April 30, 2016

Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn MP
Leader of the Opposition
Leader of the Labour Party
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA
UK

Mr. Leader,

I have been appalled and outraged by the recent examples of anti-Semitism by senior Labour Party officials in the United Kingdom. Knowing that the British Labour Party has a proud and distinguished history of fighting racism in every form, has only added to my profound disappointment at recent events, which must act as a red alert and prompt immediate action.

As someone whose father served in the British army and risked his life fighting against Hitler and the Nazis, the views expressed by Ken Livingstone, the former Mayor of London and member of Labour’s national executive, in which he claimed that Hitler “was supporting Zionism before he went mad and ended up killing six million Jews”, were particularly horrific, and unthinkable for a British politician in the 21st century.

That this followed the revelation that another of your MPs, Naz Shah, shared a sentiment that Jews should be forcibly transported from Israel, the land to which so many came to for refuge after having been transported to concentration camps, sickens all those of moral conscience to the core.

Mr Corbyn, part of the story of Israel’s establishment, was the context of centuries of anti-Jewish discrimination and dehumanisation, and the subsequent need for a state from which the Jewish people could defend themselves.
While there are many within the British Labour Party that support Israel, and fight every day against anti-Semitism, and despite the fact that the views recently expressed represent a minority within the British Labour Party, this cannot diminish the importance of dealing with this serious problem.

I would like to take this opportunity, in the week leading up to Holocaust Memorial Day in Israel, to invite you to bring a delegation from the British Labour Party to Israel’s national Holocaust museum, Yad Vashem, in order to witness that the last time the Jews were forcibly “transported”, it was not to Israel, but to their deaths. While Ken Livingstone is surely anti-Semitic beyond hope of redemption, I’m sure there remain many Labour Party activists with a willingness to engage and better understand the scourge of anti-Semitism. By doing this, perhaps we can ensure that the anti-Semitism expressed in recent days is not the example set to British young generation, but rather one of tolerance and acceptance of all people, regardless of faith.

MK Isaac Herzog
Leader of the Opposition
Chairman of the Labour Party

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