It violates the principles of natural justice as there is no provision for independent assessment of prima facie grounds for suspension; suspension would be at the say so of any individual,
 - The inclusion of 'private and offline material' is regulation of private and personal life,
 - It would give extraordinary power over party membership to a tiny group, the JLM, which is neither representative of the majority of Jews in the party nor of the party as a whole.
 - Once adopted it would be difficult to criticise or repeal as this could be defined as antisemitic by the rule itself, and the proposer would be liable to suspension/dismissal. Even quoting current Israelis like IDF General Ya'ir Golan - who likened developments in Israel to 1930's Germany - could lead to suspension if a member of the JLM found them offensive.
 - This is the world of mind control and double speak, of 1984 and Brave New World.
 - But it is the JLM which is proposing to advise the Labour Party on antisemitism as a form of racism, and to be responsible for training in this area, and this was endorsed by Baroness Royall in her report on the Oxford Union, despite having found no evidence of antisemitism.
- ***We do not consider the JLM is fit for this purpose.***

WHAT TO DO

- We believe there is a need for a specific rule on racism, of which antisemitism is one form.
- We believe it is essential that disciplinary procedures should be based on the principles of natural justice, with complete transparency of process.
- We believe that advice and training should be accorded to an independent and representative group and should not, under any circumstances be delegated to a group with a very partial and highly biased political agenda.

CHAKRABARTI RECOMMENDATIONS:

If the commission's recommendations are endorsed by the NEC and proposed as a rule change motion and if:

1. The commission's recommendations meet the above criteria then they should be welcomed and supported.
2. If only some of the recommendations meet these criteria then it should be moved that the motion is taken in parts.
3. If none of the recommendations meet these criteria then it should be opposed, or referred back
 - a. for the disciplinary procedures to be redrafted by an independent legal team to be based on the principles of natural justice and transparency,
 - b. that an independent and representative body be established to provide training and advice.