



## Cheltenham Constituency Labour Party

Secretary: Professor Robert Arnott

During the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, please reply to:

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Ms Jennie Formby  
General Secretary  
The Labour Party  
Southside  
105 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1E 6QT

21 April 2020

Dear General Secretary

### **WORK OF THE LABOUR PARTY'S GOVERNANCE AND LEGAL UNIT**

I am writing to you on behalf of the entire Executive Committee of the Cheltenham CLP. Like other Labour members throughout the country, we are horrified by the alleged behaviour of some senior Party management as revealed in the messages contained in the recent leaked report. We would be extremely disappointed if the Party's response to this was now to show more concern over the leaking of the report rather than over the behaviour revealed by it. It needs to be made clear that the actions of those concerned were totally unacceptable.

If the allegations are true and the direct evidence of *WhatsApp* messages and emails suggests that they are, it points to many at the top of the Labour Party being willing to damage the Party's prospects in an election so as to pursue their own agenda against the elected Leader of the Party. Furthermore, the tone presented is totally unprofessional, both in terms of the language about members of the Party and in terms of the slapdash way all complaints (not just those about antisemitism) seem to have been handled.

As members we have campaigned tirelessly for Labour candidates, Labour policy, and a Labour government. We are outraged by the apparent waste of our contributions and hard work in the run up to the 2017 General Election, where a few thousand more votes could have led to a Labour Government. In the current crisis we are seeing the disastrous consequences of the last three years of austerity which could have been avoided.

Going forward, it is clear structural changes must be made to ensure the professional management of the Party and its disciplinary process. After this report, it is hard to see how members can trust the outcome of any disciplinary proceedings. So far, the handling by the current leadership in dealing with these revelations does not inspire confidence. We ask for clarification of the following questions:

- Why was there no discussion with the NEC before initiating the independent enquiry?
- Why the knee jerk response of an independent enquiry that would cause delay? The report's validity could have been confirmed far more quickly by internal peer review.
- Why has the report not been submitted to the Equality and Human Rights Commission? The cause of the delays in dealing with the antisemitism complaints seems clearly relevant to their investigation.
- Why were the separate issues (on the report's context and circumstances of the whistleblowing) included with the explosive core allegations around internal Party saboteurs; they would clearly delay and obfuscate matters?

We would also ask that the Party and the independent inquiry make regular communications to CLPs to ensure they are kept informed of the procedural and substantive progress made on this matter over the coming months.

The Party must learn from this disaster and not least that the arrogance, lack of transparency and accountability within the Party hierarchy must stop. A start could be made by answering the questions above.

Please advise the National Executive Committee of the contents of this letter. We expect a response at your earliest convenience.

In comradeship,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Arnott', written in a cursive style.

Professor Robert Arnott  
Secretary