

Getting on the Front Foot about Antisemitism

Basics

- **We're fighting a general election.** We want to talk about Labour policies, not get diverted by an irrational panic about antisemitism.
- **Impose our agenda.** Challenge those who raise antisemitism to identify *any* Labour policies that are actually antisemitic.
- If someone **on the doorstep** seems genuinely concerned about 'antisemitism in the Labour party':
 - Be friendly
 - Aim to turn this into a dialogue on Labour's policies
 - Don't be apologetic. Too many Labour spokespeople are.
 - Understand any hurt they may express but call into question – sensitively – the grounds for it.
 - Ask them to name specific Labour policies they've come across that they feel would discriminate against Jewish people
 - When they can't, shift the discussion onto the positives of Labour's policy offer.

Dealing with the media or aggressive attacks

If you are dealing with people who try to use antisemitism allegations to bury Labour and Corbyn give them no quarter

- Don't be apologetic.
- Go on to the offensive.
- Turn every question and allegation about antisemitism into a positive statement about the best of Labour's anti-discrimination, anti-fascist, pro-refugee past and its continued commitment to help *everyone* who is disadvantaged.
- Insist: "You have no basis for saying that! What particular policy do you object to, one you think that discriminates against Jews"

Here are affirmative answers to basic accusations

The Labour party is antisemitic?

- **No it is not.** I presume you mean by this hatred of or discrimination against Jews. Let us be absolutely clear, there are no policies or measures proposed in Labour's policy commitments that show hatred of or discriminate against Jewish people. **Absolutely none.**
- Where is the even the vaguest hint of any suggestion that any Jew will be discriminated against when Labour forms the government?
- Every Jew who works for the health service, who works in education, who works in local government or any other form of public service will benefit alongside all others who work in the sector – after a decade of austerity everyone will benefit.
- Every Jewish mother looking for adequate maternity care, or Jewish parents hoping that their local schools will be adequately funded; Jewish families wanting care as they age, and safety on their streets as well as all Jewish people anxious about the impact of the climate catastrophe will like other citizens of this country feel a difference once a Labour government is elected.
- Our interests are no different from those of the rest of our society and we will overwhelmingly be among the beneficiaries, with the introduction of policies for the many, not the few.

Jeremy Corbyn is an antisemite?

You mean by that he shows hatred of or discriminates against Jews? **He does not.**

- He has stood with Jews countless numbers of times against Nazi marches through our streets, condemning attacks on synagogues, signing parliamentary early day motions against antisemitism in sport, praising Holocaust education, calling for an investigation into Facebook and its failure to prevent the spread of antisemitic materials on its site and much more.
- Do you think if an anti-Jewish march took place down Cable Street today that Jeremy Corbyn would be anywhere but on the side of those opposing the fascists, vehemently?
- His policies in support of Palestinian rights – our policies in support of Palestinian rights – are in line with our socialist principles of support for all oppressed peoples, past and present – be they Blacks in South Africa, the Rohingya today. To make peace you have to be prepared to talk to all sides in the conflict – just as the Queen ended up shaking hands with Martin McGuinness, formerly a leader of the IRA.
- Any Jew who leaves the UK after the election of a Labour government will be making the mistake of a lifetime – losing the chance of helping create a genuinely egalitarian, anti-racist society in which all people are valued equally for who they are, not their origins, their religion, their ethnicity or social class. Labour's policies speak for all of us.

What is there for Jews not to wish for in this future?

To sum up: the party has done nothing wrong

- All the evidence shows there is *less* antisemitism in the Labour party than in other parties in the UK.
- Insofar as it was slow in tackling what antisemitic allegations there were, this has now been remedied.
- What is definitely needed is more backbone in the Labour interviewees.
- Impose our agenda. Be positive that our policies are good for voters and their families, and good for everyone, Jews included.

Further Information

See [Briefing for canvassers: Challenging false allegations of antisemitism](#)

For JVL's position on antisemitism and our implacable opposition to it, see the statement [What is – and what is not – antisemitic misconduct](#), and our endorsement of the October 2019 Board of Deputies of British Jews/Community Security Trust [definition of antisemitism](#).