



**Joint Statement from the Jewish Leadership Council
and the Board of Deputies of British Jews**

**JEWISH LEADERSHIP
COUNCIL**

For Immediate Release - 17th September 2009

Response to TUC statements on the Middle East

Responding to today's discussions on the Middle East at the Annual TUC conference, Jeremy Newmark, Chief Executive of the Jewish Leadership Council and Jon Benjamin, Chief Executive of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, have issued the following statement:

'We are genuinely saddened that, in passing the FBU motion and adopting elements of the General Council statement, the TUC have damaged their ability to act as an honest broker building bridges between Israelis and Palestinians. The TUC has a noble record as a positive and unifying element in British life and in international relations. This new policy will only create discord and divisiveness, masking a pro-boycott agenda behind the smokescreen of opposition to settlements.

The TUC has committed to supporting a two-state solution. They have asked unions to fund joint Histadrut/PGFTU projects. These constructive positions are totally incompatible with the decision to work closely with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, an organisation whose own logo wipes Israel off the map.

The Jewish community has many friends in the heart of the Trade Union movement, some of whom fought for a more balanced position. We are grateful to them. However, we made it clear to TUC leaders before their conference that a 'deal' which retained the language of boycotts would not address our concerns.

The fact that within moments of this statement being released, conference delegates voted for another extreme hard line pro-boycott motion proposed by the FBU, is evidence that our concerns are well placed, and that TUC leaders must act against the harmful influence of the PSC within their unions. We insist that TUC leaders immediately clarify that this motion does not stand as TUC policy.

Israel's strong, independent trade union movement works closely with the Palestinian trade unions to protect the rights of all workers. It is particularly ironic that implementation of the TUC's policy will harm the employment of many of those Palestinians.

Our communal leaders will respond robustly to this policy, which risks driving a wedge between British Jews and the Trade Union movement. Our response will be threefold:

Firstly, we will be asking the TUC leadership to act swiftly and decisively to reassert their opposition to a boycott of Israel, and advise their member unions accordingly. We expect the General Council's statement to be used as a licence to boycott by anti-Israel activists.

Secondly, we will actively expose the discriminatory politics of the PSC, in order to frustrate their hijacking of Trade Unions to promote their anti-Israel and anti-peace agenda.

Thirdly, we will be encouraging members of our own community to fight back, by getting involved in Trade Unions and speaking out."