



# London Centre for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism

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## **A statement from *The London Centre for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism*:**

We are dismayed to learn that the disgraced former leader of the Labour Party in the UK, Jeremy Corbyn, has been invited to meetings of the new *Union of the Left* in France.

Corbyn brought antisemitic ways of thinking into the mainstream of British politics. He employed antisemitic rhetoric, he tolerated it, and his supporters felt licensed to harass and to demonize people who they designated as “Zionists”. People designated in that way were cast out of the Labour community and were treated as the class enemy. They were treated as dishonest racists and as apologists for apartheid and imperialism.

There was an overwhelming consensus amongst British Jews, and amongst the institutions of the Jewish community, that Corbyn embraced antisemitic politics. British Jews were rightly afraid of the Corbyn movement and they opposed it with a great degree of unity.

The Corbyn movement was a disaster for the left. It was instrumental in allowing the populist right to win the Brexit referendum and it was unable to build a coalition capable of preventing the Boris Johnson Brexit government from coming to power.

Antisemites always portray themselves as the victims of the Jews and the Corbynites were no exception. In the face of mountains of evidence of antisemitism, and as the examples piled up, the Corbynites always responded with an aggressive counter-accusation of Zionist conspiracy. They said it was the Zionists who were ‘weaponizing’ antisemitism, they said antisemitism was a ‘smear’, they said it was a lie invented by Israel and propagated by Israel’s agents in Britain, and in the Labour Party, to silence criticism of Israel and to stop people from supporting Palestinian rights. They refused to look at the evidence of antisemitism or to consider what Jews were saying about it; they only accused anyone who raised the issue of antisemitism of speaking in bad faith and with a hidden agenda.

After Corbyn’s second electoral defeat and his resignation as leader, the Labour Party has been healing. It now admits that it had a problem of antisemitism and it has apologized for its antisemitism. The *Equality and Human Rights Commission* (EHRC) found that Labour had unlawfully harassed Jews while Corbyn was the leader. Corbyn still does not understand what he did wrong. He responded to the EHRC’s report with the usual counter-accusation of Zionist conspiracy. Labour has now exiled him from the Party in Parliament.

We very much hope that the French left will learn from the experience of Britain. We hope that it will listen to British Jews, to the anti-antisemitic left and to genuine antiracists. It should listen to French Jews too and it should strongly resist stigmatising them as a natural enemy of the left.



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We hope that the broad French left will look at the current British Government and will think carefully about what the British left did to allow it into power.

Antisemitism is inherently vile, it threatens and endangers Jews and it is symptomatic of anti-democratic politics. The left wing tradition of antisemitism is the left's totalitarian tradition; the left's democratic tradition has always recognised and opposed antisemitism.

Some may find antisemitism to be subtle; they may find it difficult to recognise it, to interpret it and to respond to it. But this kind of antisemitism paves the way for more explicit antisemitism both political and social, on both the left and the right. Antisemitism is never trivial or insignificant compared to some other, apparently more important threat. It is generally part of that other threat. When antisemitism is tolerated, it gets worse.

Please do not take Corbyn's advice, or follow his lead.

*The London Centre for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism.*

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