**Jewish Greens questions for Leaders**

 **Zack Polanski**

**How do you see the Green Party tackling the far-right and anti-migrant narratives?**

We need to change peoples' material living conditions. By tackling inequality and the scarcity narrative - we can then make sure we tell positive stories both about our own Jewish community but all communities. We must also challenge power and wealth - and consistently shine a light on the corrupting influences, often with fossil fuel companies, that the right wing narratives have both on our media but the more general political discourse.

**What role do you see for faith in politics?**

Green politics is at it's heart about compassion, solidarity and intersectional justice. These are also the values of many religions and it's beautiful to celebrate that connection.

I also think it's important that those without faith and those who consider them secular values also have spaces to convene and thrive.

The question always has to be about how to protect the rights of the most marginalised in any situation and to challenge power or status that may be oppressing them. Faith on an individual level can be the driving force for that - but it's not exclusive to it.

**What is your approach to combatting antisemitism:**

1. in the party?
2. in society?

Education. Ensure that people are informed, that there's spaces for people to learn and that we build alliances with those looking to do so.

In the party it's about ensuring that our disciplinary systems are well managed and that the volunteers who run the systems are being treated with the dignity and respect they deserve. And whilst leadership must have absolutely no role in the disciplinary process - they do have a role in ensuring trust in the process. That's about transparency within the governance structures, accountability and nurturing a culture where the first response isn't always to go straight to complaint stage.

In the country more broadly, the work I'm always proudest of is interfaith solidarity work. We know when they come for one of us, they come for all of us - and we must all stick together in solidarity.

How will you ensure a range of voices are heard on Israel/Palestine issues?

We have a democratic process at conference where people are able to bring amendments and motions. This is democracy but can also be alienating for some.

It's important we also have spaces like the Jewish greens where people can come collectively to speak and important to listen to each other.

As with any issues of politics, I'm always keen to read/listen to different voices on a topic whilst we remain resolutely opposed to the genocide.

How will you reach out to Jewish communities across the UK to persuade them to vote Green?

I do all the time. I visit Jewish schools, synagogues and I'll be proud to be one of the few Jewish politicians ever in history to lead a political party.

I think it's about not expecting people to come to us but us being willing to go out and speak to people. Yes to spotlight our green policies but even more importantly to listen and learn from communities.

It's about genuine authentic community engagement.

**How best will you protect religious practices such as Halal and Kosher slaughter?**

They're already protected in law - I think it's about holding the line and not allowing the right to divide communities. I want to see a country where we consume less meat and less animals die - but the equality act is really clear about the need to protect religious freedoms.

**Adrian Ramsay and Ellie Chowns**

**How do you see the Green Party tackling the far-right and anti-migrant narratives?**

In a dangerous world, the Green Party is a visible, courageous alternative to the right. We must carry on listening to people who are impoverished, hurt and disillusioned by politics as usual, and in particular those who are desperate enough to believe that the far right will help them in any way. Ellie and Adrian are already in Parliament — calling out fearmongering, injustice, and division, every day, and reframing problems of governments' own making. For example promoting safe passage to avoid anyone having to risk their lives in small boats.

**What role do you see for faith in politics?**

Religion is a private matter but the right to practice it is an enshrined human right. The Green Party welcomes people of all faiths and perspectives, along with the inspirations and insights that they bring. We are keen to engage with faith communities and know that faith for many people provides the basis for their concerns for environmental and social justice.

**What is your approach to combatting antisemitism:**

1. **in the party?**

Antisemitism is present in society and it would be naive to think that the Green Party is immune from it. We welcome the setting up and the work of Jewish Greens in explaining and highlighting its manifestation - and recognise that it is not always obvious to someone who is not alert to it.

Discrimination, fear and othering are always present to some degree, and never acceptable. We are grateful to Jewish Greens for creating the Antisemitism Guidance, and to the Alternative Disputes Resolution Committee for its work to de-escalate tensions. Knowledge, understanding and listening are key to improving our behaviour towards each other. However we have a disciplinary system for the sad occasions when all else fails, and we are working to improve this.

1. **in society?**

Antisemitism and other forms of racism are amplified by the far right to drive polarisation and distract from the real causes of societal problems. It's also clear that many current and increasingly prevalent conspiracy theory narratives are thinly disguised versions of earlier antisemitic conspiracy theories, and that these have spread beyond far-right extremist circles. Tackling the far right will reduce but not eliminate antisemitism, and it must be called out wherever it occurs. We support equalities legislation and laws against hate speech, and want to see much more effective oversight and regulation of the social media platforms that allow and in some cases actively promote racism and toxic conspiracy theories.

**How will you ensure a range of voices are heard on Israel/Palestine issues?**

We cannot shy away from naming genocide in Gaza, and our horror is almost universally shared by Jews and non-Jews alike. Genocide is a legal term that requires legal action, and naming it is an important step to ending it. However we must not let the actions of the Israeli government reflect on diaspora Jews, who have no say in what happens in Israel but are deeply affected by it, and often play leading roles in the protest against it.

Green Party Policy calls for a two state solution and equal human rights for all people. As with any discussion and debate where feelings run high, that debate must be respectful of all members' views and intolerant of any kind of abuse.

The appalling Hamas attack on 7th October 2023 and Israel's continuing horrific retribution against the people of Gaza have made life more precarious for all people in the region, and have contributed to rising antisemitism and Islamophobia here.

**How will you reach out to Jewish communities across the UK to persuade them to vote Green?**

Jewish values, like Green Party values, are human values. The Green Party has led the way on equality and inclusion practices, though of course there is more to be done.

All our communications must reflect our antiracism, intolerance of antisemitism and sensitivity to Jewish feelings. We would welcome invitations to Synagogue and interfaith events and will seek opportunities for more pro-active interaction.

**How best will you protect religious practices such as Halal and Kosher slaughter?**

The Green Party supports but does not impose dietary changes from meat towards much more plant- based eating, for reasons of climate, biodiversity, land use and animal welfare. There is much cruelty in factory farming and we should not single out religious practices over others as we strive to increase welfare practices and move away from intensive farming. We would work empathically and respectfully with relevant medical, scientific and religious groups to establish the best ways to minimise fear, pain and discomfort for any animals that are slaughtered.