

Jerusalem, July 18, 2019

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn
Leader of the Labour Party
United Kingdom

יצחק הרצוג
יו"ר ההנהלה

Isaac Herzog
Chairman of the
Executive

Sir,

I am writing to you as Chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel, the largest Jewish organization in the world which serves Jews worldwide. One of our main concerns has always been fighting antisemitism, and it is precisely this concern which is the reason of my letter to you.

The revelations made by the BBC Panorama documentary on the expansion of antisemitism within the Labour Party under your leadership have caused much distress and dismay. The treatment by Labour's leadership of antisemitic incidents within the ranks of the party is properly outrageous, and the leniency and laxness displayed by the party's institutions towards members who spread antisemitic tropes and cast antisemitic aspersions is mind-boggling.

It is legitimate to criticize any government. I have done so myself as Leader of the Opposition, from within the Knesset - as vibrant and as vivid a democratic parliament as you may find in any liberal democracy. But it is racist to attribute to a whole ethnic or religious group negative characteristics which are supposedly innate. It is antisemitic to demonize Israel and Israelis in general as inherently evil. It is antisemitic to apply double standards to Israel, that is: to hold it to standards to which no other nation is held. And it is antisemitic to delegitimize the Jewish people's right to a sovereign state of its own - and to apply this denial exclusively to Jews and to no other people. All of this relies heavily on ages-old anti-Jewish prejudice, stereotypes and bigotry. The new mask of this old hatred fools no one.

May I remind you that when I was Leader of the Opposition and Chairman of Israel's Labor party (Avoda), which was for decades your sister party, I had sent you an invitation to come to Jerusalem and to pay a visit to Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial and museum. It is a shame that you did not respond to this invitation as many other leaders did.

Since then, the situation has deteriorated, and the Panorama documentary has exposed the moral chasm into which Labour has fallen. What needs to be done, and urgently, is to determinedly prevent all antisemitic, antisemitic-compatible and antisemitic-enabling expressions within the party lines. Whether their background is malevolence or ignorance, no tolerance must be shown to any display, nuanced as it may be, of xenophobia, racism and antisemitism. Firm action must be taken before it's too late!

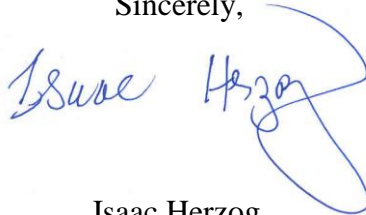
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The only credible way to do that is to entrust the probe to an outside body, which will be completely independent of the party and its leadership and which will make practical recommendations as to the right process to rid the party in the most unambiguous way of the scourge that is antisemitism.

I therefore call on you to undertake with a sense of urgency this task, through which a neutral entity outside the party shall proceed to investigate in a transparent way everything related to the allegations of antisemitism within the party and make public recommendations which, when implemented forcefully within the party, will allow British Jews to feel safe and wanted once again within Labour, as they have in the past.

Sincerely,



Isaac Herzog

Chairman of the Executive

Copy: Mr. Yigal Palmor, Head of International Relations Unit