



# ANTISEMITIC DISCOURSE

in Britain 2018

Cover image: Antisemitic mural in the East End of London in 2012 that became the subject of intense scrutiny and debate in 2018 (see p.17)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Antisemitism played an unprecedented role in British public life in 2018.** It became a regular feature in national politics and media to an extent not seen before, largely but not exclusively as a result of the ongoing controversy over alleged antisemitism in the Labour Party.
- At various points in 2018, **the national debate over antisemitism focused specifically on the past conduct of Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn MP.** The suggestion that the leader of one of Britain's main political parties may be personally antisemitic is itself unprecedented in recent decades, and indicates the extent to which public debate over, and awareness of, antisemitism reached new heights in 2018.
- The question of **how to define antisemitism, and how to determine its relationship with anti-Israel language and sentiment**, was a subject of widespread attention in 2018 due to Labour's internal debate over whether to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism.
- This new prominence of antisemitism in the media also involved several stories about **antisemitic insults or comments involving celebrities or public figures** during 2018.
- There is some evidence that **concerns in the Jewish community over alleged antisemitism prevented the Labour Party from winning Barnet**, the London borough with the largest Jewish population, in the local elections in May 2018.
- Scandals over **alleged antisemitism from party representatives or supporters also affected the Conservative Party and Scottish National Party** in 2018.
- Some Brexit campaigners, including Nigel Farage and the Leave.EU campaign, used conspiratorial language about George Soros, immigration and the EU that echoed antisemitic tropes about Jews, money and political manipulation.
- Social media and the internet was a particular focus of concern over antisemitism and extremism in 2018. These included **revelations about secret Facebook groups with pro-Jeremy Corbyn or anti-Israel titles where antisemitic posts and comments were common**; antisemitic videos from popular YouTubers; and debates over the extent of social media companies' responsibility to remove hateful content from their platforms.
- Several stories emerged in 2018 about **antisemitism and racism in football**, while Chelsea FC launched a new campaign against antisemitism.
- The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) published their second opinion poll of Jewish perceptions and experiences of antisemitism in the EU. This found that **75 per cent of British Jews think antisemitism is a "very big" or "fairly big" problem** in this country, compared to 48 per cent who said this in the first poll in 2012. Eighty-four per cent of British Jews said antisemitism was present in "political life", the highest figure of any country in the poll, compared to 34 per cent in 2012.
- A poll by the Pew Research Center found that **23 per cent of British people said they would not accept a Jewish person in their family**; two thirds of people said they know "not much" or "nothing at all" about Judaism; and 55 per cent said they personally know somebody who is Jewish.



# INTRODUCTION

This CST *Antisemitic Discourse in Britain* report analyses written and verbal communication, discussion and rhetoric about antisemitism and related issues in Britain during 2018. It is published annually by CST.<sup>1</sup>

'Discourse' is used in this report to mean 'communicative action': communication expressed in speech, written text, images and other forms of expression and propaganda.<sup>2</sup>

The report is not a survey of marginal or clandestine racist, extremist and radical circles, where antisemitism is much more common. Where such material is quoted within this report, it is usually for comparison with more mainstream sources, or because of the wider influence that such material may have.

Antisemitic image posted by Labour Party member Kayla Bibby, March 2018



CST distinguishes antisemitic discourse from actual antisemitic incidents and hate crimes against Jews or Jewish organisations and property.<sup>3</sup>

The 2006 *Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism*<sup>4</sup> noted the importance and complexity of antisemitic discourse and urged further study of it. By 2008, the parliamentary inquiry process had led to the issuing of the first progress report of the Government's task force against antisemitism. This stated of antisemitic discourse:

*"Antisemitism in discourse is, by its nature, harder to identify and define than a physical attack on a person or place. It is more easily recognised by those who experience it than by those who engage in it."*

*"Antisemitic discourse is also hard to identify because the boundaries of acceptable discourse have become blurred to the point that individuals and organisations are not aware when these boundaries have been crossed, and because the language used is more subtle particularly in the contentious area of the dividing line between antisemitism and criticism of Israel or Zionism."*<sup>5</sup>

The 2015 *Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism*<sup>6</sup> noted the earlier finding by MPs in the 2006 Report that:

*"the significance of public discourse is that it influences attitudes which in turn influence actions."*

1 Previous reports are available on the CST website: [www.cst.org.uk/publications](http://www.cst.org.uk/publications)

2 Paul Iganski & Abe Sweiry, *Understanding and Addressing the 'Nazi Card': Intervening Against Antisemitic Discourse*. London: European Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism (2009)

3 CST's annual *Antisemitic Incidents Report*, available at [www.cst.org.uk/publications](http://www.cst.org.uk/publications)

4 *Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism*. London: The All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism (September 2006)

5 *All-Party Inquiry into Antisemitism: Government Response. One year on Progress Report*. London: The Stationery Office (12 May 2008), p.12

6 *Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism*. London: The All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism (February 2015)

# ANTISEMITIC DISCOURSE AND ANTISEMITISM

Antisemitic discourse influences and reflects hostile attitudes to Jews and Jewish-related issues. Hostile attitudes can lead to hostile actions and damaging impacts.

Physically, antisemitic discourse may contribute to an atmosphere in which antisemitic hate crimes against Jews and Jewish institutions are more likely to occur. Psychologically, it can make Jews feel isolated, vulnerable and hurt.

The purpose of this report is to help reduce antisemitism, by furthering the understanding of antisemitic discourse and its negative impacts on Jews and society as a whole.

## Antisemitic impacts of legitimate debate and media coverage

Antisemitic impacts may arise from entirely legitimate situations that have no antisemitic intention.

Statistics show that hate crimes against perceived members of any particular group can be triggered (or exacerbated) by public discourse or events related to that particular group. For example, antisemitic incident levels typically rise in relation to some public events and stories involving Jews, Jewish institutions, or Jewish-related subjects such as Israel.<sup>7</sup>

Negative media coverage of, or political comment on, Jewish-related events may be entirely legitimate, fair and in the public interest. Nevertheless, those debates can encourage antisemites or cause concern to Jews. This is more likely if such commentary involves inflammatory language or the use of traditional antisemitic imagery, or appears to single out one particular object or individual for scrutiny due to their being Jewish.

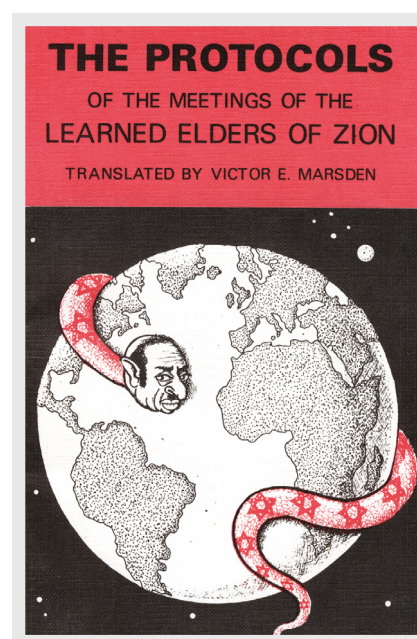
<sup>7</sup> Shown repeatedly in CST's annual Antisemitic Incidents Report. Also, Paul Iganski, Vicky Kielinger & Susan Paterson, *Hate Crimes Against London's Jews*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research (2005)

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the world's largest regional security organisation, explains the relation between antisemitic discourse and hostility as follows:

*"Expressions of anti-Semitism in public discourse remain a serious issue of concern as they exacerbate hostile attitudes towards Jews. They have the potential to fuel anti-Semitic incidents, leading to greater insecurity in the Jewish communities and in societies across the OSCE region."*<sup>8</sup>

The notorious antisemitic forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* claims to reveal a supposed secret Jewish conspiracy to take over the world, depicted in this British version by a Jewish snake encircling the globe.

Championed by both far-right and Islamist extremists, it includes chapters on Jewish control of war, politicians, finance and media. *The Protocols* contains old antisemitic themes that still resonate, impact and evolve in modern politics, media and discourse.



<sup>8</sup> <http://www.osce.org/cio/75676?download=true>

# UK JEWISH LIFE: putting antisemitism into context

Any overall assessment of the condition of British Jewry demands proper consideration of both positive and negative aspects. Britain's diverse Jewish communities have many examples of success, vibrancy and confidence. Nevertheless, antisemitic hate crimes, antisemitic discourse and wider antisemitic attitudes in society are issues of considerable importance for British Jews.

## Overview

Jewish life in Britain today is diverse, and most Jews are well integrated into wider society. Government and others often cite the Jewish community as the benchmark of successful minority integration.

British Jews have full equal rights and protection in law, including against antisemitic incitement and bias. Jews who wish to live a Jewish life can do so in many ways, including pursuing educational, religious, cultural or political activities. Generally, overt antisemitism is deemed socially unacceptable and Jews have succeeded in many spheres of public and private life. Nevertheless, the long history of antisemitism, and its remaining manifestations, can cause significant concerns.

A 2014 report by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research noted that whilst *"most British Jews feel integrated into British society and that discrimination against Jews is largely a thing of the past"*, it is also the case that *"most Jews feel that levels of antisemitism have increased in recent years, particularly online, in the media, in academia and certain political contexts"*.<sup>9</sup>

## History

Jews arrived in the British Isles in Roman times, but organised settlement followed the Norman Conquest of 1066. Massacres of Jews occurred in many cities in 1189, most notably in York. In

1290, all Jews were expelled by King Edward I, but some converts to Christianity and secret adherents to Judaism remained.

Following the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492, a covert Jewish community became established in London. The present British Jewish community, however, has existed since 1656, when Oliver Cromwell formally invited Jews to return to this country.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Jews were largely emancipated politically, economically and socially, but still suffered instances of exclusion and prejudice. From 1881 to 1914, the influx of Russian Jewish immigrants saw the Jewish community's population rise from approximately 60,000 to approximately 300,000. Many Jews can trace their arrival in Britain back to this wave of immigration. Others can trace their British identity back considerably further. Considerable numbers of Jews of other national origins have arrived in recent years and decades, from countries including South Africa, Israel and France.

## Demography

A total of 263,346 people answered "Jewish" to the voluntary question on religion in the 2011 UK Census. For the first time, the 2011 Census showed Jews living in every local authority in England and Wales.<sup>10</sup>

Just under two-thirds of British Jews live in Greater London. Other major Jewish centres are in Manchester, Leeds, Gateshead, Birmingham and Glasgow.

The religious composition of the Jewish community is highly diverse and ranges from the strictly Orthodox to non-practising.

<sup>9</sup> Laura D Staetsky & Jonathan Boyd, *The Exceptional Case? Perceptions and experiences of antisemitism among Jews in the United Kingdom*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research (July 2014)

<sup>10</sup> Simon Roker, 'Census 2011: The Jewish breakdown', *Jewish Chronicle* (13 December 2012) <http://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/94111/census-2011-the-jewish-breakdown>

## WHAT IS ANTISEMITISM? Background and concepts

In essence, antisemitism is discrimination, prejudice or hostility against Jews.

The word 'antisemitism' came into use in the late nineteenth century to describe pseudoscientific racial discrimination against Jews, but is now used more generally to describe all forms of discrimination, prejudice or hostility towards Jews throughout history, and has been called "*The Longest Hatred*".<sup>11</sup>

It may be spelled as 'antisemitism' or as 'anti-Semitism'. CST uses 'antisemitism', as this spelling limits the notion that there is such a thing as 'Semitism' to which one may be 'anti' (i.e. in opposition to).

### Antisemitism: background

History shows that increases in anti-Jewish sentiment or actions often reflect growing extremism or divisions within society as a whole. Antisemitism is a subject that should concern not only Jews, but all of society.

The near-destruction of European Jewry in the Nazi Holocaust rendered open antisemitism taboo in public life. The strong association of antisemitism with the Nazi Holocaust can lead to the mistaken assumption that antisemitism is an exclusively far-right, genocidal phenomenon that essentially ended after the Second World War.

Throughout history, anti-Jewish attitudes have taken many forms, including religious, nationalist, economic and racial-biological. Jews have been blamed for many phenomena, including the death of Jesus; the Black Death; the advent of liberalism, democracy, communism and capitalism; and for inciting numerous revolutions and wars.

A dominant antisemitic theme is the allegation that Jews are powerful and cunning

manipulators, set against the rest of society for their evil and timeless purpose. The notion of Jewish power (for example as codified within the notorious hoax<sup>12</sup> *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*) distinguishes antisemitism from other types of racism, which often depict their targets as ignorant and primitive.

Antisemitism – like any other form of prejudice – is not solely found in the conscious motivation or intention of an individual or group.

Antisemitism can also reside in the resonance of a perpetrator's behaviour, where this echoes or repeats older antisemitic accusations and behaviours.

Antisemitism can also be the impact (whether intended or inadvertent) of a person's actions, or the consequence of the policies and practices of an organisation.

### Types of antisemitism

Antisemitism is a global phenomenon, occurring even where there are no Jews. Its manifestation and expression may range from violent thuggery and murder to literary, philosophical and political discourse. Antisemitism has been described as an ideology in its own right, but others say it is undeserving of such status and should rather be regarded as a polluter of ideologies.<sup>13</sup> Its persistence and adaptability are not doubted, yet precise definitions of antisemitism, its scale and the nature of its contemporary appearance can cause heated debate.

### Interpretations of antisemitism

Much has been written and discussed regarding what constitutes antisemitism. The definitions shown on page 10 are intended as a constructive guide to differing interpretations, but are brief introductions to what is a very large topic.

<sup>11</sup> For example, Robert S Wistrich, *Anti-Semitism: The Longest Hatred*. Methuen (1991) and Screen Guides for Thames Television, *The Longest Hatred*. (1991)

<sup>12</sup> See, Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide*. London: Serif Books (1996), original publ. 1967

<sup>13</sup> Anthony Julius, *Trials of the Diaspora*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (2010), p. xliv



Steve Cohen argued that antisemitism is defined by its ideological nature:

*"The peculiar and defining feature of anti-semitism is that it exists as an ideology. It provides its adherents with a universal and generalised interpretation of the world. This is the theory of the Jewish conspiracy, which depicts Jews as historically controlling and determining nature and human destiny. Anti-semitism is an ideology which has influenced millions of people precisely because it presents an explanation of the world by attributing such extreme powers to its motive force – the Jews."*<sup>14</sup>

Anthony Julius has argued that English antisemitism comprises "several kinds of anti-Semitism"; and he identifies four kinds that wholly or substantially "have an English provenance":

- *"A radical anti-Semitism of defamation, expropriation, murder, and expulsion – that is, the anti-Semitism of medieval England, which completed itself in 1290, when there were no Jews left to torment."*
- *"A literary anti-Semitism – that is, an anti-Semitic account of Jews continuously present in the discourse of English literature...through to present times."*
- *"A modern, quotidian anti-Semitism of insult and partial exclusion, pervasive but contained...everyday anti-Semitism experienced by Jews...through to the late twentieth century."*
- *"A new configuration of anti-Zionisms, emerging in the late 1960s and the 1970s, which treats Zionism and the State of Israel as illegitimate Jewish enterprises. This perspective, heavily indebted to anti-Semitic tropes, now constitutes the greatest threat to Anglo-Jewish security and morale...By 'tropes' I mean those taken-for-granted utterances, those figures and metaphors through which*

Antisemitic twweet, May 2018



*more general positions are intimated, without ever being argued for."*<sup>15</sup>

Brian Klug describes the importance of the imaginary 'Jew' (as distinct from the reality of Jews). He depicts the antisemitic caricature of this imaginary 'Jew' as follows:

*"The Jew belongs to a sinister people set apart from all others, not merely by its customs but by a collective character: arrogant yet obsequious; legalistic yet corrupt; flamboyant yet secretive. Always looking to turn a profit, Jews are as ruthless as they are tricky. Loyal only to their own, wherever they go they form a state within a state, preying upon the societies in whose midst they dwell. Their hidden hand controls the banks, the markets and the media. And when revolutions occur or nations go to war, it is the Jews – cohesive, powerful, clever and stubborn – who invariably pull the strings and reap the rewards."*<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Julius, *Trials of the Diaspora*, pp. xxxvi–xxxvii

<sup>16</sup> Brian Klug, 'The Concept of Anti-Semitism', speech to Oxford University Chabad Society (7 June 2009) [http://www.oxfordchabad.org/templates/articleco\\_cdo/aid/922682/jewish/Anti-Semitism-Symposium.htm](http://www.oxfordchabad.org/templates/articleco_cdo/aid/922682/jewish/Anti-Semitism-Symposium.htm)

<sup>14</sup> Steve Cohen, *That's Funny, You Don't Look Anti-Semitic*. Leeds: Beyond the Pale Collective (1984), p. 11

## ANTISEMITISM: legal definitions

Legal definitions of antisemitism are primarily intended for police and judicial use in identifying antisemitic incidents and crimes, rather than defining discourse. Nevertheless, these definitions can provide useful tools for helping consider what may, or may not, constitute antisemitic discourse.

### Race Relations Act 1976

The 2006 *Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism* summarised antisemitism with reference to the Race Relations Act 1976, which is the basis for legal definitions of racism and antisemitism. This was repeated in the updated 2015 *Antisemitism Inquiry* report:

*"Broadly, it is our view that any remark, insult or act the purpose or effect of which is to violate a Jewish person's dignity or create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for him is antisemitic.*

*"This reflects the definition of harassment under the Race Relations Act 1976. This definition can be applied to individuals and to the Jewish community as a whole."*<sup>17</sup>

### Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (1999)

The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry definition of a racist incident has significantly influenced societal interpretations of what does and does not constitute racism, strengthening the importance of the victim's perception.

The 2006 *Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism* and the updated 2015 report invoked the Lawrence Inquiry, stating:

*"We take into account the view expressed in the Macpherson report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry that a racist act is defined by its victim. It is not acceptable for an individual*

*to say 'I am not a racist' if his or her words or acts are perceived to be racist.*

*"We conclude that it is the Jewish community itself that is best qualified to determine what does and does not constitute antisemitism."*<sup>18</sup>

The UK Government command response to the Parliamentary inquiry concurred, stating:

*"The Government currently uses the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry definition of a racist incident which is an incident that is perceived as racist by the victim or any other person, and this would include antisemitism. This is a very wide and powerful definition as it clearly includes the 'perception' of the victim and others."*<sup>19</sup>

### International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism (2016)

In December 2016, the UK Government formally adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism.<sup>20</sup> This is a non-legally binding definition of antisemitism that evolved from a previous working definition, drawn up by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) in 2005, primarily to aid law enforcement when deciding whether crimes are antisemitic or not. This was intended to enable cross-comparison and assessment of levels of antisemitism, and of European nations' policing and prosecuting of antisemitism.

The IHRA definition includes a list of examples of attitudes and language that *"could, taking into account the overall context"* indicate antisemitism, which includes some attitudes

<sup>18</sup> *Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism* (2006), p. 1

<sup>19</sup> *Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism: Government Response*. London: The Stationery Office (29 March 2007), p. 3

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-leads-the-way-in-tackling-anti-semitism>

<sup>17</sup> *Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism* (2006), p. 1

## IHRA adoption plenary in Bucharest Credit IHRA



and language that relate to Israel as well as to Jews per se. Some anti-Israel and anti-Zionist activists claim this unfairly renders their behaviour antisemitic. Some pro-Israel activists claim that the working definition defines and outlaws certain anti-Israel attitudes and acts as antisemitic. At times, both are guilty of neglecting the working definition's core purpose and its caveat about "*overall context*".

Following the UK Government adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism, it has since been adopted, endorsed or used by the Crown Prosecution Service; the National Union of Students; the Scottish and Welsh governments; and over 120 UK local authorities. Its previous incarnation, the EUMC working definition, is used by the UK College of Policing. It is likely to become the standard non-legal definition that is used when trying to identify possible manifestations of antisemitism.

## BRITISH JEWS: relationship with Zionism and Israel

Zionism and Israel are, in part, Jewish responses to the long and often tragic history of antisemitism. The complex dynamics between antisemitism, anti-Israel activity and anti-Zionism play an important role in debates over contemporary British antisemitism.

Overwhelmingly, British Jews do not come from Israel and their families have been British for at least two generations. Nevertheless, Israel plays an important role in the self-identity of many British Jews. This manifests in the practical sense of physical, emotional and family links that many Jews enjoy with Israel and Israeli citizens, as well as in the psychological sense of perceiving Israel as representing Jewish identity, refuge and rebirth in the post-Holocaust age.

A 2010 survey by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research found that 95 per cent of British Jews said Israel plays some role in their Jewish identity, 82 per cent said it plays a central or important role and 72 per cent consider themselves "Zionists". The same survey found that 95 per cent of British Jews have visited Israel.<sup>21</sup> A similar

survey by City University in 2015 found that 90 per cent of British Jews support Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state and 93 per cent said Israel plays some role in their Jewish identity.<sup>22</sup>

In recent years, Israel has been subject to repeated criticism and outright hostility from relatively large sections of the liberal left, including parts of the media, campaigning groups, trade unions, politicians, churches and the NGO sector. British Jews hold varying perspectives on the legitimacy and motivation of this behaviour, ranging from those who play a leading part in anti-Israel activity, to those who regard these actions as antisemitic.

21 David Graham & Jonathan Boyd, *Committed, concerned and conciliatory: The attitudes of Jews in Britain towards Israel*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research (July 2010), p.9

22 Stephen Miller, Margaret Harris & Colin Shindler, *The Attitudes of British Jews Towards Israel*. London: City University, London (November 2015), p.15

Closer to Israel parade, London 2013





# ANTISEMITISM AND ANTI-ZIONISM

Like racism, antisemitism can feed off criticism of Jews, Israel or Zionism, regardless of how fair or unfair, antisemitic or legitimate, that criticism may be.

## ANTI-ZIONISM

The term 'anti-Zionism' describes a wide range of hostile attitudes towards Jewish self-determination, and particularly towards Jewish peoplehood and the right of the Jewish people to have a nation state (now existing in Israel). Anti-Zionism that denies these beliefs, or seeks Israel's dissolution, should not be confused with criticism of Israel's actions.

Anti-Zionism is a complex and contested term, because definitions of Zionism itself mean different things to different people. In particular, mainstream Jewish definitions of Zionism differ markedly from far-left, far-right and Islamist definitions – all of which tend to use (and denigrate) Zionism as a term of political abuse.

Not all anti-Zionists are antisemites and anti-Zionism is not necessarily antisemitic. For example, a minority of Jews do not believe, either for religious or political reasons, that the existence of Israel is in the best interests of the Jewish people. However, much anti-Zionism today is expressed in ways that are actively hostile towards Jews and towards the Jewish people as a group, and that bears similarities to older antisemitic language and imagery.

The malicious denial or misrepresentation of Jewish peoplehood is fundamentally antisemitic, as is politically motivated denial of the Jewish people's historical and religious links with the land of Israel.

### Jews and anti-Zionism

In the decades before the Second World War, anti-Zionism was a relatively widespread and respected position within mainstream Jewish politics. Many Jewish anti-Zionists opposed the idea of creating a Jewish state because they feared it would threaten the political and civic status of Jews in Diaspora communities. Others opposed Zionism because they believed that revolutionary socialism would emancipate Jews alongside the rest of humanity. Many strictly Orthodox Jews opposed Zionism on theological grounds relating to the coming of the Messiah.

After the Holocaust and the creation (and survival) of Israel, Jewish opposition to Zionism declined markedly. Other than in some ultra-Orthodox or far left groups, Jews tend not to describe themselves as anti-Zionists.

Displaced Jews at Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in 1946, holding the flag of Israel



## ANTI-ZIONISM AND CRITICISM OF ISRAEL

Antisemitism, anti-Zionism and anti-Israel criticism or hatred are not the same as each other. They can, however, be hard to untangle and distinguish from one another.

It is not necessarily antisemitic to criticise Israel or Zionism, even if the criticism is harsh or unfair. Gauging antisemitic motives and impacts largely depends upon the interaction of the following factors:

**Target:** Are local Jews being singled out as recipients for criticism, bias or hatred that ostensibly derives from anti-Israel or anti-Zionist enmity?

**Motivation:** To what extent is the criticism, or outright hatred, driven by the Jewish nature of Israel and/or Zionism?

**Content:** Does the criticism, or hatred, use antisemitic or otherwise prejudiced language, themes or motifs?

**Response to concerns:** Are local Jewish concerns about the above sincerely and equally heard? Or, are Jewish concerns viewed with hostility and singled out for scorn?

**Repeat behaviour:** Does the offender repeat their behaviour, knowing the consequences and concerns that will be raised?

Antisemitic conspiracy poster



### Antisemitic anti-Zionism and conspiracy theory

Antisemitism has changed and adapted throughout history to reflect the condition of Jews and the society around them at any given time. Today there is an antisemitic form of anti-Zionism that treats Zionism as a global, malevolent conspiracy, much as antisemites have portrayed Jews in the past. This can be found within far-right, far-left and extreme Islamist and New Age circles.

These different ideologies all use 'Zionism' and 'Zionist' as pejorative labels for political opponents, often regardless of whether the targets of their hatred are Jewish or pro-Israel, or not. In each different setting, Zionism is commonly discussed and perceived in ways that are strikingly similar to older antisemitic conspiracy theories (for example, as in *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*).

Employing the word 'Zionist' where the word 'Jew' would have previously appeared in open antisemitic discourse may, or may not, be deliberate obfuscation on the part of the user. Nevertheless, it essentially fulfils the same psychological and political purpose as open antisemitism once did.

Tweet to Jewish community organisation, July 2018



This antisemitic anti-Zionism has, at its core, a construction of Zionism as a political, financial, military and media conspiracy that is centred in Washington and Jerusalem, and which opposes authentic local interests. It is commonly found in extremist discourse, and sometimes alluded to in more diluted forms in mainstream discourse.

Unlike pre-war Jewish anti-Zionism, these modern anti-Zionists are not motivated by a concern for Jewish political and civic rights.

The 2006 *Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism* noted:

*"One of the most difficult and contentious issues about which we have received evidence is the dividing line between antisemitism and criticism of Israel or Zionism.*

*"...discourse has developed that is in effect antisemitic because it views Zionism itself as a global force of unlimited power and malevolence throughout history. This definition of Zionism bears no relation to the understanding that most Jews have of the concept; that is, a movement of Jewish national liberation, born in the late nineteenth century with a geographical focus limited to Israel. Having re-defined Zionism in this way, traditional antisemitic notions of Jewish conspiratorial power, manipulation and subversion are then transferred from Jews (a racial and religious group) on to Zionism (a political movement). This is at the core of the 'New Antisemitism' on which so much has been written."*<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism, pp. 16–17

## HISTORICAL CONTINUITIES BETWEEN ANTISEMITISM AND ANTI-ZIONISM

Other continuities between historical antisemitic themes and the type of modern anti-Zionism that is antisemitic can include the following:

- Alleging that Jewish holy books preach Jewish supremacy and that this is the basis for alleged Zionist racism.
- Dehumanising and demonising language comparing Jews to rats, cancer, plague and bacteria is now repeated in some depictions of Zionists and Israel. This reduces its target to a pest or disease to be cleansed.
- Scapegoating Jews as 'the Other'; blaming them for local and global problems; and demanding their destruction or conversion as a vital step in building a new, better world. This is echoed in the notion that Zionism is uniquely

illegitimate, and that its destruction is required for the fulfilment of utopian ideological goals.

- The image of Jews as alien corrupters of traditional, authentic society and established morality endures in today's portrayals of Zionists as somehow hijacking other people's true will and nature, and thereby polluting domestic politics and society.

## ANTI-ZIONISM: a group-focussed enmity

'Group-focussed enmity' is an emerging study of hostility to groups, defined as:

*"the negative evaluation of groups and of individuals because of their (factual or perceived) group membership. This is different to individual dislike of a specific person. Prejudices are used to legitimise social inequality."*<sup>24</sup>

Some forms of anti-Zionism fit this description, because prejudice against Zionists as a political group can translate into hostility to Jews who do not distance themselves from Israel.

This can happen when 'Zionism' and 'Zionist' are stripped of their essential meaning and are instead used in a hateful manner; once individuals or groups are pejoratively labelled as Zionist, they can then be denied equal and fundamental rights. It is not only Jews who may be labelled as Zionists, but Jews are overwhelmingly those who will be most personally affronted and affected by this.

Jews seeking equality in such settings may be pressured to make clear their opinion on Zionism or Israel, regardless of whether they wish to do so or not. Failure to show sufficient distancing from Zionism and Israel then risks adversely impacting against the prospective Jewish participant or member.

<sup>24</sup> [https://web.archive.org/web/20100425195611/http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/ikg/zick/Press%20release%2013Nov\\_english.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20100425195611/http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/ikg/zick/Press%20release%2013Nov_english.pdf)

Tweet attacking Labour MPs who complained about antisemitism, March 2018



The day I see Luciana Berger, Ian Austin, Wes Streeting, Ruth Smeeth, Mike Gapes, Joan Ryan and all the other screamers of (fake) antisemitism decry the State of Israel's behaviour, I'll take what they say seriously..

11:14 AM · Mar 25, 2018



# LABOUR PARTY ANTISEMITISM CONTROVERSY

The ongoing controversy over antisemitism in the Labour Party reached new heights in 2018, generating unprecedented public disagreements between representative bodies of the Jewish community and the Labour Party leadership.

Several of the allegations of antisemitism that affected the Labour Party in 2018 involved Jeremy Corbyn personally. Whereas in previous years such stories had usually involved Corbyn's alleged associations with people who held antisemitic attitudes, in 2018 a series of stories emerged that accused Corbyn himself of having expressed antisemitic views or taken part in antisemitic events. However, throughout 2018 Corbyn also made several statements explicitly condemning antisemitism.

## Jeremy Corbyn and allegations of antisemitism

Corbyn's apparent support for an antisemitic mural in the East End of London in 2012 became the subject of intense scrutiny and debate. This mural, painted by American graffiti artist Kalen Ockerman (also known as Mear One), depicted a group of bankers playing Monopoly on a board that rested on the backs of faceless workers, overseen by a conspiracy theory motif. Some of the bankers had been drawn as caricatures with outsized facial features to represent Jewish bankers such as the Rothschilds. At the time the mural had been painted in 2012 it was

widely condemned as antisemitic and there were calls for it to be removed. The then Mayor of Tower Hamlets, Lutfur Rahman, said at the time: *"Whether intentional or otherwise, the images of the bankers perpetuate antisemitic propaganda about conspiratorial Jewish domination of financial and political institutions. Where freedom of expression runs the risk of inciting racial hatred ... then it is right that such expression should be curtailed."*<sup>25</sup> However, when Ockerman complained on Facebook that the mural was going to be removed, Corbyn had posted a comment on Ockerman's Facebook page that appeared to support the artist and opposed the removal of the mural. Six years later, Labour MP Luciana Berger saw images of the mural and Corbyn's supportive comment for the first time, and asked Corbyn's office for an explanation. Corbyn initially said that he had been *"responding to concerns about the removal of public art on grounds of freedom of speech"*, but acknowledged that the mural was antisemitic and should have been removed. He then issued a second statement claiming that he only expressed support for Ockerman because he had not looked closely at the image of the mural: *"I sincerely regret that I did not look more closely at the image I was commenting on"*.<sup>26</sup> Some found these explanations unconvincing. Novelist Howard Jacobson wrote that *"if [Corbyn] saw nothing exceptionally offensive in this mural it can only be because it mirrored an image of the Jew as bloodsucker he was already carrying in his head."*<sup>27</sup> Peter Osborne wrote in the *Daily Mail* that, while he had previously felt allegations of antisemitism under Corbyn were *"overplayed"* and viewed Corbyn himself as *"a man who was passionately opposed to all kinds of racism"*, he had changed his view and was *"now convinced*



25 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/mayor-tower-hamlets-mural-to-be-removed-1.36785>

26 <https://www.thejc.com/comment/comment/there-is-only-one-word-for-jeremy-corbyn-1.461313>

27 <https://www.thejc.com/comment/comment/howard-jacobson-jeremy-corbyn-enough-is-enough-1.461673>

*that there is something detestable about Corbyn's politics which make it impossible to defend him any more... the poison of anti-Semitism has spread into the heart of the Corbyn Labour Party."* Dismissing Corbyn's explanations of how he came to support the mural, Osborne wrote: *"Either he was revealing shocking naivety, which, in any case, is unacceptable in a frontline politician and renders him unfit for public office. Or there is something hideously sinister about Corbyn's core views. What is without doubt is that he is damned by his own behaviour. Corbyn's dreadful lack of judgment over anti-Semitism — and his weaselly attempt at an apology this week — shows that he is unworthy to be an MP, let alone lead a great political party."*<sup>28</sup>

The *Times* reported that Corbyn had hosted an event in Parliament on Holocaust Memorial Day in 2010 that compared Israel to Nazi Germany. The meeting was titled "Never Again – for Anyone" and was part of a national tour, co-organised by the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network and Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign, called "Never Again for Anyone – Auschwitz to Gaza". Corbyn spoke at the meeting alongside Hajo Meyer, a Holocaust survivor who repeatedly compared Israeli government policy to the actions of Nazi Germany. Other Holocaust survivors were in the audience at the meeting and strongly objected to Meyer's views and to the premise of the meeting. Haidar Eid, a Palestinian activist, addressed the meeting via phone, reportedly saying: "Nazism has won because it has finally



28 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-5563767/PETER-OSBORNE-Labour-leader-Jeremy-Corbyn-soon-gone.html>

*managed to Nazify the consciousness of its own victims."*<sup>29</sup> The following year, Corbyn and John McDonnell both sponsored a Parliamentary Early Day Motion supporting the "Never Again For Anyone" campaign and calling for Holocaust Memorial Day to be renamed "as Genocide Memorial Day - Never Again For Anyone."<sup>30</sup> Corbyn apologised when the *Times* reported this story, although at the time of the meeting he had defended his involvement.

A video emerged of Corbyn speaking at a meeting of the Palestine Return Centre in 2013, in which Corbyn claimed that "Zionists" are incapable of understanding "English irony", even if they were born in the United Kingdom.



Corbyn had been describing a previous event at which the Palestinian ambassador, Manuel Hassassian, had spoken. Corbyn then said: "This was dutifully recorded by the, thankfully silent, Zionists who were in the audience on that occasion, and then came up and berated him afterwards for what he had said. They clearly have two problems. One is that they don't want to study history, and secondly, having lived in this country for a very long time, probably all their lives, don't understand English irony either."<sup>31</sup> Many observers, including those who had previously defended Corbyn, felt that this comment was antisemitic as it used "Zionists" as a euphemism for British Jews (because it

29 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/jeremy-corbyn-hosted-event-likening-israel-to-nazis-6sb5rqd5x>

30 <https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/42381/never-again-for-anyone-initiative>

31 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/aug/24/corbyn-english-irony-video-reignites-antisemitism-row-labour>

included those who had “lived in this country... all their lives”) and implied that, even if Jews are born in the UK, they can never be truly “English”. For example, Simon Hattenstone, writing in *The Guardian*, declared: “I have repeatedly defended Jeremy Corbyn against charges of antisemitism... But not any more. I still don’t believe (or would like not to believe) that he is an antisemite, but what the Labour leader said at a London conference convened by the Palestinian Return Centre in 2013 is unquestionably antisemitic... Let’s look closely at the words used by Corbyn: these British Zionists don’t study history, and they don’t understand irony... In other words, they are uneducated, they have failed to integrate or assimilate, they are outsiders, they don’t belong, they need to be taught a lesson. Sorry, Jeremy, this is the language of supremacism.”<sup>32</sup> When this speech was reported in August 2018 Corbyn defended his actions while also saying he would not use same words again, saying: “I described those pro-Israel activists as Zionists, in the accurate political sense and not as a euphemism for Jewish people – and that is made clear in the rest of my speech that day. I am now more careful with how I might use the term ‘Zionist’ because a once self-identifying political term has been increasingly hijacked by anti-Semites as code for Jews.”<sup>33</sup>

Corbyn was accused of laying a wreath at the graves of Palestinian terrorists linked to the murder of 11 Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics while attending a conference in Tunis in 2014, along with Conservative and Liberal Democrat peers Lord Sheikh and Baron Phillips. Corbyn had attended a ceremony at a cemetery that held the graves of people killed in a 1985 Israeli air strike against the headquarters of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, which was located in Tunis at that time. Corbyn had written in his *Morning Star* column in 2014 that “wreaths were laid at the graves of those who died on that day and on the graves of others killed by Mossad



agents in Paris in 1991”<sup>34</sup> – an apparent reference to senior PLO figures also buried in that cemetery. These include Salah Khalaf, the alleged founder of Black September, and Atef Bseiso, the alleged mastermind of the Munich Olympics attack, who were assassinated by unknown assailants in Tunis in 1991 and Paris in 1992 respectively. The *Daily Mail* unearthed photographs of Corbyn holding a wreath in the cemetery that appeared to show him stood in front of the graves of Khalaf, Bseiso and the other senior PLO leaders, rather than the memorial to the victims of the 1985 bombing which was several yards away. Corbyn denied this was the case and insisted that “I, along with other colleagues who were delegates to the conference, laid a wreath in memory of all those who have died in the hope that we have a peace process and peace in the future, so those raids are never repeated.” When asked specifically about whether he had laid a wreath for people linked to Black September, Corbyn told an interviewer: “I was present when it was laid. I don’t think I was actually involved in it.”<sup>35</sup> The Labour Party made a formal complaint to the press regulator Ipso regarding the reporting of this story by six different national newspapers, but dropped the complaint two months later.

The *Observer* reported that Corbyn had suggested the “the hand of Israel” was responsible for the killing of Egyptian soldiers by jihadist fighters in Sinai in 2012 as part of an effort to destabilise Egypt’s government. Corbyn

32 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/aug/24/jeremy-corbyn-antisemitism-labour-zionists-2013-speech>

33 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-45301548>

34 <https://morningstaronline.co.uk/a-98de-palestine-united-1>

35 <https://www.channel4.com/news/factcheck/factcheck-jeremy-corbyn-and-the-wreath-row>





was appearing on the Iranian state TV channel Press TV when he discussed these killings with the host, Lauren Booth. Corbyn said: “you have to look at the big picture: in whose interests is it to destabilise the new government in Egypt? In whose interest is it to kill Egyptians, other than Israel, concerned at the growing closeness of relationship between Palestine and the new Egyptian government?” When Booth asked Corbyn “Would a Muslim go against his Egyptian brother and open fire?”, Corbyn replied: “It seems a bit unlikely that would happen during Ramadan, to put it mildly, and I suspect the hand of Israel in this whole process of destabilisation.”<sup>36</sup> The Labour Party defended Corbyn’s comments by claiming he had in mind a previous episode when Israeli soldiers had accidentally killed Egyptian police officers while in pursuit of Palestinian terrorists. In another part of the same show on Press TV, Corbyn and Booth had taken part in a discussion with a convicted Hamas terrorist called Dr Abdul Aziz Umar who appeared on the show via video link to Qatar. Umar had been sentenced to life in prison for his role helping to organise a 2003 suicide bombing in Jerusalem that killed seven people. He was released in 2011 in a prisoner exchange deal between Hamas and Israel, following the kidnapping of Corporal Gilad Shalit. Corbyn said on the show that he had previously met Umar and other Hamas prisoners – who he called “brothers” – in Qatar following their release, and questioned why they had ever been imprisoned: “You have to ask the question why they are in prison in the first place... I’m glad that those who were released were released, I hope they’re now in safe places.”<sup>37</sup>

36 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/jul/28/labour-antisemitism-code-ian-austin-mp-faces-suspension>

37 <https://twitter.com/daverich1/status/1023478307118100480> and subsequent thread

## Jeremy Corbyn: condemnations of antisemitism

In April 2018, on the day that he was due to meet Jewish community leaders, Corbyn published an article in the *Evening Standard* that included a forthright condemnation of antisemitism and an apology to the Jewish community. He wrote: “Anti-semitism is a poison that must be challenged wherever it raises its head, across Europe and at home. Hatred and bigotry towards Jewish people has no place in our society, whether on the streets or online. And that of course goes for the Labour Party too.” He insisted that Labour has a “long and proud record” of opposing antisemitism and has always valued its Jewish support, before acknowledging that “we must also face the uncomfortable fact that a small number of our members and supporters hold anti-Semitic views and attitudes, which need to be confronted and dealt with more rapidly and effectively.” He went on: “Labour staff have seen examples of Holocaust denial, crude stereotypes of Jewish bankers, conspiracy theories blaming 9/11 on Israel, and even one member who appeared to believe that Hitler had been misunderstood. So let me be clear. People holding those views have no place in the Labour Party. They may be few — the number of cases over the past three years represents less than 0.1 per cent of Labour’s membership of more than half a million — but one is too many.” Corbyn identified two sources of antisemitism in the Labour movement: “First, individuals on the fringes of the movement of solidarity with the Palestinian people can stray into anti-Semitic views... Second, there are people who have come to see capitalism and imperialism as the product of conspiracy by a small shadowy elite rather than a political, economic, legal and social system. That is only a step from hoary myths about ‘Jewish bankers’ and ‘sinister global forces’.” He claimed that Labour was “taking action” against antisemitic members, but accepted that “we have not done enough to get to grips with the problem... My party and I are sorry for the hurt and distress caused.”<sup>38</sup>

38 <https://www.standard.co.uk/comment/comment/jeremy-corbyn-what-i-m-doing-to-banish-antisemitism-from-the-labour-party-a3821961.html>



In a second article on the same subject, published in *The Guardian* in August, Corbyn repeated his condemnation of antisemitism and his desire for Jewish people to remain as part of the Labour movement. He reassured the Jewish community that *“any government I lead will take whatever measures are necessary to guarantee the security of Jewish communities, Jewish schools, Jewish places of worship, Jewish social care, Jewish culture and Jewish life as a whole in this country.”* He then addressed the specific question of antisemitism in the Labour Party, stating that *“Driving antisemitism out of the party for good, and rebuilding that trust, are our priorities”* and acknowledging that *“We were too slow in processing disciplinary cases of antisemitic abuse... And we haven’t done enough to foster deeper understanding of antisemitism among members.”* He declared: *“People who dish out antisemitic poison need to understand: you do not do it in my name. You are not my supporters and have no place in our movement.”*<sup>39</sup>

To mark the Jewish new year festival of Rosh Hashanah, Corbyn wrote a message on Facebook that appeared to accept that Labour needed to undergo a period of self-reflection and change in relation to the Jewish community. He wrote: *“Teshuvah – that process of recognition and putting things right – is a moment for reflecting on our core values, in our communities and in our politics. I would like to reiterate that the Labour Party stands in solidarity with the Jewish community in the fight against antisemitism. We will work to eradicate the social cancer of antisemitism wherever it surfaces, including in our own party. We need change and I hope this year we can make this happen. Let us all re-commit to doing things differently, working together for community and social justice and changing not just ourselves but our society.”*<sup>40</sup>

39 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/aug/03/jeremy-corbyn-antisemitism-labour-party>

40 [https://www.facebook.com/JeremyCorbynMP/posts/10156734398723872?\\_xts\\_\\_\[0\]=68.ARBKOTIVKsDDJqx\\_X-JAta2Mq1hczTDvGB900C7NErLgIkPQ5mxxI1GSiSKMptKY8DpEZFMVXQfyWIXKaU1MabODERILWWM5SJqUKFTJkybfl-zf1azR9ze1MnhKIW91CJFdtmFBPICWUWUUFJ](https://www.facebook.com/JeremyCorbynMP/posts/10156734398723872?_xts__[0]=68.ARBKOTIVKsDDJqx_X-JAta2Mq1hczTDvGB900C7NErLgIkPQ5mxxI1GSiSKMptKY8DpEZFMVXQfyWIXKaU1MabODERILWWM5SJqUKFTJkybfl-zf1azR9ze1MnhKIW91CJFdtmFBPICWUWUUFJ)



Jeremy Corbyn

9 September 2018 · 6

As Jewish people in our country and around the world prepare to celebrate the High Holy Days, I want to extend my warmest greetings. As we enter the new year of 5779 it is a difficult time for many of Britain's Jewish communities. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur allow time to reflect, learn and confront those challenges. Teshuvah - that process of recognition and putting things right - is a moment for reflecting on our core values, in our communities and in our politics. I would like to reiterate that the Labour Party stands in solidarity with the Jewish community in the fight against antisemitism. We will work to eradicate the social cancer of antisemitism wherever it surfaces, including in our own party. We need change and I hope this year we can make this happen. Let us all re-commit to doing things differently, working together for community and social justice and changing not just ourselves but our society. Shana Tova.

### Labour antisemitism on Facebook

Apart from allegations of antisemitism involving Jeremy Corbyn personally, several other stories throughout 2018 featured claims of antisemitism amongst Labour Party members, activists and supporters; the suspension or expulsion of some people accused of antisemitism; alleged failings in the party's efforts to address the problem of antisemitism; and, for some, denial that such a problem even existed. This is a small selection of some of those stories.

In March 2018 independent blogger David Collier revealed that Jeremy Corbyn, Labour MPs Chris Williamson and Clive Lewis, former Liberal Democrat peer Baroness Jenny Tonge and former Liberal Democrat MP David Ward, and other prominent pro-Palestinian campaigners had all been members of a Facebook group called Palestine Live that featured Holocaust denial, conspiracy theories and other antisemitic content. There was no evidence that Corbyn had seen any of the antisemitic content in Palestine Live, although he had commented on other posts, and he had left the group when he became Labour Party leader in September 2015. The Labour Party subsequently suspended a small number of party members who had belonged to Palestine Live.

In March 2018 it also emerged that Alan Bull, a Labour Party candidate for the forthcoming council elections in Peterborough, had been

retained as a candidate even though the party had received complaints that his Facebook page included antisemitic posts. One post on Bull's Facebook page was a link to a Holocaust denial article titled "International Red Cross Report

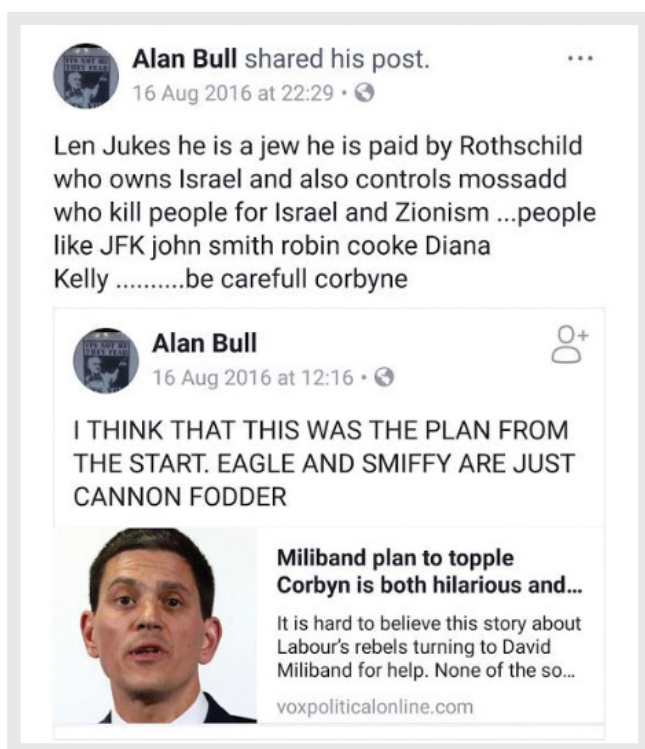


*Confirms the Holocaust of Six Million Jews is a Hoax*" in which the infamous "Arbeit Macht Frei" sign over the gates of Auschwitz had been changed to

"Muh Holocaust".<sup>41</sup> Other posts suggested that Israel is allied to ISIS and described former Labour Foreign Minister David Miliband as "a jew he is paid by Rothschild who owns Israel and also controls mossadd [sic] who kill people for Israel and Zionism".<sup>42</sup> Bull claimed all the posts were doctored. He was reported to the Labour

Party by local members and councillors in 2017 and again in 2018 but was only removed as a candidate when his alleged posts were reported in *The Jewish Chronicle*. It then emerged that Christine Shawcroft, who chaired the Disputes Panel of Labour's National Executive Committee, had sent an internal email arguing that Bull should be reinstated and allowed to stand in the council elections. Shawcroft wrote in her email that the Facebook posts were "taken completely out of context" and that "elements of Peterborough Labour Party... have political reasons for wanting Mr Bull suspended".<sup>43</sup> Shawcroft resigned from Labour's Disputes Panel after this email was leaked to media, saying that she had not seen the relevant Facebook posts before sending her email.

In April *The Sunday Times* published an investigation into hateful, violent and antisemitic content in several Facebook groups that existed to encourage support for Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party. Their investigation featured 20 different Facebook groups with a combined (if overlapping) membership of approximately 400,000 people. The biggest of these groups, called We Support Jeremy Corbyn, had over 67,000 members. According to *The Sunday Times*, the group included Holocaust denial posts and antisemitic comments directed at Jewish community leaders who had criticised Labour.<sup>44</sup> A separate investigation found several antisemitic comments on Jeremy Corbyn's own Facebook page, including comments such as: "a Jewish supremecist [sic] takeover of the Labour Party. Anti-Semitism is a Jewish hoax"; "Jews will always claim victimhood no matter what"; "Jews are over 8 times represented in Parliament"; "The Zionist lobby is very powerful and prominent in UK politics, media".<sup>45</sup> The Labour Party said that any commenters who were found to be party members would be investigated.



41 <https://twitter.com/AntisemitismOut/status/976383505100832769>

42 <https://twitter.com/AntisemitismOut/status/976383364432351232>

43 <https://twitter.com/bbclaurak/status/979104946544168960?lang=en>

44 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/vitriol-and-threats-of-violence-the-ugly-face-of-jeremy-corbyns-cabal-gxdk69m8f>

45 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5669989/Jeremy-Corbyns-official-Facebook-page-littered-vile-anti-Semitic-posts.html>

## Expulsions and suspensions

Two high-profile cases involving veteran left-wing campaigners who had been accused of antisemitism were resolved by the Labour Party in 2018 by expelling the activists in question. Marc Wadsworth had been suspended following comments he made about the Jewish Labour MP Ruth Smeeth at the launch of the Chakrabarti Report in June 2016, in which he accused Smeeth of “working hand in hand” with *The Daily Telegraph* against Corbyn.<sup>46</sup> Wadsworth was charged with conduct that “is grossly detrimental to the party” and was found guilty nearly two years after the initial incident. Smeeth had been accompanied by dozens of Labour MPs when she arrived at Wadsworth’s hearing to give evidence. Smeeth welcomed the decision to expel Wadsworth, saying: “I would like to pay tribute to the hard work and professionalism of Labour Party staff who have had to deal with this case and many others... I hope that this decision represents the first step towards a return to the values of decency and respect throughout the Labour Party.”<sup>47</sup> However, Smeeth’s fellow Labour MP Chris Williamson called the verdict a “perverse determination” that “flies in the face of the evidence... and offends against natural justice.”<sup>48</sup> Williamson pledged to assist Wadsworth “in his efforts to clear his name, and his reputation as a veteran anti-racist campaigner” and spoke alongside Wadsworth at a meeting in Manchester the following month.

In February 2018 Tony Greenstein, a founder of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and long-standing anti-Zionist campaigner, was expelled from Labour for antisemitic abuse. Greenstein had been suspended from the party for almost two years for a host of abusive comments, most of which he had posted online. According to the party’s charge sheet against Greenstein, his “deeply offensive and derisory antisemitic posts” included

his “repeated use of the antisemitic and abusive term ‘Zio’”; a comment that “Gay Zionists make me want to puke”; and describing a Jewish woman as a “racist whore” and “Zionist scum”. Greenstein was also accused of using racist language about Chuka Umunna MP.<sup>49</sup> A week after his expulsion, Greenstein tweeted that “Israel is intent on proving Shakespeare’s allegedly anti-semitic play the Merchant of Venice and Shylock true” while linking to an article that accused Israel of taking “its pound of flesh” in an incident in which a Palestinian teenager was shot.<sup>50</sup> In November, Greenstein was also suspended for three years from Unison trades union for “disrespectful or intimidating behaviour”, following blog posts he had published criticising a Unison official in relation to the union’s handling of a complaint about antisemitism.<sup>51</sup>



In May 2018 Ken Livingstone resigned from the Labour Party while under suspension for allegedly antisemitic comments he made in 2017. Livingstone had been found guilty in 2017 of making comments that were prejudicial or grossly detrimental to the party, but was not expelled and was subsequently suspended a second time for further offensive comments alleging collaboration between Nazi Germany and the Zionist movement in the 1930s.

46 <https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/labour-party/news/76781/jewish-labour-mp-left-tears-launch-anti-semitism>

47 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/marc-wadsworth-expelled-from-labour-party-after-antisemitism-inquiry-1.463205>

48 [https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=2112790345627596&id=1676943375878964](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=2112790345627596&id=1676943375878964)

49 <https://www.theredroar.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Skeleton-Greenstein.pdf>

50 <https://twitter.com/TonyGreenstein/status/968333143911665667?s=20>

51 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/notorious-anti-zionist-tony-greenstein-is-suspended-from-unison-union-1.472146>

In January 2018, Livingstone had attracted further criticism for appearing on Iran's Press TV on Holocaust Memorial Day to discuss the topic *"Has the Holocaust been exploited to oppress others?"*<sup>52</sup> In May, Livingstone announced that he had decided to resign from the party because *"The ongoing issues around my suspension from the Labour party have become a distraction from the key political issue of our time – which is to replace a Tory government... I am loyal to the Labour party and to Jeremy Corbyn. However, any further disciplinary action against me may drag on for months or even years, distracting attention from Jeremy's policies."* Livingstone also insisted: *"I do not accept the allegation that I have brought the Labour party into disrepute – nor that I am in any way guilty of antisemitism. I abhor antisemitism, I have fought it all my life and will continue to do so. I also recognise that the way I made a historical argument has caused offence and upset in the Jewish community. I am truly sorry for that."*<sup>53</sup> His resignation was welcomed by Jeremy Corbyn, who called it *"the right thing to do"* but said his resignation was *"sad after such a long and vital contribution to London and progressive politics"*.<sup>54</sup> Jonathan Arkush, then President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, expressed frustration that Livingstone had resigned rather than being expelled by the party, saying: *"Ken Livingstone has jumped when he should have been expelled for his toxic and odious distortion of history. His departure from Labour has all the signs of being orchestrated with the Leader's office, with the obvious aim of shielding Livingstone from the ignominy of being thrown out of a party that should have no place for him."*<sup>55</sup> The far left group Jewish Voice for Labour said they were *"saddened to hear of Ken Livingstone's resignation from the Labour Party. We deplore*

*his hounding and the trial by media that he has been subjected to over two years and more. We can find no evidence of antisemitism in any of the statements for which he has been attacked."*<sup>56</sup>



Two Labour MPs were threatened with disciplinary action by the party in relation to comments they allegedly made that criticised Labour and Corbyn over the party's efforts to tackle antisemitism. Margaret Hodge MP received a letter threatening disciplinary action after she had confronted Corbyn following the Labour National Executive Committee (NEC)'s failure to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism in July. Hodge allegedly said to Corbyn: *"It is not what you say but what you do, and by your actions you have shown you are an anti-Semitic racist."*<sup>57</sup> Other reports claimed that she swore at the Labour leader, which Hodge denied. Labour dropped its disciplinary action in August 2018. The party claimed that Hodge had *"expressed regret"* for the way she spoke; Hodge denied this and tweeted: *"Just to be clear: there have been no apologies – on either side."*<sup>58</sup> Ian Austin MP was also subject to investigation in July by the party following an argument he had with party chairman Ian Lavery MP over Labour's handling of antisemitism, but this investigation was dropped in November.

52 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/livingstone-marks-hmd-on-iran-tv-show-asking-has-the-holocaust-been-exploited-to-oppress-others-1.457578>

53 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/may/21/ken-livingstone-resignation-labour-party-statement-antisemitism>

54 <https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/labour-party/news/95371/jeremy-corbyn-pays-tribute-ken-livingstone-he>

55 <https://www.bod.org.uk/arkush-calls-on-corbyn-not-to-allow-livingstone-back/>

56 <https://www.jewishvoiceforlabour.org.uk/article/ken-livingstones-resignation-from-the-labour-party/>

57 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/jul/17/labour-agrees-to-fresh-antisemitism-consultation-after-stormy-debate>

58 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/aug/06/labour-ends-action-against-margaret-hodge-in-antisemitism-row>



*"I'm not a conspiracy theorist, but..."*

Two prominent trades union leaders made public statements in 2018 arguing that allegations of antisemitism were being invented or exaggerated for political gain. Mark Serwotka, the General Secretary of the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) and newly-elected President of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), told a Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) fringe event at the TUC conference that allegations of antisemitism in Labour were the result of "something sinister going on" and implied that Israel had "create[d] a story" of antisemitism in Labour to prevent criticism of its "atrocities". He said: "In a year when Donald Trump has moved the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, in a year when dozens of Palestinians including children were gunned down – unarmed innocent civilians – by the Israeli military... isn't it a vile world when, instead of being on the front foot, denouncing these atrocities, demanding an independent and sovereign state for the Palestinian people, we have had a summer of asking ourselves whether leading Labour movement people are in any way antisemitic?... I'm not a conspiracy theorist, but I'll tell you what – one of the best forms of trying to hide from the atrocities that you are committing is to go on the offensive and actually create a story that does not exist for people on this platform, the trade union movement or, I have to say, for the leader of the Labour Party."<sup>59</sup> Neither the Labour Party, the TUC, PCS nor the PSC condemned Serwotka's comments or distanced themselves from his suggestion that Israel had created allegations of antisemitism in Labour.

Perhaps the most powerful and influential trades union General Secretary, Len McCluskey of Unite, wrote in the *New Statesman* in April that the "small number" of Labour members who had antisemitic views were being used by Labour MPs to undermine their own party leader. He argued that MPs who were guilty

of this should be subject to "mandatory reselection" by their local parties. McCluskey wrote: "Here are two truths about the state of the Labour Party today. First, there are a small number of members expressing entirely unacceptable anti-Semitic views and attitudes, especially on social media. The second is that this issue has joined a line of others in being used by a group of backbench Labour MPs to attack and undermine Jeremy Corbyn and the progressive leadership of the party." He went on to acknowledge that "there are anti-Semites in the Labour Party" who should be "dealt with", although he insisted that he "had never encountered such attitudes in my 47 years of party membership", and said that "The idea that Corbyn has ever shown hostility towards the Jewish community, or allowed anti-Semitic actions, is a disgusting libel." He then went on to attack several Labour MPs who, in his view, "work overtime trying to present the Labour Party as a morass of misogyny, anti-Semitism and bullying... I look with disgust at the behaviour of the Corbyn-hater MPs who join forces with the most reactionary elements of the media establishment and I understand why there is a growing demand for mandatory reselection." He concluded: "To watch as these so-called social democrats tried to demean and attack, in front of our enemy, a decent and honourable man who has fought racism and anti-Semitism all his life and who has breathed life and hope back into the hearts of millions, especially the young, made my stomach churn. To see Tory MPs cheer and applaud them was shameful. Promiscuous critics must expect to be criticised, and those who wish to hold Corbyn to account can expect to be held to account themselves."<sup>60</sup> In another column, this time in *The Huffington Post* in August, McCluskey turned his attention to "the leadership of the Jewish community", who he identified as the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Jewish Leadership Council and the Jewish Labour Movement. He claimed they "have simply refused to take 'yes' for an answer" in not giving

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/labour-antisemitism-israel-corbyn-mark-serwotka-tuc-trade-union-pcs-a8535986.html>

<sup>60</sup> <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2018/04/corbyn-ultimatum>

Corbyn due credit for the steps McCluskey claimed he had taken to tackle antisemitism and accused them of showing *"Intransigent hostility and an utter refusal to engage in dialogue about building on what has been done and resolving outstanding difficulties."* McCluskey also claimed that the row over antisemitism in Labour *"is not manufactured but has certainly been wildly exaggerated."*<sup>61</sup>

### Engagement between Jewish community leaders and Jeremy Corbyn

On 25 March, following the revelations about Palestine Live and Corbyn's apparent support for the antisemitic mural in 2012, the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Jewish Leadership Council published an open letter to the Labour Party titled *"Enough Is Enough"*. This letter accused Labour of *"a repeated institutional failure to properly address Jewish concerns and antisemitism"*, while claiming that *"Again and again, Jeremy Corbyn has sided with antisemites rather than Jews... There is literally not a single day in which Labour Party spaces, either online or in meetings, do not repeat the same fundamental antisemitic slanders against Jews... Rightly or wrongly, those who push this offensive material regard Jeremy Corbyn as their figurehead."* It concluded: *"Jeremy Corbyn is the only person with the standing to demand that all of this stops. Enough is Enough."* This led to an exchange of letters between Jeremy

Corbyn and Jonathan Goldstein (Chair of the Jewish Leadership Council) and Jonathan Arkush (then President of the Board of Deputies). In his reply to the letter of 25 March, Corbyn wrote to *"acknowledge the anger and upset that provoked"* their letter and offered an *"urgent meeting to discuss the issues you have raised"*. Corbyn then wrote at some length about *"antisemitism in the Labour movement"* and in the party. He apologised *"for the pain which has been caused"* and *"for not having studied the content of the mural more closely before wrongly questioning its removal in 2012."* He went on to acknowledge that *"Newer forms of antisemitism have been woven into criticism of Israeli governments"*, such as *"comparing Israel or the actions of Israeli governments to the Nazis"* or using *"Zio"* as a term of abuse. His letter ended with a promise *"that I will never be anything other than a militant opponent of antisemitism."* To accompany the release of the initial open letter, approximately 1,000 people attended a protest in Parliament Square, organised by the Board of Deputies and the Jewish Leadership Council and addressed by several MPs who expressed their support for the protest and their opposition to antisemitism. This protest attracted a much smaller counter-demonstration, organised by the fringe group Jewish Voices for Labour, who argue that allegations of antisemitism in Labour are exaggerated, weaponised or invented for political purposes. Attendees at this counter-demonstration included individuals who have themselves been expelled or suspended from the Labour Party for antisemitism. Some Labour MPs who attended the main Jewish community demonstration received criticism and censure from their local parties, leading Labour General Secretary Jennie Formby to write to all Constituency Labour Parties informing them that *"tackling antisemitism in the party is a central priority"* and that *"criticism of any individual or organisation who has expressed concern about antisemitism would be deeply unhelpful to that process."*<sup>62</sup>

Protest against antisemitism, London, March 2018  
Credit Wiktor Szymanowicz/Shutterstock



61 [https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/anti-semitism-labour-uk\\_5b7573dee4b0df9b093ccbc6](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/anti-semitism-labour-uk_5b7573dee4b0df9b093ccbc6)

62 <https://twitter.com/jenniegensec/status/981991599705088001>

Two days later the Board of Deputies and Jewish Leadership Council released another letter, welcoming Corbyn's apology and setting out six areas for discussion in the proposed meeting, including Labour's disciplinary process and timescale for outstanding cases; education about antisemitism; engagement with mainstream Jewish organisations; denying party platforms or MP support for those suspended or expelled for antisemitism; the need for Corbyn to show personal leadership in implementing change; and an agreed monitoring programme to ensure change is *"sustained and enduring"*.<sup>63</sup> These six points formed the agenda for a meeting between representatives of the Board of Deputies, the Jewish Leadership Council and Community Security Trust, and Jeremy Corbyn and his senior staff, in April 2018. However the meeting did not produce agreement, with Labour describing it as *"positive and constructive, serious and good humoured"*, but the Jewish community representatives calling it *"a disappointing missed opportunity"* in which *"Mr Corbyn's proposals fell short of the minimum level of action which our letter suggested."*<sup>64</sup> Nor was there any further meeting between Jewish communal organisations and the Labour leader's office in 2018.

### Defining antisemitism: IHRA or Labour's Code

The question of how to define antisemitism, and in particular whether to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism in full, became the focus of much of the debate and argument over antisemitism in the Labour Party in 2018. The party's National Executive Committee (NEC) had adopted the IHRA definition in December 2016, and one of the requests made by the Board of Deputies and the Jewish Leadership Council in their letter to Jeremy Corbyn of 28 March 2018 was to *"circulate the IHRA definition with all its examples and clauses"*

to all party members and branches. However, senior officials in Corbyn's office insisted that the NEC had only adopted the introductory paragraph of the IHRA definition and not all 11 of the definition's illustrative clauses, which give examples of how antisemitic speech might manifest. Rather than adopt the IHRA definition unamended, the Labour Party produced its own *"Code of Conduct"* on antisemitism. This code set out that Labour had *"endorsed"* the IHRA definition of antisemitism, which it treated as only the introductory paragraph of that definition, and then provided two pages of *"guidelines"* that were intended to operate as an alternative to the illustrative clauses used by the IHRA definition. These guidelines, the code explained, *"draw on a number of sources, including the IHRA working examples, the Home Affairs Select Committee report of October 2016, the Chakrabarti Report itself and other contemporary material."* Labour's NEC initially adopted their alternative code in July, and then reversed this decision in September and adopted the IHRA definition unamended, following intense criticism from inside and outside the party.

Labour's alternative code adopted seven of the IHRA examples unchanged, but diverged from the IHRA definition when it came to examples of antisemitic speech in the context of debates about Israel. In such cases, Labour's code explained, *"the expression of even contentious views in this area will not be treated as antisemitism unless accompanied by specific antisemitic content (such as the use of antisemitic tropes) or by other evidence of antisemitic intent."* Whereas the IHRA definition includes *"Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis"* as an example of antisemitic speech, Labour's code insisted that *"It is not antisemitism to criticise the conduct or policies of the Israeli state by reference to such examples unless there is evidence of antisemitic intent"* (although the code did warn that such language carries a *"strong risk"* of falling foul of Labour's disciplinary rules). Another IHRA example that Labour's code diluted was the idea that

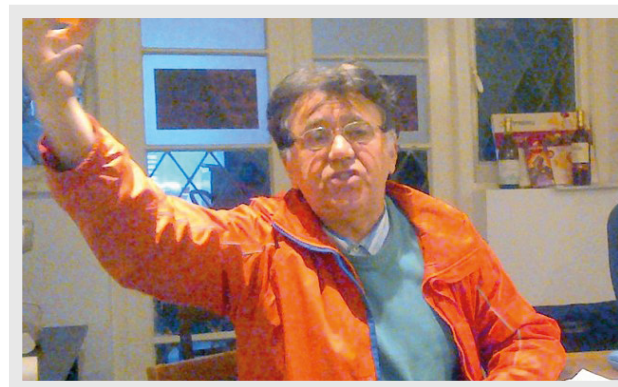
<sup>63</sup> <https://www.bod.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Response-to-Rt-Hon-Jeremy-Corbyn-from-JLC-Chair-and-BOD-President-28032018.pdf>

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/corbyn-meeting-board-jlc-1.463017>

*"Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations" is antisemitic; Labour's code included this idea, but only as a form of speech that is "wrong" rather than explicitly antisemitic.*<sup>65</sup>

The differences between the alternative code's guidelines and IHRA's clauses were the subject of intense debate, as was the very fact that Labour had sought to re-write the definition at all. Jeremy Corbyn claimed that Labour's code was *"a good faith attempt to contextualise" the IHRA definition's examples and "make them legally watertight for use as part of our disciplinary procedures, as well as to draw on additional instances of antisemitism."*<sup>66</sup> The opposing view was expressed in a joint statement by the Board of Deputies, Jewish Leadership Council and CST, that rejected Labour's code as a *"weaker, flawed definition whose main purpose seems to be to protect those who are part of the problem."*<sup>67</sup> This represented widespread, although not unanimous, sentiment across the Jewish community in support of the idea that Labour should adopt the IHRA definition unchanged. The day before Labour's NEC met to discuss adopting the code in July, a letter was published in *The Guardian* signed by 68 British rabbis from different religious denominations and political viewpoints, which claimed that *"antisemitism within sections of the Labour party has become so severe and widespread that we must speak out with one Jewish voice... On behalf of our communities, members and congregants, we urge the Labour party to listen to the Jewish community, adopt the full and unamended International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism including its examples, and like*

*the organisations listed above, use the IHRA definition alone as their working definition of antisemitism."*<sup>68</sup> On the same day, Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis warned that if Labour did not adopt the IHRA definition, they *"will be placing themselves on the wrong side of the fight against racism, antisemitism and intolerance."*<sup>69</sup> At a meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party, Labour MPs voted overwhelmingly to back the IHRA definition, with fewer than ten MPs who were present opposing the vote. Despite this opposition, Labour's NEC decided at the July meeting to adopt Labour's code instead of the IHRA definition. The meeting was marred by an outburst by an NEC member called Peter Willsman, who suggested that allegations of antisemitism were falsified and then said: *"some of these people in the Jewish community support Trump – they are Trump fanatics and all the rest of it... So I am not going to be lectured to by Trump fanatics making up duff information without any evidence at all. So I think we should ask the 70 rabbis where is your evidence of severe and widespread antisemitism in this Party?"* Willsman then asked the other people at the NEC meeting: *"Let me ask you, let me ask you a question, how many people in this room have seen antisemitism in the Labour Party? Put your hands up... one, two – you've had antisemitism in the Labour Party? I'm amazed. I've certainly never seen it."* According to media reports, Willsman spoke *"in an increasingly agitated manner"* and while



65 IHRA definition at <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/working-definition-antisemitism>; Labour NEC code at <https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/5/0/NEC%20code%20of%20conduct%20Antisemitism.pdf>

66 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/aug/03/jeremy-corbyn-antisemitism-labour-party>

67 <https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2018/07/18/joint-statement-on-labour-nec-adoption-of-a-watered-down-definition-of-antisemitism>

68 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/jul/16/labour-party-must-listen-to-the-jewish-community-on-defining-antisemitism>

69 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/chief-rabbi-ephraim-mirvis-labour-letter-1.467265>



there were “audible protests” from some NEC members, Corbyn was present throughout and remained silent.<sup>70</sup> Willsman’s comments were the subject of a formal complaint by the Jewish Labour Movement but the party declined to open disciplinary proceedings, choosing instead to accept a letter of apology from Willsman who wrote: *“Not all of what I said has been accurately reported. But I accept that what I did say, and the way I said it, fell short of the requirement, which I accept, for discussions of contentious issues to be conducted in a fully civil and respectful way. I deeply apologise for any offence caused to those present and those to whom my remarks were reported.”*<sup>71</sup> However, the following week a recording of the meeting emerged that confirmed Willsman’s remarks had been reported accurately. As well as a sitting NEC member, Willsman was at that time a candidate for re-election to the NEC as part of a left wing slate of candidates endorsed by the pro-Corbyn campaign group Momentum. After the recording emerged, Momentum announced that they were withdrawing their endorsement of Willsman as an NEC candidate, while others, notably Chris Williamson MP, emphasised that they still supported him. Willsman was duly elected and retained his seat on Labour’s NEC. The week after this NEC meeting, three UK Jewish newspapers published an unprecedented joint editorial on their front pages titled *“United We Stand”*, that warned of what they claimed was *“the existential threat to Jewish life in this country that would be posed by a Jeremy Corbyn-led government... the party that was, until recently, the natural home for our community has seen its values and integrity eroded by Corbynite contempt for Jews and Israel.”* The editorial discussed Labour’s decision not to adopt the IHRA definition and then declared: *“there is a clear and present danger that a man with a default blindness to the Jewish community’s fears, a man who has a*

problem seeing that hateful rhetoric aimed at Israel can easily step into antisemitism, could be our next prime minister... implement IHRA in full or be seen by all decent people as an institutionally racist, antisemitic party.”<sup>72</sup>

Labour’s NEC returned to the question of the IHRA definition in early September, following criticism of their decision in July. At this meeting the NEC reversed its earlier stance and adopted the IHRA definition of antisemitism in full, with all 11 illustrative examples. They also adopted a separate statement clarifying that their adoption of the IHRA definition *“will not in any way undermine freedom of expression on Israel or the rights of Palestinians.”*<sup>73</sup> Jeremy Corbyn had tried to persuade the NEC to adopt a lengthy statement of his own, which included the claim that *“It cannot be considered racist to treat Israel like any other state or assess its conduct against the standards of international law. Nor should it be regarded as antisemitic to describe Israel, its policies or the circumstances around its foundation as racist because of their discriminatory impact, or to support another settlement of the Israel-Palestine conflict.”*<sup>74</sup> However, according to reports, the Labour leader withdrew this statement when it became apparent that the NEC would not support it.

### Momentum videos against antisemitism

The pro-Labour activist movement Momentum made two videos about antisemitism in 2018, both of which reflected an acceptance that the problem of antisemitism in the Labour Party had to be addressed. The first video featured a Jewish Labour Party member called Tania Shew who had worked on Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership campaigns in 2015 and 2016. In the video, Shew explained her support for Corbyn and her desire for a *“socialist government”*, before giving her personal experience of

70 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/bombshell-recording-proves-corbyn-ally-blamed-jewish-trump-fantatics-for-false-antisemitism-clai-1.467802>; <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/labour-rejects-ihra-definition-antisemitism-nec-1.467291>

71 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/pete-willsman-apologises-jennie-formby-jlm-antisemitism-nec-meeting-1.467755>

72 <https://www.thejc.com/comment/leaders/three-jewish-papers-take-the-unprecedented-step-of-publishing-the-same-page-on-labour-antisemitism-1.467641>

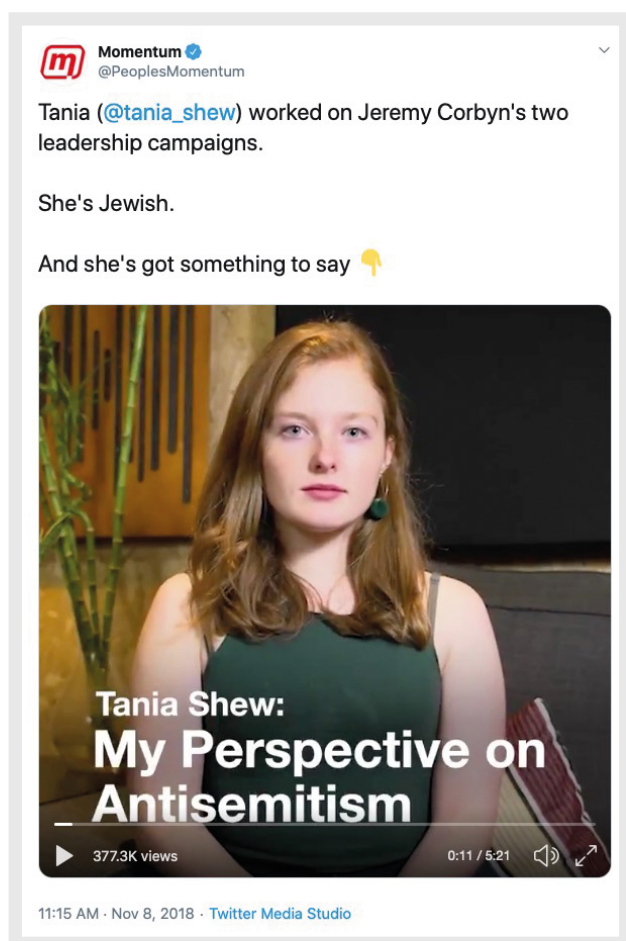
73 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-45414656>

74 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/sep/04/labour-adopts-ihra-antisemitism-definition-in-full>

encountering “antisemitic tropes in many left wing groups or online spaces”. Shew set some of these out in detail, described being quizzed about her views on Israel by people on the left when they discover she is Jewish, and put all this in the context of the history of antisemitism in Britain, from medieval persecutions to twentieth century fascism. However, there were aspects of this Momentum video that troubled some observers. For example, Shew argued that she shouldn’t be held responsible for Israeli actions because she “literally has never been” to Israel and “boycott[s] Israeli goods”. She argued that “language carries different weight depending on who says it”, which she took to mean that Palestinians “need to have the right to define their oppression in whatever terms they see fit”, while “white British people” should ensure that their language “never veers” into antisemitic tropes. The implication of this distinction is that Palestinian activists should, in Shew’s

concluded with a clip of Jeremy Corbyn saying that “Jewish people have been at the heart of our party and our movement throughout our history. No one should dismiss the concerns they’ve expressed about what’s been happening in the party.”<sup>75</sup>

The second video that Momentum made about antisemitism concerned the well-known conspiracy theorist David Icke, who was due to begin a UK tour of conspiracy talks to public audiences. The video accused Icke of “a sinister core” involving “the same antisemitic conspiracy theory about Jews controlling the world promoted by the Russian Tsars, Adolf Hitler and the far right today.”<sup>76</sup> The video was used to promote a demonstration organised by a new group called Socialists Against Antisemitism, to protest against a David Icke talk being held in Watford. The protest was joined by members of Momentum and of the Jewish Labour Movement. One Momentum activist wrote that he took part in the protest because “Icke is highly popular amongst the far-right and his work is regularly cited by neo-Nazis. But there is a further troubling aspect to his appeal: it is through Icke, and conspiracy theory culture more generally, that antisemitism has seeped into some parts of the left.”<sup>77</sup> The extent of support for Icke’s views amongst some on the left was demonstrated by the criticism Momentum received for making this video, including from some of their own supporters. In the Facebook group called “Jeremy Corbyn – True Socialism”, which had 17,000 members, one of the group administrators accused Jon Lansman, director of Momentum, of making the video to “further his Zionist agenda” and called him a “Zionist snake”. Other comments in the group argued that “the truth is we are controlled globally by the Zionists” and that “One does have to wonder why there are



view, be allowed to use antisemitic language without being criticised for doing so. The video

75 <https://twitter.com/PeoplesMomentum/status/1060490942870966272>

76 <https://twitter.com/PeoplesMomentum/status/1066404253525307392>

77 <https://labourlist.org/2018/11/why-momentum-joined-the-jewish-labour-movement-to-protest-against-david-icke/>



so many Jewish people in the media and in politics".<sup>78</sup> The anti-fascist group Hope Not Hate attended Icke's talk in Watford and reported that an audience of hundreds of people watched as "An image of the billionaire philanthropist George Soros (who is of Jewish heritage), depicted as a fiery demon with reptile eyes, was displayed on screen next to images of refugees and of the Arab Spring. Another image depicted Soros as a controlling puppet master, and another alleged that 'Rothschild Zionism' was a constituent part of a supposed ring of global manipulators. In indulging in such tropes, Icke is echoing a longstanding tradition of conspiratorial antisemitism that has portrayed Jews as dictating world events, pushing globalism and mass immigration to undermine white populations. In the modern era Soros has become the focus of numerous conspiracy theories, many of which are patently antisemitic."<sup>79</sup>

## Elections and opinion polls

<sup>78</sup> <https://twitter.com/supergutman/status/1066468812642533377> and subsequent thread

<sup>79</sup> <https://www.hopenothate.org.uk/2018/11/26/inside-david-ickes-watford-talk/>

The ongoing controversy over alleged antisemitism in the Labour Party appeared to have a negative impact on the party's performance in Barnet in the council elections in May 2018. Barnet is the UK borough with the largest Jewish population by size and proportion: just over 15 per cent of the population of Barnet declared themselves to be Jewish in the 2011 census, while the borough included six of the top ten wards with the largest Jewish populations in England and Wales. Barnet council was in no overall control prior to the 2018 local elections (but had previously been held by the Conservatives), and was one of Labour's top targets to win in London. However, despite Barnet being a key target for Labour, they failed to take a single seat from the Conservatives while the Tories took six from Labour and won back overall control of the council. Labour's vote share dropped in the six Barnet wards with the largest Jewish populations (by proportion), despite their vote share increasing in the borough as a whole. The leader of the Labour group on Barnet council, Barry Rawlings, wrote afterwards that he was certain that Labour's record on antisemitism had played a decisive role: "I will always believe that if the evidence of antisemitism in the party had been dealt with as it should have been over the last two years, Barnet would have a Labour council this weekend. What happened instead was an election day phenomenon that I never want to experience again. Jewish residents voted in protest against Labour. In Golders Green, which has a large Jewish population, turnout was above 70% compared with below 40% in other polling districts. Non-Jewish residents voted against us in solidarity with their Jewish friends, neighbours and loved ones. We are a community, after all. Hundreds of our own supporters, even members, told us that this time they couldn't bring themselves to vote Labour."<sup>80</sup> One of the defeated Labour councillors in Barnet, Adam Langleben, said that the issue of antisemitism had repeatedly come up on the doorstep during the campaign: "Every Jewish Labour

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/may/05/barnet-paid-price-for-labour-record-on-antisemitism>

household we visited, people said, 'Not this time.' Activists were being told 'this is a racist party, an antisemitic party', doors were slammed in their faces. We, as Jewish Labour activists, were told we were endorsing antisemitism. The reason we have lost here is the inability to deal with this issue and to tackle antisemitism."<sup>81</sup> In Greater Manchester, Labour lost Kersal ward in Salford, which has the largest proportion of Jewish residents of any ward in the country at 41 per cent of the population, with Labour's vote share dropping by 22 per cent compared to 2014. They also lost Pilkington Park ward in Bury, where 24 per cent of the population is Jewish, but held Sedgley ward where 33 per cent of the population is Jewish. After the election, Labour's shadow communities spokesman Andrew Gwynne MP acknowledged that concerns about antisemitism had probably played a role in some results, pledging: *"It's my job as Labour's shadow communities secretary to help to rebuild that trust with the Jewish community, because there are so many people that do share Labour's values, that do want to see a progressive left of centre government, supported by a progressive left of centre group of councillors at a local level. We've got a job to do and that means we have to tackle the issue of antisemitism."*<sup>82</sup>

Two opinion polls published in September 2018 revealed the extent to which concerns about antisemitism in Labour, and media coverage of those concerns, had affected attitudes amongst British Jews and in the British population as a whole. A survey by Survation found that the general public viewed Labour as having a higher level of antisemitism amongst its members and elected representatives than any other party. In the poll, 26 per cent of people said that high levels of antisemitism were present amongst Labour Party members and elected representatives, compared to 20 per cent for UKIP members and representatives; eight per cent for Conservative members and

representatives; and five per cent for Liberal Democrat members and representatives. In addition, 39 per cent of the general public felt that Jeremy Corbyn was personally antisemitic,



while 28 per cent said he was not antisemitic (the remainder answered "Don't know"). The same poll also asked about the other party leaders at that time, and found that 12 per cent of the public said Theresa May was antisemitic and 49 per cent said she was not; ten per cent thought Vince Cable was antisemitic and 38 per cent said he was not; and 13 per cent thought Gerard Batten, the then UKIP leader, was antisemitic, while 18 per cent did not (69 per cent did not have an opinion about Batten, a much larger proportion than for the other three party leaders in the poll).<sup>83</sup> A different poll conducted by Survation at around the same time asked the same set of questions just of Jewish respondents. This poll found that 66 per cent of British Jews felt that there was a high level of antisemitism amongst Labour Party members and elected representatives, compared to 25 per cent for UKIP; five per cent for the Liberal Democrats; and two per cent for the Conservatives. The poll also found that an overwhelming 86 per cent of British Jews thought that Jeremy Corbyn was personally antisemitic, while eight per cent felt he was not. Just two per cent felt that Theresa May was antisemitic, while 90 per cent said she was not; six per cent felt Vince Cable was antisemitic, while 55 per cent said he was not; and 15 per

<sup>81</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/may/04/labour-antisemitism-scandal-blamed-for-tory-win-in-barnet>

<sup>82</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/labour-north-london-barnet-jewish-votes-antisemitism-jeremy-corbyn-ken-livingstone-a8335836.html>

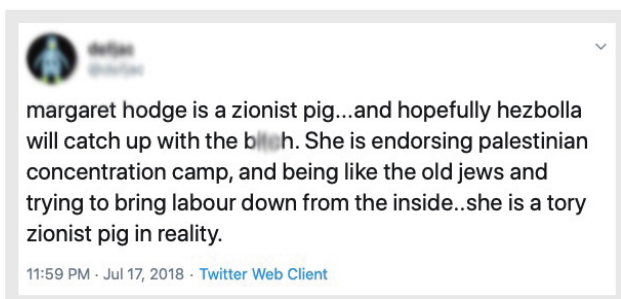
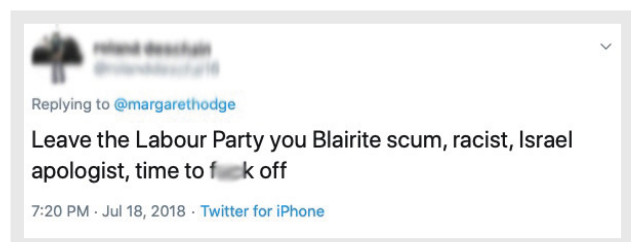
<sup>83</sup> <https://www.surveation.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Final-Tables-Anti-Semitism-Questions-1.pdf>



cent said Gerard Batten was antisemitic while 16 per cent said he was not (again, 68 per cent of respondents in this poll said they did not have a view about Batten).<sup>84</sup>

### Social media abuse of MPs

One consequence of the heated and fractious debate over antisemitism in Labour was a stream of online abuse directed at Labour MPs who criticised the party or Corbyn's performance on the issue. This affected Jewish and non-Jewish MPs, but appeared to be particularly acute when directed at female MPs. For example, in the seven days following Margaret Hodge MP's argument with Jeremy Corbyn on 17 July over the Labour NEC's decision not to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism, and the announcement the following day that Labour intended to open disciplinary proceedings against Hodge as a result, CST measured 157,000 online mentions of Hodge (an increase of 1450 per cent from the previous week), involving 35,000 unique online authors, across all websites and social media platforms. These include positive, negative and neutral mentions and indicate the scale of attention the story attracted. This included a large number of tweets that used antisemitic, misogynistic or otherwise abusive language, such as the following:



<sup>84</sup> <https://www.surveon.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/JC-Combined-Tables.pdf>

## ANTISEMITISM AND OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES

The Conservative Party and the Scottish National Party both had to address alleged antisemitic comments by party members in 2018, while the Conservatives were also criticised for their support of the Hungarian government in a vote at the European Parliament.

### Conservative candidate suspended

George Stoakley, a Conservative council candidate running in Fenn Ditton and Fulbourn in South East Cambridgeshire, was suspended by his party after tweets from 2013 came to light that included antisemitic and other offensive comments. One tweet read *"Sweating like Jew in an Attic"*, which appeared to be a reference to Anne Frank.<sup>85</sup> Stoakley had also tweeted offensive comments about HIV/Aids and about pregnant teenagers. Although the Conservatives suspended him, this occurred too close to election day for his name to be removed from ballot papers and he received 810 votes, coming sixth out of 11 candidates (in a ward in which three council seats were up for election).

### SNP blogger expelled for Hitler comparison

The Scottish National Party expelled a party member who was accused of writing an antisemitic post on his personal blog about Rhea Wolfson, a Jewish Labour Party activist and GMB trades union official. In October 2018, Gareth Wardell wrote a blog post about Wolfson's role in a strike over equal pay for women in Glasgow that was organised by the GMB and Unison trades unions. Wardell's blog defended the record of the SNP-run Glasgow City Council against the GMB, which he described as *"a Cockney clique that thinks Scotland should be North England in every respect"* and *"another wing of the campaign to Bring Back the Great British Empire."* The post described Wolfson as a *"budding demagogue"* before comparing her alleged behaviour to

Hitler's attitude to trades unions. In a section titled *"Hitler's View"*, Wardell wrote: *"Fascist ideology hates unions. Fascists know unions are the very bedrock of democracy... In Part 1 of Mein Kampf Hitler attacks unions over an [sic] over again. Unions are fascism's Public Enemy Number 1. He went further. He accused 'The Jew' of gradually assuming leadership of the trade union movement. Hitler wanted a blindly obedient fighting force loyal only to the national leader of government. Whether or not Wolfson is intellectually aware of Hitler's outlook is unknown but she certainly knows how to make the most of it, however, Labour's travails over its alleged anti-Semitism isn't for this essay."*<sup>86</sup> The post was shared on social media by the SNP Edinburgh East and Livingston East branches, and by the SNP's West Lothian councillor Frank Anderson.

On the day that the post was published, Wolfson tweeted that *"this morning I've woken up to an 'article' abt the women's strike that cites Hitler. It is about my role in strike and has all the usual stuff but goes on to discuss Hitler + trade unions... This article brings home (literally) the challenge we face globally right now and the obligation the left has to root out all anti-semitism in order not to facilitate far right fascism."*<sup>87</sup> The Scottish Labour Party and the GMB union both lodged complaints with SNP First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, and the SNP quickly condemned the post and the decision by other SNP members to share it, apologising to Wolfson. Wardell was suspended by the SNP two days after publishing his post and expelled from the party a month later. Wardell denied that the post was antisemitic and claimed that he could not be antisemitic as he was *"brought up in a Jewish family"*. He also edited the post, removing the reference to Hitler warning against *"the Jew"... assuming leadership of the trade union movement"*, and adding a line

85 <https://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/news/local-news/fen-stoakley-jew-jokes-cambridgeshire-14615234>

86 <https://web.archive.org/web/20181028181512/https://grousebeater.wordpress.com/2018/10/28/gmb-a-cockney-clique/>

87 <https://twitter.com/rheawolfson/status/1056490793609977857>

## Conservative support for Hungarian government

The Conservative Party was widely criticised after it supported the Hungarian government in a European Parliament vote to instigate disciplinary proceedings against Hungary. While the vote was in response to allegations that the Hungarian government has undermined democracy and the rule of law, much of the criticism of the Conservatives' vote drew on wider concerns about allegedly antisemitic rhetoric from the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his governing party, Fidesz. These concerns revolved largely around their attitude towards the Jewish Hungarian philanthropist George Soros, who funds a wide range of liberal campaigns and organisations in Hungary and other countries. In April 2018, the Board of Deputies of British Jews had expressed their concern about "worrying antisemitic undertones in the relentless campaign that Fidesz waged against George Soros" during the Hungarian elections. In particular, the Board of Deputies drew attention to a speech by Orbán in which he had said: "We are fighting an enemy that is different from us. Not open, but hiding. Not straightforward, but crafty. Not honest, but base. They are not national, but international; they do not believe in work, but speculate with money; they have no homeland, but feel that the whole world is theirs." The Board of Deputies claimed that this speech by Orbán "described his opponents in terms that reflect classic anti-Jewish tropes".<sup>90</sup>

Conservative MEPs sit in a European Parliament group with Fidesz MEPs and voted against the European Parliament motion to censure the Hungarian government, even though most other centre-right parties and MEPs voted for the motion. Some Conservative MEPs explained that they voted against the motion because they felt the European Parliament was setting a dangerous precedent by voting to discipline a member state for its domestic policies. However, Conservative peer Lord



commending Wolfson for being "commendably assiduous in condemning anti-Semitism in the Labour Party".<sup>88</sup> After his expulsion, Wardell published a supportive letter signed by over 60 self-described "bloggers and other influencers in the campaign for Scottish independence" condemning his expulsion. The letter stated that Wardell did not know Wolfson was Jewish at the time he wrote the post and denied that it was antisemitic, claiming that "his words were deliberately and opportunistically taken out of context and weaponised against him and the entire movement in a concerted attack by the union, members of the Scottish Labour Party – to which the GMB is affiliated, and elements of the anti-independence tabloid press... This decision undermines freedom of expression within the party and the movement".<sup>89</sup>

<sup>88</sup> <https://grousebeater.wordpress.com/2018/10/28/gmb-a-cockney-clique/>

<sup>89</sup> <https://grousebeater.wordpress.com/2018/11/28/a-heinous-crime/>

<sup>90</sup> <https://www.bod.org.uk/concern-at-campaign-messages-of-hungarian-election-winner-orban/>

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán  
Credit European People's Party



Finkelstein called the decision “*shameful*” and “*a very distressing moment*” which he called on Conservative MEPs to reconsider.<sup>91</sup> The Board of Deputies President Marie van der Zyl “*noted with disappointment*” the vote “*in defence of Hungary’s far right government*” in the light of what she called “*the vivid antisemitism in the relentless campaign against Jewish philanthropist George Soros*” and other anti-migrant and anti-Muslim rhetoric used by Orbán. She concluded: “*It is very concerning that the Conservative Party MEPs chose to defend Hungary’s appalling track record, rather than supporting this motion to protect the rule of law.*”<sup>92</sup> Michael Gove MP, the then Conservative Environment Secretary, defended the decision of Conservative MEPs to vote against the motion on the grounds that it is a “*long standing principle*” that the EU should not “*interfere in or censure the internal democracy of a particular country*”, and insisted that it was not a vote in support of Orbán personally. Gove refused to comment directly on allegations of antisemitism or racism against Orbán, saying “*I am not going to be drawn on my views about individual European leaders*”.<sup>93</sup>

91 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-politics-45522597/lord-finkelstein-on-uk-conservatives-role-in-hungary-vote>

92 <https://www.bod.org.uk/board-of-deputies-disappointment-at-conservative-meps-defence-of-far-right-hungarian-government/>

93 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-45540540>



# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES ON ANTISEMITISM

In a sign of the growing prominence of antisemitism as a national and political issue in Britain, both Houses of Parliament held debates on antisemitism in 2018. This section will contain extracts from some of the speeches made in those debates.

## House of Commons debate on antisemitism, 17 April 2018<sup>94</sup>

**Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (Conservative)**

*"This is the first general debate on anti-Semitism that we have had in this House. This is an issue that should concern not just the Jewish community, but all communities on both sides of the House. I think I speak for all of us in not wanting this to be an issue that we have to grapple with in the next decade... I believe that the task before us today is more important than just discussing policy solutions. What we need to achieve today is to show the Jewish community in our country, and indeed those who may be watching abroad, that we do get it, that both sides of this House stand united in recognising the pernicious prejudice of anti-Semitism and in recognising the anxiety that is felt within the community here in Britain in 2018, and that we are listening to their concerns carefully, with humility and determination... The British people are fundamentally decent and tolerant, as are the vast majority of those who are engaged in political activism. The reality is that these tropes did not appear overnight, but now that this brand of hatred has emerged from its dark underbellies, we have an opportunity to focus our minds and defeat it. It is my hope that today will be a milestone, when MPs from all parties put down a marker in this place, in Hansard ink, that enough is enough."*

**Andrew Gwynne MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (Labour)**

*"As politicians, we all—and I mean all—have a duty to root out anti-Semitism, but recent events have shown that we in the Labour party need to be better at policing our own borders. The Labour party was formed to change society and to give a voice to the oppressed. Reflecting the existing defects of society can never be enough. It is our responsibility to show that we have zero tolerance of anti-Semitism in the Labour party. There is no place for anti-Semitism in the Labour party, on the left of British politics or in British society at all... No political party has a monopoly on vice or virtue, but we will put our house in order. Let me be clear today that if anyone is denying the reality of anti-Semitism on the left, they are not doing so with the endorsement of the Labour party or its leader."*

**Stuart McDonald MP (Scottish National Party)**

*"It is worth reflecting on the history of the Jewish community in Scotland... Glasgow's Jewish community—and Scotland's—have been a precious part of our history, and they deserve to be a precious part of our future as well, because they are a people who have been hunted to the four corners of the world for centuries. All of us in this Chamber this afternoon feel horror and shame that they still feel like a people hunted across the world, the consequences of which, of course, led to some of the darkest moments in our history... It is rather depressing that we cannot debate anti-Semitism these days without coming to the issue of Israel and Palestine. When that conflict escalates, as it does over time, it is unacceptable to expect Jewish people in this country to shoulder any responsibility for that escalation. I do not hold the Muslim community responsible for the crimes of Muslim Governments across the world, so I will not allow anybody to hold responsible Jewish people in my constituency or elsewhere for the actions of the Government of Israel."*

<sup>94</sup> <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2018-04-17/debates/9D70B2B4-39D7-4241-ACF8-13F7DFD8AEB2/Anti-Semitism>

**Robert Halfon MP (Conservative)**

*"At best, it used to be acceptable to use the fig leaf of 'Zionist' or 'Israelite' as a cloak for anti-Semitism. Now, anti-Semitism has got so bad that the people who hate the Jews do not even use those terms any more. Anti-Semitism is out in its naked viciousness for everyone to see. The air has grown tighter; you feel very hot, you undo a button on your shirt and your mouth goes dry. This is still a great country and a wonderful place for Jewish people, but things have changed. I always thought that this was the greatest country in the world. My father was an immigrant here, having escaped from pogroms in Libya, and I never imagined that one would feel the air tightening in this country."*

**Luciana Berger MP (Labour)**<sup>95</sup>

*"I was 19 when I received my first piece of hate mail—it described me as a dirty Zionist pig—and so started my 18-year experience of contending with anti-Semitism. As a university student and activist, I was attacked from all quarters from the far right to the far left... In total, four people have been convicted since 2013 for the anti-Semitic abuse and harassment they have directed towards me... There is currently one more person on remand, having made threats to my life because of my faith... I make no apology for holding my own party to a higher standard. Anti-racism is one of our central values, and*



*there was a time not long ago when the left actively confronted anti-Semitism... Yet, as I said in Parliament Square outside this place—it pains me to say this as the proud parliamentary chair of the Jewish Labour Movement—in 2018, anti-Semitism is now more commonplace, more conspicuous and more corrosive within the Labour party. That is why I have no words for the people purporting to be both members and supporters of our party and using the hashtag JCforPM who have attacked me in recent weeks for my comments, for speaking at the rally against anti-Semitism, and for questioning the remarks of those endorsing the anti-Semitic mural... There are people who have accused me of having two masters. They have said that I am Tel Aviv's servant, and called me a paid-up Israeli operative. Essentially, this is anti-Semitism of the worst kind, suggesting that I am a traitor to our country. They have called me Judas, a Zionist and an absolute parasite, and they have told me to get out of this country and go back to Israel... We have a duty to the next generation. Denial is not an option. Prevarication is not an option. Being a bystander who turns the other way is not an option. The time for action is now. Enough really is enough."*

**John Mann MP (Labour)**

*"I recall that Jewish people used to say when I held meetings, 'Is it true that there is a growth in anti-Semitism?' We identified 13 years ago the three forms of anti-Semitism: Islamist anti-Semitism, traditional right anti-Semitism, and the anti-Semitism of the new left. That was all documented and has all been discussed in here. It is not new, and those who say that it is a smear to raise this issue need to publicly apologise and to publicly understand what they are doing, what they are saying and the dangers. It does not end with me and my family. It does not end with Jewish Members of Parliament here. Where this stuff ends is with what happened in Copenhagen, in Brussels and in France repeatedly, including four weeks ago: people murdered because they are Jewish. That is where this ends, and we know where history takes that. That is the reality now."*

<sup>95</sup> Luciana Berger has since left the Labour Party and at the time of writing is a Liberal Democrat MP

**Ruth Smeeth MP (Labour)**

*"Today I find myself in the bizarre position of feeling obliged to state for the record that my entry in the Register of Members' Financial Interests is in fact accurate and that I have not failed to report any additional employment. Specifically, Madam Deputy Speaker, I feel I must inform you that I am not a CIA spy. I am not a Mossad agent, nor am I an MI5 operative. I can assure people who are occasionally foolish enough to google me—although I would urge Members not to; it can be unpleasant reading—that I work not for the people of Tel Aviv, but for the people of Tunstall. Those are just some of the regular anti-Semitic tropes that have become normal in my world... I have experienced something genuinely painful: attacks on my identity from within my own Labour family. I have been the target of a campaign of abuse, attempted bullying and intimidation from people who would dare to tell me that people like me have no place in the party of which I have been a member for over 20 years, and which I am proud to represent on these Benches... But this is not the worst of it. There have always been racists and anti-Semites in our country, lurking on the fringes of our society—both left and right—and I dare say there always will be. What is so heartbreaking is the concerted effort in some quarters to downplay the problem... There is something more fundamental at stake here than any party's policy platform or electoral performance: the right of Jewish people to participate in the politics of our country as equals."*

**Priti Patel MP (Conservative)**

*"It is appalling that, in the 21st century, we are having to discuss the growing tide of anti-Semitism in the United Kingdom. I say this as the daughter of migrants who fled persecution and hate; it is appalling, and anyone who has endured hate crime or been on the receiving end of abusive comments about their religion, their culture, the colour of their skin or their heritage will know just how disgusting and hurtful those comments can be. Many, including myself, had hoped that the attitudes of the past would have disappeared by now, and that we*

*would never see them repeated, yet they feature prominently in our society and our politics today. I hoped that we would have become much more respectful and tolerant as a society."*

**Ian Austin (Labour)<sup>96</sup>**

*"Last week I was in Poland, where I met another holocaust survivor who had been in Auschwitz and is now in his 90s. The first words he said to me when he learned that I was a Labour MP were, 'Are you not ashamed to be in the Labour party, with all the anti-Semitism?' The truth is that I am deeply ashamed that our party has caused so much distress to Jewish people. We have witnessed appalling anti-Semitic claims. We have seen Labour candidates denying the holocaust... The problem with the hard left is that some of them believe they are so virtuous—they have fought racism all their lives so how can they possibly be guilty? That is why they say that this has been whipped up or weaponised. But do they not understand how offensive it is to victims of anti-Semitism when they are told that they are inventing these complaints? Why do they get angry with the people complaining about racism instead of the people responsible for it?"*

**Alistair Carmichael (Liberal Democrat)**

*"In truth, this is something that affects us across the political divides, because as political parties, we are reflective of the society in which we live. I confess freely that I have been on something of a journey. When I was first confronted with the spectre of anti-Semitism in our society and in my own party, I was too quick to excuse it, because frankly I could not believe that it could be a feature of otherwise sensible, rational people. I now realise that it is. We find all around us so much casual anti-Semitism—the clichés, the stereotypes and the references even to 'these people'. I now find myself in a position where, when I do see it, I am not prepared to be forgiving in any way, shape or form. It is incumbent on us all who reject it to call it out when we see it."*

<sup>96</sup> Ian Austin has since left the Labour Party and at the time of writing is an Independent MP.

## House of Lords debate on antisemitism, 13 September 2018<sup>97</sup>

### Lord Popat (Conservative)

*"For me, this is personal. As a member of the British Hindu community, I understand the pain that prejudice brings. My family and I came to this country from Uganda more than 45 years ago to escape the brutal dictator Idi Amin. We were welcomed by this country, and the Jewish community was at the forefront in helping us to settle in the part of north London where I live today. For us, the Jews were a positive example of what immigrants can achieve by integrating fully into society. In them, we saw people who not only survived horrific persecution but thrived despite it... Jews have long felt safe in this country. Regardless of what was happening elsewhere in the world, here in the UK—like us—they felt at home... In the last couple of years, with anti-Semitism on the rise in France, Hungary and other parts of Europe, many Jews expressed relief that they were living here and not elsewhere. Even a growth in recorded anti-Semitic incidents in the UK did not dampen the Jewish community's feeling that they were fundamentally protected by UK values, laws and institutions. So when my Jewish friends say that they fear for their children's safety in schools, synagogues and universities; when they are afraid of openly identifying as Jewish, and when they start to question their future in this country, the rest of us have a duty first to listen and then to ask: 'How has it come to this? Why has it come to this?' And, most importantly, 'What are we going to do about it?'"*

### Lord Mendelsohn (Labour)

*"I have always felt that the acts of solidarity and the breadth of the coalition against such manifestations of anti-Semitism have demonstrated the very best of Britain. In the 1980s, I felt what others had felt before, not just the conditionality of the far left—not of the Labour party but the far left—but its movement to embrace aspects of anti-Semitism. I felt it on campus, with the banning of Jewish societies and*

*even with the actions, in 1994, of some student activists who bombed a Jewish community centre in north London—an act which singlehandedly transformed the view of the security of this community... How to solve this? It is hard to be positive. The leader of my party needs to reflect carefully on this. The deniers, those who seek to try and throw Israel and the Palestinians up as a smokescreen, who whip up unrelenting hostility and target those who show the noblest instincts of fighting for their legitimate rights or for acts of solidarity—may they be shamed by their indifference and understand that they are no more than perpetrators themselves."*

### Lord Palmer (Liberal Democrat)

*"Anti-Semites must not be able to hide their hatred of Jews. The vile outpourings of anti-Semites on Facebook and Twitter and on other social media must be stopped, and if the service providers do not stop them they should be made to do so by statutory means. Service providers should suffer significant fines if they allow anti-Semitic vitriol to go unchecked. To allow expressions of anti-Semitism on social media, on our streets or in any other public place must be made legally unacceptable."*

### Lord Sacks (Crossbench)

*"The greatest danger any civilisation faces is when it suffers collective amnesia. We forget how small beginnings lead to truly terrible endings. A thousand years of Jewish history in Europe added certain words to the human vocabulary: forced conversion, inquisition, expulsion, ghetto, pogrom, Holocaust. They happened because hate went unchecked. No one said stop... Anti-Semitism, or any hate, becomes dangerous when*



<sup>97</sup> <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2018-09-13/debates/51BBA437-4683-4341-9469-1978445FB343/Anti-Semitism>



three things happen. First, when it moves from the fringes of politics to a mainstream party and its leadership. Secondly, when the party sees that its popularity with the general public is not harmed thereby. Thirdly, when those who stand up and protest are vilified and abused for doing so. All three factors exist in Britain now. I never thought I would see this in my lifetime. That is why I cannot stay silent. For it is not only Jews who are at risk—so too is our humanity.”

#### **The Lord Bishop of Birmingham**

“My Lords, as we have heard, there is a need for constant vigilance to ensure that anti-Semitism plays no part in the life of our country. To continue its determination in this aim, the College of Bishops of the Church of England, building on 75 years of friendship marked by the founding of the Council of Christians and Jews, has adopted and adhered to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s working definition of anti-Semitism, including all examples without qualification or exception. This is in the context of our conviction, which I trust will be affirmed today by Her Majesty’s Government, that anyone involved in political, spiritual or national life should reject all language and activity that leads to prejudice, stigma or hatred towards people on the grounds of their religion, culture, origins, identity or beliefs.”

#### **Lord Pickles (Conservative)**

“I am the UK delegation leader for the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. I was part of the team that persuaded the IHRA to accept this definition. It was necessary because anti-Semitism in all its forms is growing right across Europe; it has been accelerated by the growth of ultra-nationalism and its marriage to social media. It is also necessary because of the way that anti-Semitism has changed and adapted. In particular, it now hides behind, for example, criticism of Israel or support for Palestinian rights. It is less obviously hidden by attacks on Zionism. The repackaging of these old anti-Semitic tropes is perhaps the most horrible aspect of this. Even the blood libel has been repackaged and reworked for

a modern audience. It is all designed to make Jewish citizens feel uncomfortable... We have seen in Europe what happens when the Jewish community is taken out of a country and seeks to migrate elsewhere: the very heart of that country is removed. I certainly believe that the Jewish identity is a fundamental part of the British identity. Without a vibrant Jewish community, this country would be a lesser place. As my noble friend said: enough is enough. Let us stand by our Jewish friends.”

#### **Lord Beecham (Labour)**

“It is deeply disappointing that this appalling manifestation of racism should still be with us, especially in the light of the dreadful history of the 20th century. It is especially troubling that there are people who are in denial about the problem, with some people in the party that I joined 58 years ago refusing to accept that it exists, even when Jeremy Corbyn has, belatedly, recognised it and pledged to eliminate it. Let us be clear that this is not just a matter for the Labour Party. All three major parties have encountered the problem to some degree. But there has for some time been a rise in the number of anti-Semitic incidents, including violence and vandalism, and latterly a tidal wave of vile abuse and threats through social media—perhaps in this area it is better labelled anti-social media—to which Jewish Labour MPs, particularly women, have been subjected... Two areas require urgent attention. The first is the problem of social media and the failure of the industry to tackle misuse. The second is the need to do more to promote the concept of a tolerant, multi-ethnic society through our education system, starting from a young age.”

## GEORGE SOROS, BREXIT AND ANTISEMITISM

*The Daily Telegraph* published a feature about George Soros that was accused of endorsing antisemitic tropes. The article was co-authored by Nick Timothy, the former joint Chief of Staff to then Prime Minister Theresa May. This feature provoked a range of commentary from people on the left and right of the political spectrum, while Nick Timothy vehemently rejected the notion that the article might have encouraged antisemitism.

### *Daily Telegraph: Soros “accused of toppling governments”*

The front-page feature was headlined “George Soros, the man who ‘broke the Bank of England’, backing secret plot to thwart Brexit”. It identified Soros as “one of three senior figures linked to the Remain-supporting campaign group Best for Britain”, which it claimed intended to campaign for a second referendum and against the Brexit deal that PM Theresa May was negotiating at that time. The report went into detail about Best for Britain’s campaigning activities, revealed that Soros had donated £400,000 to Best for Britain and claimed he had entertained Conservative donors to encourage them to contribute. The article noted that Soros had “made over £1 billion betting against the pound shortly before the UK withdrew from the European Exchange Rate Mechanism” in 1992; more controversially, it described Soros as having “been accused of organizing rallies against Donald Trump in the US and interfering in the democracies of several European nations.” An additional biographical profile of Soros, which Timothy did not write,

noted his extensive philanthropy via the Open Society Foundation (OSF), and then repeated several of the allegations against Soros that originate with authoritarian governments in Eastern Europe; including that “he stands accused by many governments around the world of meddling in their internal affairs through the OSF... is accused of toppling governments in Georgia and Ukraine” and cited criticisms of Soros and OSF from the governments of Hungary, Poland and Romania. The article did not explicitly identify Soros as Jewish, describing him as a “Hungarian-American [who] survived Nazi occupation and then fled Communism.” This biographical profile was later changed by the Telegraph, replacing several of these allegations with a description of him as a “high profile campaigner for liberal values around the world”, whose foundations in Eastern Europe “have campaigned for democracy to be respected and drawn attention to the authoritarian behaviour of several governments. This has led to him being personally targeted – in particular by the Hungarian government, which he has said is an anti-semitic attack... However Viktor Orban, the Hungarian prime minister, continues to accuse Soros of seeking to undermine his Government – by opposing his anti-immigrant policies – and the issue is the central theme of his re-election campaign. Soros’ organisations are banned in several countries. Soros has found himself at the centre of similar controversy in the US where he has also been targeted by the Alt-right after speaking out against the Trump administration.”<sup>98</sup>

The article became the subject of widespread debate over whether it echoed, however unintentionally, antisemitic tropes about Jewish financiers trying to manipulate national governments. Rafael Behr, in *The Guardian*, wrote: “These days you are never more than a couple of clicks away from weapons-grade



98 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2018/02/07/george-soros-man-broke-bank-england-backing-secret-plot-thwart/>; <https://twitter.com/Birdyword/status/961366164273352705/photo/1>

antisemitism. But it still comes as a shock when one of the oldest and most versatile themes of the genre – the Jewish financier, dandling politicians on puppet strings, coordinating events in the shadows – finds its way on to the front page of a national British newspaper. To be clear: I am not charging any individuals at The Daily Telegraph with willingly promoting hatred of Jews or writing with that agenda in mind...” but, he argued, the Telegraph should have been “sufficiently literate in European history and attentive to what has been going on in the rest of the world to understand the wider cultural context of this material... a modicum of cultural awareness and a glancing acquaintance with old Jew-hatred and its modern iterations would have alerted a half-decent editor to the signal being sent by that front page. In case there is no such person at the Telegraph to decrypt that signal let me spell it out for them. It was this: shadowy Jew-financier conspires against Britain. That might not seem obvious to many readers. It might even sound a little paranoid. But I am very confident that two audiences understood it instantly and very clearly in exactly those terms. One was antisemites, the other was Jews.”<sup>99</sup>

Stephen Bush in the *New Statesman* accused the Telegraph of endorsing antisemitic attacks on Soros by undemocratic governments in Eastern Europe: “The reason that many find the Telegraph’s treatment so disturbing is that Soros, who is Jewish, has been at the centre of a series of anti-Semitic conspiracies by the increasingly authoritarian governments in Poland, Hungary and Turkey – and the paper has seen fit to uncritically repeat those accusations.”<sup>100</sup>

Nick Timothy strongly denied that the article was antisemitic. He tweeted: “Throughout my career I’ve campaigned against anti-Semitism, helped secure more funding for security at synagogues and Jewish schools, fought to lift the cap on faith schools, and supported Israel. The accusations and insinuations against me

are as absurd as they are offensive.” He was supported by Conservative peer Lord Pickles, the UK Special Envoy for post-Holocaust issues, who tweeted: “@NickJTimothy @Telegraph we have known each other for a good years, we were on opposite sides during the EU referendum, the idea that you would endorse Antisemitism views is ludicrous. You are a consistent friend of Israel. Nasty smears add nothing to arguments.”<sup>101</sup>

Conservative MP Robert Halfon (who is Jewish) also supported Timothy, tweeting: “How incredibly absurd. Article by @NickJTimothy re V. well- funded ‘Remain’ organisations trying to thwart Brexit, turns 2accusations he’s antisemitic! All more crazy as N Timothy is pro-Israel. As a remain voter - & Jewish - nonsense like this, makes me much more pro Brexit.”<sup>102</sup>



Conservative peer Lord Finkelstein, writing in *The Times*, tried to see both sides of the argument. He first acknowledged that “The Daily Telegraph, and the prime minister’s former adviser Nick Timothy, appear to be bewildered by suggestions that there might have been a hint of antisemitism in their recent front page article” and declared that “Mr Timothy is, in my experience, the opposite of antisemitic.” However, he also asked: “when right-wing populist governments in Hungary and Poland select as their public enemy George Soros, a Jewish financial speculator, and accuse him of being the puppeteer behind a conspiracy to

99 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/feb/08/brexit-antisemitic-dog-whistle-daily-telegraph-george-soros>

100 <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/staggers/2018/02/nick-timothy-telegraph-george-soros-anti-semitic>

101 [https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/nick-timothy-hits-back-at-anti-semitism-accusation-over-george-soros-anti-brexit-story\\_uk\\_5a7c0ae2e4b08dfc93001c39](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/nick-timothy-hits-back-at-anti-semitism-accusation-over-george-soros-anti-brexit-story_uk_5a7c0ae2e4b08dfc93001c39)

102 <https://twitter.com/halfon4harlowMP/status/961533037853986821>

*undermine their democracy, is it surprising that Jews are nervous about what is unfolding? Or that Jews should be concerned about any hint that such a campaign could be exported to Britain from countries where antisemitism has been historically so strong?... George Soros isn't a puppet master, and his 'plot' isn't secret. He's just a rich guy paying for some leaflets about Brexit. The politics of conspiracy are dangerous and, if allowed to spread, they will suffocate us all. The Jews are just the canary in the coal mine."*<sup>103</sup>

### Nigel Farage and Leave.EU

Nigel Farage also picked up the theme of Soros' alleged role in anti-Brexit campaigning in 2018, and did so using language that could be interpreted as echoing similar antisemitic tropes. Speaking at the Conservative Political Action Conference in the United States, he encouraged the audience to boo the name of George Soros before claiming that Soros *"is attempting to intervene and disrupt in every single election and cause and campaign that is taking place across the Western world. These people don't believe, people like Soros don't believe in the existence of the nation state. They don't believe as we believe, don't we, in basic patriotism and believing in who we are. They don't believe in national identity. They want us to live in a world with open borders."*<sup>104</sup> Speaking on his LBC radio show in August, Farage said: *"It's not the People's Vote, it's the George Soros vote!"*<sup>105</sup> The pro-Brexit Leave.EU campaign tweeted about George Soros several times in 2018, accusing him of providing *"filthy money"* to try to stop Brexit. One tweet read: *"Hungarian-born billionaire, George Soros is funding 'Best for Britain', a campaign whose aim is to overrule the British people and stop Brexit. We will not allow our democracy to be bought with Soros' filthy money!"*<sup>106</sup> Another claimed: *"Globalist billionaire George Soros pledges another £100,000 of his*

<sup>103</sup> <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/george-soros-and-the-roots-of-antisemitism-z63fhp6z6>

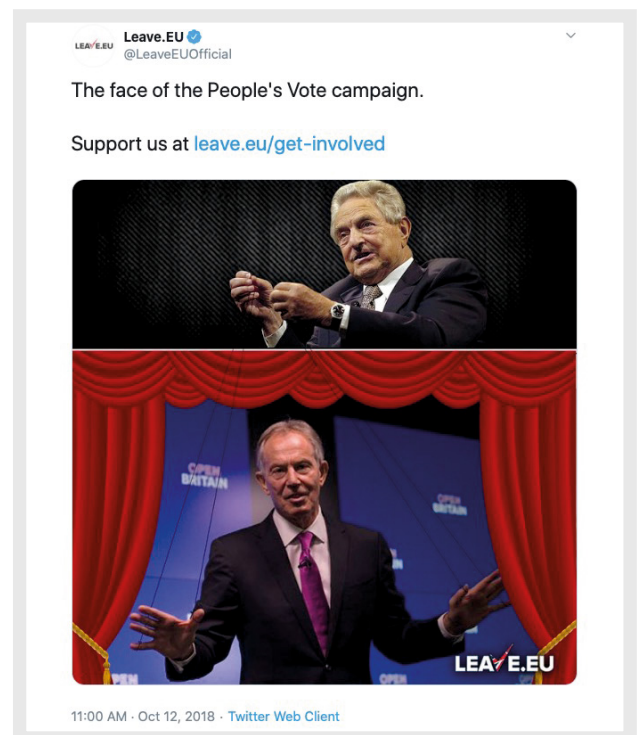
<sup>104</sup> <https://twitter.com/LeaveEUOfficial/status/967158112707858432>

<sup>105</sup> <https://twitter.com/LBC/status/1031986271948865536>

<sup>106</sup> <https://twitter.com/LeaveEUOfficial/status/999600526621859840>



*foreign money to overturn Brexit"*.<sup>107</sup> Another tweet depicted Soros as a puppeteer, pulling the strings controlling former Prime Minister Tony Blair. The tweet bore the slogan: *"The face of the People's Vote campaign"*; a reference to the campaign for a second Brexit referendum.<sup>108</sup> The notion of Jewish financiers using their money to pull the strings of politicians, revealing them to be the real, but secret, power behind political events, is a long-standing antisemitic trope.



<sup>107</sup> <https://twitter.com/LeaveEUOfficial/status/962991143389671426>

<sup>108</sup> <https://twitter.com/LeaveEUOfficial/status/1050687525218643968>



# ANTISEMITISM ON UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES

Several allegations of antisemitism from university students and academics were raised in 2018, including alleged antisemitism in lectures, at social events and online.

## Antisemitism in online group chats

Several antisemitic messages were revealed to have been sent by students in a Manchester University first year physics Facebook group chat. The messages started when one student asked whether the other students would rather become an engineer or “Become a neo-Nazi”. The student followed it up with the comment, “Don’t be a Jew”. Another student then commented “6 million is not enough” and “6 million Jews ain’t enough”. Another student in the group objected, posting “could you stop with the nazism maybe now?... f\*\*\*\*\*g knock it off”. This led to an argument between the students posting the antisemitic comments and the student who had objected. There was a total of approximately 200 students in the group chat. Following the exposure of these messages, the University of Manchester issued a statement warning that “The University is a welcoming environment and we will not tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment. Allegations of this nature are thoroughly investigated and if appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken.” The university’s Jewish Society condemned the messages, and said: “We expect a robust and transparent investigation into this incident from the relevant faculty, who we call on to denounce this incident in the strongest possible terms. It is incumbent of all members of the student body to tackle anti-Semitism wherever it arises”.<sup>109</sup>

Eleven students at Warwick University were suspended following revelations in the university newspaper of a private online group chat that contained numerous racist, antisemitic and violently misogynistic comments. Most of the offensive comments were about raping female

students. One antisemitic and racist comment read “Love Hitler, hate n\*\*\*\*s and jews and Corbyn” and one of the group members had the username “Taxi Jew”.<sup>110</sup>

## NUS Executive Officer resigns

Ayo Olatunji resigned from the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the National Union of Students following complaints about allegedly antisemitic tweets he had made about “the Israel lobby” and comparing Israel to Nazi Germany. Olatunji was elected to the NEC in April 2018, having previously been the BME officer at University College London where he was a student. Olatunji had tweeted: “A labour MP was killed by a far right white supremacist and it is barely a talking point now. The Israel lobby has been seen to bully the U.K. media into changing headlines and focus, I believe it is happening right now with Jeremy Corbyn... the lobby has decided to come after him full force”. He had also tweeted that “there are many Nazi policies and principles that are embodied within Israel’s culture and policy making” and that comparing Israelis to the Nazis is “100% right”. He had previously apologised for a tweet in which he said “the Rothschild conspiracy” was the “only viable explanation people come across”.<sup>111</sup> Olatunji resigned from the NEC in September when he was due to face a motion of censure for his allegedly antisemitic comments. Following his resignation, NUS stated: “The National Union of Students believes that all forms of hate and prejudice are unacceptable. NUS will continue to engage with the Jewish students and the community to identify ways in which we can ensure our spaces are inclusive and accessible to all students. We will always strive to create a sector, organisation and movement that gives everyone the opportunity to learn, share ideas and lead without fear”.

110 <https://theboar.org/2018/05/warwick-students-temporarily-suspended/>

111 <https://thetab.com/uk/2018/08/22/the-union-of-jewish-students-have-accused-an-nus-committee-member-of-antisemitism-78538>; [https://twitter.com/ujs\\_pres/status/1032246984214806528](https://twitter.com/ujs_pres/status/1032246984214806528) and subsequent thread

109 <https://thetab.com/uk/manchester/2018/05/08/dont-be-a-jew-first-year-anti-semitic-physics-group-chat-exposed-34571>

The Union of Jewish Students welcomed his resignation and thanked those NUS members and officers who supported them, saying: *"We have been clear throughout this incident that antisemitism and Holocaust Inversion have absolutely no place in the student movement and neither do those who knowingly engage in it."*<sup>112</sup>

### Academics and antisemitism

Allegedly antisemitic comments from academics are less common than from students, but still occur and can have a more serious impact on the well-being and confidence of Jewish students who are taught by them. It should be stressed that such allegations are usually vehemently denied by those academics who are subjected to them.

Durham University's St Chad's College removed the title of honorary fellow from Stephen Pax Leonard, a linguist who had previously held fellowships at Oxford and Cambridge, following allegations that he had posted and liked tweets with antisemitic and anti-Muslim views. One allegedly antisemitic tweet read: *"With so few Jews it is extraordinary that the [Swedish] print media is largely owned and edited by Jewish families"*, while others targeted George Soros. Other tweets were staunchly anti-immigrant and one claimed that London Mayor Sadiq Khan wanted to make London *"a mecca for Muslims"*.<sup>113</sup> Leonard had been scheduled to speak at a conference of the far right Traditional Britain Group, but pulled out beforehand. Leonard strongly rejected any accusations of antisemitism or far right sympathies, saying: *"I am aware of recent accusations made against me by student activists claiming that I hold Far-Right, anti-semitic and Islamophobic views. I wish to rebut these libellous accusations which are absurd, totally unfounded and deeply upsetting... I reject the alt-right identitarian movement and abhor identity politics of any kind."*<sup>114</sup>

112 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/national-union-of-students-officer-resigns-before-censure-vote-on-tweets-comparing-israel-to-nazis-1.469856>

113 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/durham-university-drops-academic-stephen-pax-leonard-over-antisemitic-tweet-7g75z78bv>

114 <https://stephenpaxleonard.com/a-statement-by-dr-stephen-pax-leonard/>

A meeting organised by the former education officer for University College London Students Union on the subject of *"How to stand up against intimidation at campuses"* heard a lecture from a Bristol University professor who argued that Jewish students who say they *"feel unsafe"* have been *"schooled"* with *"propaganda"* by *"Israel lobby organisations"*. Professor David Miller, a Labour Party member who was briefly suspended for alleged antisemitism and then reinstated to the party, told the meeting that *"It's not Jewish students who feel unsafe, it's specific Jewish students who are part of a particular political tendency who are saying that they feel unsafe... it's propaganda which they have been schooled with... there are organisations, Israel lobby organisations, Zionist movement organisations, some allied to the Israeli government, who have devoted huge amounts of time to do messaging to working out how to combat, in particular, BDS."* Miller also discussed what he called *"the attack in particular on the Corbyn leadership of the Labour Party"* for which, he said, *"the weapon of choice has been antisemitism."* He then suggested that this is a deliberate campaign funded by the Israeli government: *"much of the attempt to paint the Labour party and especially Corbyn's supporters of the party as antisemitic has been pushed by pro-Israel groups in this country sometimes funded in this country, but sometimes also as we know from the al Jazeera documentary funded directly by Israelis from the million pound slush fund that they brag about."* Miller then directly addressed the question of how much antisemitism there is in the Labour Party, and claimed that *"most of the allegations of antisemitism in the labour party have been false."* He said: *"Let's be clear there is antisemitism in the labour party there are people who are actual antisemites very, very few of them, a much larger number of people who occasionally say things that might be seen to be potentially antisemitic by accident but...I admit that's true but by and large most of the allegations of antisemitism in the labour party have been false."* He described the IHRA definition of antisemitism as *"a politically motivated attempt to pushback pro-Palestinian*

activism” and said that Labour’s treatment of Ken Livingstone and expulsion of Tony Greenstein was “a disgrace”, saying: “I don’t think anything [Mr Livingstone] said was historically inaccurate.”<sup>115</sup>

<sup>115</sup> <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/shocking-comments-of-uk-academic-on-israel-and-antisemitism-at-a-palestinian-event-hosted-by-ucl-stu-1.472789>; <https://hurryupharry.org/2018/11/23/the-bristol-uni-professor-who-calls-out-parts-of-the-zionist-lobby/>

## ANTISEMITISM ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The prevalence and availability of antisemitic hate speech on social media was a recurring subject of media and political attention in 2018. While mainstream platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Google took measures to try to reduce the amount or prominence of hate speech, with varying degrees of success, in some cases extremists simply moved to new platforms to connect with each other and spread their views.

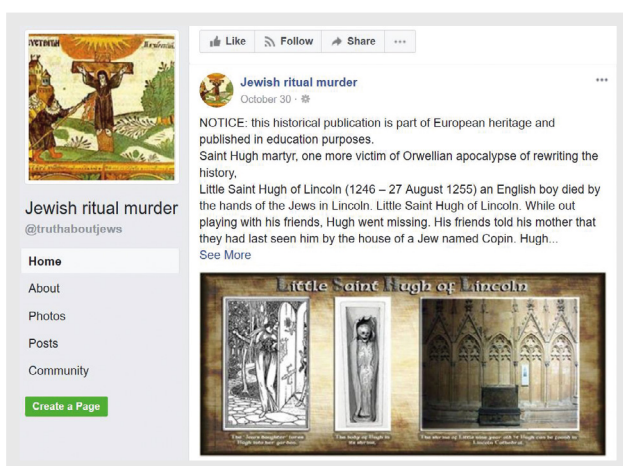
### Removing hate from mainstream platforms

Several mainstream social media platforms and other major websites, including Facebook, YouTube and Amazon, came under scrutiny for their approach to the removal of hate content on their sites. In January 2018 Facebook finally removed the long-standing and notoriously antisemitic page “Jewish Ritual Murder”, which had been the subject of complaints from Jewish

organisations in Europe and the United States (including CST) for several years. The page was removed after Facebook admitted that its moderators made the wrong decision in almost half the cases examined in an investigation by the non-profit organisation Propublica. Facebook apologised for the errors, saying: “We’re sorry for the mistakes we have made – they do not reflect the community we want to help build. We must do better.”<sup>116</sup> However, further research later in 2018 found that Facebook was still allowing antisemitic posts to remain on the platform despite being flagged as hateful or abusive. An investigation by *The Times* “found scores of examples of material designed to incite hatred and violence against Jews.” Some of the content was removed, but a post showing a Star of David with the text “the worst cancer I’ve ever seen” was allowed to remain.<sup>117</sup> Facebook’s attitude to Holocaust denial, which it does not consider to be antisemitic hate speech, drew particular criticism. Twenty-five Holocaust experts, survivors and heads of memorials and museums in six continents wrote an open letter to Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg, calling on him to change Facebook’s policy of allowing Holocaust denial on its platform. The latter supported Zuckerberg’s “desire to bolster freedom of speech”, but warned: “Facebook

<sup>116</sup> <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/facebook-fails-to-delete-hate-speech-and-racism-hwrzw0qzn>

<sup>117</sup> <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/antisemitic-hate-posts-including-holocaust-denial-allowed-by-facebook-7crdvw2x>



*must not allow complete and utter falsehoods about the Holocaust, and about the Jewish people, to go systematically unchecked. Virulent antisemitism is a proven pathway that leads from rhetorical hatred to actions of violence. Freedom of speech laws are not a reason to do nothing — inaction is always the opportunity for evil to flourish. All genocide starts with distortion of the truth and prejudice.”<sup>118</sup>*

Amazon was criticised for advertising numerous antisemitic, neo-Nazi and jihadist books for sale from third party sellers on its website. The antisemitic books available via Amazon included the *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, *The Synagogue of Satan: The Secret History of Jewish World Domination* and *Planet Rothschild: The Forbidden History of The New World Order*. The same investigation by MailOnline also found original Nazi antisemitic propaganda, such as the film *Jud Süß*, and modern neo-Nazi works including the racist and antisemitic book *The Turner Diaries* by American far right ideologue William Pierce. Jihadist books for sale via Amazon included works by terrorist leaders Osama bin Laden and Anwar al-Awlaki, and books by people banned from the UK, such as the Muslim Brotherhood ideologue Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, and Abdullah el-Faisal, who was sentenced to nine years in prison in 2003 for inciting racial hatred and soliciting murder of Jews and others.<sup>119</sup> Faisal was deported after his prison sentence. A separate investigation by the anti-extremism organisation Hope not Hate found that antisemitic, Holocaust denial and neo-Nazi books were sold online by mainstream bookshops such as Waterstones, Foyles and W H Smiths as well as Amazon.<sup>120</sup>

YouTube and Google were criticised by Yvette Cooper MP, the Chair of the Home Affairs Committee, for “*continuing to collude*” with

illegal organisations at a hearing into hate crime and its consequences in Parliament. The committee was questioning William McCants, Global Leader for Counterterrorism for YouTube and Google, about the platforms’ failure to remove videos from a range of proscribed terrorist organisations. Much of the hearing in March focused on the ease with which the MPs had managed to find videos from the banned neo-Nazi movement National Action on YouTube. After McCants tried to explain why the combination of automated and human reviewing had failed to identify and remove all such videos, Cooper concluded: “*I think the failing that we have seen today is a corporate one by YouTube and also by Google. The fact is that you are continuing to host illegal organisations, you are continuing to collude with these illegal organisations by providing a platform for their extremism. Your algorithms are continuing to promote radicalisation by promoting more and more extreme organisations. The failing is not simply an accident... frankly, the richest organisation in the world should be capable of doing a better job than this on national security and public safety issues.*”<sup>121</sup> This hearing was followed by written evidence from Google which revealed that, of more than 4,200 staff working on content moderation, all but 200 were external contractors rather than in-house Google employees, and none were based in the UK. Cooper’s response was to criticise Google further, arguing: “*If lack of directly employed staff in the UK explains why YouTube were so utterly hopeless at removing banned National Action videos it proves they need to think again... Google have already admitted to us that their content moderators weren’t sufficiently sensitive to far-right extremism and terror threats in the UK. Now we learn why, if none of them are based here.*”<sup>122</sup> However, Google argued that they were planning to increase the number of staff working on content moderation

<sup>118</sup> <https://www.aegistrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Letter-to-M.Zuckerberg.pdf>

<sup>119</sup> <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5757977/Amazon-selling-books-terrorists-bomb-making-manual.html>

<sup>120</sup> <https://www.hopenothate.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Briefing%E2%80%93turn-the-page-on-hate.pdf>

<sup>121</sup> <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/hate-crime-and-its-violent-consequences/oral/80512.html>

<sup>122</sup> <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/news-parliament-2017/publication-of-google-response-17-19/>



to 10,000 and claimed that *“since Autumn 2017 our systems have automatically blocked 17,000 videos for violent extremism including from far right organisations, removed over 71,000 videos for violent extremism including from far right organisations and removed around 30 National Action propaganda videos... We continue to see very low volumes of their content.”*<sup>123</sup> In December, YouTube released a report detailing their efforts to remove content that violates their Community Guidelines. This report showed that from July to September 2018, YouTube removed 7.8 million videos, most of which were removed by automated processes before any viewers had actually watched them. The majority of these videos were removed because they were spam or adult content, but the total includes videos that were hateful or abusive. During the same period YouTube also removed 224 million comments that users had posted on the site.

Alison Chabloz was found guilty of broadcasting antisemitic songs on YouTube in a private prosecution brought by the Campaign Against Antisemitism. Chabloz was a prolific far right online activist who uploaded several videos to YouTube of herself performing songs she had written that described the Holocaust as a *“Holohoax”* and called Auschwitz a *“theme park”*. Chabloz was supported in court by several far right activists during her trial. Chabloz claimed her songs were satire, but the magistrate rejected this defence.<sup>124</sup> Later in the year, Chabloz joined a march of the far right National Front to the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday, where she laid a wreath *“in honour of the 784 members of the British Armed Forces who lost their lives during the peace-keeping mission to Palestine in 1945 to 1948.”*<sup>125</sup>

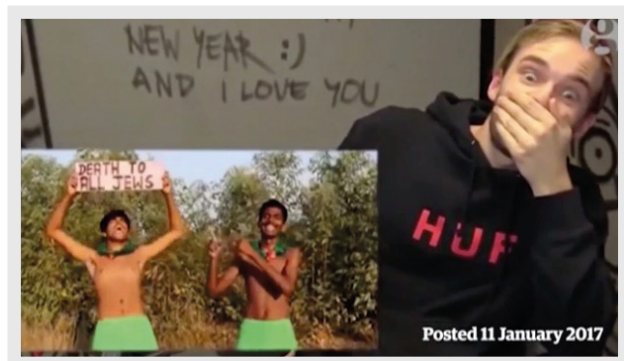
<sup>123</sup> <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/hate-crime-and-its-violent-consequences/written/80831.html>

<sup>124</sup> <https://cst.org.uk/news/latest-news/2018/05/25/antisemitic-holocaust-denier-and-musician-found-guilty-in-landmark-case-after-posting-grossly-offensive-videos>

<sup>125</sup> <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/national-front-alison-chabloz-antisemitism-lay-wreath-cenotaph-british-troops-palestine-1.472886>

## Popular YouTube channels promoting antisemitism

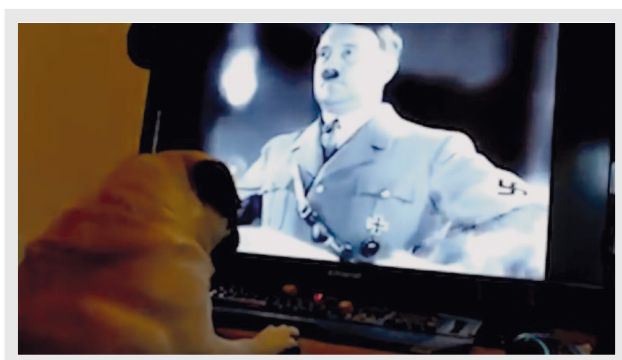
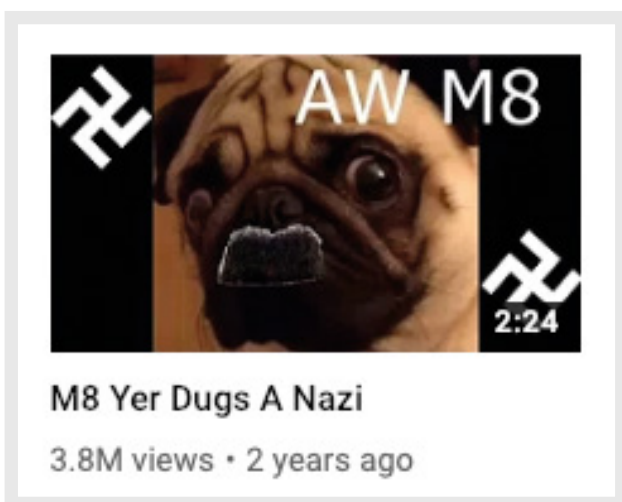
The most popular channel on YouTube, PewDiePie, was criticised for promoting another channel that included antisemitic and neo-Nazi content in its videos. The PewDiePie channel is run by video blogger Felix Kjellberg, who is Swedish but is based in the UK, and at the time of this incident had 76 million subscribers on YouTube. PewDiePie would regularly promote and endorse smaller YouTube channels to his subscribers, and in December 2018 he promoted a channel called E;R, saying that E;R *“does great video essays.”* However, this endorsement was criticised by other YouTubers who claimed that the E;R channel included videos with allegedly antisemitic, racist and homophobic content. As a result of this criticism, Kjellberg claimed that he was not aware of any far right content on the E;R channel, saying *“obviously if I noticed that I wouldn’t have referenced him in the shoutout.”*<sup>126</sup> E;R gathered 15,000 new subscribers following PewDiePie’s endorsement. PewDiePie had previously caused controversy in 2017 when he paid two men in India to hold up a sign saying *“Death to all Jews”* and filmed them for his YouTube channel.<sup>127</sup>



Another UK-based popular YouTuber, Mark Meechan, was fined £800 by a Scottish court for posting a *“grossly offensive”* video of his girlfriend’s dog performing a Nazi salute whenever Meechan said the phrase *“Gas the Jews”*. Meechan, who goes by the name Count

<sup>126</sup> <https://www.vox.com/2018/12/13/18136253/pewdiepie-vs-series-links-to-white-supremacist-alt-right-redpill>

<sup>127</sup> <https://medium.com/swlh/pewdiepie-adl-donation-nazi-conspiracy-theory-2e71f6a85aa3>



Dankula on YouTube, said the phrase “Gas the Jews” 23 times during the video, as well as “Sieg Heil” and showing images of Hitler speaking at a rally.<sup>128</sup> The video was watched more than three million times. Meechan apologised and denied that the video was meant to be antisemitic, claiming instead that it was intended to be a joke to annoy his girlfriend. However, the court rejected the defence, concluding that he did not need to post the video on YouTube in order to annoy his girlfriend. The decision to prosecute Meechan for a video that he claimed to have been a joke, however offensive, proved to be controversial. Meechan was supported by several comedians and commentators, including David Baddiel, Douglas Murray and Ricky Gervais, all of whom argued that the video should not have been prosecuted. Gervais tweeted: “If you don’t believe in a person’s right to say things that you might find ‘grossly offensive’, then you don’t believe in Freedom of Speech.”<sup>129</sup> Following

<sup>128</sup> <http://www.scotland-judiciary.org.uk/8/1962/PF-v-Mark-Meechan>

<sup>129</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-43478925>

Meechan’s conviction, Ephraim Borowski of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities welcomed the conviction and thanked the court “for recognising that shouting ‘Gas the Jews’ over and over again is not a joke, and that claiming that something is a joke does not make it any less offensive. This case was not about whether the video was a ‘joke’ but about whether it was intended to give offence; Meechan himself made clear both in the video and in court that that was his intention, and far from apologising or expressing regret, is now presenting himself as a martyr and has been embraced by the extreme right.” Borowski also revealed that he and the Scottish Council had been “flooded with abusive messages from around the world” as a result of the trial.<sup>130</sup> Meechan was supported by the former English Defence League leader Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (aka Tommy Robinson), who attended court for Meechan’s sentencing. Three weeks after the sentencing Meechan spoke at a far right rally in Whitehall organised by Yaxley-Lennon, and in June 2018 he joined UKIP.

<sup>130</sup> <https://www.thenational.scot/news/16103783.jewish-leader-who-gave-evidence-in-nazi-dog-trial-targeted-online/>

# ANTISEMITISM IN FOOTBALL

The issue of antisemitic chanting and abuse at football matches attracted national attention in 2018, with high-profile incidents reported in the media and a significant campaign against antisemitism launched by Chelsea FC, with CST's support.

## Antisemitic language and abuse

Football's anti-discrimination organisation Kick It Out published statistics showing that antisemitism accounted for ten per cent of all racist incidents recorded by the organisation during the 2017/18 season. Kick It Out recorded a 22 per cent increase in racist incidents and an 11 per cent increase in all types of discriminatory abuse.

Much of the reported antisemitism in professional football in the UK reflects the historic association of Tottenham Hotspur with the Jewish community, and the self-identification of many Spurs fans with that history. Police investigated reports of antisemitic abuse when Spurs played Liverpool in February 2018, with one video appearing to show a Liverpool supporter shouting "f\*\*\*\*\*g Jewish c\*\*\*s" at Spurs players. A journalist who was at the match claimed to have heard "three or four" Liverpool fans calling Spurs players "Y\*d c\*\*\*s" at the end of the game. Liverpool FC condemned the abuse and promised to ban any supporter who was identified as being involved.<sup>131</sup> In December 2018, an Arsenal fan was ejected from Arsenal's stadium after other Arsenal supporters confronted him for chanting about gassing Jewish people during a cup match against Spurs. A small group of England fans were filmed giving Nazi salutes and singing "Spurs are on their way to Auschwitz – Sieg Heil – Hitler's gonna gas them again" in a bar in Russia during the 2018 world cup. The Football Association condemned the fans, saying: "The disgraceful conduct of the individuals in this video does not represent the values of the majority of English football fans supporting the

team in Russia."<sup>132</sup> Following a police investigation, three of the fans involved were identified and were given football banning orders.

Braintree Town player Billy Crook was suspended for five games and ordered to take an education course by the FA after he was found guilty of racially abusing a Jewish player, Scott Shulton, during Braintree's match against Hemel Hempstead in the Vanarama National League South. Crook shouted "f\*\*\*\*\*g Jew" at Shulton during a confrontation following a tackle. Crook denied using those words, but video evidence showed Shulton saying "that's f\*\*\*\*\*g racist" and the FA decided "on the balance of probability" that Crook's language "was insulting and/or abusive, and did make reference to religion, ethnic origin and/or race as it is anti-Semitic."<sup>133</sup>

Football Association Chief Executive apologised after giving a speech in which he appeared to bracket the Star of David with swastikas and other extremist symbols that are banned from football shirts. Glenn was explaining why Manchester City's manager Pep Guardiola had been banned from wearing a yellow ribbon to show his support for Catalan pro-independence politicians, when football teams are allowed to wear poppies for Remembrance Sunday. Glenn said: "We have rewritten Law 4 of the game so that things like a poppy are OK but things that are going to be highly divisive are not. That could be strong religious symbols, it could be the Star of David, it could be the hammer and sickle, it could be a swastika, anything like Robert Mugabe on your shirt – these are the things we don't want."<sup>134</sup> Glenn quickly apologised, explaining that he did not intend to equate the Star of David with the swastika: "I would like to apologise for any offence

131 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/liverpool-tottenham-premier-league-match-antisemitism-allegation-1.458153>

132 <https://www.lbc.co.uk/radio/audio-video/england-fans-perform-nazi-salutes-russia-world-cup/>

133 <https://www.hemeltoday.co.uk/sport/football/shulton-thanks-tudors-for-standing-behind-him-1-8555297>

134 <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2018/mar/04/fa-pep-guardiola-yellow-ribbon-manchester-city-poppies>

*caused by the examples I gave when referring to political and religious symbols in football, specifically in reference to the Star of David, which is a hugely important symbol to Jewish people all over the world.*"<sup>135</sup> Glenn subsequently met representatives of CST and the Jewish Leadership Council to discuss his comments, following which he released a further apology and stressed: *"I would like to make it clear to all of our clubs with Jewish players, coaches, officials and volunteers that the Laws of the Game, which are set out by the International Football Association Board [IFAB], do permit the use of the Star of David if it is used on the crest of the shirt. As an organisation more broadly, we actively promote faith inclusion through football. We have developed a series of resources to support the game, such as an annual Faith in Football Calendar, providing guidance to grassroots football on fixtures and respecting Jewish religious observance."*<sup>136</sup>

### Chelsea FC: Say No To Antisemitism

Chelsea Football Club launched a campaign against antisemitism in January 2018 with a series of educational and promotional efforts to reduce antisemitism at Chelsea, and to use the club's status to try to influence attitudes in wider society.



As part of their Say No To Antisemitism campaign, Chelsea produced a guide for safety officers and stewards called *Tackling Antisemitism in Football* that includes straightforward guidance about how

to recognise antisemitic chanting or gestures, and outlines the legal powers available to stadium safety officers and match day stewards. Written jointly with CST and Kick It Out, a version of the guide has also been produced without Chelsea branding so that it is available for other football clubs to use. Chelsea and Kick It Out also produced a short film, written by Ivor Baddiel, to encourage people to report antisemitism if they see it in football grounds. The film juxtaposed graphic images of the Holocaust with recent footage of football fans singing antisemitic songs and giving Nazi salutes. Chelsea's educational efforts included working with the Holocaust Educational Trust to bring Holocaust survivors to give talks to first team and academy players, and taking players and fans to visit Auschwitz. In April 2018, a club delegation took part in March of the Living, the annual gathering at which thousands of people march from Auschwitz to Birkenau to mark Yom Hashoah. The Chelsea delegation included Chelsea directors Bruce Buck and Eugene Tenenbaum, club ambassador Sir Steve Redgrave, players from the Chelsea academy and former Chelsea manager Avram Grant, whose father was a Holocaust survivor.

Chelsea's campaign against antisemitism took place against a backdrop of a number of incidents in which some Chelsea fans were accused of antisemitic chanting at matches during 2018. These reports included allegations of antisemitic chanting at matches against Watford, Brighton & Hove Albion and Crystal Palace. In response, Chelsea Chairman Bruce Buck published an open letter on the club website that pledged: *"we will not rest until we have eliminated all forms of discrimination from our club. We will continue to work alongside our fans, anti-discrimination organisations and football authorities to create an environment where everyone feels welcome and valued. If you do not share these values, this is not the club for you. We must not allow a small minority of fans to bring further embarrassment upon us, and will continue to take the strongest possible action against them."*<sup>137</sup>

<sup>135</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2018/mar/05/fa-martin-glenn-apologises-for-star-of-david-swastika-and-mugabe-comments-football>

<sup>136</sup> <https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2018/03/14/statement-from-fa-chief-executive-martin-glenn>

<sup>137</sup> <https://www.chelseafc.com/en/news/2018/12/18/-we-will-not-rest-until-we-have-eliminated-discrimination-from-o>



## 'ZIONIST' CHICKEN SOUP DENOUNCED

An initiative by the Jewish charity Mitzvah Day in which Muslim and Jewish volunteers cooked chicken soup for distribution to homeless shelters was denounced as a method of "Zionist infiltration" of the Muslim community. For some, the involvement of organisations that have benefited from UK government funding or that have links to Israel was evidence of an underhand conspiracy to use interfaith activities to undermine pro-Palestinian activism.

Mitzvah Day is a day of social action and charitable activities that takes place across the UK every November and, having begun purely as a Jewish community event, now attracts increasing participation from other communities. In November 2018 one of Mitzvah Day's activities was a "cookathon", in which volunteers across the country made thousands of bowls of chicken soup for charities and homeless shelters to distribute. The main focus of this initiative was East London Mosque, where Jewish and Muslim volunteers worked together to make chicken soup for the Salvation Army and other charities. Roshan Muhammed Salih, a journalist for the Iranian state broadcaster Press TV, tweeted that this event was evidence of "Zionists doing soft infiltration of Muslim community." He also tweeted that this "soft infiltration" "usually happens under guise of interfaith work" and that "Muslims need to understand that we must have a zero tolerance policy against working with Zionists. If we do this we are selling out the Palestinian people who have been disposed by Zionists."<sup>138</sup> Salih then wrote about the event on the 5Pillars website, of which he is editor, warning that "several Muslim organisations have crossed a serious red line by normalizing relations with Zionists under the guise of interfaith activities." Salih's evidence for this was that Mitzvah Day's donors include organisations that also run projects in Israel, and that "Mitzvah Day was heavily promoted

Mitzvah Day chicken soup activity  
Credit Yakir Zur



in pro Israel British newspapers such as the *Jewish News* and *The Jewish Chronicle*. And last but not least it was attended and endorsed by Israel's ambassador to the UK, the notorious apologist for Israeli crimes, Mark Regev." According to Salih, this was evidence of "a deliberate strategy of pro Israel organisations to promote interfaith gatherings over many years... the promotion of interfaith is a deliberate tactic to firmly establish Israel as a *fait accompli*, to neuter criticism of it and to divide groups which could pose a threat to it. For example, if Zionists make personal connections with influential Muslims then it becomes more difficult for those Muslims to become harsh critics of Israel for fear of disrupting those relationships or rocking the boat. So instead they may simply limit themselves to mild criticism of certain aspects of Israeli policy but never question fundamental aspects of Israel's very nature... East London Mosque which hosted an event sponsored by Zionists, as well as Muslim Aid and the Muslim Council of Britain, which facilitated and promoted it, need to remember which community sustains them and gives them legitimacy... have they been ordered by government bodies to work with Zionists as the price of getting back to the top table with access to influence and funds that that entails? For those who want to do interfaith with Jews there are so many anti-Israel Jews we can do it

<sup>138</sup> <https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/press-tv-journalist-mitzvah-day-is-zionist-infiltration-of-muslim-community/>

with; men and women who take an honourable stance when it comes to the Zionist entity, and frankly who have much more courage than our community leaders.”<sup>139</sup>

#### Headline on Middle East Eye’s website



Middle East Eye website took a different slant on the Mitzvah Day event at East London Mosque, asking whether it was “cooked up” by the Home Office as part of its counter-extremist strategy because Mitzvah Day had received funding from a Home Office initiative called Building a Stronger Britain Together, which “supports civil society and community organisations who work to create more resilient communities, stand up to extremism in all its forms and offer vulnerable individuals a positive alternative, regardless of race, faith, sexuality, age and gender.”<sup>140</sup> According to Middle East Eye, this meant that “the Chicken Soup Challenge was also backed by the UK Home Office, through a programme that provides funding and support for counter-extremism projects.” Mitzvah Day responded by saying that they had only had a “small grant” from that fund in 2017 and that none of their projects had been run with Home Office funding. The Middle East Eye article also pointed out that the BBYO youth movement supported the event,

and therefore “other organisations involved organised youth trips to Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.” Mitzvah Day responded to the Middle East Eye story by saying: “Mitzvah Day is proud that Jews and Muslims united to make 1,000 portions of chicken soup to feed the homeless and vulnerable. To suggest this was some sort of British or Israeli Government plot is quite frankly ludicrous. Mitzvah Day’s entire focus is on social action at a local grassroots level and we don’t get involved in international politics at all. Our projects have made a real difference for the better to the communities within which we all live and helped create constructive dialogue and lasting friendships between Jews and Muslims.”<sup>141</sup>

139 <https://5pillarsuk.com/2018/11/20/why-muslim-organisations-are-getting-cosy-with-zionists/>

140 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-a-stronger-britain-together>

141 <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/was-jewish-muslim-chicken-soup-challenge-cooked-uks-home-office>

## GILAD ATZMON BANNED FROM PERFORMING

Antisemitic saxophonist Gilad Atzmon was banned from performing at a council-owned premises by Islington Council but still managed to perform in disguise, despite having been informed of the council's decision.

As well as being a jazz saxophonist, Atzmon is also an author who has written a series of highly antisemitic books. His latest book, published in 2017, claimed that *"Jewish power is the most effective and forceful power in America and beyond"*; *"Jews have become a dominant element in Western society"*; *"Jewish power prevents us from both assessing Jewish power and, more importantly, from discussing its impact"*; the American social order has undergone *"Jewification"*; identity politics and cultural Marxism *"are largely Jewish political schools of thought"* and cultural Marxism *"is a Jewish problem"*. He also wrote sympathetically of fascism that *"Fascism, I believe, more than any other ideology, deserves our attention"*; and that it is to our detriment that, in the *"post-WWII 'liberal' intellectual climate, it is politically impossible to examine fascism and 'National Socialism' from an impartial theoretical or philosophical perspective... stifling honest examination of National Socialism has left open the question of whether the problems of global capitalism may be alleviated by combining socialism with nationalism"*.<sup>142</sup>

Atzmon was due to play with the band the Blockheads at Islington Assembly Hall in December, but the council informed Atzmon he was banned from playing following a complaint *"from a member of the Jewish community."* Atzmon challenged the decision through his lawyers, but after reconsidering the council decided to maintain their ban. They explained that *"under the Equality Act 2010, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to foster good relations*

*between different races and religions within the borough. The Council took account of the fact that Mr Atzmon's presence at the Hall, and knowledge of his presence among residents of the borough, might harm such relationships, as well as the Council's duty to tackle prejudice and promote understanding within the borough."*<sup>143</sup> When the proposed ban on Atzmon was publicised, a petition to support him and oppose the ban was signed by thousands of people including the Labour MP Chris Williamson. Williamson also tweeted his support for Atzmon. He later deleted the tweet and apologised, claiming that he was not aware of Atzmon's views. A Labour Party spokesman said that *"Gilad Atzmon is a vile antisemite. Chris Williamson has said he was not aware of Atzmon's appalling views and rightly apologised for his tweet."*<sup>144</sup> In the event, Atzmon still played at the concert, but did so disguised in a Santa Claus outfit. Islington Council responded to this by saying they were *"disappointed"* that the Blockheads had broken their *"prior agreement to adhere to the council's decision."*<sup>145</sup>

Gilad Atzmon dressed as Father Christmas to avoid detection



<sup>142</sup> <https://cst.org.uk/data/file/4/f/Antisemitic%20Discourse%20Report%202017.1543487089.pdf>

<sup>143</sup> <https://www.islington.media/news/statement-gilad-atzmon>

<sup>144</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/dec/21/labour-mp-chris-williamson-apologises-for-backing-jazz-musician-gilad-atzmon>

<sup>145</sup> <https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/council-considering-options-after-gilad-atzmon-defies-ban/>

## PUBLIC FIGURES AND ANTISEMITISM

Several public figures found themselves either accused of antisemitism, or accusing others of making antisemitic remarks about them, during 2018. Some of these incidents appeared to involve the inadvertent and ignorant use of antisemitic language or imagery and led to a swift apology, while others appeared to be more calculated and were followed by a less apologetic and more defensive response.

### Katie Hopkins condemned for Chief Rabbi tweet

Right-wing commentator Katie Hopkins was widely condemned for a tweet that appeared to blame the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting on the Chief Rabbi. In October 2018 a far right terrorist, Robert Bowers, murdered 11 Jewish people at prayer in the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh. Before the attack, Bowers had stated on social media that he was planning to attack that particular synagogue because they had hosted events to support refugees in America. Following this massacre, Hopkins tweeted: “Watching the pin-the-blame on the donkey after #PittsburghSynagogue. Gab. Trump. White Supremacists [sic]. The Media. Muslims. Look to the Chief Rabbi and his support for mass migration across the Med. There you will find your truths.” Hopkins did not specify in her tweet whether she was referring to the British Chief Rabbi, Ephraim Mirvis, or to a European equivalent; but Chief Rabbi Mirvis has expressed public support and sympathy for migrants.



*Times* columnist David Aaronovitch tweeted that Hopkins had gone “full fascist” by appearing to endorse the far right conspiracy theory that Jews are behind mass immigration.<sup>146</sup>

### Steve Bell cartoon blocked by Guardian

A cartoon by the veteran *Guardian* cartoonist Steve Bell was blocked by *Guardian* editor Kath Viner due to concern that it used a Holocaust allusion to criticise Israel. Bell reacted to this decision by emailing all *Guardian* staff to protest that his cartoon “contains no anti-Semitic tropes”. The cartoon drawn by Bell was based on a photograph of Prime Minister Theresa May and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu seated in front of a fireplace in 10 Downing Street. However, in Bell’s version he added an image of a Palestinian woman, Razan al-Najjar, who had been shot during protests at the Israeli-Gaza border a few days before May and Netanyahu’s meeting. Bell placed al-Najjar in the fireplace with flames coming from her head, as if she was on fire. According to Viner, *The Guardian’s* opinion page staff “were united in considering the image that Steve had filed to be offensive, and I agreed with them. As the fire looked like an oven, it seemed clear that the cartoon conjured up an image of the Holocaust.”<sup>147</sup> Viner pointed out that Bell could have made the same connection between al-Najjar’s death and the Downing Street meeting without referencing fire or ovens. She also said it was “distasteful” and “offensive to her memory” to suggest that al-Najjar, a Muslim woman, was “burning in the afterlife.” Bell complained that his cartoon had been “unfairly traduced and censored”, and explained: “I cannot for the life of me begin to understand criticism of the cartoon that begins by dragging in ‘wood-burning stoves’, ‘ovens’, ‘holocaust’, or any other

146 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/katie-hopkins-chief-rabbi-pittsburgh-shooting-synagogue-tree-of-life-robert-bowers-1.471688>

147 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jun/24/steve-bell-razan-al-najjar-cartoon-guardian-editor>



nazi-related nonsense. That was the last thing on my mind when I drew it, I had no intention of conflating the issues of the mass murder of European Jews and Gaza. It's a fireplace, in front of which VIP visitors to Downing Street are always pictured... The cartoon is sensitive, not tasteless, not disrespectful, and certainly contains no anti-Semitic tropes."<sup>148</sup> He later complained of a "growing visual prudishness", and insisted that rather than alluding to the Holocaust, he had given al-Najjar a "symbolic immolation" by drawing her on fire. In assessing these competing arguments, *The Guardian's* internal Readers' Editor concluded that "If enough experienced and sensible people, with a feel for their audience and a taken-as-read appreciation for the role of satire in a free society, see in a cartoon a problematic allusion to the Holocaust, a leader listens, considers context, thinks about the individual involved, and makes a judgment – often within a tight deadline. Intended or unintended, I believe that in this cartoon an allusion to the ovens of the concentration camps of the Holocaust is obvious. I don't regard the image as antisemitic, which is important to state because Bell has been accused of it more than once before. Rather, I see the image as insensitively and counterproductively ill-judged."<sup>149</sup>

### George Galloway calls David Baddiel an "Israel fanatic"

Jewish comedian and author David Baddiel called former MP George Galloway an "anti-Semite", resulting in a threat of legal action from Galloway, in an argument on Twitter that shed light on the interaction between Jewish identity and support for Israel.

The row began when Galloway tweeted about Baddiel's proposed involvement in a march against American president Donald Trump. Galloway tweeted: "There will be no supporter

of the Palestinian people marching behind vile Israel-fanatic 'comedian' David Baddiel. There will be no opponent of imperialist wars marching behind Stella Creasy. #justsaying".



Baddiel objected to being described as a "vile Israel-fanatic" and argued that, as he is not a public supporter of Israel, this phrase was a coded reference to the fact that he is Jewish. Baddiel tweeted: "Since I've always made it entirely clear that my attitude to that country is entirely meh, I think we can only conclude that by 'Israel-fanatic' George just means Jew. Vile Jew. And that therefore he is an anti-Semite. Now let him come at me with his stupid f\*\*\*\*\*g lawyers." Jon Lansman, the founder of Momentum, then voiced his support for Baddiel and called for Galloway to lose his job as a radio host, tweeting: "Solidarity with @Baddiel - since he's a Jew who's talked about being non-Zionist, there's no possible reason to call him a 'vile Israel-fanatic' other than antisemitism. There clearly should be no place for @georgegalloway in @UKLabour or in the employment of @talkRADIO". Galloway was expelled from the Labour Party in 2003 but at the time this row took place, there had been media speculation that he might be readmitted.

Galloway reacted by deleting his original tweet and posting a clarification which stated: "I was wrong to tweet that David Badiel (sic) was an 'Israel-fanatic', he is not and I have deleted it. I should have said that David Badiel routinely slanders Israel-critics like me as 'anti-Semites'." However, he then posted a series of tweets denying that he had said anything antisemitic and threatening to sue Lansman for defamation.

<sup>148</sup> [https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/guardian-cartoonist-steve-bell-denies-anti-semitism-claims-after-drawing-spiked-by-editor\\_uk\\_5b19054ce4b09578259f5b4a](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/guardian-cartoonist-steve-bell-denies-anti-semitism-claims-after-drawing-spiked-by-editor_uk_5b19054ce4b09578259f5b4a)

<sup>149</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jun/24/steve-bell-razan-al-najjar-cartoon-guardian-editor>



He did not level a similar threat at Baddiel, but he did promise to call Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn as a witness. Galloway tweeted: *"I have never said an anti-Semitic word in my life. I have to the contrary fought fascism and anti-Semitism as adjudged by Justice Eady in the High Court... The use of the defamatory smear of anti-Semitism against supporters of the Palestinian people has at least for me gone far enough. I have instructed Solicitors to bring a case for defamation against Jon Lansman owner of Momentum. I will be calling @jeremycorbyn as a witness."* No legal action ensued from Galloway, and at the time of writing he has not been readmitted to Labour.<sup>150</sup>



<sup>150</sup> <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5329913/David-Baddiel-accused-George-Galloway-anti-Semitism.html>

## Comedian Jimmy Carr's anti-Jewish joke

Comedian Jimmy Carr was found to have breached Ofcom regulations with a joke that played on the antisemitic stereotype of Jews having large noses. This case reflected careful consideration by Ofcom of the boundaries of televised offensive material, and also showed Ofcom referring to the IHRA definition of antisemitism in its adjudication.

Ofcom received a complaint about a trailer advertising *Roast Battle Week* on the Comedy Central Extra +1 channel, in which rival comedians make jokes at each other's expense. These jokes are often offensive and tasteless. In the trailer, Jimmy Carr said to fellow comedian Tom Rosenthal: "You're not Jewish?" Rosenthal replied "No", and Carr then said: "Someone needs to tell your face!" Rosenthal then laughed while holding his nose. A voiceover then said: "The show that offends everybody in equal measure." Rosenthal is of Jewish heritage and there is a long-standing antisemitic stereotype that caricatures Jews as having large noses.

Ofcom's ruling assessed whether this trailer breached Rule 2.3 of the Ofcom Code, which states: *"broadcasters must ensure that material which may cause offence is justified by the context... Such material may include, but is not limited to...discriminatory treatment or language (for example on the grounds of... race, religion...)"* Ofcom stated that they "had regard to" the IHRA definition of antisemitism, and that: *"Ofcom is aware of a significant rise in reported incidents of anti-Semitism across Europe and in particular in the UK in recent years. This has manifested itself in many ways, but one significant recurring stereotype has been discriminatory references to Jewish people's physical appearance, which has been recognised as being clearly anti-Semitic. In our view the use of such a well-known anti-Semitic trope against this backdrop would have had the potential to cause considerable offence."* Ofcom took into account the context in which the joke was made, which included the fact that *Roast Battle* is intended for an adult audience

that expects to see offensive comedy. However, as this joke was in a trailer, it increased the possibility that it would be seen by viewers who would not normally watch the programme and did not expect to see a racially offensive joke. On this basis Ofcom found the channel guilty,

but acknowledged their apology and noted that “we do not expect to see any future similar breaches in future.”<sup>151</sup>

<sup>151</sup> [https://www.ofcom.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/129050/Issue-367-of-Ofcoms-Broadcast-and-On-Demand-Bulletin.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/129050/Issue-367-of-Ofcoms-Broadcast-and-On-Demand-Bulletin.pdf)

## BARONESS TONGE STANDS DOWN AS PSC PATRON

Baroness Jenny Tonge stood down as a patron of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) following criticism of a Facebook post in which she appeared to indirectly blame Israel for the murder of 11 worshippers at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh.

Following the shooting at the Pittsburgh synagogue by a neo-Nazi gunman, Robert Bowers, Tonge wrote on Facebook: “Absolutely appalling and criminal act, but does it ever occur to Bibi and the present Israeli government that it’s [sic] actions against Palestinians may be reigniting anti-Semitism? I suppose someone will say that it is anti-Semitic to say so?”

In response to widespread criticism of this statement, Tonge offered to stand down as a patron of PSC “to save them embarrassment”.<sup>152</sup> PSC issued a statement confirming this news, and said: “PSC regards the original post to be deeply troubling. Whilst the post acknowledged that the killings were appalling and a criminal act, it risked being read as implying that antisemitism can only be understood in the context of a response to Israel’s treatment of Palestinians. Such a view risks justifying or minimising antisemitism. PSC understands antisemitism to be prejudice, hostility or hatred towards Jews as Jews. It is never to be condoned or justified. The killings in Pittsburgh were an appalling crime motivated

by antisemitism and we stand shoulder to shoulder with Jewish communities in opposition to antisemitism and all other forms of racism.” In the same statement, PSC also said that it “wishes to acknowledge the enormous work Baroness Tonge has done over many years to bring attention to the injustices suffered by the Palestinian people and to campaign for them to be brought to an end.”<sup>153</sup>

Tonge had been a patron of PSC since at least 2013, despite having been removed as a Liberal Democrat spokesperson in 2005 and again in 2010, giving up the party whip in 2012, and finally resigning as a Liberal Democrat party member in 2016, all due to previous allegedly antisemitic remarks.

Facebook post by Baroness Tonge, October 2018



<sup>152</sup> <https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/baroness-tonge-stands-down-as-patron-of-palestine-solidarity-campaign/>

<sup>153</sup> <https://www.palestinecampaign.org/statement-on-baroness-tonge-and-antisemitism/>

## OPINION POLLING ON ANTISEMITISM

Various opinion polls were released in 2018 that shed light on public attitudes regarding antisemitism, and on Jewish experiences of antisemitism in Europe.

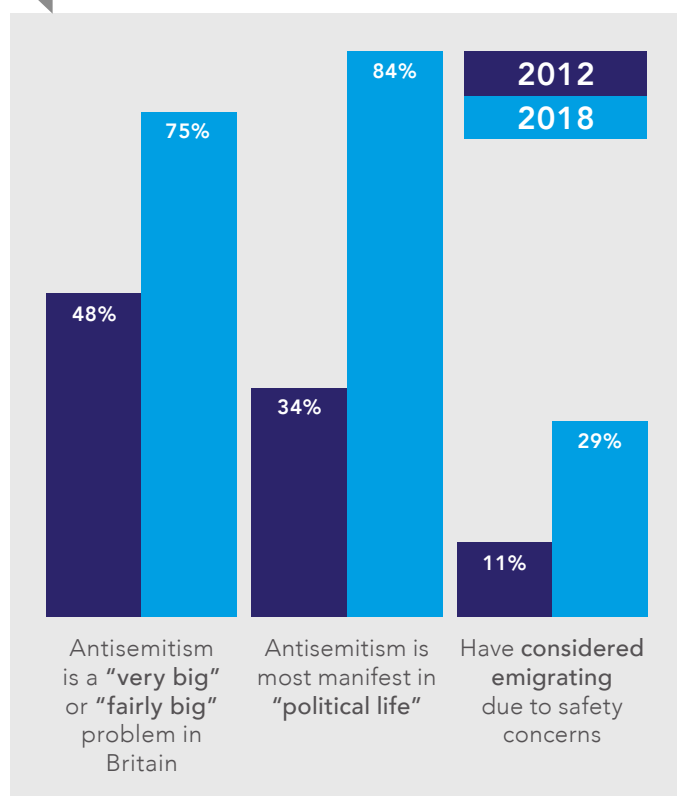
### EU poll of Jewish experiences of antisemitism

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) published a wide-ranging poll of Jewish experiences and perceptions of antisemitism across twelve EU member states. This was the second survey of its kind, and repeated and expanded upon FRA's previous landmark 2012 survey on how Europe's Jews, including in Britain, experience and perceive antisemitism. It is the largest ever study of its kind worldwide and should, like its predecessor, be a key tool in the understanding of modern antisemitism. CST played a role in the survey as did other Jewish organisations such as the Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

The survey found that, across the EU, 85 per cent of European Jews consider antisemitism to be the biggest social or political problem in their home country; a third of European Jews avoid visiting Jewish events or sites because they do not feel safe; and over a quarter of respondents had experienced antisemitic harassment at least once in the past year, most of whom had not reported it to any agency.

Looking specifically at the UK, the survey found that three-quarters (75 per cent) of British Jews think antisemitism is a "very big" or "fairly big" problem in this country. In 2012, fewer than half (48 per cent) thought it was. This is the largest such perception increase in the countries covered by both surveys and reflects a stark change in how British Jews view antisemitism today. Twenty-nine per cent of British Jews have considered emigrating due to safety concerns, an increase of 11 per cent from 2012.

Based on the EU Fundamental Rights Surveys of British Jews in 2012 and 2018



One in four British Jews (25 per cent) had suffered antisemitic harassment in the year prior to the survey, nearly the lowest of any country. About one in three (34 per cent) suffered such harassment in the last five years, the lowest of any of the twelve countries polled. Only 21 per cent of British Jews who had experienced antisemitic harassment over the past five years had reported the most serious incident to any agency (such as the Police or CST), but this was still the third-highest reporting rate of any country in the poll. Where respondents identified a political motive for the perpetrator of antisemitism they experienced, twice as many reported the perpetrator as "left-wing" (25 per cent) or "Muslim extremist" (22 per cent), than "right-wing" (11 per cent).

Six in ten British Jews (60 per cent) sometimes avoid displaying or wearing Jewish items in public, similar to 2012.



When asked where antisemitism is manifest, 84 per cent of British Jews included “*political life*” as an answer, the highest of all countries surveyed. In 2012, about one-third (34 per cent) had said this, the second lowest of all countries surveyed. The huge shift is most likely to be a reflection of the ongoing problems of antisemitism within the Labour Party. The only other sector to rival “*political life*” as a locus for antisemitism was the Internet, which 84 per cent of British Jews also named as a place where antisemitism is manifest.<sup>154</sup>

In response to the survey results, EU First Vice-President Frans Timmermans said: “*I’m deeply concerned about the growth of antisemitism as concluded by the report of the Fundamental Rights Agency. It is essential that we combat this scourge forcefully and collectively. The Jewish community must feel safe and at home in Europe. If we cannot achieve this, Europe ceases to be Europe.*”<sup>155</sup>

### Pew Research Center: 23 per cent would not want Jews in their family

A poll on religious attitudes in Europe found that 23 per cent of British people would not accept a Jewish person in their family, while a smaller percentage held stereotypically antisemitic attitudes.

The American polling company Pew Research Center asked questions about attitudes towards Jews and Muslims as part of a poll about Christian beliefs and practices in Europe. They found that in the UK, two thirds of people said they know “*not much*” or “*nothing at all*” about Judaism, while 55 per cent said that they personally know somebody who is Jewish (the highest figure for any country in the poll, equal to France). Sixty-nine per cent of people in the UK said they would accept a Jew as a member of their family, while 23 per cent said that they wouldn’t. Only Italy and Austria showed a lower

acceptance of Jewish family members out of the fifteen countries in the poll; only Italy showed a higher level of rejection. For comparison, 53 per cent of British people would accept a Muslim in their family, while 36 per cent would reject them. The poll found greater tolerance of Jewish neighbours: 88 per cent of British people would accept a Jew as their neighbour, while only eight per cent would not.

The same poll found that sixteen per cent of British people agree with the statement “*Jews always pursue their own interests and not the interest of the country they live in*”, while 80 per cent disagreed. Sixteen per cent also agreed with the statement “*Jews always overstate how much they have suffered*”, a statement that 81 per cent of British people disagreed with.<sup>156</sup>

<sup>154</sup> <https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2018/12/14/key-uk-findings-of-eu-antisemitism-survey>

<sup>155</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/luxembourg/news/commission-presents-its-response-antisemitism-and-survey-showing-antisemitism-rise-eu\\_fr](https://ec.europa.eu/luxembourg/news/commission-presents-its-response-antisemitism-and-survey-showing-antisemitism-rise-eu_fr)

<sup>156</sup> <https://www.pewforum.org/2018/05/29/nationalism-immigration-and-minorities/>

## STEPS TO COMBAT ANTISEMITISM IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Several organisations and public figures organised campaigns or made public interventions to draw attention to antisemitism, or to campaign against it, during 2018.

### Sara Conference on antisemitism and misogyny

The Antisemitism Policy Trust organised a conference to examine the confluence of antisemitism and misogyny in gender-based hatred. CST was one of several organisations to take part in the conference, which included panel discussions and presentations at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office's Lancaster House and a reception at 10 Downing Street hosted by then Prime Minister Theresa May. The name Sara was chosen for the conference after the name of the first Abrahamic matriarch and because female Jews in Nazi Germany were forced to adopt this name to make them easily recognisable if their given name was not considered Jewish enough.

During the conference, several Members of Parliament who have faced gender-based hatred during their careers discussed their experiences. This included Jewish MPs Ruth Smeeth, Luciana Berger and Dame Margaret Hodge, who lamented that each incident of antisemitic misogyny appears to fuel more, as more perpetrators are emboldened to send her hate-filled letters, emails and social media messages. These have included rape threats, antisemitic insults and messages claiming that feminism is nothing more than a Jewish conspiracy. Sara Khan, the Commissioner for Countering Extremism said that *"the sheer scale of antisemitism in 2018, particularly that aimed at Jewish women, is a source of national shame."*

The need for digital media companies to recognise and tackle abusive behaviour was repeatedly raised. The then Minister of State

at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Margot James, said the time for self-regulation of the internet has run out in order to address the volume of hate online, including hateful language that is harmful but not currently illegal.

Several speakers examined research into the areas of hate speech online, specifically focused on gender-based hatred and antisemitism. Seth Stephens-Davidowitz presented research commissioned by the Antisemitism Policy Trust and CST that revealed Jewish women in parliament face a disproportionate amount of antisemitic abuse online compared to their male counterparts. The research also showed that the neo-Nazi Stormfront platform has hosted 9,000 threads focused on feminism, 60 per cent of which also mentioned Jews or claimed that feminism is a Jewish invention. Stephens-Dawidowicz also found that Jewish MPs Luciana Berger and Margaret Hodge were the most mentioned MPs since Stormfront's inception and that in several American states, where there are very few Jews, many people were searching on Google for *"proof that Jews are evil."*<sup>157</sup>

Angelo Carusone from Media Matters looked at the way that white supremacist and 'men's rights' content crosses over with gamer communities that are mostly made up of young men. As gamers watch those videos, then YouTube's 'Watch Next' feature gradually recommends more and more white supremacist, antisemitic or misogynistic videos for them to watch. Carusone also revealed that there is a crossover on message boards and other platforms between conspiracy theories, gender-based grievance content, race-based grievance content and gaming.

<sup>157</sup> <https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2018/11/28/standing-shoulder-to-shoulder-at-the-sara-conference-against-misogyny-and-antisemitism>

Other speakers at the conference and at the breakfast event included actress Tracy-Ann Oberman, journalist Emma Barnett, global education advocate Sarah Brown, Metropolitan Police Commissioner Cressida Dick, Director of Demos Polly McKenzie, Facebook Policy lead Rebecca Stimson, human rights campaigner Seyi Akiwowo and NUS President Shakira Martin.

### Religious leaders speak out

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, called on social media companies to do more to limit antisemitism and racism online. Speaking at a Holocaust Memorial Day event hosted jointly by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the Israeli Embassy, Archbishop Welby highlighted the role played by the internet in facilitating the spread of hatred in society. He warned: *"If we do not act [on anti-Semitism], then we are complicit. We are called by God not to accept false witness, but to disrupt conversations and discourse. Whoever it is, we should assume collective responsibility. As we remember that anti-Semitism continues to flourish in this country and across Europe, let us not hold back in our disruption."*<sup>158</sup>

A group of British Muslim leaders and activists published an open letter urging British Muslims to *"speak out against all forms of hatred and bigotry – against anti-Semitism no less than anti-Muslim hatred."* The letter was published as a full-page advert in The Daily Telegraph, under the name Muslims Against Anti-Semitism, and was signed by political and media figures, human rights activists and faith leaders. The letter read: *"As British Muslims, we believe that the time has come to speak out. For far too long, anti-Semitism has gone unchecked... Eradicating it is a challenge faced by all of us."* It went on: *"We understand that many in our country empathise with the Palestinians and their right to a sovereign state... However we must be ever vigilant against those who cynically use international issues to vilify Jews or promote*

*anti-Semitic tropes."* It was titled *"We Muslims have one word for Jews. Shalom."*<sup>159</sup>

### Joint CST and Tell MAMA campaign

CST and the anti-Muslim hatred organisation Tell MAMA ran a joint digital campaign, under the slogan '#DontLabelMe I am Human Too', to promote human rights and oppose hatred of all kinds. The campaign was born out of a Europe-wide project initiated by Facebook, the European Commission and the Institute of Strategic Dialogue, and involved online posts that reached over two million people.

The campaign, which started on World Peace Day on 21 September 2018, ran throughout the High Holy Day period to promote the joint humanity which cuts across all strands of society, including Muslim, Jewish, LGBT, BAME or any other individual identity. The campaign, which ran on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, reached over two million unique users.

Iman Atta OBE, Director of Tell MAMA said



<sup>158</sup> <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2018/26-january/news/uk/holocaust-memorial-day-welby-demands-internet-companies-do-more-to-clamp-down-on-anti-semitism>

<sup>159</sup> <https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/british-muslims-write-letter-opposing-anti-semitism-the-time-has-come-to-speak-out/>

afterwards: *"The 'Don't Label Me' Campaign is essential in re-enforcing the fact that people are more than just labels, which in the current environment of rising intolerance, are even more dangerous for social cohesion and for personal safety. This is why this campaign is essential at this time when social media is flippant and sometimes deeply divisive comments by politicians are legitimising hate"*.

A separate campaign run by CST earlier in 2018 that used the hashtag #AntisemitismHurtsMeToo reached over three million online users, but also attracted some antisemitic responses online. This campaign was part of the Create Against Hate project set up by Facebook to inspire young creators to collaborate with charities and produce a campaign to combat hate speech and extremism online.

The #AntisemitismHurtsMeToo campaign included five short videos of various people across society who explain how antisemitism does not just affect the Jewish community, but hurts wider society too. It urged the viewer to celebrate Britain's diverse and multicultural society and encouraged people to fight antisemitism together. The campaign, run on Facebook and Instagram through their advertising platform, ran for two weeks at the beginning of February 2018, and the five films were seen by almost 3.5 million users on Facebook across the United Kingdom. Over

400,000 people took an action based on the advert, such as playing the video, commenting, liking or sharing.

Despite the videos' wide reach and success, when the campaign went live the videos received a disappointing amount of online antisemitic hate speech from members of the public on Facebook and Instagram. Several comments posted in response to the videos drew upon multiple antisemitic language themes, including references to Adolf Hitler, the Holocaust, and antisemitic conspiracy theories including Jews controlling the media. Other comments denied that antisemitism exists in the UK. The campaign did not mention Israel or Zionism; it only mentioned antisemitism and Jews in the United Kingdom. Despite this, the videos received many abusive or hostile comments that included direct references to Palestine and the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. Only a small proportion of people who viewed the videos posted antisemitic or otherwise hostile comments, but they made up approximately 57 per cent of all the comments posted on the five videos.

Antisemitic comments on CST Facebook campaign, 2018 (see also p.65)







**CST**  
PROTECTING OUR  
JEWISH COMMUNITY

“ANTISEMITISM  
HURTS ME TOO”

**communitysecuritytrust**

LOVE ZION

the deansing  
will commence with the rape n murder off  
all the mothers and daughters. All theen will  
be immediately decapitated n mutilated

you are a demon.

Adolf Hitler should've  
finished all your people off #TrueChildrenOf  
Israel

Jewish d...k sucker

well said  
brother


Hail Hitler

Well said. Sick of the  
prejudice against Jews

Fight Jewish scum

2,768 views  
JANUARY 29

Add a comment...



**CST**  
PROTECTING OUR  
JEWISH COMMUNITY

“ANTISEMITISM  
HURTS ME TOO”

**communitysecuritytrust**

communitysecuritytrust Let's fight  
antisemitism together

Any religions that is  
persecuted should be protected not just  
Jewish people

free Palestine

am Yisrael chai

Free Palestine

The truth is antisemitic

Nothing more antisemitic in this  
world than zionism

Love one another

1,970 views  
JANUARY 29

Add a comment...





## CST'S MISSION

- To work at all times for the physical protection and defence of British Jews.
- To represent British Jews on issues of racism, antisemitism, extremism, policing and security.
- To promote good relations between British Jews and the rest of British society by working towards the elimination of racism, and antisemitism in particular.
- To facilitate Jewish life by protecting Jews from the dangers of antisemitism, and antisemitic terrorism in particular.
- To help those who are victims of antisemitic hatred, harassment or bias.
- To promote research into racism, antisemitism and extremism; and to use this research for the benefit of both the Jewish community and society in general.
- To speak responsibly at all times, without exaggeration or political favour, on antisemitism and associated issues.



[www.cst.org.uk](http://www.cst.org.uk)



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