

To: NDP MPs; EDA Presidents; EDA Delegates to NDP 2021 Convention

Re: Noah Tepperman's letter (Friday March 26) demanding that the no-IHRA definition of antisemitism resolution be removed from Convention's list before prioritization by delegates.

April 5, 2021

Dear friends,

We send this as over 60 concerned Jews who, along with many others, followed the NDP's constitutional process to ask EDAs to pass a resolution opposing the IHRA "working definition of antisemitism" and send it to the party for priority-setting and debate at convention. Noah Tepperman did not do this: instead he has attempted to interfere with the process by sending a misleading letter that tries to pre-empt the prioritization process. There are many problems with this letter sent to you or your EDA.

First, if self-definition were the real reason for the IHRA definition of antisemitism, a no-IHRA resolution would never have been approved by over 45 EDAs, labour councils and unions. This definition and its examples make it possible to equate criticism of Israel with antisemitism. Using this definition has allowed the Jewish establishment to call Charlie Angus antisemitic for showing concern for the Palestinian's need for covid vaccination. It allows Noah Tepperman to call us, Jewish New Democrats, antisemitic 'tokens' for criticizing Israel's oppression of Palestinians. For more information, please see <https://www.noihra.ca/ndpconvention>.

Second, if defining antisemitism were the real purpose of the IHRA definition, another vulnerable group (Palestinians) would not be oppressed in the process. Other better definitions of antisemitism, written by Jews, exist and are in use (see for example <https://jerusalemdeclaration.org/> and <https://www.noihra.ca/our-definition>) The IHRA definition is controversial among Jews because it oppresses and is out of date. EKOS polling shows that a significant proportion of Canadian Jews (especially those who support the NDP) agree that criticism of Israel should not be labeled antisemitic:

<https://www.ijvcanada.org/new-ekos-poll-jewish-canadians-sharply-divided-on-israel-palestine/>

Third, EDAs have asked for meaningful, vigorous debate on this resolution. Tepperman and his group of signatories are trying to interfere with the NDP's priority-setting process and curtail debate. In fact, his letter tries to pre-empt debate on this resolution even before convention starts. If he was so concerned, the process is to do what many EDAs did: submit concerns in the form of a resolution to convention. Please see more details and resources to share here:

<https://www.noihra.ca/ndp-convention-resources>

Fourth, the IHRA lobby in Canada has been clear about their intentions to use this "working definition" against progressives. They have a sordid history of defaming Canadians (including NDP MPs) as "antisemites" for supporting Palestinian rights or criticizing Israel and Zionism. Their own words illustrate how they will go after NDP members and others who hold consistent positions against antisemitism and for universal human rights. For example, in September 2018, the Centre for Israel & Jewish Affairs (CIJA) stated: "We are launching a national campaign to

have government and police adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism...because it explicitly confirms that anti-Zionism is antisemitism." This is just one example among many that shows how the IHRA definition can and will be used against Jewish and other NDPers who hold consistent positions for human rights:

- We oppose antisemitism, and support Palestinian rights;
- We oppose antisemitism and criticize Israel's occupation of Palestine, and;
- We oppose antisemitism and do not support Zionism.

Please consider how important these resolutions are to recognizing our commitment to an anti-racist and decolonial approach to antisemitism. Please rank both resolution 4-10-20 ("Justice and Peace in Israel-Palestine") and resolution 4-11-20 ("Opposing the IHRA Definition of Anti-Semitism") highly in the prioritization process, and also vote for them.

In solidarity,

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Bernie Koenig
London West NDP

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Davenport NDP

Daniel Tetrault
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Arthur Milner
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Scott Weinstein
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