

## Annex 10

### The oppressive impact of the General Secretary's directives on left-wing Jews

Five instructions forbidding formal<sup>1</sup> discussion about topics of critical importance to left wing Jewish Party members were issued between 13 August 2020 and 9 December 2020.

The topics were the Panorama Settlement<sup>2</sup>, the EHRC Report, the IHRA definition of antisemitism, Jeremy Corbyn's suspension and removal from the Parliamentary Labour Party and the General Secretary (GS's) powers to issue such directives.

One of the members suspended was a JVL officer who chaired a GC meeting, the General Committee of a Constituency Labour Party. The CLP representatives voted to pass a resolution condemning the withdrawal of the Whip from Jeremy Corbyn and the GS's disciplinary actions against other CLP's who had not followed the directives. The suspension was lifted after five months, but although the directives have been challenged widely on the basis that the Rule Book only permits intervention about the *conduct* of debate, the Party issued a sanction for a breach of Labour Party rules.

On 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 the GS wrote to all CLP chairs stating:

*"It remains the case that motions which seek to repudiate the findings of the EHRC or question its competency to conduct the investigation remain not competent business for branches or CLPs. Motions relating to ongoing disciplinary cases are also not in order, in line with the instructions of my predecessor.*

*I am aware that other motions (including expressions of solidarity, and matters relating to the internal processes of the PLP) are providing a flashpoint for the expression of views that undermine the Labour Party's ability to provide a safe and welcoming space for all members, in particular our Jewish members. Therefore, all motions which touch on these issues will also be ruled out of order.*

This instruction was reiterated on 30<sup>th</sup> November and extended to all motions of solidarity, questioning the actions of the GS, with the same justification about Jewish members.

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1 Formal means that branch and constituency Labour Parties were instructed not to allow the tabling of resolutions also known as motions. This is the normal protocol for political discussion and leads to members agreeing a political position on a particular topic.

2 The Panorama Settlement was a legal agreement made with seven former members of staff who appeared on an edition of the BBC's Panorama 'programme, as well as with the journalist who hosted that programme. It included the Party paying over a substantial sum of money. The General Secretary informed local Party officers that 'motions relating to these settlements and the circumstances behind them are not competent business for discussion by local parties'. There were reports that Labour's legal advice had been that the Party could have mounted a strong defense. As the programme asserted that the Labour Party was antisemitic, Jews who disagreed with this view were denied even the opportunity to express their opinions.

This assumes all Jewish members will be uncomfortable in the face of respectful but robust debate on topics very important to Jews.

The policy seems to be a development of the current leadership's reaction to the views of many Jewish and non-Jewish members of the Party to Jews and non-Jews who have questioned the extent and content of allegations of antisemitism. Disciplinary action against individual Jews is now coupled with the sanctioning of free debate on the proscribed topics, all of which affect Jewish members both disproportionately and negatively.

### **The EHRC**

We have published and recorded our concerns about how the Party is systematically misrepresenting the findings of the EHRC's investigation. (How the EHRC Got it so Wrong)<sup>3</sup>. The misrepresentation continues – e.g. in the Huffington Post of 21 July 2021 – which, as others have done, erroneously refers to the EHRC finding the Party guilty of ***institutional anti-Semitism***.<sup>4</sup>.

### **The IHRA and the JDA**

In line with the statement of principles that includes that, 'We stand for rights and justice for Jewish people everywhere, and against wrongs and injustice to Palestinians and other oppressed people anywhere'<sup>5</sup> JVL's Jewish activists have been instrumental in attempting to highlight the risks of the widespread 'attempts to widen the definition of antisemitism beyond its meaning of hostility towards or discrimination against Jews as Jews' and its silencing of debate about Israel/Palestine.

The IHRA is crucial to this debate and JVL members have been engaged with those Jewish scholars who have put the IHRA in some context by creating the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism<sup>6</sup>.

Yet, as Jewish Labour Party members we are forbidden from discussing this, even though there are many Jewish Jurists and Jewish academics who have studied antisemitism, who are highly critical of it as a definition and even more so of its application.<sup>7</sup>

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3 [Verso \(versobooks.com\)](https://www.versobooks.com/)

4 [Keir Starmer Expels Far-Left Corbyn Supporters From Labour | HuffPost UK \(huffingtonpost.co.uk\)](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/keir-starmer-expels-far-left-corbyn-supporters-from-labour)

5 [JVL Statement of Principles | Jewish Voice for Labour](https://www.jewishvoiceforlabour.org.uk/statement-of-principles)

6 [The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism | JDA](https://www.jda.org.uk/the-jerusalem-declaration-on-antisemitism)

7 [Jamie Stern-Weiner | Israel. Palestine. Israel-Palestine. \(wordpress.com\)](https://www.israel-palestine.com/)

## **Jeremy Corbyn**

JVL's Jewish members have provided evidence that directly contradicts the malign accusations that, under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, the Party colluded with antisemitism – some gathered in a number of short videos<sup>8</sup> and in more detail, JVL's document challenging the JLM dossier<sup>9</sup>.

This evidence has been ignored.

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8 [\(10\) Just Jews \(@JustJewsUK\) / Twitter](#)

9 [JLM evidence to EHRC – Gossip, distortion, double standards and presumed guilt | Jewish Voice for Labour](#)