

Ex-Labourites, and 24 Notables, Denounce Corbyn and His Labour Party for Antisemitism

by Hugh Fitzgerald



It is now well-established that Jeremy Corbyn both tolerates antisemitism in the Labour Party, and is himself an antisemite, in his continuing support for Hamas and Hezbollah, and his limitless malevolence toward Israel, even as he piously assures one and all that he is doing all he can to root out antisemitism in the party. Many Jewish members of the Labour Party, like Luciana Berger, unable to endure what the Labour Party has become, have been driven out of the party by the antisemitic atmospherics that they could no longer tolerate.

Last February, M.P. Ian Austin left the Labour Party for the same reason, as noted [here](#):

The 54-year-old had resigned from Labour in February citing antisemitism under Mr Corbyn's leadership but now said he could not stand again in the Dudley North constituency he had represented since 2005 because he did not want to "muddy the waters" and risk the Labour candidate getting elected.

Britain's Jewish community has lost one of its most outspoken and devoted supporters in Parliament.

"I think the best contribution I can make at the moment is to make sure Jeremy Corbyn does not get anywhere near to Downing Street," he said. "I stood down from parliament because I thought that was the best way of achieving that. That is the most urgent thing in this election.

"I think there is a risk of Corbyn becoming PM. I stood down to try to make sure this doesn't happen."

Along with Austin and Berger, four other members of Labour resigned last February from the party because of what they described as a culture of antisemitism that Jeremy Corbyn not only refused to address, but which, they claimed, he shared. Several other M.P.s have resigned from Labour Party since, making the same charges of antisemitism being both expressed and tolerated.

In July, three Labour peers (members of the House of Lords), [also resigned](#) from Labour:

Three Labour peers have resigned over the party's handling of antisemitism complaints, with the former general secretary David Triesman arguing the party was "plainly institutionally antisemitic".

Lord Triesman, who is Jewish and an ex-chairman of the Football Association, said he was resigning the whip in the

House of Lords.

Ara Darzi, a former health minister, and Leslie Turnberg, a former president of the Royal College of Physicians, also told Angela Smith, the party's leader in the Lords, that they were leaving the Labour benches.

In his letter of resignation, Triesman wrote: "We may one day be the party of anti-racism once again but it certainly isn't today. My sad conclusion is that the Labour party is very plainly institutionally antisemitic, and its leader and his circle are antisemitic having never once made the right judgment call about an issue reflecting deep prejudice. The number of examples is shocking."

He said the Labour party was "no longer a safe political environment" for Jewish people or others who opposed antisemitism.

"It is time to recognise the reality. I always said it was worth hanging on to fight so long as there was a prospect of winning. I now don't believe with this leadership there is," he said.

In October, a long-serving Labour M.P., Louise Ellman, President of the Labour Friends of Israel, also resigned, denouncing Corbyn:

"Jeremy Corbyn – who spent three decades on the backbenches consorting with, and never confronting, anti-Semites, Holocaust deniers and terrorists – has attracted the support of too many anti-Semites," she said. "The Labour party is no longer a safe place for Jews and Jeremy Corbyn must bear the responsibility for this."

Having resigned from Labour in February, Ian Austin this November [urged](#) former Labour supporters to vote for Boris Johnson in the upcoming election. He said in November that the

party has been poisoned by “anti-Jewish racism” under Corbyn.

Austin was one of seven lawmakers who left the Labour Party in February because of allegations of anti-Semitism and its failure to take a clear stand on Brexit.

On Thursday, he urged “decent, traditional, patriotic Labour voters” to vote for Johnson and the Conservatives rather than let Corbyn take power. He said the “scandal of anti-Semitism” has poisoned Labour since Corbyn was elected party leader in 2015.

Those concerns were echoed by the Jewish Chronicle weekly newspaper, a fixture in Britain’s Jewish community since 1841, which said its polling indicated that nearly half of Britain’s Jews would “seriously consider” leaving the country if Corbyn becomes prime minister.

“Over his long career, the 70-year-old Corbyn has stoked controversy by championing the grievances of groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah, and been accused of failing to expel party members who express anti-Semitic views. He has also been criticized for past statements, including a 2010 speech in which he compared Israel’s blockade of the Gaza Strip to Nazi Germany’s sieges of Leningrad and Stalingrad during World War II.

“Corbyn denied the allegations, saying Thursday that “anti-Semitism is a poison and an evil in our society” and that he was working to root it out of the Labour Party. But if so, no one seems to have noticed his efforts. Not Lord Treisman, who spoke about the “scandal of antisemitism” that had infected the Labour Party ever since Corbyn took it over in 2015, the party which, Lord Treisman complained, was now “institutionally antisemitic.” Not Louise Ellman, M.P., who recently described Jeremy Corbyn as someone “who spent three decades on the backbenches consorting with, and never confronting, anti-Semites, Holocaust deniers, and terrorists

and has attracted the support of too many anti-Semites,” and added, for good measure, that “the Labour party is no longer a safe place for Jews and Jeremy Corbyn must bear the responsibility for this” Not Ian Austin, who had also resigned as a Labour M.P., and who said that the party has been poisoned by “anti-Jewish racism” under Corbyn.

And now comes the best part. Not just members of the House of Commons and House of Lords, but a group of non-political figures – actors, writers, the founder of Wikipedia, the former head of the Equality and Human Rights Commission – twenty-four British notables in all, have written an open letter urging everyone not to vote for Labour in the next election because of the antisemitism now rampant in the party.

The text – which was published in the left-wing Guardian – read as follows:

The coming election is momentous for every voter, but for British Jews it contains a particular anguish: the prospect of a prime minister steeped in association with antisemitism. Under Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership, Labour has come under formal investigation by the Equality and Human Rights Commission for institutional racism against Jews. Two Jewish MPs [and at least five others felt they had to quit, as did three Jewish Lords] have been bullied out of the party.

Mr Corbyn has a long record of embracing antisemites as comrades.

We listen to our Jewish friends and see how their pain has been relegated as an issue, pushed aside by arguments about Britain’s European future. For those who insist that Labour is the only alternative to Boris Johnson’s hard Brexit, now, it seems, is not the time for Jewish anxiety.

But antisemitism is central to a wider debate about the kind of country we want to be. To ignore it because Brexit looms

larger is to declare that anti-Jewish prejudice is a price worth paying for a Labour government. Which other community's concerns are disposable in this way? Who would be next?

Opposition to racism cannot include surrender in the fight against antisemitism. Yet that is what it would mean to back Labour and endorse Mr Corbyn for Downing Street. The path to a more tolerant society must encompass Britain's Jews with unwavering solidarity. We endorse no party. However, we cannot in all conscience urge others to support a political party we ourselves will not. We refuse to vote Labour on 12 December.

John le Carré (David Cornwell), Fay Weldon, Joanna Lumley, William Boyd, Simon Callow, Antony Beevor, Sathnam Sanghera, Janina Ramirez, Trevor Phillips, Jimmy Wales, Suzannah Lipscomb, Tom Holland, Frederick Forsyth, Peter Frankopan, Ghanem Nuseibeh, Dan Snow, Fiyaz Mughal, Tony Parsons, Dan Jones, Maajid Nawaz, Oz Katerji, Nick Hower, Ed Husain, Terry Jerv

Such a list of celebrities is bound to make a deep impression on many members of the British public, including those who have been following only vaguely, or not at all, the moral collapse of the Labour Party. When political figures like Ian Austin, Liliana Berger, and Lord Trestein declare their opposition to Corbyn and the party he has been molding in his likeness, that's one thing, impressive, but still in the world of politics. For true mass appeal, celebrities are necessary. And this letter has twenty-four of them. The signers include the well-known writers John le Carré, Fay Weldon, Frederick Forsyth, and William Boyd, such major actors as Simon Callow, Dan Snow (who, it is probably worth mentioning, is married to Lady Edwina Louisa Grosvenor, daughter of the 6th Duke of Westminster), Joanna Lumley (most famous for the television series *Absolutely Fabulous*), and Tom Holland, the academic historian and television presenter Suzanna Lipscomb, the

journalist and television presenter Nick Hower, the film director Jerry Jarvis, the historian (and hotelier) Peter Frankopan, the journalist and writer Tony Parsons, the founder of Wikipedia, Jimmy Wales, the writer and journalist Oz Katerji, the former head of the Equality and Human Rights Commission Trevor Phillips. The four signers with Muslim backgrounds are a little more problematic, given their apparent continued belief in a peaceful “core” of Islam which many of us believe to be non-existent. While denouncing Corbyn’s antisemitism, and that of the Labour Party he has fashioned, none of the four Muslim signers, in their outside lives, while willing to call out antisemitism themselves, appears ready to admit that antisemitism is a profound and immutable part of Islam. These Muslim signers are Fiyaz Mughal (founder of Tell Mama), Ed Husain (a senior fellow at the British think tank Civitas and a global fellow at the Wilson Center), Maajid Nawaz (founder of Quilliam), and Ghanem Nuseibeh (founder of an international consultancy, Cornerstone Global Management).

Many of those who signed the letter – all the signatories were non-Jews, so as to avoid the obvious attacks – had long been loyal to Labour, which makes their public disaffection so much harder for Corbyn and his acolytes to satisfactorily explain or dismiss. So many well-known people on the left have just abandoned the party but these two dozen notables have gone further; they have not merely refused to vote for Labour but have gone to the trouble of urging others not to vote for Labour as well. Convinced as many of us now are of the influence of non-political celebrities even in political matters, I allow myself to believe that this intervention, by these writers, actors, television presenters – will have a major effect on voters, who will come down deservedly hard on Jeremy Corbyn.

National elections in Great Britain will be held on December 12. If Corbyn loses, it will be for one reason: his party’s,

and his own, antisemitism, that has driven so many people away from Labour. And along with those resignations from, and denunciations of, Labour and Jeremy Corbyn by such former Labour stalwarts as Tim Austin, Louise Ellman, Luciana Berger, and a dozen other Labour MPs and Peers, what will also have caused many voters to abandon Labour, while Corbyn remains its head, is this heartfelt letter, with its twenty-four celebrity signatories.

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