

Complaint against Nick Small

Anna Hutchinson,
NW Regional Labour Party,
Suite 97,
Spencer House,
Dewhurst Rd,
Birchwood,
Warrington WA3 7PG

May 19th, 2016

Dear Anna Hutchinson,

Complaint against Councillor Nick Small, Riverside CLP

We wish to lodge a formal complaint against Councillor Nick Small of Riverside CLP for the reasons below.

1/ Following a CLP meeting on April 1st Mr Small went outside the meeting and spoke to the press (*The Jewish Chronicle*) making various false allegations, against unidentified members of the Party. In the absence of a denial from Mr Small of the allegations attributed to him by *The Jewish Chronicle*, we can only assume that he is happy for these allegations to remain in the public domain. Speaking to the press to express his own opinion on private CLP proceedings is surely not to be condoned by the Labour Party as being an acceptable practice.

As you will know, Mr Small should have followed due process as laid down in the Rule Book and either bring a motion to the next meeting, stating the charge, identifying the supposed culprits and stating explicitly the grounds for the charge - or by bringing the matter to the CLP executive.

His behaviour has made the CLP a very unsafe place in which to conduct legitimate political debate. His statements to *The Jewish Chronicle* have since been repeated in other press reports and social media exchanges as though they were statements of truth.

2/ Secondly, we think the appropriate Labour Party body should censure Mr Small for making false accusations (against un-named persons). According to *The Jewish Chronicle*, Mr Small made a serious allegation of anti-semitism. According to Mr Small, one of the un-named persons posed the question that, if it were true that there had been a rise in anti-semitism could it be that this was in part due to the behaviour of the Israeli government and its policies in relation to the Palestinians. How is this question anti-semitic? *The Independent*, of Weds 24th August 2014, quoted *The Community Security Trust*, a charity whose stated aim is to monitor anti-semitic incidents, as claiming that anti-semitic incidents were up 500% in the UK since the start of the bombardment of Gaza in 2014.

At the meeting Mr Small refers to, the critical contributions by others in relation to Israel/Palestine were also political in content, not anti-semitic. People are entitled to and should be encouraged to engage in political debate on the issues surrounding Israel, Palestine and the Occupation. How else does one arrive at a viable policy? The consequence of Mr Small's intervention is to stifle legitimate and much needed discussion. One can only conclude that Mr Small is adopting a definition of anti-semitism that equates criticism of Israel with anti-semitism.

3/ Thirdly, Mr Small should be censured for misrepresenting the mood of Jews in the constituency. In saying that particularly Jews in the meeting were 'deeply offended' by the comments made by the accused, he is implying that ALL Jews in the CLP have the same opinions. Is this not itself racist? In fact, one of those who spoke clearly prefaced her comments by saying she herself was from a Jewish family.

In making his comment did Mr Small not realise he was offending another Jew? Are some Jews to be deemed more worthy of attention and respect than others? Is he not aware that there is a significant percentage of Jews, both in this country and in the diaspora, who are neither Zionist nor supporters of present day Israel.

4/ Fourthly, Mr Small described the people he accused as being from “the hard left”. All of the un-named accused are supporters of Jeremy Corbyn, his policies and values, and are all bona fide members of the Party. Is it a matter of disgrace to support the leader of the Labour Party? Would it be acceptable for the accused to publically describe Mr Small as being on the “hard right”? We believe his accusation was aimed at discrediting supporters of Mr Corbyn prior to the local elections and of driving them out of our Party.

5/ Fifth, Mr Small described the un-named accused as “infiltrators”. Most of the presumed accused have been members of the Labour Party on and off for 30+ years, one for at least 40 years. As for the others, are all those who joined after Jeremy Corbyn's election to be deemed “infiltrators”? Or just those who disagree with Mr Small? What did Mr Small know about the politics in general of the presumed accused when he made such a pejorative accusation? It is a smear he should retract.

6/ Lastly, Mr Small wrongly said the un-named accused were waging a personal and abusive campaign against MP Louise Ellman. Mrs Ellman is naturally going to be the subject of critical questioning because she consistently campaigns on behalf of Israel both inside and outside parliament. She fails to include this pro-Israel activity in her monthly CLP reports. Those who have challenged her have not been abusive in any way and have regularly acknowledged the other work she does for our constituency.

We believe that Mr Small's behaviour has brought the Party into disrepute, and we are asking the NW Regional office to investigate our complaint. Since Mr Small and his supporters are on the CLP executive, we don't think it is appropriate for our CLP Executive to investigate this matter.

We believe that Mr Small's false accusations of anti-semitism have debased the true meaning of that word. This is particularly hurtful for Jewish people whose families and relatives have been subjected to prejudice, hatred and murder.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Helen Marks
John Airs
John Davies
Alison Down
Dave Hookes