

Partisan Antisemitism in the United Kingdom and the United States: Response Mechanisms and Red Lines

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This article examines how political parties confront antisemitism among candidates and elected officials and analyzes the tools available to them in determining the boundaries of political legitimacy. Focusing on the case study of the British Labour Party, the article demonstrates how Britain's centralized party structure and external regulatory oversight made it possible to treat antisemitism within the party not as a collection of individual incidents, but as a phenomenon governed by institutional accountability. By contrast, the decentralized structure of American political parties, the centrality of primary elections, and constitutional protections safeguarding the political process limit their ability to bar candidates from running or to expel them. An examination of case studies across both major U.S. parties reveals a gap between principled condemnation and practical action, shaped by a candidate's standing, internal power balances, and the political cost of disavowing them. The article analyzes the tools available to American parties before and after elections and examines the establishment of *The Front Line* as an attempt to make antisemitism politically costly. Finally, it proposes mechanisms for setting party standards, conducting independent inquiries, and linking investigative findings to endorsements, funding, and positions.

Introduction

Discussion of antisemitism in the political sphere usually focuses on the statements of elected officials and their effect on public discourse. But when such statements are made by a candidate or party member, they raise a broader question: How does a party determine who is qualified and entitled to represent it, and what are the consequences of crossing its ideological and moral boundaries? Parties provide candidates with legitimacy, campaign finance, organizational infrastructure, and influence. Their responses to antisemitism therefore shape the conditions under which candidates can move from the margins into the mainstream political arena.

The most notable example in recent years where antisemitism became an exceptionally major electoral liability is that of the British Labour Party. It demonstrates how an accumulation of problematic statements and the mishandling of complaints can develop into a crisis attributed to the party as a whole. A similar issue has emerged in the United States in recent years, as candidates and elected officials from both parties have continued to advance politically, despite displaying antisemitic statements or symbols.

However, the decentralized structure of American parties, the central role of primary elections, and the constitutional protections of the political process create a distinct system of powers and incentives, different than that of Britain. This raises several questions: How do American parties respond to antisemitism among their elected officials and candidates? What tools are available to them before and after elections? And what insights does the establishment of *The Front Line* offer regarding efforts to convert principled condemnation into an enforceable political red line?

The British Labour Party as a Case Study

The most prominent case in which antisemitism led to a political crisis is that of the British Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership. Beginning in 2015, [complaints](#) accumulated over antisemitic statements by party members, activists, and elected officials, including Corbyn himself. Gradually, the focus of the crisis shifted from the statements themselves to the party's handling of them. Lengthy proceedings, ambiguous rules, and allegations of political interference in disciplinary decisions eroded Jewish members' confidence in the party's mechanisms. Following complaints submitted between 2016 and 2018 by the [Jewish Labour Movement](#) and [Campaign Against Antisemitism](#), the UK's Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) launched a formal investigation. In its [2020 report](#), the Commission found the Labour Party responsible for unlawful acts of harassment and discrimination, including political interference in the handling of complaints and a failure to properly train those tasked with addressing such complaints. This finding changed the status of the crisis: antisemitism in the Labour Party was now recognized as a failure for which the party itself bore institutional responsibility, rather than one attributable only to individual members who made antisemitic statements, and who can be deemed not representative of the Party.

Even before the report was published, the affair had become a central issue in [British public discourse](#) and a test of Corbyn's leadership. In March 2018, the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Jewish Leadership Council [organized](#) the "[Enough Is Enough](#)" protest outside Parliament. They framed antisemitism as a crisis of party leadership and called on Labour's leadership to take concrete action against antisemitism within its ranks. The protest, the [resignations](#) of members of Parliament, and sustained media coverage turned the party's handling of antisemitism from an issue concerning only the Jewish community into a public test of the leadership's competence. A [poll](#) found that 55 percent of respondents believed Corbyn's failure to address antisemitism demonstrated that he was unfit to serve as prime minister. The peak of the crisis arrived on the eve of the 2019 election, when Britain's Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis took the rare step of [intervening](#) in an election campaign, warning that Labour's failures cast doubt on Corbyn's fitness to serve as Prime Minister and calling not to vote for him. Pressure from the Jewish community thus translated into a loss of public confidence in the party's leadership, and antisemitism became an issue Labour could no longer ignore.

The shift from condemnation to establishing a mechanism for addressing antisemitism within the party was made possible by a unique combination of circumstances. Labour operates as a centralized organization, with a constitution, a central leadership, and disciplinary bodies. At the same time, British equality law empowered the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to investigate the party and require it to implement an action plan. These conditions coincided with an internal struggle over the party's identity. Corbyn's rise marked the strengthening of the far-left wing, previously at the margins of Labour, at the expense of the moderate-left wing. Antisemitism became a central issue in the

struggle between the factions as moderates sought to regain control of the party. At the same time, the issue moved beyond the Jewish community's campaign and attracted broad public attention, eventually becoming one of the factors that brought about Corbyn's defeat. This accumulation of circumstances contributed to undermining Corbyn's standing, leading to his resignation following Labour's defeat in the 2019 election, and making addressing antisemitism a central test in the race to succeed him. Leading candidates, including Keir Starmer, [pledged](#) to adopt measures demanded by the Jewish community.

Similar mechanisms may be suitable, with the necessary adjustments, for countries like Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand, which combine party control over candidates with external bodies dealing with discrimination. Countries where these conditions do not fully exist may also learn from the British case, which illustrates how organized public pressure can turn the handling of antisemitism into a political demand, while also underscoring the cost of inaction: eroding the Jewish community's trust and making antisemitism an electoral liability for the leadership.

What Is Happening in the United States?

The difficulty the two major American parties face in addressing antisemitism within their ranks has become more apparent as cases have accumulated in which candidates and elected officials have continued to build their standing even after their statements or past conduct prompted accusations of antisemitism. The responses of party leaders, including officials leading party organizations at the federal and state levels, as well as senior elected officials in the House and Senate, make it possible to examine not only the severity of the problem, but also whether parties recognize it as an internal issue or limit themselves to condemning isolated incidents.

The gap between identifying antisemitism and mounting a party response invites a closer examination of cases in which criticism failed to halt a candidate's political rise. To the frustration of the Jewish community, the tipping point at which a party was compelled to disavow a candidate sometimes came only after another, unrelated, scandal emerged, one seen as more serious or more electorally dangerous. For example, Graham Platner, a Democratic candidate for the Senate from Maine, continued to gain support even after it was revealed that for years he had a [tattoo](#) associated with the Nazi SS. In June 2026, he won the Democratic Senate primary. Jewish organizations associated with the Democratic Party [opposed](#) his candidacy and warned against supporting someone with a Nazi tattoo, but their plight did not prevent senior party figures from [endorsing](#) him. Only after he faced [allegations](#) of sexual assault, which he denied, did senior Democrats withdraw their support; Platner then dropped out of the race. The disregard for Jewish concerns did not merely result in the legitimization of his candidacy; [accounts](#) from Jewish voters in Maine indicate that some felt they could no longer trust the party to protect their interests, a process that recalls the erosion of Jewish community trust in the British Labour Party.

A similar pattern is evident in the case of [Mark Robinson](#), North Carolina's lieutenant governor and the 2024 Republican candidate for governor. Statements in which he cast doubt on the number of Jews murdered in the Holocaust and employed antisemitic tropes drew [criticism](#) from local Jewish leaders, the Anti-Defamation League, and the Republican Jewish Coalition, yet they did not prevent him from securing the nomination and the endorsement of President Trump. Despite the [Coalition's reservations](#) and its calls for Robinson to apologize, mainstream party figures continued to back him. Senior

Republican officials and donors began distancing themselves only after an investigative report linked him to sexual and racial posts on a pornography website. In both cases, antisemitism prompted public criticism, including from Jewish groups aligned with the parties themselves, but it was not what led the parties and their leaders to withdraw their support.

Tolerance toward antisemitic rhetoric is also evident in the ability of incumbent politicians, and not only candidates, to continue gaining political ground after their remarks have sparked public controversy. In 2019, Ilhan Omar, a Democrat representing Minnesota in the House of Representatives, [attributed](#) congressional support for Israel to public donations made by Jewish organizations, and claimed that pro-Israel Americans were loyal to a foreign country, evoking age-old antisemitic tropes. Democratic leadership condemned her remarks, but the subsequent House resolution intended to rebuke them was ultimately broadened to a [general condemnation](#) of antisemitism, Islamophobia, and other forms of hate, without censuring Omar, naming her, or addressing antisemitism as a distinct issue. Omar remained in the party and has since been [reelected](#). On the Republican side, [Royce White](#) received party backing in Minnesota in 2024 and won the party's Senate nomination, despite claiming that Jews invoke Holocaust memory to conceal corruption and that Israel is a central pillar in the "[New World Order](#)." Jewish organizations, including the Republican Jewish Coalition, [condemned](#) him and backed his primary opponent, yet this did not impede his primary victory. In both cases, Omar's and White's remarks echoed conspiracy theories that take on antisemitic meaning when attributed to Jews or Israel.

Internal party criticism underscores that the problem is not limited to a few outlier candidates; it concerns the ability of antisemitic figures to become part of the mainstream political landscape. In Michigan, Attorney General Dana Nessel's [claim](#) that the Democratic Party is failing to protect its Jewish members points to a broader internal failure: even when antisemitism is identified, there are no rules defining who may take part in party activities or what consequences are expected to those harming fellow party members. Nor are there clear standards governing which figures, however controversial, party officials may and should associate with. For example, [criticism](#) followed the collaboration of Democratic candidates and activists - led by candidate Abdul El-Sayed - with online influencer Hasan Piker, whose past includes violent and antisemitic statements. Moderate figures in the party distanced themselves from Piker because of his statements, while also emphasizing that he held no official role. This response illustrates the difficulty of setting boundaries for an influential political figure from outside the party.

On the right, figures within the Republican Party and affiliated Jewish organizations [warn](#) of the continued influence of Tucker Carlson and Candace Owens, as well as the possibility that supporters of Nick Fuentes, an antisemitic online personality who openly professes admiration for Adolf Hitler, will integrate into institutions that train and recruit the next generation of activists. As mentioned, some have already [warned](#) of this scenario, reflecting concern that extreme views are seeping into the training and professional pathways of those in the conservative movement, and from there into positions of influence across the party and government. Former Republican elected officials also pose challenges in this regard. For instance, [Marjorie Taylor Greene](#), who previously promoted a conspiracy theory alleging that the Rothschild family had ignited wildfires using space-based lasers, remains accepted, even glorified, by some within the party. These concerns intensified after a Politico investigation [revealed](#) antisemitic messages exchanged by leaders of a young Republicans' organization, several of whom had already assumed positions within the party apparatus and in government.

Critics are not only calling for stronger condemnation but also drawing attention to the infrastructure through which antisemites gain access, standing, and continuity within the conservative camp. In doing so, they shift the debate from whether political parties acknowledge antisemitism to whether they develop internal mechanisms capable of preventing those who promote it from becoming part of their ranks.

These cases suggest that the gap between recognizing antisemitism and acting against it is shaped by how tolerant the party is of antisemitic expression and how explicit that expression is. A candidate's standing within the party, internal political considerations, and the cost of disavowing them also play a role. Democratic leaders condemned Omar's remarks but did not link their condemnation to personal sanctions. In the same vein, Platner's explanation that he had not known what his tattoo meant, and his decision to [cover it](#), allowed him to appear as a legitimate candidate. Among Republicans, Robinson's and White's statements drew condemnation from intra-party rivals and Jewish organizations, while the party's leading power brokers continued to support them.

The politicization of antisemitism also affects how parties respond. Influential figures in both parties use antisemitic statements from the opposing camp to attack it but tend to downplay the severity or refrain from imposing sanctions when such statements come from their own ranks. Both parties are thus capable of condemning antisemitism in principle; however, in the absence of a fixed and binding standard, this condemnation fails to translate into concrete action, remaining contingent upon the overtness of the statement or act, the internal balance of power, and the political cost of enforcement.

Existing Response Mechanisms

The decentralized structure of American political parties makes it difficult for them to prevent candidates with antisemitic views from entering the political arena. A [U.S. political party](#) is not a centralized organization, but a loose network of actors that includes national, state, and local party leadership, election bodies, and congressional caucuses. No central body approves a candidate's party affiliation or has the authority to disqualify a candidate because of their past or present statements. Primary elections themselves are largely administered by the states rather than by the parties; consequently, a candidate who satisfies state ballot-access requirements may enter the race even without the party leadership's support. The party can condemn the candidate, withhold campaign resources, or assist the candidate's opponent, but it cannot guarantee their defeat, since voters ultimately choose the nominee.

Unable to prevent a candidate from running, party leaders may try to sideline them and identify an alternative around whom they can consolidate party funding, organizational backing, and the associated donor network. The assumption is that a candidate cut off from these resources will struggle to stay in the race. But this tool is effective only if the candidate is dependent on the party's support. A candidate who can raise money independently and build a support base of their own, sometimes with help of antisemitic online influencers such as Piker and Fuentes, is no longer beholden to party leadership. In such instances, exercising the party's authority becomes a political contest decided by voters, and the party may ultimately lose. The case of Graham Platner illustrates this limitation: the party recruited Governor Janet Mills to run as [his opponent](#), but even after gaining knowledge of his tattoo, party leaders could not derail his candidacy. He raised independent funds and built a broad base of support, while Mills withdrew before the primary.

Importantly, party contributions to candidates are [subject](#) to contribution limits, so withholding them carries only a marginal influence over the race in certain cases. That is true especially when the candidate also receives outside financial support from [Super PACs](#), which can spend unlimited amounts independently to support a campaign. As this support is provided without coordination with the candidate or the party, it places the donation beyond the party leadership's control. The party cannot prevent a candidate from benefiting from such support, nor can it direct that support to a rival. Funding therefore remains a means of influencing a race, sometimes substantially, but it cannot block a candidate with an independent base of public and financial support.

After an election, the party caucus and the House of Representatives have more substantial tools at their disposal than during primaries and general elections. However, none of these bodies operate under a binding definition establishing that antisemitism *per se* constitutes an infraction warranting formal sanction or disciplinary review. A caucus can strip a member of internal leadership roles and influence their committee assignments, while the House is empowered to remove a member from committees, issue a reprimand or censure, and even expel a member by a two-thirds majority. These measures can damage a member's standing and political power, but, short of expulsion, they do not revoke the mandate voters gave them. Whether to impose them is decided case by case by a majority vote; the decision does not follow a fixed standard on antisemitism. Imposing such sanctions risks fracturing party cohesion and can be framed as capitulation to the opposing camp. In addition, sanctions imposed by the majority party on members of the minority could set a precedent for similar measures against its own members after a change of power.

Thus, Ilhan Omar's [removal](#) from the House Foreign Affairs Committee was approved by a majority vote in the House when it was under Republican control - a move that likely would not have been passed under a Democratic majority House. In response to her remarks about dual loyalty, the House passed a general resolution condemning antisemitism alongside Islamophobia and other forms of racism and hate. The most severe sanction, expulsion from the House, has historically been invoked in only a handful of extreme cases involving insurrection, corruption, or severe criminal and ethical violations. In practice, utilizing expulsion risks reducing a party's voting margin, giving neither party an incentive to do so.

In addition to these tools, permanent ethics committees in the House and Senate are authorized to investigate suspected violations of conduct rules by members of Congress and recommend disciplinary measures. Although they can examine a wide range of violations, antisemitism is not defined as an offense under their rules. At the same time, both chambers of Congress have bipartisan antisemitism task forces that promote legislation and policy but have no disciplinary authority. Republican Senator James Lankford chairs the Senate Ethics Committee while also serving as co-chair of the Senate Bipartisan Task Force for Combating Antisemitism; this overlap could provide a future pathway for translating policy expertise on antisemitism into enforceable codes of conduct for elected officials. As of this writing, however, the potential synergy between the two bodies has not developed into a dedicated disciplinary mechanism.

Early Signs of Change

The British case illustrates what a party response looks like when the recognition of antisemitism is translated into an effective mechanism. Following an [investigation](#) by the British Equality and Human

Rights Commission, Labour established an independent process to investigate complaints, limited leadership interference in disciplinary proceedings, published clear guidelines for handling cases, and strengthened its vetting procedure for candidates. External legal counsel and independent bodies were brought in to review decisions, and representatives of the Jewish community helped shape training and policy. This shifted the response from political decisions that varied from case to case to a process requiring the party to explain how a violation was identified and what consequences followed.

The decentralized structure of American parties and their limited authority over primaries make it impossible to replicate this model in full. But its central principle can be applied in the United States as well: establish a party standard, create an independent process for reviewing violations, and set binding rules that link findings directly to endorsements, campaign finance, and committee assignments.

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution [limits](#) the government's ability to punish someone or restrict their access to politics based on the content of their speech, except in extreme cases. Furthermore, states are barred from [adding](#) qualifications for congressional office beyond those established by the Constitution. These limitations significantly constrain the possibility of creating a government mechanism to disqualify candidates due to antisemitic speech. Nevertheless, the First Amendment equally [protects](#) political parties' freedom of association and their right to determine which candidates and positions represent them. By virtue of this right, a party is fully entitled to set standards for endorsements, fundraising support, committee assignments, and access to party resources, and may declare that a candidate who violates those standards does not represent it. Preventing candidates from taking part in primary races is more complicated and depends on each state's election laws and procedures. The absence of a binding party standard on antisemitism is therefore not a constitutional inevitability: parties may set conditions for granting their support and resources.

[*The Front Line*](#) was launched in July 2026 in light of these constraints. Affiliated with Republican Senator Ted Cruz, the organization aims to turn antisemitism into a "disqualifying factor" within the Republican Party. To this end, the organization operates directly in the primary arena: it identifies candidates with antisemitic views and runs targeted campaigns engineered to inflict an electoral cost for their views. The organization's [first action](#) was to spend approximately \$400,000 on a campaign against James Fishback, a Republican candidate for Governor of Florida, following his statements regarding "white [genocide](#)" (a conspiracy theory whose antisemitic variant accuses Jews of replacing the white population) and his declaration that he would refuse to enforce state laws against antisemitism. The effort sought to connect principled condemnation with a political outcome by persuading party voters to treat antisemitism as a decisive factor in choosing their candidates. Fishback did, in fact, lose. It should be noted, however, that he was already a less attractive candidate, and the effort's efficacy will need to be tested in more competitive races.

The organization's very formation suggests that some on the right see antisemitism as a threat that has taken root to the point of requiring a dedicated political effort. Its stated goal of making antisemitism a "disqualifying factor" also points to the failure it aims to remedy: public condemnation alone does not define the boundaries of political legitimacy within a party. The chosen course of action reflects an understanding that, within the American party architecture, a red line becomes effective only when translated into voter behavior and voting outcomes. At the same time, the organization's affiliation with Cruz places the fight against antisemitism within a broader struggle over the Republican Party's

character and the future leadership of the American right in the post-Trump era. *The Front Line* thus embodies both a deeper institutional recognition of the problem and an effort by a specific faction to use it to redraw the boundaries of the Republican tent. On the Democratic side, no organized equivalent has emerged to date, leaving responses ad hoc, with condemnation from party leaders but no dedicated enforcement mechanism.

Conclusion and Recommendations

An analysis of these cases demonstrates that American political parties are capable of identifying and condemning antisemitic rhetoric, even if partially and inadequately. However, this identification is practically significant only when political actors link it directly to decisions regarding endorsements, campaign finance, committee assignments, and status. Similarly, the efficacy of pressure exerted by Jewish organizations hinges on their capacity to mobilize broad political support for their demands - a capacity that appears to have declined in recent years. Partisan polarization makes it harder to build such support, while social media allows candidates to develop an independent base even when the party and Jewish organizations disavow them. The decentralized structure of American parties gives candidates considerable autonomy, leaving the final outcome in many cases to voters. Under these conditions, party leaders may condemn a candidate even as that candidate continues to gain momentum, while party mechanisms derive their force from the ability to build a political majority behind them.

The British case illustrates how a binding definition, an independent complaints process, and external oversight can turn antisemitism from a collection of individual incidents into a problem for which the institution must assume accountability. The American system requires these principles to be adapted to a structure in which authority is divided among national parties, state organizations, caucuses, and voters. Parties can establish in advance how evidence of antisemitism will affect the support and funding they provide, publish consistent standards for evaluating candidates, and create a transparent, professional process for investigating cases. After elections, they can apply these same standards to decisions about leadership roles and committee assignments, doing so consistently across the party.

Adopting a clear definition of antisemitism, such as [IHRA's working definition](#), could give parties a consistent basis for identifying antisemitic statements and demarcating the boundaries of conduct expected of their members and nominees. Incorporating the definition into party rules would make it possible to assess cases against established criteria, rather than leaving them to political considerations or ad hoc public pressure. For the definition to be more than a declaration, however, it must be linked to investigative procedures and clear party actions.

Another avenue worth exploring is regular cooperation between the bipartisan antisemitism task forces and the ethics committees in both chambers of Congress. Such cooperation could translate the expertise and policies advanced by the task forces into clear guidance for assessing elected officials' conduct. In the Senate, Senator James Lankford's concurrent tenure as Chairman of the Select Committee on Ethics and Co-Chair of the Bipartisan Task Force for Combating Antisemitism could provide a starting point, but the effort's success would depend on embedding it in the institutions so it continues even after a change in officeholders.

The Front Line offers a complementary approach: exacting an electoral toll by exposing candidates and persuading primary voters. Its success could show that party boundaries of legitimacy can be shaped

even without the authority to disqualify candidates. Nevertheless, sustainable institutional policy requires more than an external advocacy campaign dependent on an outside organization or a particular political faction. Linking an explicit party standard, a credible investigative process, and strategic engagement in the primary arena could turn the fight against antisemitism from a shifting response into a policy that determines what is expected of anyone seeking to represent a political party.

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