

Ms Jo Bird



BY EMAIL ONLY: 

24 August 2021

Ref: A674976

Case No: CN-12993

Dear Ms Bird,

Notification of Possible Automatic Exclusion from Membership of the Labour Party

1. We write to inform you that we have reason to believe that you are ineligible to be or remain a Labour Party member because you are a supporter of Labour Against the Witchhunt (**LAW**).
2. This letter sets out the relevant rules and definitions governing the criteria for eligibility to be or remain a Labour Party member, the evidence to support the claim that you are a supporter of LAW, and what action you are required to take in response to this letter.

Relevant Rules and Definitions

3. Chapter 2, Clause I.4.B of the Labour Party Rule Book¹ provides:

"A member of the Party who joins and/ or supports a political organisation other than an official Labour group or other unit of the Party, or supports any candidate who stands against an official Labour candidate, or publicly declares their intent to stand against a Labour candidate, shall automatically be ineligible to be or remain a Party member, subject to the provisions of Chapter 6.1.2 below of the disciplinary rules."

4. On 20 July 2021, the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party (**NEC**) confirmed that LAW constituted a "political organisation" for the purposes of Chapter 2, Clause I.4.B of the Labour Party Rule Book.
5. The NEC further confirmed a number of example acts that the Labour Party considers demonstrate a person supports a political organisation. This included participating in a number of events organised or hosted by LAW, contributing written material to the website of LAW, and encouraging others to join the relevant organisation.
6. Other acts include repeatedly liking or sharing LAW content on social media or participating in the LAW Facebook group.

¹ <https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/rulebook-2020.pdf>

7. On 22 July 2021, the Labour Party gave notice that the NEC had confirmed the above in *The Labour Party Complaints Policy*.²

Evidence

8. We believe that you have engaged in the following acts and that these acts constitute support for LAW.
- 8.1. On or around 24 September 2018, you spoke at the Labour Against the Witchhunt fringe meeting at Labour Party conference.³
- 8.2. On 21 December 2019, you spoke in Liverpool and said "*Labour Against the Witch-hunt [liverpool@labouragainsthewitchhunt.org] are a great support network for that. Given them your support.*"⁴
- 8.3. On or around 14 January 2020, you signed an open letter to Ms Rebecca Long-Bailey MP published by Labour Against the Witchhunt.⁵

Next Steps

9. We invite you to submit representations to us, within seven days of the date at the top of this letter, addressing the allegations above and, in particular, that you are no longer eligible for membership of the Labour Party due to your support for LAW.
10. The Labour Party will consider any representations that you make in response to this letter, and the Labour Party will write to inform you of any decision we take regarding your membership of the Labour Party.
11. Please note that failure to provide evidence that you are not a supporter of LAW, as defined by the NEC above, is very likely to lead to your automatic exclusion from membership of the Labour Party.
12. Similarly, failure to make written representations, or to provide a compelling reason to extend this deadline within seven days, will lead to your automatic exclusion from membership of the Labour Party.
13. Please submit any response to the Governance and Legal Unit by email at investigations@labour.org.uk within seven days of the date at the top of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

The Governance and Legal Unit

The Labour Party

c.c. North West Labour Party

² <https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Labour-Party-Complaints-Policy.pdf>

³ Item 1

⁴ Item 2

⁵ Item 3

Item 1 – Fringe Meeting, 24 September 2018

Source: <https://www.labouragainstthewitchhunt.org/campaigns/they-can-fuck-off/>



[About us](#) [Join & donate](#)

“They can fuck off”. Report of LAW’s first ever fringe meeting at LP conference

September 24, 2018 | By [admin](#) | [campaigning](#)

Like and share this post:



Labour Against the Witchhunt held a successful fringe meeting at the Labour conference. Stan Keable reports



“There can be no greater injustice than anti-racists being accused of racism by racists,” the Scouse comedian Alexie Sayle told LAW’s packed fringe meeting on Sunday night. The potential for a “massive transformation” of the Labour Party and society opened up by

“the miracle of Jeremy Corbyn” has overcome Alexie’s longstanding objection to voting. Having grown up in a communist family, he used to say: “Don’t vote, struggle against capitalism”. But, although Jeremy has changed all that, Alexie has not joined the Labour Party. A comedian needs to maintain their independence, he said, to be able to criticise any politician. The witch-hunters can’t expel me because I am not a member, he added, “so they can fuck off!” (The democracy we fight for, of course, includes the right of any Labour member, comedians included, to criticise all Labour leaders.)

Jewish Voice for Labour's Jo Bird, newly elected four weeks ago as a councillor in Birkenhead, pointed out that she and her comrades had been canvassing for weeks, talking to people about all manner of issues, but "no-one raised the issue



of anti-Semitism on the door". She was appalled by Birkenhead MP Frank Field. He rounded on the rank-and-file party membership within his constituency. He invented accusations of anti-Semitism and bullying. To all those party members falsely suspended and expelled, she said: "You are owed a huge apology. On behalf of the party, I am very, very sorry."

Item 2 – Liverpool, 21 December 2019

Source:

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2428325344145215&id=100009033190299



Jo Bird

22 December 2019 · 🌐

...

My speech on the streets of Liverpool yesterday.

Defend, Attack, Build, Create!

Thank you very much. [heckler: Go 'ed, Jo]

How are you doing? I'm alright but I'm in mourning. Like many people here, I am mourning for the socialist Labour government that the country did not elect, last week.

As well as being an elected Labour Councillor on the Wirral, I'm also Jewish. I'd like to wish everybody a happy Hannukah festival which starts tomorrow.

We are facing at least 5 years of very nasty Conservative government. They are going to batter our communities and batter the environment. So what are WE going to do about it? I've got 4 proposals about what we do next. [heckler: Fight!]

Defend, Attack, Build, Create!

First: Defend!

We need to defend each other from this hostile environment and oppressive regime. Defend each other from smears. So whenever anyone is attacked on facebook, attacked in the right-wing media, attacked in the school grounds, attacked at work, then defend each other. Defend. Speak out and stand up. That's what happened to me when I was suspended – people spoke up and that's one of the reasons I was unsuspended very quickly.

Labour Against the Witch-hunt [liverpool@labouragainsthewitchhunt.org] are a great support network for that. Given them your support.

Secondly: Attack, attack, attack!

Attack the hate-mongers, attack the wolf-cryers. Those who point fingers at witches, those who cry wolf – they should know there are consequences to their actions. Expose them, call them out, reveal their track record, name their behaviour and attack them back.

Thirdly: Build!

We need to build creative communities, resistant and resilient communities. We need to meet our own needs - clean air, clean water, decent work, homes for the homeless, good food. Bread and roses. Together, we can offer collective solutions to some of those problems. Like keeping wealth local in our communities, more devolved powers for Liverpool City Region, the solidarity economy.

and Fourthly: Create!

If you are a dancer, an actor, a film-maker, an instagrammer, a poet, a singer, a writer, a banner-maker, a musician – we need you. We need your banners, we need your costumes, we need your creativity. We need a festival of resistance! Some of that we've seen today.

Elected Labour politicians like myself, we are just the political wing of a movement - the Labour, trade union, co-operative and creative movements. I'm just one elected representative, but we are part of the wider movement – keep building it.

We are the people who started, "Oh, Jeremy Corbyn!" [crowd respond: Oh, Jeremy Corbyn! Oh, Jeremy Corbyn!]. This is what creativity can do. This is what Merseyside can do. We are the people.

Thank you to the organisers of this march. Thank you to everybody who came.

We are not going anywhere. We are part of the resistance. I'll see you soon. [cheers and clapping]



👍❤️ 231

28 comments 94 shares

Item 3 – Open Letter, 14 January 2020

Source: <https://www.labouragainsthewitchhunt.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Letter-to-RLB.pdf> and <https://www.labouragainsthewitchhunt.org/campaigns/sign-the-open-letter-to-rebecca-long-bailey-reject-the-bods-10-pledges/>

Open letter to Rebecca Long-Bailey: We call on you to reject the BoD's 10 Pledges!

Dear Rebecca

We address this letter to you, because, unlike Keir Starmer, you state that you intend to "stay true" to Jeremy Corbyn's "radical socialist vision".

The Board of Deputies (BoD) is not the representative body for the majority of Jews in Britain, many of whom are very critical of the actions of the state of Israel - unlike the BoD. The BoD is a pro-Israel organisation. It claims, for instance, that the Palestinians in Gaza are "using its civilians - including children - as pawns" in their fight against Israeli occupation and oppression.

The BoD have supported every war, every attack launched by Israel. The BoD is not a neutral body, but one with an evident political agenda: to attack, weaken and destroy any opposition to the systematic and brutal oppression of the Palestinians by the Israeli government. The BoD encourages the conflation of criticism of the Israeli government (anti-Zionism), with antisemitism (hatred of Jews).

The BoD, and its individual officers, have maintained open hostility to Labour since Corbyn took leadership of the party. They organised the 'Enough is Enough' demonstration outside parliament in March 2018, which was clearly aimed at weakening and attacking Jeremy Corbyn.

We believe that the BoD's '10 Pledges' are an outrageous political interference by an organisation that is overtly hostile to today's Labour Party and everything it stands for. If implemented, these policies would for example, result in the suspensions and expulsions of the thousands of Labour members who have stood in open solidarity with those wrongly accused of antisemitism, in-

cluding Chris Williamson, Jackie Walker, Ken Livingstone and Marc Wadsworth.

Solidarity is surely what the Labour Party stands for? If implemented, the pledges would create an atmosphere of fear, distrust and self-censorship. Is that really the kind of party you want Labour to become?

Also, it is not for the leader of the Labour Party, or candidates aspiring to be the leader, to commit themselves to such pledges. The policies and rules of the Labour Party are determined by the members of the party via annual conference. By agreeing to these pledges, you are at risk of undermining our democratic processes.

We believe you are on a dangerous path. Please turn around while you still can. We ask you to reject the '10 pledges' and stand with us - for the democratic transformation of the Labour Party into a vehicle for positive change, free speech and open debate.

We reject all of the '10 pledges', in particular:

Pledge 2: This pledge calls for the disciplinary process to be run by an "independent provider". No, Labour party members should be judged by their peers only, not by outside agencies with their own political agenda.

Pledge 3: This would hand over confidential details of ongoing disciplinary cases to "Jewish representative bodies". Which "bodies"? Of course the BoD chiefly mean themselves, because in pledge 8 they reject any engagement with what they call "fringe organisations and individuals", by which they include principled, non-Zionist organisations like Jewish Voice for Labour.

Pledge 4: This would impose a lifetime ban from membership for what the BoD refers to as "repeat offenders, such as Ken Livingstone or Jackie Walker." However, Ken Livingstone resigned his membership; whereas Jackie was not found guilty of antisemitism, but "bringing the party into disrepute". Clearly, neither of them has said or done anything antisemitic (defined as "hatred of Jews"). Not only is this crass harassment of two individuals who have fought against racism for their entire life, it allows an anti-Labour organisation to decide who should or should not be a member of our party.

Pledge 5: This states: "Any MPs, peers, councillors, members or CLPs who support, campaign or provide a platform for people who have been suspended or expelled in the wake of antisemitic incidents should themselves be suspended from membership." This is gross censorship, which should be rejected by anybody who wants a critical, engaged and thinking membership. This pledge would make it impossible for members to campaign to right a wrong in the party; it could lead to the suspension and smearing of thousands of members who dare to question and criticise what they may perceive to be wrong decisions.

Pledge 6: The Labour Party's NEC has already adopted the IHRA's 'definition' of antisemitism with all its eleven examples, even though some of those conflate anti-Zionism with antisemitism. Making this "the basis for considering antisemitism disciplinary cases" is yet another insidious attack on free speech – exactly what the definition's author, Kenneth Stern, has been warning about.

Pledge 7: This pledge seeks to hand the deliverance of "anti-racism training" to the Jew-

ish Labour Movement, a pro-Zionist organisation that was revived in 2015 with the specific aim of undermining and attacking Jeremy Corbyn and the left. JLM (whose members don't have to be Jewish or Labour Party members) have been instrumental in exaggerating and weaponising the very small number of antisemitic incidents in the Labour movement in order to smear Jeremy Corbyn and the left, by wilfully conflating anti-Zionism with Antisemitism.

We call on all on all socialists, anti-imperialists and Corbyn supporters to stay actively involved in the Labour Party and join us in this campaign against the BoD's '10 Pledges' and the ongoing witch-hunt against the left in the Labour movement.

Signatories include (all personal capacity):

Moshé Machover, author
Leah Levane, Jewish Voice for Labour
Alexei Sayle, comedian
Jackie Walker, author
Glyn Secker, Jewish Voice for Labour
Cllr Jo Bird, Wirral
Asa Winstanley, journalist
Roland Rance, Free Speech on Israel
Cllr Sam Gorst, Liverpool
Mike Cushman, Jewish Voice for Labour
Kevin Higgins, poet
Graham Bash, LRC, JVL, LAW
John Dunn, Orgreave Campaign
Tina Werkmann, vice-chair Labour Against the Witchhunt
Lee Rock, convenor Sheffield Labour Left
Cllr Pam Bromley, Rossendale and Carven

Organisations in support:

Labour Against the Witchhunt, Labour Left Alliance, Sheffield Labour Left, Cheltenham Labour Left, Bassetlaw Socialist Forum, York Labour Representation Committee & others

LAW is one of the organisations behind the Labour Left Alliance. Please sign up to their Appeal - and get involved in (re-)building the Labour Left where you live! Sign up here: www.labourleft.org



Labour Against the Witchhunt

Tel: 07817 379 568

BCM Box 1488, London WC1N 3XX

info@labouragainstthewitchhunt.org

www.labouragainstthewitchhunt.org