

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community
Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
SCoJeC

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House of Commons Debate

Anti-Semitism

col 247 **The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (Sajid Javid):** ... This debate is about a prejudice with a long past, an all-too-lively present and a future that is for us to determine. This is the first general debate on anti-Semitism that we have had in this House. This is an issue that should concern not just the Jewish community, but all communities on both sides of the House. I think I speak for all of us in not wanting this to be an issue that we have to grapple with in the next decade, in the next Government and indeed, at the next general election. This is an issue that has come to a head now, and we must deal with it now. ...

What we need to achieve today is to show the Jewish community in our country, and indeed those who may be watching abroad, that we do get it, that both sides of this House stand united in recognising the pernicious prejudice of anti-Semitism and in recognising the anxiety that is felt within the community here in Britain in 2018, and that we are listening to their concerns carefully, with humility and determination. ...

To combat anti-Semitism we must first understand the true nature of the problem. In December 2016, the UK became the first country to formally adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of anti-Semitism ... This definition was also adopted by the Labour party, and it includes the following:

“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.”

col 248 These tropes have been around for a very, very long time—the world’s oldest hatred. ...

Unfortunately, in recent years, this weed has found fertile soil in the corners of social media and political activism in our country, especially those cloaked in anti-Israel and anti-Zionist sentiment. Criticisms of actions taken by the Israeli Government are one thing, but for many, it is simply a mask for anti-Jewish, racist sentiment. In general, Britain can be proud of its peaceful and tolerant environment for Jews, but that is in danger of changing. Across Europe and the United States, anti-Semitism is on the rise.

Last year, the Community Security Trust recorded 1,346 anti-Semitic incidents in the UK—the highest on record. These incidents include, for example, graffiti at a synagogue in Leeds, social media abuse of Jewish figures—not least, Members of Parliament—and Jewish schoolchildren being physically and verbally attacked on a school bus. In some

ways, this type of explicit anti-Semitism is easier to recognise and to tackle head on—the hate preachers, the extremist mosques, and far-right and far-left groups—but much more of it is oblique. A search on Google produces more than half a million hits for “holocaust hoax”. Thousands more pages tell people that a greedy Otto Frank forged his daughter’s diary in a cunning scheme to try to make some money. Then there are the dinner party anti-Semites, self-regarding and respectable people who recoil at the accusation of racism but are quite happy to trot out modern takes on old tropes. In fact, this has become so pervasive that recent research by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, funded by the Community Security Trust and my Department, found that a shocking 30% of those surveyed believed in one or more anti-Semitic trope. ...

col 249 **Susan Elan Jones (Labour):** In 15 or 16 countries across continental Europe, holocaust denial is a crime. In Germany, I believe, sentences can go up to 5 years. Does the Secretary of State think there is a case for reviewing the law in this country?

Sajid Javid: We have no plans to review the law on this, because we also value freedom of speech ...

Stephen Doughty (Labour Co-op): ... I reported a very clear anti-Semitic mural and image to Facebook, which came back to me and told me that it should not have to be removed ... Does the Secretary of State not agree with me that it is a high time we took serious action against Facebook, YouTube, Google and all those who continue to propagate extremist material of all sorts on the internet?

Sajid Javid: ... More is being done and the speed at which things are coming down once they are reported is faster than ever before, but I agree with the general direction of his comments. More needs to be done.

Anti-Semitism can be found in both extremes of the political spectrum, far right and far left. ... we cannot and must not ignore the particular concern with elements within the Labour party, and nor can we ignore the fact that this increasing concern is correlating with the current Leader of the Opposition and the waves of activists that have come with him. ...

col 250 It is not surprising that in any large group of politically minded activists, a few bigots and oddballs sometimes slip through the net. ... The sensible question is not so much whether someone has ever been associated in some way with these people and their attitudes as whether there is a culture that attracts them and is allowed to fester. Unfortunately, when it comes to the Leader of the Opposition, there are simply too many of his apparently accidental associations to list. As the Board of Deputies of British Jews put it in a letter to the Leader of the Opposition, “Rightly or wrongly, those who push this offensive material regard Jeremy Corbyn as their figurehead.” ...

col 251 The fight against anti-Semitism is led by my Department in co-ordination with the Home Office, and involves colleagues from across Westminster.

On a practical level, we have increased our funding for security at Jewish schools and places of worship by a further £13.4 million this year. The solid work of the cross-Government working group on tackling anti-Semitism ensures that we are alive to their issues and concerns, and our national strategy for tackling hate crime recognises the importance of dealing with abuse specifically targeted at Jews. The Crown Prosecution Service has made it clear that it will be treating reports of online abuse just as seriously as the offline version. There will be no place anywhere to hide when it comes to hate crime. ...

... ultimately to win this battle we have to cut out the roots of this weed. The best way to do that and to focus minds is to ask people where anti-Semitism leads if left unchecked. As the Holocaust Educational Trust says, “when we understand where prejudice leads, we can stop it in its tracks.” ...

After all, the holocaust did not begin in the gas chambers: indiscriminate killing is simply where hatred when left unchecked reaches its tragic conclusion. The holocaust began with nothing more than words, but then came the insults, the boycotts, the discrimination; the noxious weed of anti-Semitism crept into everyday life, degrading, denouncing and

dehumanising its victims until the stage was set for more. ...

col 252 Lessons from history do not learn themselves. Even the most barbaric events in human history lose their edge over time. Events as recently as one generation ago have less resonance with the youngest generation, so this has to start with education. ...

That is why my Department is ... supporting the HET and the Union of Jewish Students to expand its “lessons from Auschwitz” programme to help tackle anti-Semitism on university campuses. We also support #StandUp, which tackles anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and we are working with the Anne Frank Trust to address hatred and prejudice in some of the most challenging schools. ...

Finally, and most symbolically, we are supporting with £50 million of public money a new national holocaust memorial and learning centre right beside Parliament. This memorial will ... act as a permanent, prominent reminder of mankind’s capacity for darkness through the story of the holocaust and other genocides, but also of the capacity for good by those who refused to look the other way ...

col 253 **Andrew Gwynne (Labour):** ... As politicians, we all—and I mean all—have a duty to root out anti-Semitism, but recent events have shown that we in the Labour party need to be better at policing our own borders. ... Reflecting the existing defects of society can never be enough. It is our responsibility to show that we have zero tolerance of anti-Semitism in the Labour party. There is no place for anti-Semitism in the Labour party, on the left of British politics or in British society at all. End of. ...

We cannot allow any allegations of anti-Semitism to be kept on the back burner. Where there is an allegation of anti-Semitism, we must not only call it out but root it out. ...

In the light of recent events, however, I acknowledge that much, much more work needs to be done. That includes, among other things, the overdue full implementation of the recommendations of the Chakrabarti report, including a programme of political education to increase awareness and understanding of all forms of anti-Semitism. ...

col 254 Let me be clear today that if anyone is denying the reality of anti-Semitism on the left, they are not doing so with the endorsement of the Labour party or its leader. Prejudice against and hatred of Jewish people have no place whatsoever in society, and every one of us has a responsibility to ensure that they are never allowed to fester again. ...

Ian Austin (Labour): ... Ken Livingstone claimed that Hitler was a Zionist. That is anti-Semitism, pure and simple. It happened more than two years ago, and there has been ample time to deal with it, so it is a disgrace that it has not been dealt with. Kick him out immediately. ...

col 255 **Andrew Gwynne:** ... The CST reports that 88 incidents targeted Jewish schools, schoolchildren or staff, with 50% of those incidents taking place as Jewish schoolchildren made their journeys to or from school. In one incident, fireworks were thrown at visibly Jewish people in public in November; in another, Jewish schoolchildren were hit, kicked and punched on the bus home, but were ignored by the driver when they tried to get help—the children fled the bus at the next stop but were followed, and found safety only after they entered a kosher shop and asked for help. It is a mark of shame on our society that our Jewish schools need security guards to protect their children.

On social media, as we have heard, anti-Semitism is in plain sight on the most heavily used sites. ...

But anti-Semitism not only appears as swastikas, brown shirts and jackboots; it also haunts our society as coded language and dog-whistle euphemisms. In the 1930s, the terms “usury”, “money power”, “alien” and “cosmopolitan” were used as coded references to Jewish people. Today, Jewish people in the public eye are marked out as “globalists”, “rootless cosmopolitans” and the “metropolitan London elite”. It runs through conspiracy theories, as holocaust inversion and holocaust denial, in anti-Zionism and in claims of secret plots against our country that are little different from those seen in “The Protocols of the Elders of Zion.” ...

col 256 The holocaust was a dreadful chapter in our world’s history. It happened, and we

should never ever forget what happened during those very, very dark days. Those who deny that the holocaust happened need to be called out at every opportunity. ...

Angela Smith (Labour): ... does [Andrew Gwynne] not accept that anti-Semitism is one of those areas of public debate where the far left meets the far right, and that if the far left continues to behave in this way, there is a real danger of inciting further hatred and violence against one of our most vulnerable communities?

Andrew Gwynne: Absolutely.

Andrew Percy (Conservative): Will the hon. Gentleman accept, however, that when people specifically target just the state of Israel, whether they consider the Government of Israel to have acted appropriately or not—only the Government of Israel; not the Governments of other countries around the world with whom they may have similar issues—that can be and very often is a cover for anti-Semitism?

Andrew Gwynne: And where it is clearly a cover for anti-Semitism, we have to call that out—let us be clear about that. But criticism of the Israeli Government, just like criticism of the British Government, is absolutely crucial, because that is part of our democratic process. Those who cross this distinction have no role to play in the struggle to put an end to anti-Jewish oppression within the United Kingdom, and they have no role to play in the process to establish peace and reconciliation in the middle east. ...

col 257 That peace will only come through engagement and deep mutual recognition between the two peoples—a recognition of Palestinians' struggle for freedom and human dignity; and of the centuries of attempts by the Jewish people to flee forced conversion, violence and expulsion. Jewish oppression affects all Jews, in all economic classes, and the oppression of Jewish people cannot be ended without transforming social injustice as a whole. ...

Zionism is not an insult. It is not a catchphrase, a code word for racism or imperialism, or a name for unpleasant things done by Jews. It stands for a huge range of beliefs and believers. When we fail to recognise this, we assist those on the extremes as they use anti-Semitism to cover up the roots of injustice and shift the blame on to those who are most oppressed. ...

col 258 **Graham Brady (Conservative):** ... There are 2,000 to 2,500 Jewish residents in my constituency, but I suspect that there are many more who identify as Jewish but are not particularly observant. ... The community is a model of integration, contributing fully to the wider civic and cultural life of the area, but it also maintains its own religious and cultural traditions. There is an excellent record of interfaith co-operation with local Muslim and Christian groups.

Nevertheless, in Manchester, as elsewhere, there has been an insidious growth in the number of anti-Semitic incidents. ... the past two years have seen the largest figures on record, with the number of incidents rising to nearly 1,400 last year ... In some ways, the most worrying thing about that increase is that unlike some previous peaks in anti-Semitism, it has not been driven by wars involving Israel. Rather, it seems that an increasing minority—often on the extreme right or the extreme left of British politics—have come to regard anti-Semitism as in some way normal or acceptable. It is not. ...

Some appear to have persuaded themselves that anti-Semitism is something other than racism. They are wrong. It is of course possible to criticise Israel without being anti-Semitic. British Jews themselves often have a lively debate about policy in Israel, but all too often that criticism of Israel blurs into anti-Semitism through the use of language—whether careless or deliberate. ...

col 259 There is a greater willingness for some to tolerate attacks on Jewish people. I was powerfully struck by this a few weeks ago when a Jewish constituent in his sixties sat in my constituency surgery and told me that he is now worried about anti-Semitism for the first time in his life. ...

Stewart Malcolm McDonald (SNP): ... It is worth reflecting on the history of the Jewish community in Scotland. Scotland is the only country in the world that has never had an anti-Semitic text on the statute book. Indeed, the Declaration of Arbroath ... specifically

refers to Jews and Gentiles as equal citizens. ...

col 260 I have visited a whole range of museums in the three great cities of Paris, Berlin and New York, but there was only one museum in each city where I had to be searched before I entered. There was only one museum where I had to empty my backpack, check in my jacket and go through metal detectors. It was the Jewish museum in Berlin. It was the Jewish museum in Paris. It was the Jewish museum in New York. This shows a people still feeling hunted, with airport-style security at their museums and security outside their schools. ...

It is rather depressing that we cannot debate anti-Semitism these days without coming to the issue of Israel and Palestine. When that conflict escalates, as it does over time, it is unacceptable to expect Jewish people in this country to shoulder any responsibility for that escalation. I do not hold the Muslim community responsible for the crimes of Muslim Governments across the world, so I will not allow anybody to hold responsible Jewish people in my constituency or elsewhere for the actions of the Government of Israel ...

Richard Graham (Conservative): ... does the hon. Gentleman agree that we reject anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and any form of racism, and that we absolutely reserve the right to criticise the Israeli Government for illegal settlement and to criticise Hamas for storing armaments in schools or hospital compounds? The two things are separate and different. ...

col 261 **Stewart Malcolm McDonald:** In 2016, the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities carried out a study called, "Being Jewish in Scotland". Many of its findings should make any Member of Parliament representing Scotland, any Member of the Scottish Parliament or any Scottish councillor deeply worried. It showed us that when tensions between Israel and Palestine escalate, fear levels rise significantly among the Jewish communities in Scotland. It told us that Jewish people in Scotland actually try to hide the fact that they are Jewish. It will be no different in other parts of the United Kingdom, and that should of course shame us all. ...

col 262 **Robert Halfon (Conservative):** ... I have been amazed to see guards outside synagogues. ... I remember being at a synagogue where the rabbi said to the Jewish people inside, "Please do not congregate outside when we finish the service because you might get abuse or something even worse." I thought, "How can it be, in the 21st century, when we thought we had escaped the horrors of Nazi Germany, that Jews are told that by a rabbi in a synagogue?"

There appears to be in some sections of the left an accepted belief that all Jews are either Israeli settlers, very rich, or part of the capitalist establishment, and these claims are then linked to even more sinister conspiracy theories.

At best, it used to be acceptable to use the fig leaf of "Zionist" or "Israelite" as a cloak for anti-Semitism. Now, anti-Semitism has got so bad that the people who hate the Jews do not even use those terms any more. Anti-Semitism is out in its naked viciousness for everyone to see. The air has grown tighter; you feel very hot, you undo a button on your shirt and your mouth goes dry. This is still a great country and a wonderful place for Jewish people, but things have changed. ...

col 263 Facebook and Twitter have become social networks acting as a septic tank in which a disgusting and non-stop stream of anti-Semitic sewage collects. What is even worse is that when someone is a victim of anti-Semitism on social media sites, the duty is on them to get it corrected and not the other way round. Why are books and newspapers rightly punished for the publication of any kind of anti-Semitic content, but social media platforms act with impunity? ...

Luciana Berger (Labour Co-op): ... I grew up in multicultural north-west London and went to a Christian school. I had friends of all faiths and none. I had never seen anti-Semitism as a child, but I knew from my own family history what anti-Semitism was. During a debate in 1938, Commander Robert Tatton Bower MP told my great uncle, the hon. Member for Seaham, across the Floor of the House to "go back to Poland". The most pernicious and haunting examples came from the holocaust. On my mum's side

alone, we know that more than 100 members of her family, aged from four to 83, were sent by the Nazis to their death in the gas chambers of Treblinka, Sobibór, Mauthausen, Bergen-Belsen and Auschwitz, for no other reason than that they were Jewish.

col 264 I was 19 when I received my first piece of hate mail—it described me as a dirty Zionist pig—and so started my 18-year experience of contending with anti-Semitism. As a university student and activist, I was attacked from all quarters from the far right to the far left. I had members of Hizb ut-Tahrir, an anti-Semitic and homophobic organisation follow me and camp outside my house. I received countless anti-Semitic emails and letters condemning my work as the convenor of the National Union of Students anti-racism campaign. ...

In total, four people have been convicted since 2013 for the anti-Semitic abuse and harassment they have directed towards me. Three of those were imprisoned; they were of a far right persuasion, including a member of the now proscribed National Action organisation. In the wake of one of those convictions, a far right website in the United States initiated the #filthyjewbitch campaign, which the police said resulted in me receiving over 2,500 violent, pornographic and extreme anti-Semitic messages in just one day alone. ...

col 265 There are people who have accused me of having two masters. They have said that I am Tel Aviv's servant, and called me a paid-up Israeli operative. Essentially, this is anti-Semitism of the worst kind, suggesting that I am a traitor to our country. They have called me Judas, a Zionazi and an absolute parasite, and they have told me to get out of this country and go back to Israel.

I am grateful to the Community Security Trust and to the police for their work to keep me and my family safe, and for all that they do for the British Jewish community to keep our Jewish schools and our places of worship safe, but they should not have to do that. ...

We have a duty to the next generation. Denial is not an option. Prevarication is not an option. Being a bystander who turns the other way is not an option. The time for action is now. Enough really is enough.

I want to conclude with the eloquent words of the former Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks, who said that “an assault upon Jews is an assault upon difference, and a world that has no room for difference has no room for humanity itself”. ...

col 266 **Andrew Percy:** ... Anti-Semitism is racism. There are no ifs or buts—it is simple racism. I want to start by saying that I think Britain is a good place for Jews to live. ...

The situation is not good in Britain, although it is a lot better than that in many parts of Europe ... But there are difficult questions to be asked about anti-Semitism in this country and where it comes from, and we must ask some of those challenging questions. As I heard from our own Chief Rabbi at the global forum on anti-Semitism in Jerusalem just a few weeks ago, there are questions to be asked about certain communities. A recent study undertaken by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research found that certain communities in this country, particularly the Muslim communities, are twice as likely to hold deeply anti-Semitic views. They are also more likely to be on the receiving end—of Islamophobia, of course, and of racism too, so they are victims, but there are issues that need to be raised ...

col 267 What I saw throughout this debate was the Leader of the Opposition chuntering repeatedly when anybody stood up and tried to hold him to account for some of the things that people have said and done in his name. This is a leader of the Labour party who found himself not in one, but in four or five racist anti-Semitic Facebook groups by accident. He did not look at the material. He did not read the material. He did not know the material was there. He did not understand the material. He looked at the mural and made a comment on the mural, but he did not know about it. How are we supposed to believe any of this? ...

I am sorry the Leader of the Opposition has left his place, because he needs to be held to account. The question I would like to have asked him is why he still has not taken the opportunity to respond to the invite from the Labour party in Israel to visit Israel and to

visit Yad Vashem. ...

Labour member after Labour member has made all sorts of disgusting comments about Jews. I just want to give one example—that of a suspended Labour member, Laura Stuart from Hendon. Reference was made earlier to Sir Eric Pickles, the Prime Minister's envoy on post-holocaust education. Laura Stuart felt the need to post a picture on Facebook of a photograph from the Holocaust Educational Trust that had been changed to include the words "Zionist fairy tales" and "fat Zionist conference". A Labour party member did this. There are countless other examples. ...

col 268 how can one possibly be moderate in one's language when we are dealing with a leader of a political party in this country who has stood up and described people who want to wipe Jews off the planet as his friends? ...

John Mann (Labour): ... 13 years ago I took on the role of chairing the all-party group against anti-Semitism ... When I took on this voluntary cross-party role, I did not expect my wife to be sent, by a Labour Marxist anti-Semite, a dead bird through the post. I did not expect my son, after an Islamist death threat, to open the door, when he was in the house on his own as a schoolboy, to the bomb squad. I did not expect my wife, in the last few weeks, from a leftist anti-Semite in response to the demonstration, to be threatened with rape. I did not expect my daughter similarly to have to be rung up in the last few weeks by special branch to check out her movements in this country. ...

col 269 It does not end with me and my family. It does not end with Jewish Members of Parliament here. Where this stuff ends is with what happened in Copenhagen, in Brussels and in France repeatedly, including four weeks ago: people murdered because they are Jewish. That is where this ends, and we know where history takes that. That is the reality now. ...

I am stopped in the street everywhere I go now by Jewish people saying to me, very discreetly, "I am scared." Young people and old people say, "I am scared." We see what happened in France, in Belgium and in Copenhagen and we understand why people are scared. ...

Any Jewish person is entitled to say that they are, to define themselves as, an anti-Zionist, or a non-Zionist, and I have no right to challenge them. Any Jewish person, as the vast majority do, is entitled to say, "I am a Zionist," and I have no right to deny them that. Those that do are racists. ...

col 270 **Theresa Villiers (Conservative):** ... As it has in the past, anti-Semitism has mutated into different forms and found different outlets. Yes, it lingers in the poisonous rantings of the extreme right, but there can be no doubt that it has been given a new lease of life by radical Islamism and the militant anti-Zionism of the radical left. It has been given a powerful new platform by social media. ...

The [2006 APPG against antisemitism] report was also clear that criticism of the Government of Israel can and does become polluted by anti-Semitism. Such criticism is not, as people have pointed out, anti-Semitic in itself, but equating contemporary Israeli policy with the Nazis most certainly is. So, too, is holding Jewish people collectively responsible for the actions of the Government of Israel. ...

The 2006 report warned: "It is increasingly the case that, because anger over Israel's policies can provide a pretext, condemnation of antisemitism is often too slow and increasingly conditional." ...

col 272 **Ruth Smeeth (Labour):** ... Over the past two years ... I have experienced something genuinely painful: attacks on my identity from within my own Labour family. I have been the target of a campaign of abuse, attempted bullying and intimidation from people who would dare to tell me that people like me have no place in the party of which I have been a member for over 20 years, and which I am proud to represent on these Benches. ...

I would like to read out a small sample of what I have received on social media, but before doing so, I have to thank the dedicated team at the CST who have protected me, shielded me from as much of this abuse as possible, and worked with the police on the

occasions when abuse became threats. ...

- “Hang yourself you vile treacherous Zionist Tory filth. You are a cancer of humanity.”
- “Ruth Smeeth is a Zionist—she has no shame—and trades on the murder of Jews by Hitler—whom the Zionists betrayed.”
- “Ruth Smeeth must surely be travelling 1st class to Tel Aviv with all that slush. After all, she’s complicit in trying to bring Corbyn down.”
- “First job for Jeremy Corbyn tomorrow—expel the Zionist BICOM smear hag bitch Ruth Smeeth from the Party.”
- “This Ruth Smeeth bitch is Britainophobic, we need to cleanse our nation of these types.”
- “#JC4PM Deselect Ruth Smeeth ASAP. Poke the pig—get all Zionist child killer scum out of Labour.”
- “You are a spy! You are evil, satanic! Leave! #Labour #Corbyn.”
- “Ruth you are a Zionist plant, I’m ashamed you are in Labour. Better suited to the murderous Knesset! #I Support Ken.”
- “Your fellow traitor Tony Blair abolished hanging for treason. Your kind need to leave before we bring it back #Smeeth Is Filth.” ...
- “The gallows would be a fine and fitting place for this dyke piece of Yid shit to swing from.”

This is merely a snapshot, and the comments are those that I would feel comfortable—if that is the right word—to say in this place. ...

col 273 What is so heartbreaking is the concerted effort in some quarters to downplay the problem. For every comment like those we have just heard, we can find 10 people ready to dismiss it—to cry “Smear”; to say that we are “weaponising” anti-Semitism. ...

I am speaking not just for me, but for the young Jewish people I meet across the country who are beginning to fear they do not have a place. ...

There is something more fundamental at stake here than any party’s policy platform or electoral performance: the right of Jewish people to participate in the politics of our country as equals. Last month we heard a plea: enough is enough. I stand here today to say that we will not be bullied out of political engagement, that we are going nowhere, and that we will stand and keep fighting until the evils of anti-Semitism are removed from our society. ...

col 274 **Priti Patel (Conservative):** ... Racist and anti-Semitic attitudes have festered and brewed on the hard right but also on the left, and there is absolutely no justification for those attitudes or behaviours. There is no justification for people to claim to be emboldened, perhaps through social media, to make vicious and vitriolic comments about the “Jewish lobby” and the “Israeli lobby”, or about “conspiracies”. There is no justification for the stereotypical racist attitudes and abuse that are deliberately targeted at members of the Jewish community in Britain today. It is appalling that we now see anti-Semitism in all forms ...

I pay tribute ... to the Community Security Trust, which has done so much to support the Jewish community and keep it safe. In the community that I grew up in, in Radlett in Hertfordshire, we saw the CST outside synagogues and schools, protecting children and families. Now, however, we see Jewish students at university who feel unsafe because they are being threatened, victimised and targeted. I was shocked to read an account of a debate at City University this year in which a female student was being targeted and experiencing pure hatred. ... She said that she now felt completely unsafe being a Jew in the city of London. ...

col 275 **Lisa Nandy (Labour):** ... It is devastating that this generation has not grappled and dealt with the problems that were a persistent feature of my childhood. This House has no right to look away now when the problems are happening again. My party has no right to pick and choose how and when we decide to confront racism in this country.

It is right to say, as a Labour Front Bencher did this week, that anti-Semitism exists across society, but it is wrong to go on and say, as my hon. Friend the Member for Brent North (Barry Gardiner) then did, that what is happening in the Labour party is merely a reflection of society, because a particular sort of anti-Semitism has found its home on the far left throughout history. ...

What do holocaust denial, references to financiers of the sugar and slave trades, and the horrific mural that recently resurfaced that depicted Jewish bankers profiting off the backs of the poor have in common? It is the demonisation of Jews as somehow wielding illegitimate power, a demonisation which forces people to deny any suffering, especially the horror of the Holocaust. It is a form of racism that instead of looking down, as usual, looks up and argues that because this group supposedly wields illegitimate power it is therefore a legitimate target for the left, which fights oppression in all forms. ...

Stephen Doughty: ... I have just seen a tweet from someone claiming to be a member of Momentum suggesting that those of us who have spoken out about anti-Semitism have taken a bounty of £1 million from Israel to undermine the leader of the Labour party. That absurdity must be rooted out, too. ...

col 276 **Lisa Nandy:** ... In recent months, we have seen a rise in anti-Semitic attacks in Britain, a murder in France, attacks on synagogues in Sweden, and fascists on the march in Poland. It is no wonder that, as one constituent who wrote to thank me for speaking out about the issue in the Labour party said, "People are frightened." ...

The Labour party ought to be the light on the hill for people in times of darkness, and it shames us that we are a source of pain because a small group of people has been allowed a voice, and that demands concrete action. Expel Ken Livingstone—it has been nearly two years—deal with the thousands of complaints that are waiting to be heard, and bring in training for members. ...

As vice-chair of Labour Friends of Palestine for the past six years, I have stood together with Jewish and non-Jewish colleagues against illegal settlements and demolitions, and in support and defence of the Palestinian people. I have never been as moved as when I visited the west bank and saw Israeli Jewish mums volunteering in military courts to advocate for the right of Palestinian mums to be heard. It is a disgrace that some in our party seek to divide and sow hatred when those mums have managed to reach across that divide and do the opposite.

Anti-Semitism tells us that something is rotten in our society. It is not enough for us to decry the shrill, sour, hopeless dog-whistle politics that we have heard from the other side in recent years; we have to be better. ...

col 277 **Paul Masterton (Conservative):** ... Founded in 1914, the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council ... works to develop relationships between the Jewish community and other civic and religious groups. ... They were on the frontline when a sales assistant had acid poured over her head in Braehead shopping centre because she worked on a stall selling Israeli cosmetic products. They were on the frontline when the community woke to find a swastika spray painted on the side of a sheltered housing block with the words—I apologise in advance—"Jewish cunts. Jews out."

In 2013, the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities published a report on "Being Jewish in Scotland." They have since produced an update, entitled "What's Changed about Being Jewish in Scotland?" The front cover of that update featured two quotes. The first said: "I would never before have considered it risky to show my Jewish identity in public. However that is changing."

The second said: "I used to be comfortable as a Jew in Scotland, but not any more." ...

col 278 ... anti-Semitism is not just about the tweet, the picture on Facebook or the mural on the side of the London building; it is about the recipient—the innocent family member, friend, colleague, who is targeted, provoked, attacked, for no reason other than being Jewish. It is about the person made to feel unsafe and unwelcome in their home, and they do not deserve it. ...

I spent Wednesday evening commemorating the 6 million Jews killed in the holocaust —

the horrifying reminder of where anti-Semitism can lead. Just 48 hours previously, a brick had been thrown through the front door of that synagogue. ...

Ivan Lewis (Independent): I, like many Jews, love this country because of its tolerance and sense of fairness. We are proud to be British and Jewish, and no one has ever asked me to choose between the two. That is how the vast majority of UK Jews felt until recently, but, sadly, it is no longer the case. A significant number are deeply anxious and insecure. They wonder aloud whether to leave and question whether their children have a future here. ...

Anti-Semitism on the left is not new and it did not begin when the right hon. Member for Islington North (Jeremy Corbyn) became leader of the Labour party. ... I do not believe he, personally, is anti-Semitic. However, his leadership has attracted new members whose anti-Semitism is pernicious and exposed long-standing members whose use of anti-Semitic language and imagery is shocking. It is also wrong that in the past he has failed to call out ideological allies when their anti-Semitism was clear for all to see.

col 279 There are two primary forms of contemporary anti-Semitism that the party must address. The first is imagery and rhetoric suggesting that secret cabals of Jews run the world and are responsible for capitalism's excesses. In this warped world view, Jews are not worthy of protection from racism because, unlike other minorities, they hold power and wealth. The second is hostility towards Israel and the bastardisation of the word "Zionism". Zionism means the right to self-determination of the Jewish people in their own state. Other than for a small minority, it does not mean expansionism or aggression. The left leads campaigns for the right of many minorities to self-determination around the world—why are the Jews different? ...

col 280 **Louise Ellman (Labour Co-op):** ... The refusal to accept and address anti-Semitism in our ranks led to an unprecedented response from the mainstream Jewish community, when more than 1,000 people poured into Parliament Square in their anger and anguish, to protest against the Labour party's inaction in dealing with anti-Semitism. I commend the 40-plus non-Jewish MPs and peers who joined that rally. Those who denounced the demonstrators as having dubious motives, subject to manipulation, and accused them of using this issue to smear the Labour leadership, must ask themselves whether they would make that allegation against any other minority group. I think not. They should look in the mirror and ask themselves why—why do they regard Jewish people in a different light from all others?

It is a fallacy to believe that people who profess to be anti-racist cannot be anti-Semitic, and that anti-Semitism is confined to the right wing of politics. The notion of conspiratorial, powerful Jews—or Zionists—controlling international capital and manipulating the media for their own ends is to be found on the left as well. ...

The small British Jewish community—less than 0.5% of the population—is increasingly disturbed by the growth and normalisation of anti-Semitism. They understand that anti-Semitism comes from all political parties and from right across society, but when that anti-Semitism grows unchallenged in a mainstream political party—a party of Government—they simply feel frightened. ...

col 281 **Steve Double (Conservative):** ... What I have found from the Jewish people I have met is that they simply want to live in peace. They simply want to feel safe and to feel that they belong somewhere—whether that is in the state of Israel or wherever it is in the world that they call home. They are a people who simply seek to live in peace. ...

The most moving thing that I experienced while I was [in Israel] was to listen to a young British Jew, who has left this country to go to Israel because, as she said, she did not feel safe here. She did not feel that she belonged here. She could no longer see a future for herself in the UK. It should deeply trouble every single one of us in this House that the Jewish people do not feel that they belong in this country any more. ...

Margaret Hodge (Labour): ... I am a Jew. My upbringing has been entirely secular. I have never practised Jewish religious traditions. Neither of my two husbands were Jews. I am a consistent critic of the Governments of Israel. None the less, my Jewish heritage is

central to my being. ...

col 282 When I visited Auschwitz, I saw the suitcases of those murdered in the gas chambers and was confronted by a battered brown suitcase with my uncle's initials on it. That moment was utterly chilling for me. All of that is my heritage. It is what I am today. I cannot forget. It is one reason why I joined the Labour party in the 1960s. Labour was the party that fought racism and intolerance. It was the party that defended minorities. It was the natural home for Jews who had been subject to inhumane acts for no other reason than their race, their ethnicity and their religion.

It has been truly shocking to receive vicious anti-Semitic tweets from right-wing extremists, but also from the left. ... There are those who see every Jew as a paid-up member of the Netanyahu fan club, who cannot make a distinction between being a Jew and voicing support for Israel as a place for Jews to live safely, who consider "Zionist" a term of abuse, who deny the holocaust and who hate Jews.

I have never felt as nervous and frightened at being a Jew as I feel today. It feels as if my party has given permission for anti-Semitism to go unchallenged. Anti-Semitism is making me an outsider in my Labour party. ...

Simon Clarke (Conservative): ... What does it say about the willingness of the Leader of the Opposition to respond meaningfully to this criticism, when Labour MPs are telling us the stories that we have heard today or feel compelled to join the protestors outside Parliament because there is no hope of change within it? I am convinced that it stems from the fact that the leadership of the Labour party has been captured by the man who, more than any other, embodies the selective blindness of his political beliefs in regard to anti-Semitism. It is worth noticing that, after defending the despicable mural in Tower Hamlets, the Leader of the Opposition condemned himself in his own excuse. He said, "I didn't notice the anti-Semitism".

col 283 I believe him, for failing to notice blatant anti-Semitism is precisely the problem. ...

Ian Austin: ... Last week I was in Poland, where I met another holocaust survivor who had been in Auschwitz and is now in his 90s. The first words he said to me when he learned that I was a Labour MP were, "Are you not ashamed to be in the Labour party, with all the anti-Semitism?" The truth is that I am deeply ashamed that our party has caused so much distress to Jewish people. We have witnessed appalling anti-Semitic claims. We have seen Labour candidates denying the holocaust. At last year's spring conference, one speaker said, "The holocaust, yes or no?" What does he mean by "yes or no"? Was it right? Did it happen? ...

col 284 Hamas's charter is avowedly anti-Semitic, Hezbollah too, yet our leader describes them as "friends" and invites them to Parliament. Raed Salah, found guilty in court of the blood libel, was described as "a very honoured citizen" and invited here too. Stephen Sizer, a Church of England vicar, was disciplined by his own Church when he spread ideas that were "clearly anti-Semitic", yet our leader defended him and claimed he was "under attack" by a pro-Israeli smear campaign. ...

Maria Caulfield (Conservative): ... If we facilitate anti-Semitism, then we are on a slippery slope. We know from the CST that anti-Semitic attacks are increasing in this country. There are now, on average, four attacks a day on Jewish people. ... That tells us that something is happening in this country, and there is a duty on all of us to speak out. If we look back at the 1920s and '30s in Europe, we see that that is exactly what was happening then, when synagogues were being deconsecrated, Jewish people were being attacked, and murals were being painted on walls. Is this ringing any alarm bells with people in this Chamber? ...

col 285 **Alistair Carmichael (Liberal Democrat):** ... We find all around us so much casual anti-Semitism—the clichés, the stereotypes and the references even to "these people". I now find myself in a position where, when I do see it, I am not prepared to be forgiving in any way, shape or form. It is incumbent on us all who reject it to call it out when we see it. ...

The hon. Member for Altrincham and Sale West (Sir Graham Brady) said that anti-Semitism was a racism like any other. With respect, and without wanting to get into the semantics, I do not believe that to be the case. ...

col 286 Chris Green (Conservative): ... if wider society gives anti-Semitism a space, that appears to legitimise it. Often it is not obvious; it can be subtle enough not to be noticed in a mural at a casual glance. However, anti-Semitism is often overt and is too often propagated in student societies at our universities ...

We see the frequent and unique demonisation of the state of Israel. That happens only to the Jewish state; nothing comparable happens with any other country in the world. The boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign represents a unique attack on Israel and lends itself to not just anti-Zionism but anti-Semitism. It is the attempted isolation of Israel through commerce, academia and culture. Is it not incredible that we would seek to isolate Israel and to stop businessmen and women, academics, artists and musicians working in and with the state of Israel? Increasingly, Jews in Europe are leaving for Israel. We must deal with anti-Semitism in Britain before British Jews feel they have to leave our land. ...

col 287 Joan Ryan (Labour): ... Anti-Semitism is not just a problem for the Labour party; we see it across the middle east, in European Union states and, of late, in the USA. However, it is simply not good enough for a party that prides itself on its record of fighting racism and discrimination to offer this as an excuse for its failure to get its own house in order. Next year marks the 20th anniversary of the publication of the Macpherson report, and some people need to be reminded of its core principle that a racist incident is “any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim”.

When Jewish people tell us that the scenes they witness at some Labour party meetings, the bile they view on social media, or the words they hear in defence of an anti-Semitic mural cause them great offence, we should not question, ridicule or reject such an assertion, but accept it and tackle it—full stop.

Some say that this is all about shutting down criticism of the actions of the Israeli Government, but that is a pernicious lie. Let there be no doubt, however, that refusing to acknowledge Israel’s right to exist, equating Zionism with racism, or requiring of Israel “a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation”, as the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance puts it, are all forms of anti-Semitism. ...

Diane Abbott (Labour): ... Jew hatred is race hatred, and one anti-Semite in the Labour party is one too many. ...

col 288 I am sad that we are having this debate, but I am proud to represent one of the oldest Jewish communities in the country. It is my representation of that community for many decades that has shaped my strong views on anti-Semitism. ...

I want to take the opportunity to raise just two issues that are of concern to the Charedi community, who are not often talked about in this Chamber. One is the rising level of hate crime. ...

... the other is what is happening with the Charedi community maintained schools and Ofsted. ...

On the question of the schools, I can do no better than quote Gillian Merron, the chief executive officer of the Board of Deputies of British Jews: “We understand that Ofsted has a difficult job to do, but the repeated and increasingly aggressive targeting of Charedi schools is fast becoming counterproductive. While some Jewish schools have a good relationship with Ofsted, the Charedi sector is losing confidence in the inspectorate.” ...

col 289 Alex Sobel (Labour Co-op): ... After the holocaust memorial debate, I was subjected to quite horrific abuse. I shall give one example. Mr Leonard said on Channel 4’s Facebook page, “Why is this Jewish Zionazi speaking in the English Parliament?” ...

Diane Abbott: ... [The Labour party] are looking at introducing a programme of education, quite possibly delivered by organisations such as the Jewish Labour Movement, and we are emphasising that members have an absolute right to raise the issue of anti-Semitism, including on demonstrations. We acknowledge that dealing with

some of these complaints has been too slow, so we are reviewing and speeding up our disciplinary process. We are looking at the workings of the disciplinary committee. We are recruiting an in-house lawyer and a further three temporary lawyers to help to clear the backlog. ...

We in the Labour party take anti-Semitism very seriously. Nothing is gained by accusing the Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition of being an anti-Semite. I want to stand up for the vast majority of members of the Labour party, including some of the most indefatigable fighters against racism and anti-Semitism I know, and say that the vast majority of Labour party members are not anti-Semites

col 290 We realise that there is an issue and we are dealing with that issue. ...

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Amber Rudd): This has been an extraordinary and harrowing debate, full of powerful personal experiences. The Government are taking a lot of action to combat anti-Semitism, but I want to tell Members that I will leave the Chamber today even more committed to checking that we are doing all we can and stepping it up where we can.

Many Members have thanked the Community Security Trust, which does such great work. I want to put on record our thanks to the trust. We gave it £13.4 million recently to make sure it can continue its good work.

I also thank a number of the police forces who have been so good at protecting people and making sure that they are well looked-after under this growth of anti-Semitism, which so many politicians have unfortunately been experiencing. I also thank the Jewish Leadership Council and the Board of Deputies of British Jews for their work in raising awareness of anti-Semitism. ...

This has been an extraordinary and important debate. I believe that the whole House has delivered a strong message to the leader of the Labour party: take action. The leader's words have been strong, and they have been heard again and again, but we have not seen the action that we hoped would follow. ...

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved, That this House has considered anti-semitism.

To read the full transcript see

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

TOP

Israel

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Lisa Nandy (Labour) (1169) Demolition plans in Khan Al-Ahmar village in the West Bank – That this House notes with concern the upcoming Israeli High Court hearing on 25 April 2018 on the demolition of buildings in the village of Khan al-Ahmar in the West Bank; condemns those plans and the impact they will have on communities in the occupied Palestinian territories; believes that the demolition of these buildings would be a flagrant disregard by Israel of both the will of the international community and the international legal order; further notes that the coercive environment of threatened demolition, illegal settlement expansion and forcible displacement are a daily reality faced by communities in the occupied Palestinian territories; is concerned that such demolitions form part of Israel's E1 plan which will cut off Palestinians living in East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank, jeopardising the contiguity of any future Palestinian state and thus undermining an already fragile two-state solution; welcomes the actions taken by the EU in issuing a demarche to Israel; reminds the Government of its duties as a signatory to the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Fourth

Geneva Convention; and calls on the Government to exert meaningful and decisive political, diplomatic and economic pressure on the Israeli authorities to halt the demolitions programme as a whole and, in particular, to abandon attempts to demolish the school and other buildings in Khan al-Ahmar.

<https://www.parliament.uk/edm/2017-19/1169>

Scottish Parliament Motion

S5M-11690 Sandra White (SNP): Nakba 70th Anniversary – That the Parliament acknowledges the 70th anniversary of the Nakba, known by Palestinian people as the "day of catastrophe", in which the state of Israel was formed after what it understands was the mass eviction of over 750,000 people from historic Palestine land, which included the destruction of over 500 towns and villages; believes that this led to generations of pain for the Palestinian people, who continue to live under a state of occupation; understands that it led to a major crisis in which over four million displaced people were registered by the UN as refugees and unable to return home; condemns what it sees as the deepening of the crisis in the form of illegal settlements, which are unrecognised by the international community; understands that these continue to be built in the occupied territories at a rate of five times that prior to the implementation of the Oslo Accords; believes that, on 15 May 2018, millions of people across Palestine and around the world will mark the anniversary of the Nakba with marches, rallies and vigils; supports Palestinian people, including those in the Glasgow Kelvin constituency, in the commemoration of the Nakba, and notes the calls for a resolution to be sought to what it considers the Palestinian humanitarian crisis and occupation.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-11690>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

European Union (Withdrawal) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/europeanunionwithdrawal.html>

Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) (Amendment) Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/holocaustreturnofculturalobjectsamendment.html>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/marriageact1949amendment.html>

Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/organdonationdeemedconsent.html>

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Consultations ** new or updated today

Integrated Communities Strategy green paper (closing date 5 June 2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/integrated-communities-strategy-green-paper>

Home Education (closing date 2 July 2018)

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-frameworks/home-education-call-for-evidence-and-revised-dfe-a/>

Ecclesiastical exemption and guidance on scheduled monuments (closing date 13 July 2018)

<https://beta.gov.wales/ecclesiastical-exemption-and-guidance-scheduled-monuments>

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The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438