Bad Consciences: Projecting Israel's racist-settler aggression onto Labour Party "Antisemitism"
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Introduction

> An antisemite used to be a person who disliked Jews. Now it is a person whom Jews dislike. - Hajo Meyer, Holocaust survivor

Figure 1: Demonstration against the Labour Party leadership: 'Zero tolerance for antisemitism', Parliament Square, March 2018. Credit: Steve Parkins/Rex/Shutterstock

During 2016-19 there were persistent high-profile allegations that Britain's Labour Party had 'endemic antisemitism', causing 'hurt to the Jewish community.' In the dominant narrative, moreover, antisemitism was being tolerated or even condoned by Jeremy Corbyn's Left-wing leadership. The Labour Party was thereby 'institutionally antisemitic.' It must 'hold Corbyn to account', as demanded at a March 2018 protest (Figure 1). To ensure 'a safe space for Jews', the Party had to strengthen and intensify its disciplinary procedures.

Escalating the allegations, in July 2018 the UK's three Jewish newspapers published a joint statement, 'United We Stand'. It warned that a Corbyn-led Labour government would 'pose an existential threat to Jewish life' in the UK. The leadership had shown 'contempt for Jews and Israel' (JC, 2018; Figure 2).

Although the latter elision was initially rare, it was the implicit driver for false allegations of antisemitism.

Figure 2: Jewish newspapers' joint statement, July 2018. Credit: *Jewish Chronicle*

The Jews-as-victims narrative united the British Establishment, where the Corbyn leadership had diverse enemies. These included the Conservative Party, the Parliamentary Labour Party and all the mass media, especially the BBC and *The Guardian* newspaper. They amplified the anti-Corbyn allegations from numerous pro-Israel groups operating both within and outside the Labour Party.

Jews' victim role was regularly enacted, sometimes bizarrely. In September 2020 the Scottish home of a Jewish lawyer, Matthew Berlow, was daubed with graffiti saying 'Free Palestine.' The incident had a comment on a Facebook page implying pro-Palestine culprits: 'A certain Jewish lawyer woke up this morning to find "Free Palestine" spray-painted rather prominently – no idea who was responsible.' Berlow commented on that Facebook post as follows: 'Idiocy. Typical SPSC behaviour – criminal', referring to the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign (SPSC). As a journalist revealed, however, the lawyer had colluded in faking the graffiti attack on his own house. The Facebook page had been set up by his colleague Ed Sutherland. Both belonged to Scottish Friends of Israel (McGivert, 2020; Figure 3).

Figure 3: Top pro-Israel lawyer faked vandalism attack at his Scots home in a plot to frame Palestine group. Ed Sutherland created a fake profile on Facebook which posted the graffiti claim. Credit: *Scottish Daily Record* (McGivern, 2020).

Another strange example: After a complaint against a pro-Palestine local Councillor, the Labour Party suspended him for questioning whether Jews were a race (Burford, 2020; see details later). Of course, 'the Jewish race' had been a key basis for the 1935 Nuremberg Laws. Now this concept would somehow ensure 'a safe space for Jews' in the Labour Party.

In those various ways, Jews were widely portrayed as victims of antisemitism from Labour Party members, pro-Palestine activists or both. Hence

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they needed special protection. How to interrogate this dominant narrative? All this resonated with the September 2020 conference on 'Psychoanalysis and the Public Sphere: Social Fault Lines'. Its announcement framed societal conflicts as follows:

> How can psychoanalysis illuminate the reasons for, and the consequences of, figurative splits in the public psyche in the UK and abroad? By 'splits in the public psyche' we refer to collective expressions of irrationality and angst carried out in the political realm. Splits are dangerous gaps, exacerbated and exploited by power-seeking groups, between reason and emotion in the public sphere (Freud Museum, 2019).

Those general issues can be made more specific with these questions:

- What were the drivers and consequences of the allegations against the Labour Party?
- How did 'the Jewish community' become a homogeneous collective victim of antisemitism, especially by the Labour Party? How could it pose 'an existential threat to Jewish life' in Britain? threatening what existence?
- How did that dominant narrative extend earlier political agendas?
- In those ways, what groups have been seeking to gain or maintain political power? by exploiting what emotions and splits?

Those questions are answered here by linking psychoanalytic and decolonial perspectives. For a brief summary:

The Zionist settler-colonial project has developed an endemic hatred and systematic violence towards the indigenous Palestinians, thus inducing unconscious guilt among Israeli Jews. Through a racist paranoia, those feelings have been disavowed and projected onto the Palestinians, so that the colonisers can imagine themselves as victims. When pro-Palestine campaigns highlight Israel's institutionally racist role, this triggers the bad conscience of pro-Israel Jews and offends their self-identity as morally special; they blame and resent the offender, thus seeking emotional protection. As in Israel itself, a paranoiac projection associates such reminders with antisemitism as an existential threat, thus encompassing Jews who may not identify with Israel.

In parallel the British elite has promoted a philosemitic agenda essentialising Jews as a homogeneous pro-Israel 'Jewish community' being victimised by antisemitism and so needing special protection. Since the New Labour government (1997-2010), this philosemitic narrative has been enacted through various routine practices such as inter-faith events and the Prevent programme, stigmatising or silencing pro-Palestine views. This stigma inverted anti-racism and pro-Israel colonial racism. Nowadays politicians cite 'community cohesion' and 'national security' as political imperatives for their pro-Israel commitment, which is thereby shielded from anti-racist criticism. When the Labour Party membership elected a pro-Palestine leadership in 2015, this political turn jeopardised the cross-party pro-Israel commitment of the British elite. To counter the new threat, it had a ready-made framework, namely: amplifying false allegations about 'endemic antisemitism' in the Labour Party, blaming the Corbyn leadership and deploying a racist pro-Israel narrative of the 'antisemitism' problem.

My analysis seeks to engage several different readerships. Most know about at least one aspect – the Labour Party, Zionist history, the Israel-Palestine conflict or Kleinian psychoanalytic concepts – but not them all. Hence the article

has the length necessary to explain all those aspects for a diverse readership. In particular, psychoanalytic concepts are explained in the next section.

Splitting and projecting: a basis for ethnocentric nationalism

In psychoanalytic theory, paranoia describes an internal disturbance being experienced as if it were an external hostility, threat or persecution. This theory can help to understand similar processes in societal groups or even ethnocentric nationalism, as this section shows. As conceptualised by the psychoanalyst Melanie Klein, infants' emotional development undergoes several stages or recurrent cycles. They often undergo an internal disturbance and psychically externalise it. In their fantasy life, part of their ego is denied, split off and projected onto the mother-object. This impulse attributes an internal threat to an external one, thus providing a psychic defence mechanism, understood as the paranoid-schizoid position.

The infant may seek, for example, to harm or to protect the disavowed part. In their phantasy, infants split the mother's breast into the Good Breast that feeds and nourishes, and the Bad Breast that withholds and thereby persecutes the baby. Such splitting is a way to manage anxiety by protecting the ego from negative emotions (Klein, 1932). As a further step, known as projective identification, the infant identifies with the object of the projection. Child development can move to the depressive position by relating to the whole object-mother, mourning the separation of self from the mother, recognising the hurt caused through aggression, feeling guilt and seeking to repair the damage to the object-mother. The search for reparation provides a basis for love (Klein, 1946). We form our adult selves from those recurrent infantile experiences, according to Klein (1957, 1959) and her followers.

An analogous process occurs in the patient-analyst relationship through psychotherapy. By interpreting patients' projections onto the analyst, s/he aims to facilitate their shift from the paranoid-schizoid position to the depressive one (Brenman-Pick, 1985: 158). 'The tacit injunction to our patients — "Take back the projections" — is a useful way of characterising the goal of helping her or him to dwell as much as possible in the depressive position' (Young, 2012: 68). Or perhaps to acknowledge these multiple unconscious projections as a means of self-reflection.

Now let us move on to societal conflicts. By analogy with infantile projections, primitive feelings about the mother can be projected onto groups, even without any practical relationship to them. In the ethnonational realm, a group identity projects violent feelings onto external threats. In its extreme violent forms, ethnonationalism splits off unwanted aggressive parts of a society onto enemy threats. These patterns were identified in a report on the psychology of ethnonationalism (GAP, 1987).

Although the parties may have little prior relationship, such projections more often come from a persecutor. Ethnocentric movements have routinely denied, split off and projected their own racist aggression as a means to shape political agendas, often gaining state power. Institutionally racist (sometimes genocidal) states include the following: India against Muslims, Turkey against Kurds, Sri Lanka against Tamils, Burma against Rohingya, etc.

Long before such familiar cases today, large-scale precedents were set by Western colonial regimes. Their paranoid projections complemented the aims to

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exploit labour, plunder resources and sometimes expel the indigenous people. Such regimes necessarily dehumanised them, while projecting the colonizers' violence onto them: 'The oppressed exists to contain unwanted destructiveness in the oppressor….' (Bollas, 2014). People have an emotional difficulty to acknowledge this process, especially from within colonial cultures or legacies. What does this mean for the Israel-Palestine conflict?

Denying and projecting aggression: Zionist settler-colonial racism

By taking those Kleinian concepts further, the above insights about ethnocentric nationalism can illuminate Zionist settler-colonialism as inherently paranoiac. It denies and projects its own racist aggression onto its Palestinian victims and their supporters, as this section argues.

Explaining the Israel-Palestine conflict: symmetrical projections?

As an entry point, let us see how two Israeli psychoanalysts apply their own professional concepts, framing the two sides in symmetrical ways. Each writer brings insights, albeit obscuring the settler-colonial basis of the conflict. Several decades ago the Israeli psychoanalyst Rafael Moses identified a routine denial of aggressive impulses through projection. This process seeks to boost one's own moral self-esteem, in Israel as elsewhere.

> A similar increment in one's self-esteem occurs when one projects one's aggression on to others: one is left feeling fairly righteous and pure; even more so when one compares oneself— as indeed one does— with the projectee who is perceived as being bad, cruel, barbaric and inhuman. Such an increase in self-esteem, in what one can call narcissistic affect, is at the root of the mechanism of scapegoating. This indeed is how the original scapegoat was conceived of in religion, and how the chicken on Yom Kippur in Judaism is viewed to this day. The sacrificial animal is discarded with all the badness inside it: the person remains pure and clean.

> The same narcissistic gain from the use of projection occurs when the members of a nation project their hostile and aggressive wishes and tendencies into or onto an enemy-neighbour. The same polarization then takes place: they, the Arabs, are bad and we, the Jews or Israelis, are good. And vice versa, of course. But here we have now made a jump — not the mystic leap from the body to the mind — but a similarly difficult one: from the individual to the nation, or to the group. Is it right to say that 'a nation' projects its aggression on to its neighbour? That 'a nation' improves its self-esteem through this mechanism? (Moses, 1982: 55).

He answers his questions in the affirmative by drawing on concepts of group narcissism. In that regard, he emphasises Israel's similarity with other countries. An Israeli colleague commented on his text as follows: 'It's Anti-Semitic!' (ibid.) This response perversely confirmed Moses' analysis of Jewish Israelis' self-conception, while also revealing a special kind of denial.

The 'antisemitic' label above provides a psychic defence against the racist reality of a settler-colonial regime displacing the indigenous people. 'There is an unmistakable coincidence between the experiences of Arab Palestinians at the hands of Zionism and the experiences of those black, yellow, and brown people who were described as inferior and subhuman by nineteenth-century imperialists'; thus Edward Said (1979) gave a higher profile to Palestinians' common knowledge over the previous century. This racist character has been denied in order to claim

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historic Palestine as a safe homeland for global Jewry. Through splitting and projection of its own aggression, the Israeli regime reproduces a racist paranoia. 'You'd be crazy not to be paranoid', as an Israeli politician said during the first intifada in 1989.

Another Israeli psychoanalyst, Avner Falk, sought to understand why the Israel-Palestine conflict has persisted for so very long. He applied Kleinian psychoanalytic concepts to both sides, though my account here will focus on the Zionist side. As he notes, the early Zionist movement denied the Palestinian demographic reality through narrative devices.

These drew on a long-time legacy of Christian Zionism. In the mid-19th century, Lord Shaftesbury had said, 'Surely the land without a people, and the people without a land, are intended soon to meet and mutually possess each other' (quoted in Muir, 2008; see later on the Christian legacy). Eventually this was taken up by Jewish Zionists to describe Palestine as 'a land without people for a people without a land'. In Hebrew, *Eretz Yisrael* denoted the Land of Israel, the ancient land of the Jews. From its original Jewish religious meaning, the phrase was made nationalistic, proprietary and ethnically exclusive. By denying or ignoring the indigenous Arab population, the Zionist narrative has expressed 'a pathological defensive unconscious process', argues Falk (2005: 113-16; note resonance with Klein, 1946).

In violent nationalist conflicts more generally, people have difficulty in mourning their losses, Falk observes. Loss is expressed indirectly as a 'paranoid elaboration of mourning', especially by projecting and externalising aggression. Through an attachment to the motherland or nation, for example, 'we unconsciously project our guilt feelings onto our enemies' (Falk, 2005: 133). Whose guilt? For what? This question takes us beyond the above symmetrical descriptions of both sides, and likewise beyond analogies with some other countries. Let us examine Israel's specific characteristics being evaded above.

Projecting racist self-hatred and colonial aggression

From the late 19th century onwards, the Zionist settler-colonial movement internalised antisemitic stereotypes from Western elites. Racial myths of the Jews were turned into counter-myths defining the Jewish nation that must be built by 'the new Jew' (Halevi, 1987; Bresheeth, 1989). Zionism depended upon antisemitism in two ways: as a driver of Jewish emigration to Palestine, and as negative stereotypes to be superseded by 'the new Jew' as colonizer. In these ways, antisemitism and Zionism have been racist political twins (J-BIG, 2013).

Let us examine some examples from about a century ago. In 1911 the Zionist pioneer Aaron David Gordon described diaspora Jews as follows:

> We have no roots in the clod; there is no ground under our feet. And we
> are parasites not only in the economic sense, but also in the spirit, in our
> thoughts, in poetry, in literature and in our virtues and our ideals as well
> as in all higher human aspirations (cited in Sternhell, 1998).

To transcend their 'parasite' role, Eastern European Jews would help conquer Palestine by transforming themselves into the 'New Jew'– or else they would be mere human dust. As Israel's future first President said, 'The old ones will pass; they will bear their fate, or they will not. They were dust, economic and moral dust

in a cruel world...' (Weizmann, 1937: 215). With the rise of European fascism, the term 'cruel Zionism' meant sacrificing the many for the sake of the few who would emigrate to Palestine and help establish a Jewish state. 'Zionism is destined to be sometimes cruel towards the [Jewish] diaspora, that is, when this is required for building up the Land [of lsrael]', according to Moshe Shertock in the mid-1930s, later renamed Moshe Sharett as Israel's President (Elam, 1975).

This colonial mission was given a much more overtly racial narrative by Revisionist Zionism. According to its leader Zeev Jabotinsky, Jews colonising Palestine would achieve a racial remedy for their backwardness: 'In blood and sweat a new race emerges, proud, generous, cruel ... Rise from the swinging lawn of peace, sacrifice soul and blood for greatness never seen before ... to conquer or to die.' For the Israeli historian Zeëv Sternhell (1998), those quotes indicate extremist, even fascist tendencies within the Zionist movement. Indeed, they both embrace and project a racist aggression. Yet the quotes make explicit some general drivers of Zionist colonisation.

Given Jabotinsky's wish that the Jews mutate into a new race, the Holocaust survivor Hajo Meyer described this as 'self-hatred.' Moreover,

> This psychological phenomenon of projecting the mental illness from which one suffers onto an enemy is well known in psychopathology and is indicated by the word projection. The fanatical defenders of Zionism are now busily handling this projection (Meyer, 2008).

This Jewish self-hatred was enacted through settler-colonial violence to dispossess the indigenous population. This continues today, thus perpetuating unconscious guilt for crimes past and present. Zionist colonisation disavows its own self-hatred and guilt, while projecting all this onto the indigenous people as a threat. In this way, Jewish Israeli society seeks to justify or deny its systematic violence as self-defence. Indeed, 'security needs' have become Israel's secular religion.

Such projective processes are manifest in many forms. Through racist images of Palestinians, school textbooks prepare children for military service in order to dominate Israel's colonial subjects. According to one survey, 'None of the books contain photographs of Palestinian human beings. All represent them in racist icons or demeaning classificatory images such as terrorists, refugees and primitive farmers' (Peled-Elhanan, 2011: 49). Racist images likewise pervade Israeli literature and films (e.g. Bar-Tal. & Teichman, 2009; Naaman, 2001).

As the psychotherapist Martin Kemp argues,

> Within Jewish Israeli culture, Palestinians have been regularly de-humanized, perceived as infiltrators or squatters… and terrorists. By a process that can be described as splitting and projection, the Palestinians are perceived as hate-filled, irremediably hostile to the presence of Jewish Israeli society, equivalent to the Nazis, and so 'killable' (Kemp, 2020: 103).

Although colonisation has kept the Palestinians' existence constantly under threat, the phrase 'existential threat' is reserved for the anxieties of the Jewish Israeli population (ibid: 102).

Over the centuries, analogous projections gained a strong resonance in Christian Zionist movements. Since the English Reformation, many Christians embraced the Biblical prophecy of the Rapture, namely: When Jews are restored to the Holy Land, they will bring about Jesus' Second Coming and God's

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Kingdom; Jews will be converted to Christianity or else perish. This philosemitic eschatology had an antisemitic core: through Restorationism, charitable individuals could assist Jews without accepting them as neighbours and fellow-citizens (Clark, 2007: 111).

From that long-time Restorationist legacy, many Christian groups embraced the new State of Israel as crucial for the Biblical prophecy and called themselves Christian Zionists. Today many Right-wing and US Christian messianic groups support Israel as a military instrument, while treating Jews as pawns who belong there rather than in the US. An Islamophobic strand sees Israel as protecting the world from the global Islamic threat (Fink, 2014). Espousing various philosemitic narratives, Christians comprise the vast majority of today's Zionists and so provide crucial allies (Sizer, 2007).

Both those religious legacies have been appropriated for a settler-colonial agenda. The Jewish religion was traditionally based on the Torah, whose commands must be obeyed wherever Jews live. Yet Israeli political narratives have increasingly appealed to a Biblical basis for ongoing colonisation, thus resonating with the Christian evangelical eschatology. The Biblical phrase *Eretz Yisrael* has been turned into an exclusive 'historic right' to the land; this originated in Protestant readings of the Bible, English nationalism and early Christian Zionism as above (Sand, 2012). Thus Jewish and Christian Zionist racist projections have converged in Israel's proprietary claim on the land, necessary 'to gather the Jewish people' and to defend the Western world from the Islamist threat. This overlaps with Christian antisemitism, which is variously ignored, downplayed or exploited by Jewish Zionist agendas. Next let us turn to Jews outside Israel.

Displacing Zionism's bad conscience

Many Jews worldwide identify with Israel in various ways, whose tensions warrant critical analysis. The Jewish psychoanalyst Joel Kovel analysed a Zionist 'bad conscience' which splits off and projects unwanted parts of itself onto the Palestinians. The bad has multiple senses: something noxiously wrong persists, it impedes self-understanding of the totality, and it perpetuates suffering. Racist projections result in a 'permanent regime of paranoia'. By contrast with a Jewish culture based on self-reflective guilt, 'the Jewish state transformed a normally harsh conscience into a full-blown bad conscience' (Kovel, 2007: 157-58).

Outside of Israel, Jewish Zionist identities are emotionally rather more contradictory. Many Jews support Israel as 'the only democracy in the Middle East' and thus a 'Jewish democratic state' as a positive model for the region. Yet this beneficent narrative is contradicted by everyday practices of a racist settler-colonial state. Kovel analysed consequent tensions as follows:

> The notion of democracy derives from universal ideals based on universal human rights; it cannot exist where there is a systematic inequality, and all the more so when these 'others' are those who have been dispossessed by Zionism…. Of course, systematic inequalities are widespread throughout history, indeed, more or less the norm. But never have they occurred in a society ruled by people with the moral dilemmas created by Jewish exceptionalism and the 2000-year history of ghettoization. In my view it is this moral twist that accounts for the extraordinary thin-skinnedness of Jews, and their intolerance of criticism of Zionism: what I have called Zionism's bad conscience. The irony is

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radical: because Jews have to think of themselves as morally special, 'chosen' people. They cannot tolerate the coarse grab for territory and the oppression of the dispossessed inherent to Zionism. They deny the implications with messianic fervor, but the wound cannot be healed (Kovel, 2013).

Public reminders of this settler-colonial racism trigger Jews' bad conscience. This is experienced as an existential threat to their cultural identity. As a remedy, a paranoiac projection onto critics helps to contain the bad conscience and so remains central for a Jewish Zionist identity.

For Jewish Zionists, a different tension arises from Right-wing groups combining Zionist, antisemitic and wider racist views. As an extreme case, US white supremacist leader Richard Spencer describes himself as a 'white Zionist.' He seeks 'a secure homeland for us' in the USA, drawing an analogy with Israel (Independent, 2017). If Jews criticise this analogy, then they may inadvertently highlight the racist basis of Zionism. In recent years, such white supremacist groups have become more prominent, posing an embarrassment for Israel's supporters (see later Keir Starmer's dilemma: Gill, 2020).

To contain the tensions, the major antisemitic threat is displaced onto Palestinian and pro-Palestine 'antisemitism.' Israel's settler-colonial aggression has British state complicity, whose bad conscience may be likewise displaced by the 'antisemitism' allegations. Next let us see how a conflictual Jewish Zionist identity has been essentialised by the UK elite and instrumentalised for its commitment to the Israeli state.

Essentialising Jews as heroic colonists and victims of antisemitism

In recent decades, a Western elite narrative has constructed Jews as heroic colonists in Israel and as global victims of antisemitism, especially in pro-Israel countries. Through various state practices, Israel's racist character has been denied and projected onto its critics, who thereby become antisemitic threats to 'the Jewish community'. This narrative has been routinised in long-time practices, especially since the New Labour government, as this section shows.

State philosemitism: protecting Zionist colonisation and stigmatising critics

Zionism originated in the 19th century as a Christian messianic movement expecting that Jewish emigration to Palestine would bring about the Second Coming, also known as the Rapture (see previous section). By the early 20th century, this narrative acquired an extra meaning and utility. The UK elite narrative associated Eastern European Jews with various threats ranging from diseases to Bolshevism. New immigration rules sought to exclude such Jews, who belonged instead in Palestine. In late 19th Germany such hatred was given an overtly racial basis by the *Antisemitismus* movement, *e.g. the Antisemiten-Liga*, asserting the superiority of 'the Aryan race' over the 'Jewish race'.

In the UK antisemitic threat narratives complemented elite support for a 'Jewish homeland.' This euphemism meant that a settler-colonial project that would subordinate, dispossess and expel the indigenous population (as European settlers had done elsewhere). Around the time of the 1917 Balfour Declaration, this agenda was internalised by the UK's Labour Party: it adopted the programme of Paole Zion, 'Workers of Zion', a Zionist split from the Socialist Bund after its 1901 rejection of Zionism (Kelemen, 2012).

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British imperialist strategy envisaged a Zionist force in Palestine as a buffer against anti-colonial Arab movements. As Jerusalem's UK military governor privately noted in 1918, a Jewish homeland would give the British Empire 'a little loyal Jewish Ulster in a sea of hostile Arabism' (Storrs, 1937: 364). In other words, it would replicate the Orange State model of indirect colonial domination.

When Ulster's replicate became an independent state in 1948, Israel did indeed have a crucial role to contain Arab revolt in the region. Going much further, Israel has become a key partner in the global military-industrial security complex (Halper, 2015; Hever, 2017; Levidow, 2018). The clear mutual benefit is euphemistically called 'national security' or 'counter-terrorism'; the aggressor is inverted into a protector.

Meanwhile Jews have become fully integrated into the British middle class, even the upper middle class, more so than other immigrant groups. Unlike any other group, however, many Jews have developed an identification with a country in which their ancestors never lived. Although family emigration provides some basis, a Zionist identification more generally provides a quasi-secular Jewish identity, partly substituting for a lost religious identity. This Jewish identification with Israel, subtly linked with fears of antisemitism, has been instrumentalised for Western elite strategies.

By the late 20th century, the 'Jewish community' was being reconstructed as pro-Israel model citizens. According to the Jewish writer Barnaby Raine,

> Jews were once identified so intuitively with non-Europeans that we were called 'Semites' beginning in the late nineteenth-century. [Now] Europe thinks of us as its outsourced colonists in the Middle East (as anyone who watches Eurovision knows very well), and back in the metropole we are read as wealthy, successful targets of Muslim rage… (Raine, 2018).

He sarcastically describes this Europe-wide elite philosemitism as follows: 'from Palestine to Paris, Jews are sacrificial lambs for the protection of Christian civilisation' (ibid). For the British elite, Jews have become 'favourite pets: heroic colonists in the Middle East and successful citizens in the West' (Raine, 2020). This role has an analogy with French elite's philosemitism, which portrays Jews as pro-Israel victims needing protection from pro-Palestine antisemitism (Bouteldja, 2015). This common narrative deepens fears among Jews, as well as tensions between them and other groups, given the widespread negative views towards Israel. To manage or contain dissent, several initiatives have had continuity across British governments, as explained here.

As the UK's state propaganda organ, the BBC has created public confusion over the Israel-Palestine conflict. It has often portrayed Israelis and Palestinians as equivalent victims of a mysteriously intractable conflict, while obscuring its settler-colonial basis. After relying on BBC news as their main information source, some viewers thought that Palestinians were the occupiers in 'the Occupation' (Philo and Berry, 2004). More recently the BBC played a leading role in false allegations of antisemitism (see later section).

In 2005 the New Labour government established a programme, 'Preventing Violent Extremism', run by the Home Office. Its guidelines had several indicators to identify extremist views: 4 of the 9 indicators related to the Middle East and two specifically to Palestine. The latter in particular became pervasive (Mohammed and Siddiqui, 2014; OSJI, 2016; Sabir, 2017). The 'extremism'

guidance complemented Home Office funds for the Community Security Trust to document antisemitic hate speech, often conflating this with anti-Zionism. Both efforts have routinely targeted Muslims, especially for criticism of Israel. The Prevent programme has been extended by subsequent governments.

The Home Office has also deployed a 'community cohesion' agenda for self-censorship of pro-Palestine views. In particular, the agenda intimidates Muslim groups to participate in 'inter-faith' events with Jewish pro-Israel organisations on the understanding that the Palestine issue remains taboo. If Muslim groups resist the pressure, then the Home Office stigmatises them as antisemitic and thus a threat to 'community cohesion.' The Faiths Forum for London brings together numerous faith groups. It has commemorated massacres such as Amritsar 1919 and Christchurch 2019, but no massacres in Palestine such as the 1948 Nakba or the 2008 Operation Cast Lead against Gaza, thus applying a pervasive self-censorship.

The Home Office has regularly funded the Community Security Trust to document 'antisemitic hate speech', which is often conflated with anti-Zionist views. In one year, for example, 'antisemitic incidents' included reference 'to Israel, Zionism or the Middle East; and 10 in which Islamist discourse was used. There were six incidents in which "Zionist" was used as a term of abuse for Jews….' (CST, 2012: 6). The report offered no evidence that the incidents were antisemitic.

Government Ministers have frequently denounced BDS as antisemitic. As a special target, some trade unions have campaigned for pension funds to divest from companies complicit in the Occupation. According to the government, any such divestment would undermine national security and social cohesion, e.g. by threatening 'the Jewish community' (Rust, 2016; Levidow, 2020). In all those ways, state practices have built inter-community acceptance of Israel, stigmatised critics as antisemitic or extremist threats to Jews, who therefore warrant special protection. Through all those practices, a homogenous 'Jewish community' shields the UK-Israel partnership from criticism (Englert, 2018). The state has sought to protect the UK's pro-Israel commitment and its Zionist framework from any serious challenge.

This pro-Israel agenda displaces Jewish anxieties about antisemitism onto Left-wing and Muslim pro-Palestine groups. Complementing this agenda, pro-Israel writers have branded anti-Zionism as 'the New Antisemitism' (prompting numerous Jewish critiques, e.g. Gordon, 2018; Kelemen, 2012, 2018; Lerman, 2015). Their conflation intensifies societal splits among Jews, as well as splits with anti-racist political forces. Serving similar aims, state-led agendas have been turning Holocaust memorial and alleged antisemitism into weapons for stigmatising Israel's critics, as explained next.

Weaponising Holocaust memory and alleged antisemitism

As explained above, political Zionism promoted 'the new Jew' as a Jewish colonialist identity of collective strength. This was meant to remedy Jews' perceived helplessness during the Holocaust and to deal with their ongoing fears of annihilation. This conflation has been most salient among Jewish Israelis, whose identity thereby merges with the state (Shalit, 1994). In battles against Arab armies, some Israeli soldiers have imagined that they were fighting the Nazis

(Linn, 1999). Israel has institutionalised Holocaust trauma and turned it into 'a kind of civil religion' (Wistrich, 1997).

Holocaust memory gained greater prominence after the 1967 war, supposedly because Israel then faced even greater threats. Yet a more plausible explanation is the converse: Israel's expanding colonisation project needed to revive and manipulate Holocaust trauma. The official memory portrayed Jews' victim status as trans-historical, while obscuring Left-wing anti-fascist resistance including Jewish roles there. This historical selectivity suits a political agenda for exploiting fears. Holocaust trauma-memory remains alive in Western countries, especially among Jews who grew up in the post-War period; they heard such stories first-hand and experienced everyday antisemitism. In 21st century Britain, institutional antisemitism has nearly disappeared, and antisemitic physical threats have become rare. Nevertheless, a state-led agenda has encouraged and directed Jews' persistent fears towards pro-Palestine forces, as explained next.

During the Cold War, Holocaust memorial remained a marginal activity in major Western states, especially for a strategic reason: To claim moral superiority, Western powers associated former Nazi and contemporary Communist regimes as equivalent totalitarianisms. But this narrative was contradicted by the USSR's well-known anti-Nazi role during the Holocaust. Likewise the narrative was readily contradicted by Western capitalist collaboration with the Nazis (Hart, 2018). Moreover, as some historians argued, Europe's settler-colonial genocides had set a precedent which the Nazis imported: 'they set the fault line that divided rulers from ruled inside Europe, not outside it' (Mazower, 2009: 587). Together these legacies could weaken the West's claim for moral superiority.

After the Communist regimes fell, Western elites had a new opportunity to refine and popularise their favourite narrative of the Holocaust. In 1998 the US, UK and Swedish governments launched an initiative which led 31 governments to establish the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). Although it aims to counter 'Holocaust distortion', its materials sanitise the Holocaust of any legacy in Western colonialism or capitalism (e.g. IHRA, 2016a, 2019). Holocaust Memorial Day events and related education initiatives generally imply that the Nazi genocide came from drivers internal to Germany and countries that it occupied (Kelemen, 2018). This internalist explanation better suits a political agenda to portray Western regimes as protecting Jews from antisemitism, thus weaponising the Holocaust to sanitise the West. The IHRA elaborated this agenda from 1998 onwards and then further weaponised antisemitism two decades later; but let's first look at preparatory efforts in the interim.

In 2005 a US pro-Israel lobby organisation, the American Jewish Committee (AJC), prepared a 'Working Definition of Antisemitism.' A vague short definition was followed by 11 examples, 7 relating to Israel. As one key example of antisemitism: 'Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour.' Why? This example was directed at the phrase 'apartheid Israel'. According to the AJC's main author of the document, Kenneth Stern, the 'apartheid' label is 'an accusation linked with antisemitism' (TAU, 2010: 6).

In the AJC's example of antisemitism above, Jewish 'self-determination' implies that all Jews everywhere constitute a distinctive people who seek or need their own state, rather than belonging wherever they live. This was the basis for Israel's foundation as a 'Jewish state'. Its exclusive basis was made more explicit

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in the 2018 law characterizing Israel as 'the nation state of the Jewish people', whereby only Jews have a right of self-determination within historic Palestine.

In historical retrospect, the Zionist narrative invented 'the Jewish people' as a dual nation-race by updating an old Christian antisemitic narrative, namely: God had exiled the Jews from the Holy Land as a punishment, hence creating the Jewish diaspora. Despite lacking any historiographic evidence, Jews' supposed dispersal from the Holy Land later justified their 'return' and eventually Israel's Law of Return (Sand, 2009).

According to the AJC criterion above, it would be antisemitic to criticise that essentialist narrative of Jews and likewise Israel's racist basis. Israel's settler-colonial racism is thereby denied and projected onto its anti-racist critics. A decade after the 2005 AJC Working Definition of Antisemitism, only its initial 38-word definition was adopted by the IHRA (2016b; ECCP, 2017). Yet its website conveniently generated confusion about whether the 2016 meeting had also agreed to adopt the illustrative examples. Thereafter the entire document was promoted as 'the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism' by the pro-Israel lobby and its government allies.

That full 'Definition' was adopted by the British government, some other governments and the European Parliament, despite significant dissent. Pro-Israel organisations have aggressively promoted it as a test of antisemitic views. It has been an effective weapon to intimidate and silence anyone characterising Israel as a racist regime, as does the Palestinian-led global campaign for Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS). According to surveys of its usage, the Definition has been used to suppress the BDS campaign and related anti-racist diagnoses of the conflict (IJV Canada, 2020; Levidow, 2017). Its deployment has widely deterred pro-Palestine voices and events: 'no one has been able to reconcile its exclusionary claims with fundamental human rights', nor 'to integrate it into a programmatic anti-racist agenda' (Gould, 2020).

In sum, along with the Israel lobby, the UK has led initiatives to sanitise the Holocaust and Zionism alike of their racist colonial basis. Likewise they have equated the Israeli state, global Jewry and its 'self-determination.' For a long time, a multi-party consensus has normalised support for the Israeli regime, regardless of any gestural support for Palestinian rights. Through various state practices, moreover, Israel's racist basis has been denied and projected onto its critics, who thereby become antisemitic threats to 'the Jewish community.' This dominant narrative provided a framework for countering a new threat in 2015, as shown in the next section.

Displacing racist settler-colonial aggression onto Labour Party 'antisemitism'

By the late 20st century, British Jewry was largely integrated into the upper middle class, no longer facing institutional racism along with its material disadvantages. Reflecting this shift in class composition, Jews' support for the Conservative Party far exceeded the national average; this support was even higher among male, self-employed and more religious Jews (IJPR, 1996: 4; see 2010 update). This great shift away from the Labour Party was due to reasons of social class and general politics, long before sharp controversy about Israel or antisemitism (Staetsky, 2019).

This general trend went even further before Corbyn became Leader. In the UK general election of May 2015, exit polls estimate that 64% of Jews voted for the Conservatives and only 15% for the Labour Party (e.g. Survation, 2015). In a UK population of approximately 300,000 Jews, assuming that approx. 60% vote, then barely 30,000 have been voting for the Labour Party.

So, why does their relationship matter so much for British politics? Here are two reasons: First, the Jews-as-victims narrative has served as a shield for the British elite, extending and maintaining its pro-Israel commitment across all institutions. Second, the global BDS campaign has increasingly targeted British complicity in the political, cultural, military and economic spheres, thus threatening the elite's claims to moral authority. During 2016-19 this threat was displaced onto Labour Party 'antisemitism' supposedly victimising Jews. Before examining that period, let us briefly review some antecedents.

Containing pro-Palestinian forces

After Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, a stronger Palestine solidarity movement emerged. It understood that the settler-colonial apartheid regime was intensifying its control and preventing a just solution. Many Labour Party members promoted this stance internally. Conferences passed contradictory motions: for a two-state solution, and for a one-state solution, i.e. against Israel's Zionist structure. The latter motion jeopardised the Labour Party's pro-Israel commitment, crucial for the elite cross-party consensus.

To reinforce that commitment, the leadership devised strategies to contain dissent. Under Tony Blair from the mid-1990s onwards, the New Labour regime encouraged members to rebuild Labour Friends of Israel. A pro-Israel policy was necessary for 'social cohesion' at home and 'common values' worldwide. The latter was directed towards a UK-Israel common defence of Western values and security, especially against 'radical Islam' (Kelemen, 2012). This containment strategy was successful under New Labour through at least 2010.

After the Labour Party's 2015 election defeat left a political vacuum, the membership elected Jeremy Corbyn, a long-time anti-imperialist pro-Palestine figurehead of many protest campaigns. Just before and after his election, the Labour Party experienced a significant growth, becoming the largest political party in Europe, with an increasingly pro-Palestine membership. This shift again jeopardised the elite consensus.

To counter this new threat, antisemitism allegations against the Labour Party became a constant high-profile news item and the main focus of mass-media interviews. Its 'endemic antisemitism' featured 'antisemitic tropes causing offence to Jews', implicitly meaning pro-Israel Jews. The 'offence' often corresponded with Israel-related examples of the IHRA definition.

Many such allegations came from the so-called Campaign Against Antisemitism, having trawled members' social media posts going back many years. It sent the Labour Party long dossiers with demands that such members be suspended. From what standpoint exactly? The Campaign's previous reports on antisemitism had featured Islamophobic and anti-Palestinian views. For example, one had a scary dehumanised image of Muslim males, who 'are more likely to sympathise with terrorism, violence and extremism' (CAA, 2016: 8). Its racist agenda was ignored or sanitised by the mass media.

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According to Jewish pro-Israel organisations, the Labour Party leadership tolerated antisemitism and thus posed 'an existential threat to Jewish life' (JC, 2018, cited in the Introduction). As other recurrent phrases, the Corbyn leadership was making the Party 'an unsafe space for Jews' and causing 'hurt to the Jewish community' (STV, 2016). Jews were essentialised as pro-Israel, warranting an exclusive voice for such views.

Such attacks intensified in the run-up to the December 2019 general election. As background, let us remember Shelley's poem appealing for mass revolt, with the famous finale: 'Shake your chains to earth like dew, which in sleep had fallen on you. Ye are many, they are few.' This was paraphrased for the Labour Party's election campaign slogan: 'For the many, not the few.' At a March 2018 Jewish protest against the Corbyn leadership, one placard characterised the Labour Party as follows: 'For the many, not the Jew' (Figure 4). With that sarcastic paraphrase, pro-Israel Jews portrayed themselves as victims, excluded by the Labour Party leadership.

Figure 4: Twisting Shelley's famous appeal for mass revolt, March 2018, Parliament Square. Credit: @GregHeffer, https://t.co/pDjARKuXfx

The mass media turned such allegations into a persistent high-profile issue, often dominating interviews with Party spokespersons and overshadowing other issues such as Brexit and austerity. The mass media cited some truly antisemitic quotes, implying that they all came from Labour Party members, though only some did. The Corbyn leadership was vilified for tolerating 'endemic antisemitism' among the membership. This intimidation campaign helped to suppress debate on what is or isn't antisemitism, as well as on Israel's practices, thus silencing many anti-racist members on both issues.

Essentialising 'the Jewish community' as victims

Under such external and internal pressure, the Labour Party imposed disciplinary procedures on ever-more pro-Palestine pro-Corbyn members. There were numerous suspensions pending investigation, even expulsions in some cases. Shadow Cabinet members compulsively apologised for 'hurt to the Jewish community'. Despite its largely pro-Palestine membership, the Labour Party internalised the essentialist Jewish stereotype, thus accommodating its political enemies in the British elite and pro-Israel organisations. This in turn validated Jews' paranoia about pervasive Left-wing threats, while obscuring splits among Jewish members (see further in the next section).

During 2019 several pro-Israel groups intensified their accusations with long dossiers of evidence. These were submitted to the inquiry by the Equality and

Human Rights Commission (EHRC). Let us look at three accusers, especially their pro-Israel agenda and thus motives for attacking the Corbyn leadership:

The Board of Deputies of British Jews has consistently justified Israel's attacks on Palestinians as self-defence, especially its Gaza massacres in 2008-09 and 2014. After Israel killed numerous unarmed protestors at the Gaza border in 2018, Jeremy Corbyn criticised Britain's failure to call for an independent investigation as 'morally indefensible.'. In response the Board denounced his simple demand for an investigation on these grounds: 'Every country has the right to defend its own borders' (BoD, 2018). Yet again, the aggressor was inverted with the victim.

The Jewish Labour Movement (JLM) has had a long-time alignment with the Israeli Labour Party, whose leaders were making overtly racist anti-Arab statements (White, 2017); these elicited no comment from the JLM or the British mass media. For its pro-Israel agenda, the JLM promoted the IHRA Definition. Meanwhile the Board of Deputies maligned the Labour Party membership as antisemitic and so inadvertently jeopardized the election prospects of JLM candidates. In 2016 two of them reassured the Jewish press that 'neither of us has ever experienced any incidence of anti-Semitism from within the party' (Sackman and Katz, 2016). Eventually the JLM echoed the Board's stronger accusations: that Britain's Labour Party harboured 'endemic, institutional anti-Semitism'; there is 'overwhelming evidence that anti-Semitic conduct is pervasive at all levels of the party' (JLM, 2019).

Likewise according to Labour Against Antisemitism, Labour Party members showed 'endemic anti-Jewish behaviour.' Moreover, the Corbyn leadership had overseen a massive surge in anti-Semitism within the party, 'once considered the natural home of British Jewry' (LAA, 2019). This charge blamed the Corbyn leadership for a Jewish electoral shift which had occurred over several decades, mainly for reasons of social class.

During the Labour Party's 2019 internal election for a new Leader, pro-Israel forces further essentialised the 'Jewish community.' The Board issued a list of ten pledges for candidates 'to end the antisemitism crisis.' In particular, the Labour Party must 'engage with the Jewish community via its main representative groups, and not through fringe organizations', i.e. Jewish pro-Palestine ones. As another demand, the IHRA definition with all its examples must be used 'as the basis for considering antisemitism disciplinary cases' (BoD, 2019).

The BoD's ten pledges were endorsed by all the candidates for Leader and nearly all candidates for Deputy Leader. Their compliance provided an apparent consensus on Jewish representation, while splitting Left-wing candidates from their pro-Palestine Jewish supporters. This split reinforced pro-Israel practices already being operated by the disciplinary procedure and the exclusive pro-Israel voice of 'the Jewish community'.

What was the 'endemic antisemitism' in the Labour Party? When accusers were asked for quantitative evidence, or were even offered contrary evidence, such doubts were labelled as antisemitic. According to an internal report near the end of the Corbyn leadership, all the complaints under investigation totalled only 180 amongst a membership of over a half-million members (Labour Party, 2020a: 511). Even if all the complaints were valid, they would comprise fewer than 0.3%

of the membership, plausibly lower than in any other British institution. Any such comparisons were excluded by the dominant narrative.

In the Labour Party's Governance and Legal Unit, the disciplinary procedure had been run by anti-Corbyn staff members. They had taken disciplinary action against Left-wing members facing complaints, but no action against other members, even those who had made blatantly antisemitic comments (Labour Party, 2020a: 238-303). This quiet, selective inaction served to validate complaints about the leadership 'tolerating antisemitism'; this embarrassed the leadership, which remained unaware of the ruse. The internal report had been meant for submission to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) inquiry into how the Labour Party handled the 'antisemitism crisis.' But the internal report was disowned by the Starmer leadership and so was not considered by the inquiry.

When eventually published, the EHRC report reinforced the dominant narrative about 'a clear breakdown of trust between the Labour Party, many of its members and the Jewish community' (EHRC, 2020: 2). The latter phrase recurrently appeared, sometimes as 'Jewish community stakeholders'; this implicitly meant pro-Israel groups, thus again essentialising Jews. The report mentioned no evidence from the submission by Jewish pro-Palestine voices, which did not count as Jewish stakeholders.

Like previous accusations against Labour Party members, the EHRC report quoted social media messages causing offence to Jews: 'Treating them as someone not directly affected, simply because the content of an antisemitic post is not aimed at them personally, ignores the very real hurt and offence that these posts can cause to complainants' (ibid: 62). In practice, this political logic was being inverted, namely: Any comment offending pro-Israel Jews was deemed antisemitic.

All these conflicts sharpened after April 2020, when Jeremy Corbyn was replaced by Keir Starmer. He then unequivocally declared, 'I support Zionism without qualification' (ToI, 2020). Its meaning became clearer when Starmer appeared on a radio phone-in programme. After a caller made racist comments against black people, she said,

> We just have to look across to the Middle East. Israel has a state law that they [Jewish Israelis] are the only people in that country to have self determination. As a white British female, why can't I have that same right?

His vague response ignored her white supremacist analogy with Israel (Gill, 2020). This analogy elicits discomfort, like the 'white Zionist' pro-Israel identity mentioned earlier.

The Labour Party now intensified its suspensions for alleged antisemitism. In a social media post many years earlier, a pro-Palestine local Councillor had cited an Israeli historian debunking 'the Jewish race' as an historically groundless concept (Sand, 2009). After the Labour Party received a complaint against the Councillor, he was suspended and forced to apologise (Burford, 2020). Of course 'the Jewish race' had been a basis for the 1935 Nuremberg Laws, also known as the 'race laws.' The Labour Party disciplinary procedure was now protecting an antisemitic trope to 'ensure a safe space for Jews'.

Marginalising Jewish pro-Palestine dissent

Let us return to the anti-Corbyn vilification campaign as seen by Jewish pro-Palestine members. From 2016 onwards, they criticised anti-Corbyn political forces for 'weaponising' false allegations of antisemitism (JSG, 2016). Pro-Israel groups demanded that the Corbyn leadership ban such 'antisemitic' counter-accusations; the leadership duly circulated a message asking Labour Party branches to refrain from such criticisms.

In 2017 Jewish pro-Corbyn members formed Jewish Voice for Labour under the slogan, 'Always with the oppressed, never the oppressor' (JVL, 2017). Jewish pro-Palestine groups jointly opposed the IHRA definition (FSOI, 2017; see Figure 5). Many analyses provided evidence that 'endemic antisemitism' had been a gross exaggeration (Philo et al., 2019).

Figure 5: Pro-Palestine Jewish groups oppose the IHRA definition outside a National
Executive Committee (NEC) meeting, Labour Party HQ, September 2018.
Credit: Jewish Voice for Labour & Palestine Poster Project,
https://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/ihra-no-bds-yes

The mass media ignored this Jewish dissent, while actively promoting the elite deception. The most deceptive reportage came from the BBC and *The Guardian* newspaper (MRC, 2018: 5). Although this role was predictable for the BBC, it highlighted a recent shift in *The Guardian*; in previous years had been publishing propaganda from the UK security services, especially for character assassination of Julian Assange (e.g. Coburg, 2018). As a test of *The Guardian*'s role, it censored Steve Bell's political cartoon satirising the hypocrisy of the antisemitism witch-hunt (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Labour Party's Deputy Leader Tom Watson (2015-19) as Witchfinder General catching out 'antisemitic tropes'. He targeted such allegations at Left wing pro-Palestine members. *The Guardian* newspaper censored the cartoon as 'antisemitic'.
Source: Steve Bell cartoon from Tony Greenstein's blog, https://azvsas.blogspot.com/

This persistent propaganda campaign marginalised pro-Palestine Jewish members. They were among the first to be targeted by the disciplinary procedure, although their Jewish identity rarely got a public mention. The dominant narrative treated such members as non-existent or as 'fake Jews.' One activist sarcastically called herself 'the wrong type of Jew' (Wimborne-Idrissi, 2020).

After Corbyn was replaced by Starmer, the Labour Party intensified its disciplinary procedure. This was supposedly necessary to ensure 'zero tolerance of antisemitism' and thus create 'a safe space for Jews'. The procedure increasingly targeted pro-Palestine Jews, though the mass media obscured their ethnicity. By now the accusers often acknowledged that the 'antisemitism problem' related to Israel, by contrast with their earlier reticence. One lobby group searched social media 'for terms linked with leftwing antisemitism, such as "Zionist", alongside Starmer's name' (Sherwood, 2020; also Carlin & Harpin, 2020).

To ensure 'a safe space for Jews', moreover, the General Secretary forbade branches from discussing such issues. Members defying the prohibition were suspended, including many Jewish ones (SW, 2020). The leadership announced that antisemitism complaints would undergo an 'independent process', advised by 'members of the Jewish community' (Labour Party, 2020b), meaning the pro-Israel lobby. Now Israel's settler-colonial state would be fully protected from debate by disciplining critics – for 'bringing the Labour Party into disrepute' or even for 'antisemitism'.

Hence the Party became an unsafe space for anti-racist members. As some Left-wing commentators lamented, the disciplinary procedures had been suppressing Jewish pro-Palestine voices, among others (Mullin, 2020). The Corbyn leadership had too readily accommodated such unjust attacks (e.g. Stern-Weiner, 2020).

By late 2020 the leadership faced Left-wing protest against the false accusations. In the Labour Party's internal election for National Executive

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Committee, the Left Labour Alliance candidates rejected 'the IHRA mis-definition of antisemitism' (LLA, 2020). By now, however, pro-Corbyn members had been quitting en masse; the remainder felt even more intimidated**.**

In 2020 Jewish Voice for Labour helped to found a new Campaign for Free Speech. At its public launch event a JVL member reflected on earlier experiences in his Constituency Labour Party (CLP):

> I remember a meeting of my previous CLP in Hackney some five years ago, early on in Corbyn's leadership, when the issue of antisemitism in the party first raised its head. I saw it among some Right-wing young Jewish Labour members: a terror without foundation. This wasn't contrived for political reasons. For them it was real. I remember my gut response was to feel empathy. I didn't find the courage, but my instinct was to put arms around one of the young men and to say to him, 'It's all right, you have nothing to fear'…. Our answer is both to understand and empathise *and* to tell the truth about the realities of racism in modern day Britain… (Bash, 2020).

There he describes a practical difficulty: how to reassure fearful Jews so that they can engage with a fully anti-racist agenda. For that task, let us return to the psychotherapeutic process, as explained earlier: A patient can move from the paranoid-schizoid position towards the depressive position, seeking to repair the harm that s/he caused or imagined. By analogy in this case, despite their early Zionist socialisation, many Jews have confronted their bad conscience, taken back their racist disavowals and identifications, overcome the racist paranoia and eventually dissociated from the settler-colonial project.

This reparative process has happened implicitly by various social processes. Making them explicit and conscious would help to expand the process. To be effective, reparative processes must also oppose political agendas that promote societal splits and exploit Jewish fears. This brings us to the Conclusion.

Conclusion

This article began by reflecting on the period 2016-19, when there were persistent high-profile allegations against Britain's Labour Party. It had 'endemic antisemitism', tolerated by the Corbyn Left-wing leadership, and so was causing 'hurt to the Jewish community', even posing 'an existential threat to Jewish life'. Given that dominant high-profile narrative, the Introduction posed some questions: How did 'the Jewish community' become a homogeneous collective victim of antisemitism, especially from within the Labour Party? What Jewish existence was being supposedly threatened? How did the dominant narrative of Left-wing antisemitism extend earlier political agendas?

To answer such questions, this article linked several aspects: the Zionist settler-colonial project, the long-time UK-Israel partnership, its philosemitic stereotype of 'the Jewish community', and an agenda weaponizing alleged 'antisemitism' against pro-Palestine forces. From 2016 onwards this prior strategy was extended against the Labour Party's Left-wing leadership and rising pro-Palestine membership. Now let us recapitulate the overall argument in more detail:

Like other settler-colonial regimes, the Zionist one has subordinated, dispossessed and expelled the indigenous people, while projecting its own racist aggression onto them, increasingly since its 1967 extension to the West Bank and

Gaza. In recent decades Israel has further promoted itself as a front-line defence against 'Islamist terrorism', whereby Israel's regional counter-insurgency role protects the West from mortal threats. This paranoiac narrative has increasingly overlapped with the securitisation agenda of Western states, supporting allies abroad as 'counter-terror' forces.

In parallel such states have extended such paranoiac projections at home, thus stigmatising political dissent. This paranoiac displacement has a long history in UK state-sponsored domestic practices over many years, such as 'inter-faith' events suppressing pro-Palestine dissent and the Prevent programme targeting it as 'extremism'. Preventive measures have broadly framed such 'extremism' through pervasive surveillance on Muslims and deradicalization procedures. Thus Britain's domestic practices have internalised Israel's racist paranoiac projections.

Moreover, these practices have essentialised Jews as a pro-Israel 'Jewish community', being victimised by pro-Palestine antisemitism and so needing special protection, thus reinforcing a homogeneous social identity. Within the Western elite, a philosemitic narrative has constructed Jews as heroic colonists in the Middle East and pro-Israel model citizens at home. Hence they become victims of pro-Palestine antisemitism, a conflation sometimes called 'the New Antisemitism'.

The conflation has gained a very broad appeal for various reasons. Many Western Jews identify with Israel, while also needing to feel morally special. This sensibility is offended by reminders of Israel's institutionally racist practices, provoking a bad conscience; the offence is projected onto the putative antisemitism of Israel's critics. This projection has a broad appeal, beyond Jews identifying with Israel. It can displace anxiety over real antisemitic threats, such as from Right-wing 'white Zionists' and Christian Zionist groups.

Instrumentalising that displacement, UK politicians justify their pro-Israel commitment along two lines: as crucial for 'social cohesion', i.e. reassuring Jews about British support for Israel, as well as for 'national security', i.e. needing Israel as a front-line defence against the Islamist threat. This elite philosemitism has helped to shield the UK's pro-Israel commitment from anti-racist criticism.

Complementing the state's role, over several decades the Labour Party leadership has made great efforts to contain and stigmatise pro-Palestine dissent. The New Labour leadership promoted a more aggressively pro-Israel policy within the 'war on terror' securitisation agenda since 2001, complemented by the Prevent programme since 2006, together stigmatising Israel's opponents as 'radical Islam'. Sponsored by dominant Western states, from 1998 onwards the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) had served to sanitise Nazi Germany of its racist colonial legacies and its Western capitalist complicity; this framing helped to legitimise Western states as anti-racist forces, to instrumentalise Holocaust memorial education for this political purpose and later to weaponise alleged antisemitism for a racist pro-Israel agenda.

Together those practices provided a ready-made framework to contain the new threat from the Corbyn-led Labour Party during 2016-19. Palestine solidarity supporters highlighted how Israel's institutionally racist character was driving its systematic violations of international law. When the membership rose to support a pro-Palestine anti-imperialist leadership, this rise jeopardised the Labour Party's century-long role within the elite pro-Zionist consensus. Their now-prominent

voices aggravated and offended the bad consciences of Jewish Zionist members, who thus resented the offenders.

Given the Corbyn leadership's diverse enemies, they jointly mobilised the prior elite pro-Israel framework to stigmatise and silence pro-Palestine voices: In the dominant narrative, the Labour Party was tolerating 'endemic antisemitism,' creating an 'unsafe space for Jews' and thus posing 'an existential threat to Jewish existence.' As in Israel itself, the racist aggression of Zionist settler-colonialism was denied, split off and projected onto pro-Palestine critics.

Antisemitism was more broadly equated with 'hurt to the Jewish community' or simply 'offence to Jews'. Pro-Israel Jewish organisations demanded and gained a monopoly voice to speak for 'the Jewish community'; they sought a 'safe space for Jews', i.e. for a racist Zionist identity beyond challenge. The Labour Party's disciplinary procedure increasingly targeted pro-Palestine members for 'behaviour bringing the Labour Party into disrepute'; this was a euphemism for triggering bad consciences and jeopardizing the elite cross-Party consensus.

Those dynamics invert racist and anti-racist politics. The inversion was put sarcastically by Hajo Meyer, a Holocaust survivor: 'An antisemite used to be a person who disliked Jews. Now it is a person whom Jews dislike', especially Israel's critics (cited in Glunts, 2020). This inversion accommodates and enforces Zionist paranoic projections in diverse contexts.

In all those ways, the campaign against the Labour Party's Left-wing leadership and membership enacted paranoiac splits and projections. This process originally derived from Israel's racist settler-colonial aggression and the UK's complicit partnership. Moreover, the process was extended to the Labour Party's disciplinary procedure. This publicly vindicated false allegations, while splitting pro-Palestine activists from potential allies; they include some anti-racist Jews fearing antisemitism and not especially identifying with Israel.

Those practical consequences have reinforced claims by the pro-Israel lobby to represent 'the Jewish community.' Likewise they reinforced the state's claim to protect Jews by supporting Israel and by stigmatising anti-racist forces as antisemitic. Here a power-seeking agenda intensifies and exploits splits in the public psyche, along many axes at the same time (Freud Museum, 2020). This outcome closed down potential spaces for pro-Israel Jews to recognise their racist projections as such and take responsibility for them.

How to undermine the dominant agenda of state-led philosemitism? its underlying paranoic racist projections? and its unitary construct of 'the Jewish community'? How to separate antisemitism (real or imaginary) from the Israel-Palestine conflict? How to create deliberative spaces for such issues? The analysis here is meant to open up such questions.

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