

ANTISEMITISM POLICY TRUST

ANTISEMITISM AND THE LABOUR PARTY

1. INTRODUCTION

INCIDENTS OF HISTORIC AND CONTEMPORARY ANTISEMITISM

Nearly all political parties have at some point in their existence faced, in some form, allegations of racism, and specifically, antisemitism. The Labour party is not immune from this. In 2003, Labour MP Tam Dalyell complained of a “cabal of Jewish advisers” unduly influencing the Prime Minister.¹ In 2005, though it later withdrew them, Labour denied claims that posters (including one depicting then Conservative party leader, Michael Howard as Dickens’ Fagin) were antisemitic.² In 2010 Labour faced calls to withdraw electoral candidates for their use of antisemitic tropes.³

Regrettably, in recent years, the Labour party has found itself facing further serious allegations. Stories about antisemitism and revelations of antisemitic rhetoric being employed by Labour supporters, members, office holders or others, have been published on an almost monthly basis since February 2016. However, concerns about antisemitism first made headlines the previous year, when Jeremy Corbyn became leader of the Labour party, albeit some matters related to the period prior to his election in May 2015.

Many stories and allegations of antisemitism have been published, with very little clarity on the numbers of reported incidents until 2019.⁴ The veracity⁵ and reliability^{6,7} of the Labour Party data has subsequently been called into question.⁸ In its analysis of antisemitic incidents in 2018, the Community Security Trust (CST) explained that the prominence of stories about antisemitism in the Labour party correlated with a rise in anti-Jewish behaviour, either through inspiring antisemitic acts or increasing awareness of the problem.^{9,10}

ANTISEMITISM AS A ‘WITCH HUNT’ AND OTHER SERIOUS ALLEGATIONS

A number of high-profile Labour figures have made unhelpful, disparaging or dangerous comments in relation to accusations of antisemitism. Anti-Jewish hatred has been dismissed as a ‘smear’ or as being ‘weaponised’ by its victims for political ends. Talk of Jewish and/or right-wing media plotting is dangerous and contrary to the British model for addressing hate crime, namely, the Macpherson principle. This translates to treating perceived victims with sensitivity, recording the crimes they report as ‘racist’ if perceived as such, and investigating claims with due

1 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/2999219.stm

2 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1482484/Labour-drops-flying-pig-and-Fagin-posters.html>

3 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/labour-asked-to-withdraw-anti-zionist-mps-1.14893>

4 <https://labourlist.org/2019/02/jennie-formby-provides-numbers-on-labour-antisemitism-cases/>

5 <https://twitter.com/margarethodge/status/1095011980925169664>

6 <https://twitter.com/daverich1/status/1095007926501150731>

7 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/two-ex-senior-labour-staff-angrily-dismiss-claim-the-party-lacks-comprehensive-way-of-recording-a-1.481122>

8 https://twitter.com/_petermason/status/1095263571439693824

9 <https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2018/02/01/antisemitic-incidents-report-2017>

10 <https://cst.org.uk/data/file/2/9/Incidents%20Report%202018%20-%20web.1549538710.pdf>

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diligence. The Chakrabarti report, detailed below, is explicit: “any seasoned activist who says that they are completely unaware of any such [antisemitic] discourse must be wholly insensitive or completely in denial”.¹¹ Nonetheless, these claims are manifold and have continued.

In February 2016, following allegations of antisemitism at Oxford University Labour Club, former Labour Mayor of London Ken Livingstone stated that he had never heard anyone in the Labour party say anything antisemitic.¹² He repeated this claim in April,¹³ and again thereafter.¹⁴

When challenged about antisemitism by reporter John Pienaar in April 2016, Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn MP voiced opposition to racism, adding “I suspect that much of this criticism about “a crisis” in the party actually comes from those who are nervous of the strength of the Labour Party at a local level”.¹⁵

In May 2016, Shadow Cabinet member Diane Abbott MP dismissed claims that the party had a problem, as “smears”.¹⁶ Unite Trade Union General Secretary Len McCluskey claimed that Corbyn was the victim of “a cynical attempt to manipulate antisemitism for political aims”.¹⁷ That same month, the late, former MP Paul Flynn dismissed the claims, writing that accusations of antisemitism in Labour “are among the wildest and least accurate of insults”.¹⁸

Speaking at a rally in May 2016, Andrew Murray, who was introduced as working for Unite the Union and leading the Stop the War campaign, said antisemitism was being used as the “latest stick to beat Jeremy Corbyn with” and called it a “disgraceful smear campaign” on behalf of the Conservative party.¹⁹ Murray later worked in Jeremy Corbyn’s office during the 2017 election. When the speech was brought back into the public domain in 2019, a Labour source said that Murray had shown strong opposition to antisemitism in the remarks he made and the context of 2016 was different to that of 2019.²⁰

In August 2017, then Shadow Minister Chris Williamson MP said that although he wasn’t ruling incidents of antisemitism out, “it is a really dirty, lowdown trick, particularly the antisemitism smears”, continuing that “[m]any people in the Jewish community are appalled by what they see as the weaponisation of antisemitism for political ends”.²¹ In September, he claimed that online abuse or antisemitism was not from Labour party members, adding that if it was, they would have no place within the Labour party.²² In 2019, Williamson booked a room in the House of Commons for a screening of a film entitled ‘Witchhunt’, an hour long documentary about suspended Labour activist Jackie Walker, which he was then asked to cancel.²³ The anti-racism organisation Hope Not Hate called for him to

11 <https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Chakrabarti-Inquiry-Report-30June16.pdf>

12 <https://order-order.com/2016/02/17/kens-anti-jewish-sentiment/>

13 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/video/2016/apr/28/ken-livingstone-naz-shaw-vanessa-feltz-labour-antisemitic-row-audio>

14 <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/1231326/ken-livingstone-suggests-jeremy-corbyn-did-not-want-to-suspend-him-from-labour-over-hitler-row/>

15 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/apr/28/jeremy-corbyn-denies-labour-crisis-over-antisemitism>

16 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/may/01/diane-abbott-smear-labour-antisemitism-problem-andrew-marr>

17 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/labour-antisemitism-row-suspends-councillor-ilyas-aziz-facebook-posts-israel-us-jeremy-corbyn-a7009771.html>

18 <https://order-order.com/2016/05/03/labour-mp-anti-semitism-nasty-smear-distorted-exaggerated-wholly-untrue/>

19 <http://hurryupharry.org/2017/05/19/andrew-murray-and-antisemitism-smears/>

20 <https://talkradio.co.uk/news/corbyn-adviser-dismissed-antisemitism-claims-smear-19030530124>

21 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/aug/28/make-labour-leadership-rules-more-democratic-urges-shadow-minister>

22 <https://order-order.com/2017/09/20/williamson-no-evidence-of-abuse-from-labour-members/>

23 <https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/labour-party/news/102131/chris-williamson-rapped-labour-after-booking>

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be ejected from the Labour party as a result.²⁴ The same day it emerged that Williamson had said the party was “too apologetic” about antisemitism.²⁵ Once Williamson was suspended, numerous claims emerged that he had fallen victim to a deliberate attack.^{26 27}

In September 2017, interviewed at Labour party conference, film director Ken Loach suggested that some Labour MPs were making “absolute mischief” over claims of antisemitism in the party. He alleged they were seeking to destabilise Jeremy Corbyn because of his backing for Palestinians, and referred to “false stories of antisemitism”.²⁸ Loach made similar comments at an event for ‘Labour Against The Witch Hunt’ in 2018.²⁹ Ken Livingstone and Len McCluskey have also made similar claims to Loach.³⁰ There have also been motions submitted and discussed at trade union meetings and in local labour parties seeking to minimise or refute incidents of alleged antisemitism.³¹

During March 2018, when mainstream Jewish communal concerns were raised about antisemitism in the Labour party, the hashtag ‘the next Corbyn smear’ began to trend on social media and allegations of ‘smears’ were shared on Twitter by at least four Shadow Ministers.

The idea that antisemitism is weaponised also circulated on social media following a proposal at Wavertree Constituency Labour Party to debate a motion of no confidence in relation to local MP Luciana Berger, herself the victim of antisemitic abuse (and who subsequently left the party in 2019).

Any attempt to address antisemitism in the Labour Party will need to address this type of conspiratorial language, and re-emphasize the Macpherson principles.

2. REPORTS AND LABOUR PARTY EFFORTS

INDIVIDUAL CASES

There have been attempts by the Labour party, some successful, to tackle concerns about antisemitism. For example, individual high-profile incidents have been addressed, albeit action has sometimes been slow, and the party has faced criticism for delays.³² For example:

- In 2015, the late MP Gerald Kaufman suggested “Jewish money” had influenced the Conservative party. His comments were denounced by Jeremy Corbyn, and Kaufmann was reprimanded by the Labour Chief Whip.³³

24 https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/anti-racism-charity-demands-jeremy-corbyn-kicks-chris-williamson-out-of-labour_uk_5c755a12e4b0bf166203c407

25 <https://twitter.com/wizbates/status/1100471552678735873>

26 <https://www.ft.com/content/6497776a-3c28-11e9-9988-28303f70fcff>

27 <https://www.theredroar.com/2019/03/labour-councillor-says-split-nothing-to-do-with-antisemitism-and-backs-reinstatement-of-chris-williamson/>

28 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/sep/26/corbyn-allies-say-labour-antisemitism-row-driven-by-leadership-plot>

29 <http://www.labouragainsthewitchhunt.org/>

30 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/sep/26/corbyn-allies-say-labour-antisemitism-row-driven-by-leadership-plot>

31 <http://freespeechonisrael.org.uk/model-motion-on-antisemitism-allegations-for-labour-movement/#sthash.daShXCcx.dpbs>

32 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/jan/20/jewish-labour-group-accuses-failing-act-antisemitism>

33 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/labour-chief-whip-will-meet-sir-gerald-kaufman-over-jewish-money-comments-1.61439>

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- In 2016, Jeremy Corbyn agreed with Naz Shah MP that she should resign the whip temporarily following details of old antisemitic social media posts she had shared, being made public.³⁴
- In 2017, following a difficult interview with radio presenter Emma Barnett, apparent supporters of Jeremy Corbyn directed antisemitic abuse at her online. Mr. Corbyn issued a strong denunciation of those doing so, the same day.³⁵
- In 2018, Tony Greenstein was expelled from the party, including for use of the word 'Zio'.³⁶
- In 2019, a large number of Labour party members and others signed a letter apologising to the Jewish community for antisemitism.^{37 38}

THE ROYALL REPORT

In February 2016, the co-chair of the Oxford University Labour Club resigned, alleging that the student left had “some kind of problem with Jews”.³⁹ A number of specific incidents subsequently came to light, including derogatory use of the word ‘Zio’ to describe Jewish students and slurs that the Nazi death camp Auschwitz was used as a “cash cow”.⁴⁰

The Labour Students organisation began to investigate the allegations but no report was released.⁴¹ The Labour party then commissioned Baroness Jan Royall to lead an inquiry. She reported to the Labour NEC in May 2016, but it agreed “to publish the recommendations only.”⁴² With her report seemingly blocked, Royall stated that the issues she had considered would be dealt with by Shami Chakrabarti’s wider inquiry into antisemitism in Labour.⁴³ When that report made no mention of her findings, Royall suggested she would self-publish,⁴⁴ but her report later leaked to the Jewish Chronicle.⁴⁵

Royall had found that despite there being no institutional problem at the Oxford University Labour Club, there was a cultural problem. She later voiced concern at the decision not to discipline, but rather to offer a warning to two individuals over their conduct relating to the affair.⁴⁶ The handling of the Royall report, and specifically the lack of engagement with the Jewish community, was heavily criticised by the Union of Jewish Students.⁴⁷

34 <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/staggers/2016/04/naz-shah-suspended-labour-hours-after-jeremy-corbyn-praised-her-apology>

35 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4555710/Corbynistas-troll-Emma-Barnett-Woman-s-Hour-interview.html>

36 http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/labour-activist-tony-greenstein-expelled-from-party-over-antisemitism_uk_5a89ddf7e4b00bc49f4559ec

37 https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1cuDi0sm-x0RNirB8wwj6KITI-yxd1NY8-Qlmc14zDIY/viewform?edit_requested=true

38 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/labour-antisemitism-letter-apology-corbyn-a8802631.html>

39 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/12160167/Oxford-Universitys-Labour-club-embroiled-in-anti-Semitism-row.html>

40 <https://www.thejc.com/education/student/extent-of-claims-of-antisemitism-at-oxford-university-labour-club-revealed-in-student-testimony-1.61020>

41 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/feb/17/labour-condemns-antisemitism-oxford-university-labour-club-claims>

42 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/jewish-students-anger-over-labour-s-failure-to-publish-report-into-oxford-antisemitism-1.60123>

43 Ibid

44 <http://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/royall-to-publish-full-report-into-oxford-university-anti-semitism/>

45 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/baroness-royall-report-reveals-oxford-labour-students-engaged-in-antisemitism-1.61720>

46 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/oxford-labour-1.430828>

47 Ibid

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THE CHAKRABARTI REPORT

On 29 April 2016, Shami Chakrabarti was tasked by Jeremy Corbyn to inquire into antisemitism, and other forms of racism in the Labour Party. The terms of reference included a focus on acceptable behaviour, compliance procedures, training, party rules, and the environment within the Labour Party.⁴⁸

In her report, Chakrabarti dismissed claims of institutional antisemitism but cited a “bitter incivility of discourse”. She suggested that Labour should seek to set a gold standard for “disagreeing well”. She surmised that complaints and disciplinary procedures were ‘wanting’.

The Chakrabarti report made four key recommendations:

1. Zionism/Zio should effectively be outlawed as a term of abuse
2. There should be robust condemnation of stereotypes (including tropes about Jews and money, media control, Jewish dual loyalty or proscriptive political views)
3. Nazi metaphors and Holocaust obfuscation are unacceptable
4. The Macpherson principle should apply in relation to antisemitism

In addition, Chakrabarti made a number of recommendations on disciplinary procedures in order to depoliticise the process. She did, however, rule out lifetime membership bans, something Shadow Chancellor Rt Hon John McDonnell MP had voiced support for.⁴⁹

The Jewish communal response to the report was decidedly mixed,⁵⁰ with a representative of the Board of Deputies later labelling it a “whitewash”.⁵¹ The public launch of the report was marred, particularly by comments directed at Ruth Smeeth MP, considered to be antisemitic (the individual responsible was later expelled for bringing the party into disrepute).⁵² There was further outrage when it was announced that Chakrabarti was to be ennobled shortly after the report was published.⁵³ She was subsequently elevated to the position of Shadow Attorney General.

Concerning the implementation of the report, there was a rule change, held over from the 2016 Labour Party Conference, agreed at the 2017 Conference.⁵⁴ This change prevented alleged perpetrators of antisemitism from using the ‘strongly held belief’ defence. Until March 2018, there had been no official statement about further implementation efforts, but the Labour NEC was believed to have adopted, and the Leader’s office endorsed, the IHRA definition of antisemitism.⁵⁵ Chakrabarti herself said in April 2018 that she had not had the resources to implement her report but believed the Labour General Secretary Jennie Formby would do so.⁵⁶

48 <https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Chakrabarti-Inquiry-Report-30June16.pdf>

49 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/labour-party-members-anti-semitic-banned-for-life-john-mcdonnell-a6951371.html>

50 <http://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/labour-anti-semitism-shami-chakrabarti-unveils-report/>

51 <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/aug/04/shami-chakrabarti-peerage-labour-tensions-corbyn>

52 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/labour-antisemitism-jeremy-corbyn-ruth-smeeth-jewish-mp-accused-of-colluding-with-media-a7111061.html>

53 <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/aug/04/shami-chakrabarti-peerage-labour-tensions-corbyn>

54 <https://www.ft.com/content/935cb198-a2d5-11e7-b797-b61809486fe2>

55 <https://labourlist.org/2016/12/corbyn-backs-official-definition-to-stamp-out-repugnant-anti-semitism/>

56 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5621367/Chakrabarti-admits-report-Labour-anti-Semitism-not-implemented.html>

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THE HOME AFFAIRS SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT

In October 2016, following the Chakrabarti report⁵⁷, the Home Affairs Select Committee (HASC) launched an inquiry into antisemitism. The committee took oral evidence from, amongst others, Ken Livingstone and Jeremy Corbyn. The HASC press release stated that, in a cross-party report “agreed unanimously without division”, members had noted that: “the failure of the Labour Party consistently to deal with antisemitic incidents in recent years risks lending force to allegations that elements of the Labour movement are institutionally anti-Semitic”.⁵⁸

THE FALCONER REPORT

In a House of Commons debate on antisemitism on 20 February 2019, Rt Hon George Howarth MP referenced an offer from Lord Falconer to assist the Labour party in overseeing disciplinary cases.⁵⁹ This was subsequently confirmed in news reports which quoted Falconer as having made the offer, “because of my horror that the party has not been able to show it is dealing with antisemitism properly”.⁶⁰ In his first interview about the role, and in subsequent remarks⁶¹, Falconer expressed concern about existing disciplinary structures.⁶² He also confirmed that should an investigation by the Equality and Human Rights Commission proceed, he would not take forward his proposed initiative.⁶³ Others expressed concern about the relative independence of a Labour peer in overseeing internal party matters^{64 65} despite the Labour party expressing full confidence in him.⁶⁶

3. DANGEROUS DISCOURSE

The failure to properly address dangerous discourse, such as Holocaust revisionism, has led to previously marginal views becoming more mainstreamed in Labour party forums both offline and on the internet.

LIVINGSTONE, HITLER AND ZIONISM

Former Labour Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, has made a number of claims about Hitler and Zionism⁶⁷ which have caused offence to the Jewish Community⁶⁸ and, in some instances, been labelled as intentionally antisemitic,⁶⁹ something Livingstone claims is neither fair nor accurate.⁷⁰

57 <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/inquiry2/>

58 Ibid

59 <http://bit.ly/2EjxAvh>

60 <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1091358/labour-anti-semitism-jeremy-corbyn-independence-group-tony-blair-lord-charlie-falconer>

61 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/05/margaret-hodge-corbyn-misled-me-over-antisemitism-labour>

62 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/lord-falconer-interview-corbyn-will-never-enter-no-10-while-people-fear-he-and-labour-are-anti-semitic-tfszwr0wn>

63 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/0bda4764-41ec-11e9-aa0a-30b9d78dd63b>

64 <https://twitter.com/Freedland/status/1102485917170839552?s=19>

65 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/05/margaret-hodge-corbyn-misled-me-over-antisemitism-labour>

66 <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/corbyn-hits-back-at-hodge-over-antisemitism-claims-37884380.html>

67 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ken-livingstone-repeats-claims-about-hitler-and-zionism-z9rq3c389>

68 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/apr/04/labour-suspends-ken-livingstone-for-a-year-over-hitler-comments>

69 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/andrew-neil-throws-spotlight-on-labour-antisemitism-in-holocaust-educational-trust-speech-1.446066>

70 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/04/30/ken-livingstone-anti-semitism-row-former-london-mayor-to-speak-o/>

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Livingstone has claimed that Hitler supported Zionism⁷¹ and has specifically referenced the Ha'avara (or transfer) agreement. His remarks do not appropriately contextualise, and misrepresent, perspectives on Zionism amongst the Nazi political elite. In truth, the Nazis used Zionism amongst other tools as manipulation for antisemitic ends, as numerous historians, like the world expert Professor Francois Nicosia, and others have explained.

Professor Sir Richard Evans, of the University of Cambridge, has written of the Ha'avara agreement that it was worked out over several months in 1933, and was a very complicated set of financial arrangements, which allowed Jews to circumvent currency export restrictions introduced during the slump in 1931, on condition that this enabled German exports to go to Palestine.⁷² Livingstone has made a number of other claims, all contested by leading historians.

Livingstone was found guilty by Labour's National Constitutional Committee of having brought the party into disrepute and was suspended for a year (rather than expelled).⁷³ The Community Security Trust wrote of the decision that the Labour Party "as an institution, decided that it is fine for its members to repeatedly and deliberately abuse the memory of the Holocaust to wind up the Jewish community".⁷⁴ Following his suspension, Livingstone was subsequently referred for a new disciplinary investigation owing to further comments he had made, echoing his previous remarks.⁷⁵ He eventually quit the party.⁷⁶

HOLOCAUST REVISIONISM

Holocaust denial began as a deliberate political project to rehabilitate National Socialism and defame Jews.⁷⁷ The architects of the project alleged a vast Jewish conspiracy to convince everyone that the Holocaust happened, and thereby induce enough guilt to extort money from Germany and land from the Palestinians. That particular National Socialist project has fallen away, but the antisemitic aspect remains.

As Dr Dave Rich of the CST has detailed,⁷⁸ allegations of Zionist movement and Nazi collaboration emanated from the Soviet Union. It propagated a number of anti-Zionist slanders to the post-Holocaust Western radical Left in the 1950s/60s. This transformed Zionism in the minds of some on the left from an expression of Jewish national longing into a racist, colonial movement that collaborated with fascism before and during the Second World War, conspired with imperialism after it, and created an apartheid state in place of Palestine. This was the narrative inspiring politics on the hard left in the 1980s.

71 Home Affairs Select Committee, 14th June 2016, transcript available at: <<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/antisemitism/oral/34413.html>>.

72 Regius Professor Emeritus of History at Cambridge University, and the author of "The Coming of the Third Reich", "The Third Reich in Power" and "The Third Reich at War", which together form a comprehensive history of Nazi Germany, published by Penguin. Knighted in 2012 for services to scholarship. Evans, 7 July 2016, by email correspondence.

73 <https://www.ft.com/content/a0a013c8-196d-11e7-a53d-df09f373be87>

74 <https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2017/04/07/how-antisemitism-poisoned-the-british-left>

75 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-39499640>

76 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/may/21/ken-livingstone-quits-labour-after-antisemitism-claims>

77 see Harry Elmer Barnes, Paul Rassinier, David L. Hoggan

78 <https://capx.co/how-antisemitism-poisoned-the-british-left/>

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That same narrative characterises antisemitism as a historic problem, and the domain of the far right. The anti-racist left is, from this perspective, immune from antisemitism by definition. According to this worldview, other minorities, subject to structural racism, are victims whilst Jews are characterised as white (with the accompanying privileges conferred), wealthy and integrated and therefore incapable of suffering from discrimination. To this end, modern antisemitism appears to be difficult for some to comprehend.

Not only has this discourse spread, so too have many leading figures in the party been incautious about sharing platforms with those holding such views and seemingly conferring legitimacy upon them.

4. THE ‘ENOUGH IS ENOUGH’ RALLY AND SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

Allegations of antisemitism in the Labour party became national news for more than a week at the end of March 2018, following concerns relating to an antisemitic mural which Mr. Corbyn had commented about, on social media years earlier.⁷⁹ The Jewish community, angered by the lack of action on antisemitism, called a rally titled ‘Enough is Enough’ and set out its concerns in a detailed letter.⁸⁰ Following some short press statements, Jeremy Corbyn’s office issued a response.⁸¹ The Jewish community then further specified its concerns about leadership, education, engagement and processes, specifically asking Jeremy Corbyn to condemn allegations of a smear levelled at both the Jewish community and at Labour MPs that had supported the community.⁸² Following a subsequent exchange of letters, a meeting was agreed⁸³ between the two parties and they met approximately one month later. Jeremy Corbyn wrote an article in advance of the meeting, in which he admitted not enough had been done to address the antisemitism of a “small number of our members and supporters”.⁸⁴ Following the meeting, the Jewish community released a statement⁸⁵ branding it a disappointment and “missed opportunity” and six months on, the Jewish Leadership Council (JLC) Chairman Jonathan Goldstein wrote⁸⁶ that “not one” of the Jewish communal requests had been met. One year later, Jewish communal leaders said the problem had worsened.⁸⁷

During the intensified coverage of antisemitism over this period, a number of stories uncovered further incidents of alleged, and proven, antisemitism. For example, a letter claiming a “very powerful special interest group” had used “immense strength” to “employ the full might of the BBC” received some 2000 ‘likes’ and hundreds of Facebook shares, with many supportive comments from self-declared Labour members.⁸⁸

The English local elections took place in May 2018. There appeared to be a large swing against the Labour party across the country in areas with a significant Jewish population, for example, the London Borough of Barnet, and

79 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/mar/23/corbyn-criticised-after-backing-artist-behind-antisemitic-mural>

80 https://www.thejlc.org/letter_to_jeremy_corbyn

81 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-43540795>

82 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/board-of-deputies-and-jlc-set-out-preconditions-for-antisemitism-summit-with-jeremy-corbyn-1.461575>

83 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/jewish-leaders-accept-offer-to-meet-jeremy-corbyn-over-labour-antisemitism-1.461914>

84 <https://www.standard.co.uk/comment/comment/jeremy-corbyn-what-i-m-doing-to-banish-antisemitism-from-the-labour-party-a3821961.html>

85 https://www.thejlc.org/jlc_and_board_of_deputies_statement_on_meeting_with_jeremy_corbyn

86 <https://www.thejc.com/comment/comment/jonathan-goldstein-comment-labour-antisemitism-1.471493>

87 <https://www.thejc.com/comment/comment/one-year-after-the-enough-is-enough-demonstration-labour-s-antisemitism-crisis-has-grown-even-worse-1.482117>

88 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/jeremy-corbyn-labour-antisemitism-protest-powerful-special-interest-group-jewish-a8278761.html>

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Kersal in Salford. Labour Shadow Ministers and others spoke to the impact of the antisemitism crisis on voters' decisions.⁸⁹

5. ALLEGATIONS OF INSTITUTIONAL ANTISEMITISM:

As one prominent Human Rights Barrister, Adam Wagner, has explained, there are concerns about institutional antisemitism within the Labour party⁹⁰. The Macpherson report, as noted above, described institutional racism as the: “collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin”.⁹¹ Racism, it said, can be “seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping”, and caused by or potentially defeated through “policy, example and leadership”.

Of course, any institution must have proper and effective grievance and disciplinary procedures for handling, assessing and acting on complaints of discrimination. As noted, various reports, both internal and external, have suggested Labour party processes have not been fit for purpose.

IHRA AND THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Over the summer months of 2018 Labour's code of conduct was under intense scrutiny. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism⁹² is the international standard for defining anti-Jewish hatred. It has been adopted by IHRA member states and others, the British Government, Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly and over 130 Local Authorities. It is comprised of a short two sentence paragraph followed by 11 bullet points providing examples of what “may” constitute antisemitic behaviour, taking into account overall context. Though the Labour party was considered to have adopted the definition in full, it was claimed at the meeting with the Jewish community, that the Party had only adopted the short paragraph without the bullet point examples. The Labour party initially offered its own Code of Conduct on antisemitism⁹³, subject to review.⁹⁴ This was criticised by an unprecedented coalition of Rabbis,⁹⁵ the Chief Rabbi,⁹⁶ and the CST which wrote a detailed explanation of the Code's perceived flaws.⁹⁷ The Parliamentary Labour Party adopted the IHRA definition⁹⁸ and the party eventually dropped its revised code in favour of the IHRA definition in full, with a ‘clarification’ offered by Jeremy Corbyn, not accepted⁹⁹.

89 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-44001786>

90 <https://twitter.com/AdamWagner1/status/1094635859062726656>

91 Home Office, The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry: Report of an Inquiry by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny, Cm 4262-I, February 1999, para 6.34

92 <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/working-definition-antisemitism>

93 <https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/5/0/NEC%20code%20of%20conduct%20Antisemitism.pdf>

94 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/labour-rejects-ihra-definition-antisemitism-nec-1.467291>

95 <https://www.jta.org/2018/07/16/global/dozens-of-british-rabbis-call-out-labour-party-on-its-definition-of-anti-semitism>

96 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/chief-rabbi-ephraim-mirvis-labour-letter-1.467265>

97 <https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2018/07/23/ihra-and-the-labour-code-of-conduct>

98 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/labour-mps-back-ihra-antisemitism-definition-plp-1.467263>

99 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/sep/04/labour-adopts-ihra-antisemitism-definition-in-full>

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PARTY STRUCTURES AND MECHANISMS FOR ADDRESSING ANTISEMITISM

Defining antisemitism has not been the only issue of concern in relation to Labour’s disciplinary efforts. A commitment by the party to deal with a number of high-profile cases by the end of July 2018¹⁰⁰ was not met, and allegations have been made about the scale¹⁰¹, transparency¹⁰², effectiveness^{103 104 105 106 107}, impartiality¹⁰⁸ and independence¹⁰⁹ of the party disciplinary processes. Speaking at the conference of an organisation said by the Jewish Labour Movement to have a “culture of antisemitism”¹¹⁰, Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell said that he would “take up” abuse of suspended activist Jackie Walker, who was nonetheless subsequently expelled¹¹¹, with Jeremy Corbyn. This, and disputes over the action taken in previous cases,^{112 113} raised questions about the independence of the party mechanisms which Labour National Constitution Committee (NCC) member Peter Mason was recorded saying had been interfered with¹¹⁴ and upon which Party official Seumas Milne is also said to have influence.¹¹⁵ Subsequently, when Deputy Labour leader Tom Watson MP handed a file of some 50 complaints of antisemitism to the Leader’s Office, Labour sources were said to have downplayed any suggestion that the Leader could have oversight of disciplinary cases.¹¹⁶ However, new allegations of political interference later emerged^{117 118 119}, including email evidence^{120 121 122}, which prompted Jewish communal representative organisations to respond, noting explicit concern given assurances they were given to the contrary.¹²³ The Labour party said the allegations related to an outdated, and since revised, process.^{124 125} It was reported that Laura Murray, who was at the centre of some of the allegations about interference¹²⁶, was appointed interim head of complaints.¹²⁷ This was quickly dismissed by Labour sources despite some Labour parliamentarians standing by the story.¹²⁸ A number of cases of alleged antisemitism linked to Labour members were passed by LBC radio to the police for investigation, and led to arrests for ‘stirring up hatred’. Some campaign groups suggested the Labour party might have been negligent in its handling of said cases.^{129 130}

100 <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/activist-marc-wadsworth-expelled-labour-12435129>

101 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/aug/07/leaked-labour-papers-reveal-scale-of-challenge-to-tackle-antisemitism>

102 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-47217982>

103 <https://www.lbc.co.uk/radio/presenters/matt-frei/john-mann-labour-antisemitism-complaints/>

104 <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/mar/09/antisemitism-labour-failure-over-activist-facebook-posts>

105 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/anger-as-labour-meeting-chaired-by-professor-who-faced-no-sanction-over-david-icke-show-appearance-1.481350>

106 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/half-of-complaints-made-by-mps-unresolved-k2vgqnb6m>

107 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/vile-anti-semitism-met-with-a-slap-on-the-wrist-at-most-b38v7z9jd>

108 https://twitter.com/Daniel_J_Martin/status/1103614954119270402?s=19

109 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/labour-leadership-interfered-in-antisemitism-cases-p652lh7px>

110 <https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/mcdonnell-told-to-stop-double-speak-on-antisemitism-or-resign-from-committee/>

111 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/27/labour-expels-jackie-walker-for-leaked-antisemitism-comments>

112 <https://twitter.com/DPJHodges/status/1101042631583379456>

113 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/lord-falconer-reopens-labour-anti-semitic-hate-cases-wr6wgdlsf>

114 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/labour-leadership-interfered-in-antisemitism-cases-p652lh7px>

115 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6738195/CORBYN.html>

116 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/24/tom-watson-corbyn-needs-to-understand-labour-must-change-antisemitism-crisis>

117 https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/02/new-labour-party-row-over-antisemitism-jeremy-corbyn?CMP=share_btn_tw

118 <https://twitter.com/GuardianHeather/status/1102561041119150080>

119 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/labour-s-hate-files-expose-corbyn-s-anti-semite-army-9zzl0gxp>

120 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/corbyn-ally-stopped-suspension-in-antisemitic-mural-row-leaked-emails-reveal-d0n30cnd>

121 <https://twitter.com/SamCoatesTimes/status/1103269465695928320>

122 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/06/corbyn-staff-asked-to-be-copied-in-on-antisemitism-complaints-leak-shows>

123 https://twitter.com/JLC_uk/status/1102166897980776449

124 <https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/labour-party/news/102216/tom-watson-raises-fears-political-interference>

125 <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/labour-defends-handling-of-antisemitism-complaints-after-leaked-emails-show-inaction-by-party-in-a4111216.html>

126 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/corbyn-aide-laura-murray-halted-ban-on-anti-semite-patricia-sheerin-6qmq9z87v>

127 <https://twitter.com/PolHomeEditor/status/1103309515137654789>

128 <https://twitter.com/PolHomeEditor/status/110331783322705152>

129 <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8744440/labour-arrests-anti-semitism-claims/>

130 <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/mar/28/police-arrest-three-in-labour-antisemitism-case>

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Allegations of interference have been levelled at the Labour Party General Secretary Jennie Formby, who has been accused of intervening in the disciplinary process¹³¹ something she vehemently refutes.¹³² In April 2018, she pledged to make tackling antisemitism a “central priority” in her role¹³³ and set out action she planned to take. However, concerns were raised, and have been many times subsequently, about both the actions taken and their efficacy.¹³⁴ Formby’s ability to oversee action on antisemitism was itself called into question by some, who cited the employment by Formby of a Labour activist known to have made antisemitic comments.¹³⁵ A number of MPs voiced concern both about Formby’s perceived, initial refusal to provide them with data about action on antisemitism and her comment to Labour’s Parliamentary Party that it was “impossible” to rid the party of antisemitism.¹³⁶ Formby’s actions in relation to antisemitism were said by Tom Watson to have “very patently... not been adequate”.¹³⁷ Watson subsequently asked colleagues to copy him into complaints about antisemitism (and some did so in the public domain)¹³⁸ and for a point-person in the party to be identified.¹³⁹ He was publicly criticised by Jennie Formby for having done so.¹⁴⁰

The conduct of Labour National Executive Committee (NEC) members has also been called into question. A recording of NEC Member Pete Willsman¹⁴¹ emerged after a meeting of the executive at which antisemitism had been discussed. The recording clearly highlights Willsman claiming that Jewish “Trump fanatics” were making up allegations of antisemitism in the Party. Willsman accused the coalition of Rabbis, that had voiced opposition to Labour’s Code of Conduct as having made up “duff information without any evidence at all”. He was subsequently re-elected to the NEC.¹⁴² Willsman has said that some of his comments were misreported (although he did apologise for others). Other allegations about the conduct of NEC members have been the focus of newspaper reports.¹⁴³

The election of Claudia Webbe to chair of the Labour Party’s disputes panel during a meeting of the NEC was seen as controversial, given she had previously defended Ken Livingstone¹⁴⁴ and a Labour member who had been expelled.¹⁴⁵ Webbe replaced Christine Shawcroft who had resigned amidst allegations of antisemitism¹⁴⁶, citing harassment and her wish not to be a “distraction” as the reasons.

Stephen Marks was elected to Labour’s National Constitutional Committee, which has oversight of disciplinary matters for the party. Marks’ previous statements¹⁴⁷ that those alleging antisemitism in the Labour party should be suspended, were called into question.

131 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/labour-mps-general-secretary-jennie-formby-is-intervening-to-protect-members-accused-antisemitism-1.479349>

132 <https://twitter.com/TheRedRoar/status/1094994104751149056>

133 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/labour-hire-team-of-lawyers-to-tackle-antisemitism-case-backlog-1.462561>

134 <https://twitter.com/AdamWagner1/status/1092477839599955968>

135 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/labour-general-secretary-jennie-formby-frontrunner-suspended-party-member-antisemitism-vicki-kirby-a8257736.html>

136 <https://www.newstatesman.com/labour-anti-semitism-jennie-formby-jeremy-corbyn-vote>

137 <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/tom-watson-unleashes-savage-attack-14044990>

138 <https://twitter.com/AlifosterRDG/status/1101558625800200192>

139 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/tom-watson-moves-to-take-control-of-labour-complaints-process-1.480629>

140 <https://twitter.com/BenGartside/status/1101549426806542337>

141 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-45014771>

142 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/pete-willsman-re-elected-to-labour-s-nec-despite-antisemitism-denial-rant-1.469188>

143 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/apr/06/leaked-minutes-show-labour-at-odds-over-antisemitism-claims>

144 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/claudia-webbe-defends-appointment-disputes-panel-1.466564>

145 <https://order-order.com/people/claudia-webbe/>

146 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/christine-shawcroft-resigns-labour-nec-jeremy-corbyn-antisemitism-row-a8283291.html>

147 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/man-who-dismissed-antisemitism-elected-for-top-labour-role-in-dealing-with-it-1.473151?highlight=JVL>

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The Labour party hired Gordon Nardell QC as in-house Counsel to tackle a backlog of unresolved cases. Nardell's independence was queried¹⁴⁸ for his past associations with the Labour leadership, groups and activists including suspended members.¹⁴⁹

Concerns about Labour Party Leader Jeremy Corbyn's previous associations and conduct have been raised repeatedly. These include, but are not limited to:

- an event he hosted on Holocaust Memorial Day where the Israeli Government was compared to Nazis, for which he subsequently apologised¹⁵⁰
- interviews in which he suggested the BBC has a bias towards saying Israel has a right to exist and stating his concerns about Israeli influence on the BBC.¹⁵¹ A Labour Party spokesman said: "the Israeli government is well known to run an effective and highly professional media operation."¹⁵²
- footage from an event at which he suggested Palestinians in the West Bank live "under occupation of the very sort that would be recognised by many people in Europe who suffered occupation during the Second World War." A Labour spokesman said he was "...not comparing the Israeli state to Nazis."¹⁵³
- a wreath laying at the graves of Palestinian terrorists, something that was disputed by the Labour party¹⁵⁴
- his suggestion that some Zionists "having lived in this country for a long time, probably all their lives, they don't understand English irony".¹⁵⁵
- An article in which he blamed the "Zionist lobby" for assisting the deportation of Sheikh Raed Salah from Britain, saying it was "time that Western governments stood up to the Zionist lobby which seems to conflate criticism of Israel with antisemitism". Salah had been accused of invoking the blood libel.¹⁵⁶
- a number of specific allegations relating to his time as a union official and councillor were made in 2019.¹⁵⁷

Jeremy Corbyn has cited Jewish support for his activities when questioned¹⁵⁸, including a letter to the Guardian.¹⁵⁹ It quickly emerged that the letter had been signed by a number of people who were themselves subjects of inappropriate behaviour or antisemitism allegations.¹⁶⁰ A counter-letter was signed by more than 550 people¹⁶¹.

The processes for disciplining MPs have also been called into question. Following reports that he was to be

148 <https://www.lbc.co.uk/radio/presenters/nick-ferrari/impartiality-of-labour-anti-semitism-lawyer/>

149 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/labour-lawyer-overseeing-disciplinary-matters-is-member-of-hard-left-anti-ihra-group-john-mcdonn-1.479926>

150 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/aug/01/jeremy-corbyn-issues-apology-in-labour-antisemitism-row>

151 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/new-footage-shows-corbyn-saying-bbc-has-bias-towards-saying-israel-has-a-right-to-exist-1.468101>

152 <https://labourlist.org/2018/08/watch-corbyn-claimed-bbc-has-bias-towards-saying-israel-has-right-to-exist/>

153 <https://news.sky.com/story/labour-anti-semitism-row-jeremy-corbyn-faces-new-claims-he-compared-israel-to-nazis-11469216>

154 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/aug/13/jeremy-corbyn-not-involved-munich-olympics-massacre-wreath-laying>

155 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/video/2018/aug/24/jeremy-corbyns-2013-remarks-on-some-zionists-not-understanding-english-irony-video>

156 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/jeremy-corbyn-blamed-zionist-lobby-for-blood-libel-cleric-raed-salah-s-expulsion-from-the-uk-1.482455>

157 <https://www.thejc.com/comment/analysis/corbyn-s-jewish-problem-1.480367>

158 <https://news.sky.com/story/jeremy-corbyn-denies-wide-scale-bullying-problem-in-labour-11645028> (video)

159 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/20/jeremy-corbyn-labour-party-crucial-ally-in-fight-against-antisemitism>

160 <https://twitter.com/daverich1/status/1098344294648373248>

161 <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/feb/25/labour-is-no-longer-a-force-for-good-in-promoting-anti-racism>

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admonished for arranging a film screening, relating to a suspended Labour activist¹⁶², MP Chris Williamson was at the centre of further controversy when it emerged he had suggested Labour had been “too apologetic” on the issue of antisemitism. Initially, he was given a ‘notice of investigation’ in relation to a “pattern of behaviour”.¹⁶³ Journalists and others pointed out that this sanction was incongruous with previous alleged indiscretions by MPs.¹⁶⁴ Williamson was later suspended¹⁶⁵. Pressure from the Deputy Party Leader and Tribune Group of MPs was said by some, to have influenced the leadership of the party in the decision to suspend Williamson¹⁶⁶, though the Labour party categorically denied this.¹⁶⁷

The Labour party has also been referenced in other national stories, for example: where public figures associated with the party were embroiled in controversy for sharing panels,¹⁶⁸ in relation to whistle blowing,¹⁶⁹ or for other matters.

LABOUR PARTY REPRESENTATIVES, AFFILIATES, SUPPORTERS AND OTHERS

Apart from questions having been raised about party structures and overseers, a number of stories were published about the behaviour and re-admittance to the party of councillors^{170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178}, National Policy Forum representatives¹⁷⁹, a Welsh AM¹⁸⁰, former MPs^{181 182} and others^{183 184 185} that were found to have made, or were under investigation for, alleged antisemitic remarks^{186 187}. Cases included, for example, that of a Labour activist¹⁸⁸ who posted an antisemitic image, which it was alleged they had asked permission from a white supremacist website to use, of an alien with the Jewish Star of David smothering the Statue of Liberty’s face. The activist was given only a formal ‘reminder of conduct’ despite pressure from the local Labour MP for action. There was a (second) suspension of a Woking Labour activist for making remarks about Jews having “big noses”, after she had been re-admitted

162 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/26/labour-mp-chris-williamson-faces-criticism-over>

163 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/chris-williamson-labour-mp-antisemitism-antisemitic-investigation-pattern-of-behaviour-1.480710>

164 <https://twitter.com/BenKentish/status/1100753190692237312>

165 <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/mp-chris-williamson-suspended-from-labour-party-amid-antisemitism-storm-a4078386.html>

166 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6753719/Corbyn-tries-save-close-ally-vile-anti-Semitism-storm-shamed-suspending-him.html>

167 <https://inews.co.uk/news/politics/chris-williamson-mp-suspended-labour-anti-semitism-jeremy-corbyn/>

168 <https://order-order.com/2016/11/30/diane-abbott-joins-anti-zionist-nus-president-attack-counter-terrorism/>

169 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/corbyn-ignored-my-antisemitism-warnings-says-insider-1.61277>

170 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/labour-anti-semitism-claims-candidate-fair-right-twitter-meme-a7570181.html>

171 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/scottish-councillor-who-suggested-jewish-papers-colluded-with-mossad-is-back-in-labour-1.478270>

172 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5560847/Six-Labour-councillors-suspended-anti-Semitic-messages-quietly-reinstated.html>

173 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/khadim-hussain-former-lord-mayor-of-bradford-suspended-by-labour-party-over-anti-semitism-a6948856.html>

174 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-36012650>

175 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6764957/Rebel-Labour-MP-Joan-Ryan-calls-police-receiving-death-threats.html>

176 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/0bda4764-41ec-11e9-aa0a-30b9d78dd63b>

177 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lancashire-47856912>

178 <https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/enfield-labour-suspends-whip-for-councillor-who-shared-israel-backs-isis-tweet/>

179 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2018/09/27/labour-official-suggested-tom-watson-had-corrupted-jewish-donors/>

180 <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/politics/labour-am-accused-unacceptable-comments-15649566>

181 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/labour-provokes-fury-by-reinstating-ex-mp-jim-sheridan-who-said-jews-worked-with-blairite-plotters-1.479170>

182 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/scotland/antisemitism-row-as-ex-mp-shares-offensive-cartoon-ksv52nc2q>

183 <https://www.theredroar.com/2019/03/new-london-labour-official-shared-zionist-masters-post/>

184 <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/politics/welsh-labour-group-calls-mp-15922108>

185 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6868833/Countdown-star-Rachel-Riley-comes-fire-speaking-against-anti-Semitism.html>

186 <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/labour-member-suspended-months-after-reports-of-antisemitic-posts-a3705771.html>

187 <https://news.sky.com/story/sir-duncan-michael-labour-members-jewish-slur-not-deemed-antisemitic-by-party-11638591>

188 https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/labour-activist-suspended-for-anti-semitism-after-liverpool-mp-louise-ellman-demands-tougher-action_uk_5c65e154e4b01757c3699e60

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following a hearing in 2014¹⁸⁹, and suspension of a Labour and Momentum activist after querying the remit of Holocaust Memorial Day and making dismissive comments about the requirement for security at Jewish schools.¹⁹⁰ There were also revelations that a number of senior Labour party figures were members of a private Facebook group, whose members posted antisemitic comments and conspiracy theories.¹⁹¹

A number of Labour party candidate selections have also been called into question, including the high-profile case of Peterborough City Council candidate Alan Bull, who posted an article alleging the Holocaust was a hoax. He claimed this was for the purpose of debate. Bull had been reported to the party but no action taken. When his case was eventually heard, it led to the resignation of Labour's disputes panel chair Christine Shawcroft, whose email challenging his suspension was made public¹⁹² though she cited press intrusion as the reason for her departure. Other stories came to light regarding the suitability of candidates in Tunbridge Wells (Kent)¹⁹³, Fylde (Lancashire)¹⁹⁴, Torbay (Devon)¹⁹⁵, Norris Green and Birkenhead (Merseyside)^{196 197}, Swindon¹⁹⁸ and Northwood (London)¹⁹⁹, and the behaviour of council candidates, who later withdrew, for Redcar and Cleveland.^{200 201}

The Labour party conferences since 2015 have appeared to be a focal point for some of the problems. These have included: John Mann MP being labelled a 'CIA *****' because he had tried to tackle the "antisemitism nonsense";²⁰² calls to ban the Jewish Labour Movement (a leading member of which had been heckled by delegates the previous year) and suggestions it had colluded with right wing media;²⁰³ proposals at a fringe meeting to debate whether the Holocaust happened; and distribution of a Marxist newspaper outside the conference, quoting Nazi official Reinhard Heydrich.²⁰⁴ The 2018 conference was no different with reports emerging about Luciana Berger MP's requirement for police protection²⁰⁵ and other incidents including someone suggesting from the conference stage that allegations of antisemitism were part of an orchestrated campaign.²⁰⁶

In addition, there has been widespread concern about posts on Labour-linked social media sites and Labour's connection with fringe groups, for example, Jewish Voice for Labour (JVL). Prominent JVL members have dismissed allegations of antisemitism²⁰⁷, sought to oppose a Labour party Conference motion on antisemitism²⁰⁸ and have

189 http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/jeremy-corbyn-vicky-kirby-anti-semitism_uk_56e80319e4b03fb88ede23bf

190 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/sep/30/labour-suspends-jackie-walker-over-holocaust-comments>

191 <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/928717/Jeremy-Corbyn-Palestine-Live-Facebook-group-anti-semitic-comments-Clive-Lewis>

192 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/mar/28/christine-shawcroft-labour-disputes-panel-chair-resigns-antisemitism-case>

193 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-kent-43618007>

194 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/labour-drops-candidate-over-antisemitism-d38xkq6fx>

195 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-devon-47855661>

196 <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/7666244/labour-antisemitism-council-liverpool/>

197 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6711051/Labour-hopeful-hard-left-bully-dismissed-claims-anti-Semitism-against-party.html>

198 <https://order-order.com/2019/04/04/labour-ppc-liked-post-claiming-israel-lobby-manufactured-labour-anti-semitism-crisis/>

199 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5566951/Headache-Corbyn-Labour-picks-candidate-edited-paper-ran-anti-Semitic-stories.html>

200 <https://www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/teesside-news/two-labour-council-candidates-under-15972256>

201 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tees-47657060>

202 <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/staggers/2018/02/antisemitic-abuse-labour-jewish-social-media>

203 <http://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/calls-to-expel-jewish-members-from-labour-cheered-at-conference/>

204 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/throw-out-antisemitic-party-members-now-corbyn-urged-57f3w9ql5>

205 <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/jewish-mp-luciana-berger-flanked-13298354>

206 <https://www.thejc.com/comment/analysis/labour-conference-was-a-four-day-reminder-that-antisemitism-is-alive-and-well-under-corbyn-1.470353>

207 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/jvl-chair-plays-down-abuse-of-jewish-mps-at-meeting-with-labour-activists-1.462844>

208 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/sep/26/labour-to-adopt-new-antisemitism-rules-after-conference-row>

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defended Ken Livingstone's behaviour.²⁰⁹ One of JVLs' founders admitted the group was set up to challenge allegations of antisemitism in the Labour party²¹⁰ and one JVL executive member has claimed that the Labour Party is "a pawn of Zionist organizations that place loyalty to Israel's interests above advancing the Labour Party".²¹¹ Another group, the Labour Representation Committee (LRC) which has Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell as its Honorary President, has been accused of using antisemitic tropes.²¹² McDonnell has previously said he was "not going to disassociate myself from an organisation I founded because they disagree with me or I disagree with them on these particular issues"²¹³ and a spokesperson has said he has no involvement in the day-to-day running of the organisation.²¹⁴²¹⁵ The scale of antisemitism online, and specifically on the left, was detailed by the organised Hope Note Hate in its report about the state of hate in 2019.²¹⁶

APPARENT VICTIMISATION

Jewish Councillors, MPs and others have detailed examples of antisemitism they have received whilst discharging their public duties. Joe Goldberg, Natan Doran, Adam Langleben and Phillip Rosenberg alleged abusive encounters at the hands of colleagues and others²¹⁷²¹⁸²¹⁹. The Jewish Labour Movement (JLM) raised concerns about this type of behaviour at Constituency Labour Party (CLP) meetings, including at Birkenhead CLP which refused antisemitism training due to the Jewish Labour Movement's potential association "with ISIS and the Israeli Government".²²⁰ Southend West Constituency saw a motion about the Pittsburgh synagogue attack amended to remove a call for all forms of antisemitism to be eradicated²²¹, and Stroud Green CLP was to hold an open forum on antisemitism which local MP Catherine West branded "clearly unacceptable" and said would be stopped.²²² Motions seeking to downplay antisemitism were passed in Streatham²²³, Hackney North and Sheffield,²²⁴ and a row over the issue broke out in Bristol.²²⁵ An advisory notice was subsequently issued to CLP's about the unacceptability of debates on individuals subject to disciplinary processes²²⁶ and at least one meeting, in West Ham, was subsequently cancelled.²²⁷ Two non-Jewish councillors in Peterborough were moved to detail ill-treatment they suffered for voicing concerns about antisemitism,²²⁸ as was a former Secretary of Westminster CLP.²²⁹ Jewish members of the Labour party, including

209 <http://kenlivingstone.net/Docs/Statements%20from%20five%20witnesses%20being%20called%20to%20the%20hearing%20-%20supporting%20Ken%20Livingstone.pdf>

210 https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=4&v=0xULZKEhN4g

211 <https://www.timesofisrael.com/uks-new-jewish-voice-for-labour-seeks-to-throw-off-the-shackles-of-israel/>

212 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/john-mcdonnell-backed-labour-representation-committee-accuses-jewish-labour-movement-back-stabbing-1.482844>

213 <https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/john-mcdonnell-interview/>

214 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/mcdonnell-group-backs-expelled-activist-jackie-walker-wdkhqs8x0>

215 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/board-of-deputies-urges-shadow-chancellor-john-mcdonnell-to-leave-labour-representation-committee-1.482305>

216 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/survey-of-27-000-left-wing-twitter-accounts-shows-nearly-a-fifth-promote-or-engage-in-antisemitism-1.480094>

217 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/haringey-councillors-abandon-toxic-labour-party-natan-doran-joe-goldberg-1.461268>

218 <http://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/councillor-berates-local-labour-party-for-singling-out-jews-in-seven-of-last-nine-meetings/>

219 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-42168712>

220 <https://wirralleaks.wordpress.com/2018/03/31/birkenhead-clp-leak-adds-to-labour-party-anti-semitism-controversy/>

221 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/southend-west-labour-party-amends-motion-to-remove-calls-for-party-to-combat-antisemitism-1.471852>

222 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/labour-branch-to-stage-bizarre-pub-gathering-about-antisemitism-1.481472>

223 <https://twitter.com/robfuller91/status/1101502852869091328>

224 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/jewish-labour-members-in-tears-diane-abbott-s-local-party-passes-motion-questioning-instituti-1.480825>

225 <https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/row-breaks-out-between-bristol-2708623>

226 <https://labourlist.org/2019/03/jennie-formby-took-advice-from-lord-blunkett-on-labours-handling-of-antisemitism/>

227 <https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/local-labour-party-advised-to-cancel-meeting-over-antisemitism-hysteria-motion/>

228 <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/staggers/2018/03/we-tried-call-out-anti-semitism-our-local-labour-party-we-felt-ignored>

229 https://twitter.com/CJ_Appleby/status/1057570369169690624

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Holocaust survivors, have voiced their concern at antisemitism in CLP meetings.²³⁰ ²³¹ The JLM held a meeting to discuss whether to cut its association with the party in March 2019, letters acknowledging the problems and asking it to remain were sent by Jeremy Corbyn, the Shadow Cabinet, a number of Labour MPs and others.²³² ²³³ ²³⁴ ²³⁵ Jeremy Corbyn's previous call for the severance of ties to JLM's forerunner, Poale Zion was raised by journalists at the time.²³⁶ The JLM, in an indicative vote, resolved to stay in the Labour Party but a number of cases of antisemitism raised by members were reported following the meeting.²³⁷ JLM subsequently suspended all training when it was reported that the Labour Party was in discussion with Birkbeck College, University of London, about a training course, having not liaised with JLM. The group later passed a motion of no confidence in Jeremy Corbyn at its AGM in April 2019.²³⁸

Meanwhile a number of MPs, both Jewish and not, faced calls for no confidence motions at local Labour party meetings for speaking out against antisemitism, such as in Bristol²³⁹, Canterbury²⁴⁰, London²⁴¹ and Liverpool²⁴². The Human Rights Barrister Adam Wagner suggested that the behaviour by the party towards MPs such as Dame Margaret Hodge and Ian Austin, both of whom were subject to (in one case lengthy) disciplinary processes, seemingly for speaking out against antisemitism, might fall under the legal definition of 'victimisation'²⁴³ – or being treated less well for complaining about discrimination. In the case of Luciana Berger and Wavertree CLP, the suggestion by Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell that Berger should pledge loyalty if she didn't want to face a no confidence motion²⁴⁴ and the ready dismissal by Jennie Formby of claims of bullying by the CLP²⁴⁵ did little to reduce concerns about such victimisation. Allegations of bullying and antisemitic behaviour have also been investigated in relation to the treatment of Dame Louise Ellman MP.²⁴⁶

Beyond the concerns about the suitability of structures and the propriety of their overseers, there has been significant worry about the wider culture of denial and victimisation in the Labour party.²⁴⁷ For example, Jewish members of Hackney North CLP were said to be in tears at the passing of a motion rejecting charges of racism.²⁴⁸

Following the motion of No Confidence by Wavertree CLP about Berger, and subsequent revelations about the local branch²⁴⁹, including that the chair of the local party had links to antisemitic conspiracists and others²⁵⁰ Luciana Berger

230 https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/mar/04/labour-antisemitism-party-left-bigotry?CMP=tw_t_gu

231 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/labour-member-brands-jewish-labour-movement-mike-katz-a-fifth-columnist-hampstead-kilburn-1.482316>

232 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/jeremy-corbyn-acknowledges-enormous-stress-labour-antisemitism-has-caused-as-jlm-is-poised-to-sev-1.481025>

233 https://assets.nationbuilder.com/jewishlabour/mailings/271/attachments/original/Letter_from_Jeremy_Corbyn_Leader_of_the_Labour_Party.pdf?1551821422

234 https://assets.nationbuilder.com/jewishlabour/mailings/271/attachments/original/Statement_from_Labour's_Shadow_Cabinet.pdf?1551821419

235 <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSclqG8YJRRGCwL7ZpMwVvRZZnwp9dYbc6Cixy1g4d3Jh4Jy0A/viewform>

236 <https://twitter.com/JohnRentoul/status/1103245789084770304>

237 <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/mar/06/equality-watchdog-could-rule-on-whether-labour-broke-law>

238 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/07/labour-defends-antisemitism-response-after-documents-leak>

239 <https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/bristol-mp-faces-censure-motion-1406909>

240 <https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/labour-party/news/98137/canterburys-first-ever-labour-mp-faces-motion>

241 <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/david-lammy-threatened-with-deselection-after-attending-labour-antisemitism-protest-a3800991.html>

242 <https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/labour-party/news/101694/luciana-berger-face-vote-no-confidence>

243 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/27>

244 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/08/john-mcdonnell-calls-on-luciana-berger-to-confront-breakaway-rumours>

245 <https://twitter.com/SocialistVoice/status/1094633459417604096>

246 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/plot-to-oust-mp-ellman-spearheaded-by-a-former-member-of-the-trotskyist-militant-tendency-1.480621>

247 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/jess-phillips-gnasher-jew-twitter-labour-party-antisemitism-aaron-bastani-1.477870>

248 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/jewish-labour-members-in-tears-diane-abott-s-local-party-passes-motion-questioning-instituti-1.480825?fbclid=IwAR3y8s95FB5ZWG3fsyRB2zQueMvHBrigfPSkrizWISZ6JPD2SMORKF7Dk28>

249 <https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2019/02/does-labours-wavertree-clp-have-an-anti-semitism-problem/>

250 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/labour-activist-leading-online-attacks-on-luciana-berger-has-links-to-neo-nazi-website-1.480081>

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resigned from the Labour party, calling it institutionally antisemitic²⁵¹. Her resignation led to an acknowledgement by Momentum chief Jon Lansman, and others, of the problem of Labour party antisemitism²⁵². Other Labour MPs that joined Berger in resigning, such as Mike Gapes, also alleged the party to be racist and antisemitic. Joan Ryan MP said the party posed an existential threat to Jewish people.²⁵³ A number of councillors and others, both Jewish and not, also resigned on similar terms, for example, a former Croydon Councillor²⁵⁴, and Councillors in Hastings²⁵⁵ and Brighton.²⁵⁶ The MPs' resignations, and that of Ian Austin MP, were met with further antisemitic abuse²⁵⁷.

On 7 March 2019, the Equality and Human Rights Commission announced it was 'considering' using its statutory enforcement powers to investigate the Labour party over a belief that the party may have discriminated against people because of their ethnicity and religious beliefs.²⁵⁸ A member of Labour's NEC posted on social media that the organisation should be abolished, later clarifying that others agreed with her position which she said she had made clear previously.²⁵⁹ The Labour party asked for, and was granted, an extension to respond to the EHRC's notice.²⁶⁰

6. OPPONENTS OF ANTISEMITISM

Throughout the Labour party's recent difficulties, there have been parliamentarians in both houses, public officials, and members across the country that have spoken out in solidarity with the Jewish community, defying all forms of antisemitism.

Over 100 Labour MPs and 50 peers signed a Jewish Labour Movement statement declaring: "the institutions of the Labour Party have betrayed our values" when it failed to expel Ken Livingstone.²⁶¹ Many MPs and Peers spoke at the JLM's Labour conference rally against antisemitism.²⁶² Numerous MPs have joined, participated in and led events with the All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism,²⁶³ or have written articles²⁶⁴ condemning antisemitism both from within the party and outside it. Labour Peers raised their concerns, as a group, about antisemitism.²⁶⁵ A delegation of Labour MPs met with Jeremy Corbyn to address concerns about antisemitism specifically, and others continue to raise the matter at Parliamentary Labour Party²⁶⁶, council²⁶⁷ and other meetings regularly. A large number of MPs also attended the Jewish community 'Enough is Enough' rally or shared messages of support for it. Beyond parliament there have been innumerable councillors, activists, party supporters, and public figures that have been

251 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/seven-labour-mps-resign-citing-institutional-sickening-antisemitism-1.480223>

252 <https://twitter.com/TheRedRoar/status/1099950257889296384>

253 <https://www.thejc.com/comment/comment/i-cannot-remain-in-a-party-that-poses-an-existential-threat-to-british-jews-1.480314>

254 <https://www.yourlocalguardian.co.uk/news/17433297.former-croydon-councillor-cancels-labour-membership-over-anti-semitism-and-brexite/>

255 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/jewish-labour-councillor-quits-party-over-disgraceful-treatment-of-mp-luciana-berger-1.480028>

256 <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-sussex-47306426>

257 <https://twitter.com/DudleyMomentum/status/1099778518223896576>

258 <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/antisemitism-labour-party-our-response-complaints>

259 <https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/labour-party/news/102372/member-labours-ruling-body-calls-human-rights>

260 <https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/labour-given-week-extension-to-respond-to-antisemitism-claims/>

261 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ken-livingstone-labour-mps-letter-jewish-labour-movement-antisemitism-jeremy-corbyn-hittler-a7669256.html>

262 <http://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/jntv-conference-jewish-labour-movement-rally-against-anti-semitism/>

263 <https://www.antisemitism.org.uk/the-appg/events>

264 <https://labourlist.org/2016/07/john-mann-chakrabarti-anti-semitism-report-gives-a-route-out-of-this-mess/>

265 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/Obda4764-41ec-11e9-aa0a-30b9d78dd63b>

266 <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/labour-mps-demand-independent-complaints-14264696>

267 <https://www.eveningtimes.co.uk/news/17555139.anti-semitism-speech-wins-warm-praise-in-chambers/>

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resolute in taking a stand against antisemitism, and supporting those Jewish people suffering abuse both within and outside of the Labour party.^{268 269} The problem the party faces does not define, by any means, its whole membership, or the intentions of affiliated parliamentarians.

7. OTHER PARTIES

Of course, incidents of antisemitism are not limited to the Labour party. The Conservatives had to suspend members in Bradford²⁷⁰ and Hall Green,²⁷¹ the Lib Dems took action in Bradford²⁷², the Green Party deputy leader apologised for posting an antisemitic picture on social media²⁷³, and other parties have had to address antisemitism.²⁷⁴ Labour is not unique in this sense, but the scale and reach of the problem is, to date, unparalleled.

8. WHAT TO DO?

The Labour party's response to antisemitism is for it to determine. However, there are a number of simple measures that might engender confidence amongst the Jewish community and others, many of which have been proposed in the past three years^{275 276 277}. The Jewish community invited Jeremy Corbyn to commit to a series of actions, including but not limited to; appointment of an independent ombudsman to conduct investigations into outstanding claims of Jew-hatred; resolution of outstanding and future cases swiftly under a fixed timescale; a ban on platform sharing with those suspended from the party for alleged antisemitism; work with mainstream Jewish groups and others to develop and implement education about antisemitism and to engage with main representative groups, not through fringe organisations.²⁷⁸ The Labour Party is yet to have built confidence that it is taking the right approach, with the Jewish community, Parliamentary Labour Party and reportedly some members of the Shadow Cabinet all voicing concern.²⁷⁹ Certainly, changes to messaging, culture and political education would be welcomed.

268 <https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/17545080.labour-has-become-the-nasty-party-says-hartlepool-mayor-after-resigning/>

269 <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/17546468.councillor-quits-anti-semitic-labour-party/>

270 http://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/14419870.Senior_Bradford_Conservative_official_suspended_by_party_amid_probe_into_allegations_of_anti_Semitism/

271 <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/conservative-hall-green-resign-jew-12860625>

272 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/tim-farron-sacks-david-ward-antisemitism-lib-dem-candidate-bradford-east-a7703416.html>

273 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/green-party-deputy-leader-amelia-womack-apologises-after-tweeting-antisemitic-picture-1.479154>

274 <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2015/nov/12/sturgeon-says-sorry-to-jewish-community-for-anti-semitic-tweet>

275 <http://www.progressonline.org.uk/2018/03/27/how-labour-can-start-stamping-out-antisemitism/>

276 <https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/labour-party/opinion/house-commons/93930/john-mann-mp-we-shame-ourselves>

277 <https://twitter.com/wesstreeting/status/978738964696895488>

278 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/board-of-deputies-and-jlc-set-out-preconditions-for-antisemitism-summit-with-jeremy-corbyn-1.461575>

279 <https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/labour-party/news/101823/excl-tom-watson-and-labour-chairman-ian-lavery>