

Antisemitism: A Guidance

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How to use this document

This document is a step towards understanding and defining antisemitism. It is not a set of rules. Its intent is educational. This advisory document has no impact on the Green Party's existing policies on freedom of speech, BDS, or on Israel/Palestine. A more secure understanding of antisemitism within our party will help to support and protect these policies.

We have provided five pieces of writing on antisemitism, including the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism. Read them with an open mind, think about their similarities and differences, what they contribute and what they miss out. Also think about how these pieces of writing might inform judgements made on real world examples of antisemitism.

There are well-developed academic fields worth of writing on antisemitism, and therefore this should not be treated as a comprehensive guide to antisemitism, nor as the only document that should be read on the subject.

What's in this document?

Our document is made up of the IHRA, four subsidiary pieces on antisemitism, which should complement and contrast with the IHRA, an FAQs section, which answers some common questions around antisemitism, and a bibliography, which gives you ideas of where to look if you want to find out more.

The IHRA owing to its importance, the heated debate around it, and the esteem that it is held within much of the Jewish community forms the basis for this document. It is assessed in detail in section two and is returned to the FAQ's section. The document also contains some additional writing on antisemitism and commentaries on them, to help understand their contribution and arguments. The additional documents include:

The Jerusalem Declaration, which written as a response too, and clarification of, the IHRA definition.

Rosenblum's *The Past Didn't Go Anywhere* which writes about antisemitism as a structural phenomenon linked to white supremacy and capitalism

Julius' *The Trials of the Diaspora*, which seeks to understand antisemitism through producing a typology of antisemitism

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, *The Mutating Virus* which argues that antisemitism now is different to how it has previously been understood.

The FAQs spotlight some of the main questions that people ask, including relationships between anti-Zionism and antisemitism and the use of Nazi comparisons to talk about Israel.

The bibliography identifies some of the key further reading that people could look in to if they want to know more.

1. Introduction

Antisemitism¹ is on the rise throughout British society, and around the world. In Hungary, Viktor Orban's government have embraced antisemitic conspiracy theories surrounding the Jewish billionaire George Soros, and holocaust revisionism, in order to justify his increasingly autocratic rule.² In the past few years, there has been a resurgence in antisemitic violence in Western Europe and North America, including synagogue shootings in Pittsburgh and Halle. In the Ukraine, neo-Nazi militias are playing a significant role in the ongoing civil war in the Eastern half of the country.³ Antisemitism is also present among organisations and people that claim to be on the left, for example referencing a 'world-controlling Zionist conspiracy'. According to research by the British organisation CST (Community Security Trust), 2019 marked the fourth consecutive year in which reporting of antisemitic attacks had increased.⁴ Antisemitic attitudes are widespread in Britain. According to research by JPR as many as 15% people agreed or partially agreed with at least one antisemitic statement, such as 'Jews chase money more than other groups'.⁵

The Green Party should not presume that we are immune from this. Antisemitic attitudes, actions and ideology are present throughout all spheres of society. We are an ideologically antiracist party, committed to eradicating antisemitism wherever we find it, including within our own party. Defining, identifying, understanding, and opposing antisemitism is a key part of our opposition to racism. As the Jewish poet Emma Lazarus wrote, foreshadowing Martin Luther King 'until we are all free, we are none of us free'.

¹ This document will use antisemitism, rather than the hyphenated anti-Semitism, as the hyphenated form implies that a 'semitic' is a real category of person. The notion of the 'semitic' derives from German bioracial antisemitism, and was used to argue that Jews and Arabs were both less developed than white Christians. To avoid this racial heritage the single word formula is used. Some of the texts quoted use anti-Semitism rather than antisemitism. This has not been changed and reflects slightly out of date language, but does not invalidate the utility of the texts.

² Board of Deputies, 'Antisemitism and Racism in Hungary: Briefing', <<https://www.bod.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Antisemitism-in-Hungary-Briefing.pdf>> [Accessed 6/7/2020]; William Echikson, 'Victor Orban's Antisemitism Problem', *Politico*, <<https://www.politico.eu/article/viktor-orban-anti-semitism-problem-hungary-jews/>>, [Accessed 6/7/2020]

³ Marc Bennetts, 'Ukraine's National Militia: 'We're not neo-Nazis, we just want to make our country better' <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/13/ukraine-far-right-national-militia-takes-law-into-own-hands-neo-nazi-links>> [Accessed 6/7/2020].

⁴ Community Security Trust (CST), 'Antisemitic Incidents Report 2019' <<https://cst.org.uk/data/file/9/0/IncidentsReport2019.1580815723.pdf>> [accessed 6/7/2020]

⁵ Daniel Staetsky, *Antisemitism in Contemporary Great Britain: A study of attitudes towards Jews and Israel* (London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, 2017)

2. The IHRA Definition

The IHRA definition is considered the gold standard definition of antisemitism by most Jewish institutions. Organisations such as the Board of Deputies of British Jews, which is the official representative of British Jews to the government, and the Union of Jewish Students, which is the official representative of Jewish students, as well as the British Government itself, use this definition and encourage other organisations and governments to do likewise.⁶ According to the MacPherson principle for defining racism, that ‘a racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person’, the IHRA definition should clearly be a preeminent source for understanding antisemitism.⁷ Applying this principle to Jews means that allegations of antisemitism should always be taken seriously and investigated sensitively.

This definition, an update on the 2004-5 European Union Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) definition of antisemitism, was produced by the International Holocaust Remembrance Association (IHRA).⁸ This organisation is a confederation of 34 member countries including the UK, the US, and most of the EU. The IHRA has a broad mission which encompasses holocaust education, museums, memorials, and definitions of antisemitism. The definition itself was written by an international working group of academics with expertise on antisemitism.

It is important to note that this working definition should be regarded as a helpful set of guidelines to help identify and understand antisemitism, rather than a strict and comprehensive legal code setting out every example of antisemitism.⁹ The document’s structure includes a brief definition followed by a series of examples that provide practical guides for identifying antisemitism. As the document acknowledges, these should be used ‘taking into account overall context’.

For illustration, in reference to the example ‘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.’ Possible contexts where this could be antisemitic include:

- Attempting to conceptually deny Jewish self-determination (or in less academic terms arguing that Jews shouldn’t have political rights or freedom of religion) is clearly antisemitic. However, it would not be antisemitic to criticise particular strategies for ensuring those rights, for example ethno-nationalism. An argument that as ‘Israel is a racist endeavour’, Jews don’t deserve civil rights would be antisemitic.
- It is likely to be antisemitic to claim that Israel bears an outsized responsibility for racism outside of Israel, disproportionate to any reasonable assessment of Israeli political power. This would be applying the antisemitic idea that Jews have disproportionate power to Israel.
- It likely to be antisemitic to argue that Israel is a racist endeavour because Jews are intrinsically more racist than white Christians.

However, arguments that racism is foundational to modern statehood, and that Israel is an example of this, would not be antisemitic. It is also not antisemitic to argue that racism has played a significant role in Israeli life and politics since its founding, as long as similar patterns in other countries i.e Britain, the US, Australia are also identified. As the IHRA

⁶ See for example Board of Deputies, ‘Board of Deputies welcomes IHRA adoption by the Office for Students’ <<https://www.bod.org.uk/board-of-deputies-welcomes-ihra-adoption-by-the-office-for-students/>> [Accessed 6/7/2020]

⁷ Sir William MacPherson, *Report of the Steven Lawrence Inquiry* (London: Home Office, 1999), 45:17.

⁸ Kenneth Marcus, *The Definition of Antisemitism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 153.

⁹ Community Security Trust, ‘Definitions’ <<https://cst.org.uk/antisemitism/definitions>> [Accessed 6/7/2020].

definition confirms ‘criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic’. This clause also depends on context. For example, if someone has a particular personal connection to racism in Israel, they might have a better understanding of racism specifically in Israel, that does not extend to racism globally.

The reason the IHRA includes references to Israel is because anti-Israel discourse is important in understanding contemporary antisemitism. This appears in discourse relating to Israel, either by targeting Israel itself as a proxy for Jews or by repeating old antisemitic slanders with ‘Israel’ or ‘Zionist’ swapped for the word ‘Jew’. Incidents relating to Israel are often controversial and require clear examples.

The IHRA definition is a helpful guide which should be read in conjunction with other writing on antisemitism, to gain a fuller understanding of all aspects of antisemitism. Further reading is listed in the bibliography.

Another common critique of the definition is that it is interpreted in a way to limit legitimate criticisms of Israel. The ways that other organisations choose to interpret, or misinterpret the definition should not be considered relevant to the Green Party’s own, internal decision making.

See Section 4, Frequently Asked Questions, for more on the IHRA.

2.2 The Working Definition of Antisemitism

‘In the spirit of the Stockholm Declaration that states: “With humanity still scarred by ...antisemitism and xenophobia the international community shares a solemn responsibility to fight those evils” the committee on Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial called the IHRA Plenary in Budapest 2015 to adopt the following working definition of antisemitism.

On 26 May 2016, the Plenary in Bucharest decided to:

Adopt the following non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism:

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

To guide IHRA in its work, the following examples may serve as illustrations:

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectively. However, criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- 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.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

Antisemitic acts are criminal when they are so defined by law (for example, denial of the Holocaust or distribution of antisemitic materials in some countries).

Criminal acts are antisemitic when the targets of attacks, whether they are people or property — such as buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries — are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews.

Antisemitic discrimination is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many countries.’¹⁰

¹⁰ IHRA, ‘International Holocaust Association Working Definition of Antisemitism’
<<https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism>> [accessed 6/7/2020].

3. Subsidiary informed/academic work on antisemitism

While the IHRA should be considered a vital document for understanding antisemitism owing to its status within the Jewish community, it is important for those making decisions about antisemitism, to be able to engage with a range of writing about antisemitism, which goes beyond and supports the IHRA definition. For this, four examples which are paradigmatic of different approaches have been chosen. Some of these texts reflect different facets of antisemitism which are not considered by the IHRA definition, for example Rosenblum's emphasis on the structural nature of antisemitism or Julius' emphasis on different types of antisemitism. The Jerusalem Declaration represents a direct response to the IHRA definition, which aims to clarify and revise some elements of the IHRA which the authors feel are ambiguous. Rabbi Sacks' work and the 'New Antisemitism' thesis provides a Zionist challenge to traditional ways of conceptualising antisemitism, including the IHRA, in that it conceptualises contemporary antisemitism as fundamentally different to historical antisemitism.

This document does not seek to draw political judgments as to the usefulness of these different approaches to conceptualising antisemitism, but has for each given a brief overview of the similarities and differences with the IHRA definition.

3.1 Various Authors - The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism

The Jerusalem Declaration was intended as a direct response to the IHRA definition and has a high degree of support within academic Jewish and antisemitism studies. It was written primarily to give 'clarity on the limits of political speech regarding Zionism Israel, and Palestine' and states common forms of political discourse and action that 'on the face of it' are not antisemitic. They are not implying that those who support these actions, or engage in such discourse cannot be antisemitic. The JDA links antisemitism more explicitly to racism than the IHRA definition. Like the IHRA definition, it focusses on giving examples of different speech, acts or ideas which might be antisemitic, rather than considering the role of antisemitism within wider political structures.

Definition: Antisemitism is discrimination, prejudice, hostility or violence against Jews as Jews (or Jewish institutions as Jewish).

A. General

1. It is racist to essentialize (treat a character trait as inherent) or to make sweeping negative generalizations about a given population. What is true of racism in general is true of antisemitism in particular.

2. What is particular in classic antisemitism is the idea that Jews are linked to the forces of evil. This stands at the core of many anti-Jewish fantasies, such as the idea of a Jewish conspiracy in which "the Jews" possess hidden power that they use to promote their own collective agenda at the expense of other people. This linkage between Jews and evil continues in the present: in the fantasy that "the Jews" control governments with a "hidden hand," that they own the banks, control the media, act as "a state within a state," and are responsible for spreading disease (such as Covid-19). All these features can be instrumentalized by different (and even antagonistic) political causes.

3. Antisemitism can be manifested in words, visual images, and deeds. Examples of antisemitic words include utterances that all Jews are wealthy, inherently stingy, or unpatriotic. In antisemitic caricatures, Jews are often depicted as grotesque, with big noses and associated with wealth. Examples of antisemitic deeds are: assaulting someone because she or he is Jewish, attacking a synagogue, daubing swastikas on Jewish graves, or refusing to hire or promote people because they are Jewish.

4. Antisemitism can be direct or indirect, explicit or coded. For example, "The Rothschilds control the world" is a coded statement about the alleged power of "the Jews" over banks and international finance. Similarly, portraying Israel as the ultimate evil or grossly exaggerating its actual influence can be a coded way of racializing and stigmatizing Jews. In many cases, identifying coded speech is a matter of context and judgement, taking account of these guidelines.

5. Denying or minimizing the Holocaust by claiming that the deliberate Nazi genocide of the Jews did not take place, or that there were no extermination camps or gas chambers, or that the number of victims was a fraction of the actual total, is antisemitic.

B. Israel and Palestine: examples that, on the face of it, are antisemitic

6. Applying the symbols, images, and negative stereotypes of classical antisemitism (see guidelines 2 and 3) to the State of Israel.

7. Holding Jews collectively responsible for Israel's conduct or treating Jews, simply because they are Jewish, as agents of Israel.

8. Requiring people, because they are Jewish, publicly to condemn Israel or Zionism (for example, at a political meeting).

9. Assuming that non-Israeli Jews, simply because they are, Jews are necessarily more loyal to Israel than to their own countries.

10. Denying the right of Jews in the State of Israel to exist and flourish, collectively and individually, as Jews, in accordance with the principle of equality. C.

Israel and Palestine: examples that, on the face of it, are not antisemitic (whether or not one approves of the view or action)

11. Supporting the Palestinian demand for justice and the full grant of their political, national, civil, and human rights, as encapsulated in international law.

12. Criticizing or opposing Zionism as a form of nationalism or arguing for a variety of constitutional arrangements for Jews and Palestinians in the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean. It is not antisemitic to support arrangements that accord full equality to all inhabitants "between the river and the sea," whether in two states, a binational state, unitary democratic state, federal state, or in whatever form.

13. Evidence-based criticism of Israel as a state. This includes its institutions and founding principles. It also includes its policies and practices, domestic and abroad, such as the conduct of Israel in the West Bank and Gaza, the role Israel plays in the region, or any other way in which, as a state, it influences events in the world. It is not antisemitic to point out systematic racial discrimination. In general, the same norms of debate that apply to other states and to other conflicts over national self-determination apply in the case of Israel and Palestine. Thus, even if contentious, it is not antisemitic, in and of itself, to compare Israel with other historical cases, including settler-colonialism or apartheid.

14. Boycott, divestment, and sanctions are commonplace, nonviolent forms of political protest against states. In the Israeli case they are not, in and of themselves, antisemitic.

15. Political speech does not have to be measured, proportional, tempered, or reasonable to be protected under article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights and other human rights instruments. Criticism that some may see as excessive or contentious, or as reflecting a "double standard," is not, in and of itself, antisemitic. In general, the line between antisemitic and non-antisemitic speech is different from the line between unreasonable and reasonable speech.

3.2 April Rosenblum - 'The Past Didn't Go Anywhere: Making Resistance to Antisemitism a part of all our movements'

Rosenblum provides a more leftist analysis of antisemitism than the IHRA. Unlike the IHRA she links antisemitism to capitalism and racism. Rosenblum views antisemitism as primarily institutional and structural, whereas for the IHRA definition antisemitism is primarily about individual perception and hostility. Rosenblum puts much greater emphasis on the links between antisemitism and other forms of racism and discrimination, a facet of antisemitism which is less fully discussed in the IHRA definition. For both definitions, antisemitism is strongly linked to ideas of disproportionate Jewish power. Both definitions also share the idea that antisemitism is used as an explanation for failure, through Rosenblum's idea of scapegoating and the IHRA's statement that antisemitism is used 'when things go wrong'.

'How could Jews be oppressed?!

What comes to mind when you think of oppression? Poverty? Mass imprisonment? Exploitation of a group's labor? Theft of a country's resources? If you expect every oppression to look like those things, it may be hard to spot this one. The oppression of Jews often looks very different. But when you know the signs, you can see how the oppression of Jews today is alive and working the way it has for centuries.

A DEFINITION: Antisemitism, or anti-Jewish oppression, is the system of ideas passed down through a society's institutions to enable scapegoating of Jews, and the ideological or physical targeting of Jews that results from that.

The oppression of Jews has a lot in common with the oppressions that all kinds of other people are struggling with today. Racism, classism, sexism, homophobia and all oppressions serve twin functions: they control, endanger and disempower the targeted group, and at the same time, they help to keep a wider system of exploitation and inequality running smoothly. With antisemitism, it works like this:

- Jews are isolated, especially from other exploited groups - people who might normally be expected to team up with them and defend them in times of danger.
- Other oppressed groups get manipulated out of identifying and fighting the sources of their exploitation, instead being encouraged to channel their anger at Jews.
- Jews are targeted for violence or other danger, whether intentionally by local rulers, or spontaneously at the grassroots of society.
- In hopes of gaining safety, Jews are pressured to cooperate with rulers, to silence themselves and to not rise up against the powerful, for fear of greater targeting.

In the basic ways that it plays out, antisemitism is not so different from the ways that many diaspora communities get scapegoated throughout the world. Every oppression is also unique in some ways. In antisemitism's case, it's how the oppression was born: Early Christian leaders portrayed the Jews as the killers of Jesus, an idea that got institutionalized when, in every land Roman imperialism conquered and converted, a popular conception was spread of Jews as the "killers of God" in league with secret, diabolical forces. Later, as European societies modernized and grew more secular, images remained of Jews as the source of ultimate evil. Antisemitism as we know it, with its images of special, evil Jewish power, began as a Christian, European phenomenon; though Jews faced mistreatment in Muslim lands, it was a more generic 2nd-class citizenship applied to all non-

Muslims. However, with European colonization and inroads the Nazis made, European-style antisemitic theories have increasingly also entered Arab, Asian and other societies.

Over its history, anti-Jewish oppression has shifted forms between religious, racial and political persecution based on the times. But some beliefs have become fairly consistent:

- Jews have abnormal or supernatural amounts of power
- Jews are mysterious, or act secretly behind the scenes
- Jews are disproportionately the cause of harm in the world
- Jews are disloyal to, or seek the destruction of, the society they live in
- Jews are the “brains” behind the action
- Jews are wealthy or greedy.

In a world that’s very difficult to change, anti-semitism makes things seem easy to solve. It lets us fix our gaze on an imagined group of greedy, powerful Jews at the root of the world’s problems, and moves our eyes right past the systems that actually keep injustice in place: capitalism, weapons dealers, oil companies, you name it... and the overwhelmingly non-Jewish ruling classes who benefit from it all.’¹¹

3.3 Anthony Julius – ‘Trials of the Diaspora’

Anthony Julius stresses the varying nature of antisemitism. He identifies four different types of antisemitic discourse emanating from Britain: a radical antisemitism which involves direct calls for genocide, a literary form which involves invoking antisemitic tropes, an everyday antisemitism composed of small acts of social exclusion which might be referred to as ‘micro-aggressions’ and a version of antisemitism in which Israel is viewed as illegitimate because of its Jewishness. In his opinion, the final category scares him most. This differentiation between different types of antisemitism might effect, what type of response we take to it. He sees antisemitism as something which is rooted in English culture, whereas the IHRA definition is intended as an international example.

“There are many kinds of anti-Semitism, and among that number there are four that have an English provenance, either wholly or in substantial part:

- 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

¹¹ April Rosenblum, *The Past Didn’t Go Anywhere: Making Resistance to Anti-Semitism Part of All of our Movements* (Copyright free, 2007) <https://84f2d87c-60f4-4478-87d0-6980c5e46521.filesusr.com/ugd/4dc342_10d68441b6c44ee0a12909a242074ca6.pdf> [Accessed 6/7/2020].

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 more general positions are intimated, without ever being argued for."¹²

3.4 Jonathan Sacks – 'The Mutating Virus – Understanding Antisemitism'

Rabbi Sacks belonged to a group of largely right wing thinkers who believe in a 'new antisemitism' where antisemitism has become anti-Zionism. In doing this, Rabbi Sacks describes ideas that are not traditionally considered antisemitism, and omits a large swathe of what he describes as 'old antisemitism'. This 'New Antisemitism' thesis has been criticised for dismissing traditional antisemitism that doesn't use language around Israel, of the sort which we have seen among the far-right for decades, and for obfuscating the boundaries between legitimate criticism of Israel and antisemitic criticism of Israel. Rabbi Sacks' definition differs from the IHRA definition in that he conceptualises certain types of opposition to Israel, as the primary form of antisemitism within the modern day, as it denies Jews the right to exist on the same terms as everyone else. The IHRA's definition is much broader and focusses primarily on ideas that would be traditionally conceived of as antisemitism. They agree that some people do not differentiate between Israel and Jews and might be particularly hostile to Israel because they see it as a representative of the Jewish people, rather than as a genuine human rights concern.

'First let me define antisemitism. Not liking Jews is not antisemitism. We all have people we don't like. That's OK; that's human; it isn't dangerous. Second, criticizing Israel is not antisemitism. I was recently talking to some schoolchildren and they asked me: is criticizing Israel antisemitism? I said No and I explained the difference. I asked them: Do you believe you have a right to criticize the British government? They all put up their hands. Then I asked, which of you believes that Britain has no right to exist? No one put up their hands. Now you know the difference, I said, and they all did.

Antisemitism means denying the right of Jews to exist collectively as Jews with the same rights as everyone else. It takes different forms in different ages. In the Middle Ages, Jews were hated because of their religion. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century they were hated because of their race. Today they are hated because of their nation state, the state of Israel. It takes different forms but it remains the same thing: the view that Jews have no right to exist as free and equal human beings.... How did this happen? It happened the way viruses always defeat the human immune system, namely, by mutating. The new antisemitism is different from the old antisemitism, in three ways. I've already mentioned one. Once Jews were hated because of their religion. Then they were hated because of their race. Now they are hated because of their nation state. The second difference is that the epicenter of the old antisemitism was Europe. Today it's the Middle East and it is communicated globally by the new electronic media.

The third is particularly disturbing. Let me explain. It is easy to hate, but difficult publicly to justify hate. Throughout history, when people have sought to justify anti-Semitism, they have done so by recourse to the highest source of authority available within the culture. In the Middle Ages, it was religion. So we had religious anti-Judaism. In post-Enlightenment Europe it was science. So we had the twin foundations of Nazi ideology, Social Darwinism and the so-called Scientific Study of Race. Today the highest source of authority worldwide is human rights. That is why Israel—the only fully

¹² Anthony Julius, *Trials of the Diaspora* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.xxxvi-xxxvii

functioning democracy in the Middle East with a free press and independent judiciary—is regularly accused of the five cardinal sins against human rights: racism, apartheid, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and attempted genocide.

The new antisemitism has mutated so that any practitioner of it can deny that he or she is an antisemite. After all, they'll say, I'm not a racist. I have no problem with Jews or Judaism. I only have a problem with the State of Israel. But in a world of 56 Muslim nations and 103 Christian ones, there is only one Jewish state, Israel, which constitutes one-quarter of one per cent of the land mass of the Middle East. Israel is the only one of the 193 member nations of the United Nations that has its right to exist regularly challenged, with one state, Iran, and many, many other groups, committed to its destruction.

Antisemitism means denying the right of Jews to exist as Jews with the same rights as everyone else. The form this takes today is anti-Zionism. Of course, there is a difference between Zionism and Judaism, and between Jews and Israelis, but this difference does not exist for the new antisemites themselves. It was Jews not Israelis who were murdered in terrorist attacks in Toulouse, Paris, Brussels and Copenhagen. Anti-Zionism is the antisemitism of our time.'¹³

¹³ Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, 'Antisemitism: the Mutating Virus', *The Future of the Jewish Communities in Europe* Conference (The European Parliament, 2016)

4. Frequently Asked Questions

Who are Jews?

Jews are an ethnic, cultural and religious group, who derive from religious Jewish communities. Some are Jews by heritage, others convert to being Jewish. They come from all over the world, with communities from all parts of Europe, North Africa and West Asia, Ethiopia, and India. Jews may practice Judaism (the Jewish faith) but many are secular, or atheist. Jews have a variety of other ethnicities, and can be white, Middle Eastern, Black or any other ethnicity as well as being Jewish.

What is Zionism?

Zionism is a political movement for settlement of Jews in Palestine. For many Jews, Israel represents a place of Jewish safety after antisemitism and the holocaust in Europe. There are many different streams of Zionism. Zionism doesn't necessarily imply support for the state of Israel as it currently exists, or historically has existed. According to a 2015 survey, 57% of British Jews describe themselves as Zionist.¹⁴

Some non-Jews are also Zionist, usually either because of Christian beliefs about the apocalypse, or affiliation with Israel as it currently exists. Other non-Jews will not be particularly Zionist but will support Israel as it currently exists because of their other political beliefs, for example a support of allies of the US.

What is Israel?

Israel is a country in the Middle East. Not all Jews are Israeli and not all Israelis are Jews. Jews do not all have a connection to Israel though many do. Many antisemites adapt conspiracy theories surrounding Jews to refer to Israel, often depicting Israel as a hidden hand controlling world events or all Jews as working for Israel.

Sometimes this document mentions Zionism or Israel. Antizionism is not antisemitism!

It is true that antizionism is not antisemitism. It is not racist to criticise Israel, or to be forthright in that criticism. There is no direct relationship between antizionism and antisemitism. Antizionism isn't antisemitism but it does not preclude antisemitism. Antizionists can have antisemitic views as much as people who hold any other political ideology, such as Zionists, liberals, socialists or conservatives.

Sometimes racists pretend to be antizionist or anti-Israel in order to make their racism seem more respectable. The BNP, for example often used the slur 'Zio', referencing Zionism, to mean Jew.

This document is intended to protect legitimate criticism of Israel, while providing the guidance needed for the disciplinary committee to fully deal with those who are racist, and those who pretend to be antizionist to make their racism seem more acceptable.

Will this document stop legitimate criticism of Israel?

¹⁴ Stephen Miller, Margeret Harris, Colin Schindler, *The Attitudes of British Jews towards Israel* (London: Yachad, 2015)

This document is not intended as a set of rules but as an educational resource to enable the disciplinary committee to identify and understand antisemitism. It would be completely legitimate and in keeping with Green Party policy and values to criticise Israel for its treatment of Palestinians.

For example, while none of these would be uncontroversial positions, it would not necessarily be antisemitic to state:

- Israel is an apartheid state.
- Israel's treatment of its Palestinian population is undemocratic.
- Palestinians are increasingly ruled by a military regime they have no democratic control of.
- Israel should lift the siege of Gaza.
- Israel, like Australia, Canada or the US is a settler colonial state.
- Racism is a fundamental part of modern statecraft, including in Israel.
- The current Israeli government (of October 2020) is a participant in global white supremacist networks
- BDS is an important tool for solidarity with Palestinians and for delivering political change from outside of Israel.

Whilst these views don't constitute acts of antisemitism in themselves, it should be noted that it is possible for someone to have these views and also be antisemitic.

What is meant by the clause 'Applying double standards by requiring of it [Israel] a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation?' in the IHRA definition. Does this mean criticising Israel's very imperfect democracy would become against the rules?

This is an educational document and doesn't constitute a set of rules.

This clause refers to the key rule for criticising Israel without being antisemitic, which is to criticise Israel in the way that you would criticise any other state which has similar policies and was responsible for similar human rights abuses. Any criticism of Israel that is well evidenced and based on the real actions of the state would not be antisemitic under this clause. It is important that criticism of Israel is rooted in an understanding of racism as a global phenomenon, exported round the world by colonial structures, and that the current government of Israel is exemplary of this trend as much it is exceptional to it.

Attempts to point to Israel as the singular and only example of racism could very well be motivated by antisemitism, and a desire to frame Jews as the only perpetrators of racism. There are also examples where 'depending on context', pointing to Israel as the singular example of racism, i.e 'double standards' would not be motivated by antisemitism, for example being a victim of racism from the Israeli state, or being ignorant of other examples of racism globally.

With a strong set of guidance material and robust education within the party on racism, it should be entirely possible for the disciplinary committee to distinguish between these.

Does the IHRA definition and/or this document stop free speech?

No. The IHRA is a definition of antisemitism. As the Jewish Community Security Trust note, it is intended to be used as a tool for understanding antisemitism, rather than a quasi-legal set of guidelines to be applied. It is unclear how the act of reading a document in order to come to a better understanding of antisemitism would follow through to a restriction of free speech.

Why shouldn't I use Nazi comparisons to talk about Israel?

Describing a Jewish polity as being like those that perpetrated a genocide against them is at best very distasteful. When people are comparing Israel to the Nazis this criticism is articulated on the basis that Jews are failing to live up to a moral duty as survivors of Nazism. It targets Israel as a Jewish polity rather than criticising it as you would criticise any other state that does the same thing. There are much better comparisons that can be used, for example to other settler colonial states i.e South Africa, Australia, Canada, other states with a limited or racialised electoral franchise, like the US, other states with active occupation such as Indonesia or Morocco, or other states with poor human rights records which are supported by Western Europe and the US, for example Saudi Arabia, Morocco or Bahrain.

Some holocaust deniers extend the use of Nazi comparisons when talking about Israel. They claim that not only is the state of Israel like Nazi Germany, it was an active collaborator with Nazi Germany, or perpetrated the genocide of Jews rather than the Nazis. This is obviously flagrantly antisemitic.

It would obviously not be antisemitic for a holocaust survivor or their descendants to use their family experience to talk about Israel. This is covered in the 'dependent on context' clause in the IHRA.

5. I want to find out more!

While this document has provided an overview of some perspectives on antisemitism. There is a broad swathe of literature on antisemitism, which goes into much more detail and has many more specific examples. Here is a brief bibliography containing helpful articles and books to help you find out more about antisemitism.

Antisemitism Resources by and from the Left

Jewish Voice for Peace, *On Antisemitism: Solidarity and the Struggle for Justice* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2017)

Jews for Economic and Racial Justice (JFREJ), 'Understanding Antisemitism: An Offering to Our Movements' ed. by Leo Ferguson, Dove Kent, Keren Soffer Sharon (November 2017)

<<https://www.jfrej.org/assets/uploads/JFREJ-Understanding-Antisemitism-November-2017-v1-3-2.pdf>> [Accessed 14/7/2020]

Levins Morales, Aurora, 'Latinas, Israel and Palestine: Understanding Antisemitism'

<http://www.auroralevinsmorales.com/blog/latins-israel-and-palestine-understanding-anti-semitism>

Marom, Yotam 'Towards the Next Jewish Rebellion: Facing Antisemitism and Assimilation in the Movement' <https://medium.com/@YotamMarom/toward-the-next-jewish-rebellion-bed5082c52fc>

Ward, Eric K, *Skin in the Game: How Antisemitism Animates White Nationalism* (Political Research, 2017) <<https://www.politicalresearch.org/2017/06/29/skin-in-the-game-how-antisemitism-animates-white-nationalism>>

Useful Websites

Board of Deputies - <https://www.bod.org.uk/resources/>

Community Security Trust - <https://cst.org.uk/>

Jewish Policy Research - <https://www.jpr.org.uk/>

Socialists Against Antisemitism "Gallery of Antisemitism" - <https://www.saasuk.org/gallery-of-antisemitism/>

TUC training on antisemitism - <https://learning.elucidat.com/course/5daed7c9acd4e-5f29224dd8003> (via <https://www.tuc.org.uk/training>)

Book Length Works

Beller, Steve, *Antisemitism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019)

Kahn Harris, Keith, *Strange Hate: Antisemitism, Racism and the Limits of Diversity* (London: Repeater, 2019)

Lindemann, Albert and Richard Levy, *Antisemitism: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

Rich, Dave, *The Left's Jewish Problem: Jeremy Corbyn, Israel and Antisemitism* (Hull: Biteback, 2016)

Baddiel, David, *Jews Don't Count* (London: TLS Books, 2021)