

# Entanglements: the IHRA, Jews and non-White minorities

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Whether intentionally or not, the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism has had the harmful effect of ghettoising antisemitism from other forms of racism, and its imposition by a right-wing government significantly undermines potential solidarities across minority groups.

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**D**uring the past decade, the conservative right in Britain has made tremendous political capital from associating the Labour Party and the wider left with antisemitism. A key component in this (successful) campaign has been the demand that all organisations should formally adopt the working definition of antisemitism that was drafted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) in 2016.<sup>1</sup> For the conservative right, together with short-sighted supporters of Israel, this has become the only acceptable definition of the term. All who choose to follow different definitions are maliciously portrayed as hostile to Jews and their individual and collective interests.<sup>2</sup> As I explore below, there are very good reasons indeed for not only looking for alternative definitions but also, more crucially, for rejecting outright some of the key illustrations of antisemitism that the IHRA document details.

In October 2020, in an expansion of the instrumentalisation of accusations of

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antisemitism for right-wing conservative ends, Gavin Williamson (at that time the Conservative government's Secretary of State for Education in spite of his poor performance during the pandemic) sent a threatening letter to all University Vice Chancellors in England demanding that they too should formally adopt the IHRA definition.<sup>3</sup> It is worth looking at this demand closely, since it illuminates many of the contentious aspects of the right-wing position on antisemitism; and the pressure on universities to adopt the definition has been sustained since Williamson's departure. It is pertinent to note the connections to the wider Tory hostility towards universities, which they view as the haunt and breeding ground of the liberal metropolitan elite (though the demand itself contradicts their [bogus] campaign on freedom of speech in universities).

A candid biographic note about myself should help contextualise this article: for fifteen years I have been part of British academia, researching and educating literally thousands of young Britons. I am also a non-white *Mizrahi* Israeli; my family hails from Ottoman Palestine, Egypt, Tunisia, and the Greek islands of Zakynthos and Corfu. All too many of us were murdered by Nazi *Génocidaires* so I have some stake in these debates. Outside the classrooms where I have studied and taught - in Jerusalem, New York, Tel Aviv, Sderot and Manchester - I have made sure to take part in antiracist struggles, especially against antisemites and white supremacists. And I have made particular efforts to join in when this collective action has opposed organisations and parties linked to men such as John Vorster, Viktor Orbán, Geert Wilders, Gianfranco Fini, Jair Bolsonaro, Rodrigo Duterte, Heinz-Christian Strache or Steve Bannon.<sup>4</sup> This is for one main reason: over a long period of time, successive Labour and Likud Israeli governments have, disgracefully, maintained warm and friendly relationships with such men.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, these encounters with authoritarian, often antisemitic, right-wingers have been met with pitiful, effectively non-existent, challenges from self-proclaimed pro-Israel stakeholders inside and outside Britain - often the same ones whose actions during the past decade have targeted, effectively exclusively, left-wing antisemitism (mostly dubiously though sometimes accurately).

It is precisely *because* of this biographical and scholarly background and my lived experience in Britain as a non-white Jew that I was so thoroughly embarrassed to read Williamson's letter. My aim in this article is therefore to offer an explicitly non-white Jewish perspective on the post-2015 trajectory that

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underpins the drive for universities to adopt the IHRA definition. This involves, first, a discussion of some of the wider arguments about antisemitism, including the problems of the IHRA definition and its use by the Israeli government and its allies as a means of silencing critics; and, second, an exploration of the ways in which the Tory focus on antisemitism, accompanied as it is by downplaying other forms of racism, is so unhelpful for Jews labouring to cement common ground with other minority groups.

On first reading Williamson's letter I experienced some surprise at his sudden embrace of philosemitism. Though he has been a Tory politician for twenty-five years, his party and career had not previously been noteworthy for passionate activism against racism, antisemitism included. Nor had he found it problematic to serve under Boris Johnson, author of *Seventy-Two Virgins* (HarperCollins, 2004) - a novel that disappointingly recycled antisemitic tropes and stereotypical portrayals of Jews and other British minority ethnic groups.<sup>6</sup>

Less surprising was the letter's adoption of one of the more classic ploys of right-wing discourses in this field: as a non-Jew himself, Williamson chose to single out Jews from non-Jews and - in so doing - officially marked us as 'other'. Embracing the 'divide and conquer' colonial approach, his argument divorced antisemitic racism from similar manifestations of racism with which he is less concerned - including Islamophobia, Afrophobia/anti-Black racism, misogyny, anti-Roma/Gypsy racism, chauvinism, homophobia, and xenophobia vis-à-vis Asians and Arabs. Most disturbingly, Williamson's letter - through his threat that linked Jews to monetary penalties and potential state sanctions against universities if they exercised what is otherwise a simple academic and democratic right to adopt a view and definition that differed from his - managed to upgrade the quintessential stereotype of money and Jews to a new level. (The irony of setting Christmas as the deadline for submitting to this pseudo-philosemitic crusade had apparently escaped him.)

The IHRA definition is often criticised because too many of the examples it gives of antisemitism link it to anti-Zionism (of which more below). But whatever criticism may be levelled at the examples, the need to include them is understandable, given that the definition itself is so weak. Its definition of antisemitism as 'a perception that may be expressed as hatred' is vague, restrictive, minimalist, and - in the main - emotionalist. It bypasses manifestations of

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antisemitism that are equally, and possibly even more, important than ‘perception’ - including oppression, discrimination, exclusion, prejudice, bigotry or other tangible actions. Moreover, it ignores the wall-to-wall agreement that prevails among the rainbow of scholars of antisemitism that one singular definition of the abhorrent phenomenon does not exist. That is the case precisely as there is no one and only definition for racism, feminism, islamophobia, Judaism, Zionism, Islamism, English nationalism, communitarianism or others. A top-down state imposition of a single definition upon academia, especially one deemed deficient by many scholars, thus runs the risk of combining elements of both Stalinism and McCarthyism.<sup>7</sup>

### Problems with the IHRA's examples

#### *Conflation of ‘Jews’ with ‘the state of Israel’*

Of the eleven illustrations that the IHRA definition marshals to exemplify antisemitism, seven relate to post-1948 Israel. As a result, the Zionist/Arab matrix dominates the definition, and the examples come across as concerned more with the protection of Israel than the protection of Jews, let alone non-Israeli Jews. Soon after it was drafted, the British parliament's own Home Affairs Committee found the IHRA's definition wanting: cross-party committee members insisted on formally affixing two stipulations: (i) ‘It is not anti-Semitic to criticise the Government of Israel, without additional evidence to suggest anti-Semitic *intent*’; and (ii) ‘It is not anti-Semitic to hold the Israeli Government to the same standards as other liberal democracies, or to take a particular interest in the Israeli Government's policies or actions, without additional evidence to suggest anti-Semitic *intent*’ (italics added).<sup>8</sup>

While it is unclear how precisely such ‘intent’ is to be established or proven - let alone by what body or individual/s - it is clear that Williamson consciously opted to exclude these qualifications from his own communiqué. That is yet another testament to its instrumentalisation of antisemitism for sectarian conservative ends. Yet, since the letter was sent out, a substantial number of university managements have been unable to withstand the ongoing governmental pressure and have endorsed the IHRA definition, top-down, and without staff consultation.<sup>9</sup> For example, my own university's management endorsed the definition, though *with* the addition of the Home Affairs Committee's stipulations; Cambridge did the same in November 2020, as did Oxford in December. While this course of action remains

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unsatisfactory, it is somewhat less misguided that adopting the definition *as is*.<sup>10</sup>

The major problem with the IHRA definition is that, through the examples it gives, it dangerously conflates 'Jews' with 'the state of Israel', and 'Judaism' with 'modern political Zionism'. The original conflation of these identities and phenomena was - and remains - an inherent organising pillar of the ideology of Zionism. Self-proclaimed pro-Israel bodies and individuals exercise this conflation regularly in texts, actions and advocacy.<sup>11</sup> And because this kind of conflation has been extensively circulating over a long period of time, it has often been reproduced by anti-Zionist critics of Israel - sometimes consciously, and at other times as a consequence of inexcusable ignorance.

This convergence between Zionists and a proportion of anti-Zionist critics in conflating 'Jews' and 'Zionists' had already emerged by the late 1930s.<sup>12</sup> Since the establishment of Israel as a state this convergence has had the additional effect of blurring the distinction between criticism of the Israeli state and antisemitism, and enables legitimate criticisms of Israel to be fancifully labelled as 'antisemitic' in order to delegitimise pro-democratic activism on behalf of Palestinian human and political rights. For example, there were reports in the run-up to the 2020 US presidential election that the Trump administration was considering labelling organisations such as Amnesty International, Oxfam and Human Rights Watch as antisemitic because of their positions on human rights in Israel.<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile the Israeli government has been openly hostile towards the social-democrat philanthropist George Soros, whose 'humanitarianism and universalism' represents 'an expression of post-Holocaust Jewish identity that is anathema to the hard-line nationalism of Mr Netanyahu's governing coalition'.<sup>14</sup> For the Israeli state, any concern about the global hounding of Soros by antisemitic propagandists is outweighed by its need to court the support of right-wing governments (as was seen in summer 2017, when Benjamin Netanyahu backtracked on his own ambassador's criticism of the Hungarian government's antisemitic campaign against Soros).

Three facts in particular should never be lost on anyone, even if they contradict some of the precepts generated by the IHRA definition. The first is that many Jews are not Zionist; the second is that the majority of Zionists worldwide are not Jewish (including Christian fundamentalists); and the third is that more than 20 per cent of Israeli citizens are not Jewish.

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### *'Double standards'*

One of the examples of antisemitism given alongside the IHRA definition is the application of 'double standards' to Israel by 'requiring of it a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation'. The implication is that critics are focusing on actions that they would not criticise in other countries.

The key problem for this argument is that the overwhelming majority of Israel's critics worldwide focus on its post-1967 occupation of the West Bank and the oppressive actions it is continuing to implement there to date. No other democracy in the twenty-first century holds a disenfranchised civilian population under such brutal occupation, while continually taking actions that deepen its colonisation project, such as implanting armed civilian settlers and supporting illegal settlement construction. Branding as 'antisemitic' criticism of Israeli actions pertaining to its occupation - on the ground that this applies a double standard - is an Orwellian move: the majority of Israel's critics are demanding that Israel ceases being the *beneficiary* of a double standard that has exempted it - for more than fifty years now - from democratic requirements otherwise applied to, and expected of, all other democracies. The argument underpinning critiques of the occupation is that Israel should act, and be adjudged, in the same way as standard democracies. If that were to happen, it would *remove* Israeli exceptionalism, not create it.

This partially explains why many leading social scientists define Israel as a diminished form of ethnic democracy, that is, a state that does not meet the minimal requirements that would permit students of Comparative Politics to define it as a 'liberal democracy'.<sup>15</sup> For another school of scholars, the label 'democracy' should be avoided altogether for the simple reason that the glove does not fit; they thus define Israel as an ethnocracy.<sup>16</sup> For yet a third school of thought, Israel lamentably meets the definition of an apartheid state.<sup>17</sup> (In January 2021, the most rigorous Israeli Human Rights Organization, *B'Tselem*, published a report titled *A regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This is apartheid*.<sup>18</sup>) Taken together with additional schools of thought, this constitutes a standard scholarly debate that lacks any inherent link to antisemitism. It therefore should not be interfered with by politicians, or their advocates, for the purpose of policing speech. As the principal author the IHRA definition, Professor Kenneth Stern has explained on many occasions that 'it was not drafted, and was never intended, as a tool to target or chill speech on a college campus'; as he has also pointed out, he himself has

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'highlighted this misuse, and the damage it could do'.<sup>19</sup> It is clear that those seeking to impose the definition on UK universities had not bothered to consult Stern or his writings before acting. (Although it is also the case that Stern himself is yet to explain what underpinned the thinking that led to the IHRA definition's Israel-centrism and problematic connotations to begin with.)

### *Unequal citizenship rights*

The IHRA definition provides assistance to no one when it resolves that 'denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination' is a form of antisemitism. While such denial can surely assume an antisemitic form, in the vast majority of existing cases it assumes instead a straightforward democratic critique. Scholars and non-scholars alike must have the democratic right to question Israel's democratic credentials and self-defined national configuration - as well as those of any other state.

Israel's legal definitions of citizenship and migration rights are, at the very least, open to query on democratic grounds. Israel rests legally upon the notion that all Jews - including, for example British Jews who have never set foot outside Britain - enjoy more individual and collective rights between the Jordan Valley and the Mediterranean Sea than non-Jewish Palestinians who live in this territory, including those who have never set foot outside of it.<sup>20</sup> That is the case not only vis-à-vis stateless Palestinians in the West Bank (annexed de facto but not de jure by Israel), but also with regard to Palestinian *citizens* of Israel, who comprise 21 per cent of its population.<sup>21</sup> Demands to correct this state of Israeli legal-political affairs are calls to democratise Israel; they are by no means a form of antisemitism.

Further critical scrutiny of the IHRA's assumption of Israel's 'democratic nation' credentials might be prompted by the observation that both Israeli Jews and non-Jews enjoy equal legal recourse to migrate to Britain and acquire its citizenship. Yet the same democratic feature cannot be found in the case of Israel.

A Jewish Israeli citizen who marries a non-Israeli Jew from, say, Alaska, enjoys automatically a legal right to naturalise their spouse in Israel; but a non-Jewish Israeli citizen who marries a non-Jew from Ramallah (or Alaska) does not enjoy the same equal right to bring their spouse and naturalise her/him in Israel. Furthermore, non-Jews who reside in countries outside Israel - including Palestinian Christians, Muslims, seculars and others - have no viable legal pathway to emigrate to Israel,

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nor to reunite with their indigenous families there: they have no avenue to become citizens in Israel.<sup>22</sup> Yet British Jews automatically have this right. Israel is thus neither a democracy, in ways that Britain or other liberal democracies are, nor does it embody a national configuration that can, or should, remain above interrogation. Non-Jews in general - and Palestinians in particular - who seek to have rights in Israel equal to those bestowed upon Jews, would firstly need to undergo a successful religious conversion to Judaism.

In most people's definition of a democracy, immigration laws would not *a priori* restrict possible migration on the sole basis of religious affiliation. Nor is it too hard to imagine what the response of democrats (Jews among them) would be if the right to migrate to any country was reserved to non-Jews alone.

Another example of unequal citizenship is that the combined state of legal, national and political affairs in Israel easily enables non-Israeli Jews to purchase land and property in Israel even if they are not citizens. For Israeli citizens who are not Jewish this is effectively impossible.<sup>23</sup> The Israeli notion of ascribing differentiated rights to different religious groups - of both nationals and non-nationals - is absent in liberal democracies because it fatally corrodes the defining notions of civic democracy.

It therefore should come as no surprise that for its non-Jewish citizens, Israel is experienced as a Jewish and *undemocratic* state. Many Jews with democratic convictions subscribe to this view with ease. The attempt by many - chief among them Israeli Jewish and non-Jewish citizens for whom democracy is sacrosanct - to remove such discriminatory and unequal conditions and legislation, and, in doing so, to democratise Israel by bringing it closer to the model of a state *of all its citizens* (as Britain is for example), does not constitute antisemitism.

The IHRA's stipulation that 'denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination' is a form of antisemitism is thus thoroughly deceptive. It is on standard democratic grounds - not on antisemitic grounds - that many oppose the sweeping extra-territorial privilege of *non-Israeli* Jews to exercise a 'national right to self-determination' *inside* Israel/Palestine so long as this right is bestowed upon them at the direct and inevitable expense of the individual *and* collective rights of non-Jews living in Israel/Palestine.

Let us lastly think of a European or non-European individual who denies 'the



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right to self-determination' to the people of Catalonia, the Basque country, Scotland, Québec, Corsica (or others worldwide). Does this position make them by definition racists vis-à-vis the Scots, Catalans, Québécois?

### **Antisemitism and the experiences of non-Jewish minorities in the UK**

As noted above, the current Conservative government's singling out of Jews as the sole legitimate subject of antiracist concern is not helpful for those of us committed to campaign for racial justice in alliance with other minorities.<sup>24</sup>

In macro-sociological terms, it can hardly be contested that the social problems that non-working-class Jews face in contemporary Britain are not necessarily more acute than those faced by working-class immigrant, ethnic, racial and other religious minorities (including working-class Jews). It is not easy to identify a minority community globally whose legal, social, economic, religious and cultural position amidst the majority community is superior - or equal - to that of the minority Jewish community in Britain today. In fact, even the 'Golden Age' of the Jewish minority of *al-Andalus* (سُلْطَنُ أَلَا, circa the eight to ninth centuries CE) was not as impressive comparatively, given that a democratic system was not in place there. So the question inevitably arises as to why the right is so focused on this particular form of minority experience.

It was around the time that (the openly self-defined Jews) David Miliband - and later his younger brother Ed - concluded their respective terms of leadership within the Labour Party that antisemitic racism started to gain more attention than similar forms of racism from Conservative and Labour politicians, from liberal, conservative and tabloid newspapers, and from other bodies in Britain. In statistical terms, this development correlated significantly with the September 2015 election of Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader. Corbyn's history was less indifferent to the Palestinian condition than that of former Labour leaders, and it was this which became the focus of attention. With the countdown to the 2019 UK elections, the question of antisemitism - though only in relation to the left - became much more prominent, both 'naturally' and by orchestration (commonly termed, unattractively, 'the weaponisation of antisemitism').

On 25 July 2018, the *Jewish Chronicle*, *Jewish News* and *Jewish Telegraph* produced identical front pages attacking the Labour NEC's decision to endorse the IHRA

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definition without four of its eleven examples.<sup>25</sup> The joint editorial did not mince words, speculating that ‘a government led by Jeremy Corbyn would pose an *existential threat* to Jewish life in the UK’. For many Jews, this fearmongering was nothing but vulgarisation and cheapening of Jewish history for petty conservative ends. By 3 September, however, Labour had opted to raise a white flag and endorsed in full the IHRA definition. This action, alas, did nothing to diminish the anti-Labour movement and mobilisation. On 8 November, the *Jewish Chronicle* devoted its full front-page to ‘all of our fellow British citizens who would not normally read the newspaper, in other words, non-Jews’.<sup>26</sup> It now decreed that ‘the vast majority of British Jews consider Jeremy Corbyn to be an anti-Semite’, and reported that ‘nearly half of the Jewish community said ... that they would “seriously consider” emigrating if Mr Corbyn wins’. (Interestingly, the editor had not found it troubling a few years earlier to host - warmly and sympathetically - UKIP leader Nigel Farage, in front of an audience of 350 *JC* readers.<sup>27</sup>)

During the same period that persistent criticism of the Labour Party on the grounds of antisemitism was spiralling, very different trends prevailed among non-Jewish minorities in Britain, particularly those that were working-class and non-white. The support of Labour among these groups increased significantly due to concerns over the triumph of hostile, elitist and white Conservative rule.<sup>28</sup> (The sole statistical exception was middle/upper class British Hindus, particularly those sympathetic to the ideology of the ultra-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party that has ruled India since 2014.)

Two weeks before the general election, Britain’s Chief Rabbi, Ephraim Mirvis, opted for a bold intervention. On 25 November 2019 he published a demagogic and alarmist article entitled ‘What will become of Jews in Britain if Labour forms the next government?’.<sup>29</sup> Many subsequent texts analysed Mirvis’s unabashed political advocacy, yet none found it worthwhile - journalistically, professionally, socio-politically or otherwise - to inform its readers of the fact that Mirvis (like me) is (also) an Israeli citizen, as well as a committed political Zionist and a former West Bank settler.<sup>30</sup> Was there an *a priori* assumption that these facts were unworthy of any mention, even in passing? Or that they were entirely irrelevant to the political debate over Corbyn, Labour, Israel/Palestine (etc) and had no bearing on the Rabbi’s blatantly electoral intervention? Whatever the answers to these questions may be, on 12 December 2019 the committed mobilisation contributed its fair share to its

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hoped-for outcome: the Conservative Party, headed by alleged philosemite Boris Johnson, overpowered Labour, headed by alleged antisemite Corbyn.

As more observers could have predicted, the heightened levels of politicisation of antisemitism (though on the left only) stood no chance of ending at this point. Suffice it to note that a number of Jewish British academics who between 2016 and 2019 contributed their fair share to the (conservative) effort to associate and taint Labour/Corbyn with antisemitism have in the subsequent period been themselves described as ‘enablers’/‘harbourers’ of antisemitism. (I avoid names and hyperlinks here, as no extra-traffic is needed in these quarters.) Some version of the dynamic ‘First they came for the Communists/ And I didn’t speak out/ Because I wasn’t a communist’ seems to be in motion.<sup>31</sup>

While enough Jews viewed favourably the defeat of Labour, too few went on to ask what non-Jewish and non-white minorities had made of the years of fierce anti-Labour mobilisation by organised mainstream Jewish bodies and non-elected leaders, encouraged by the Conservative Party, and by successive fundamentalist and anti-Labour governments in Israel. How have communities linked to, say, Windrush victims, deportees and survivors interpreted the flood of pro-Conservative texts by leading minority Jews and newspapers? What sense was made of this dominant type of ‘Jewish’ politics by, say, the overwhelmingly non-white working-class communities linked to the 72 victims of the Grenfell Tower disaster?

These questions are of course not posed to belittle the prevalence of antisemitic racism among liberal-left as well as conservative-right constituencies. They are instead posed as a way of encouraging reflection, comparatively and macro-sociologically, on notions that might be expected to govern discussions, analyses and coverage of the respective experiences of minority groups in Britain; these notions include fairness, humility, proportionality, balance, marginalism, accuracy, honesty, equality and thoughtfulness.

There needs to be more discussion of the reasons why the experiences of some minorities receive so much attention from a government and media that routinely dismisses the experiences of others. Furthermore, mainstream discussion of racism would greatly benefit from a deeper consideration of the many different kinds of racism, including different material experiences of racism, and the ways in which racial categories intersect with other positionings, such as those of class or gender.

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Antisemitic racism in Britain is - *in the main* - a discursive phenomenon pertaining to speech. (The notable exception here is visibly-recognisable orthodox/religious Jews, who are frequently subject to profound racism from both left *and* right constituencies.) A large part of the left/antisemitism controversy has been conducted online (mainly by *sociologically* white middle-class men who appear to have near limitless access to the internet). It may be that such prolonged addiction can lead to some confusion between the chatty world of Twitter and the material world outside it, as if they are one and the same.

Meanwhile, *non-discursive* manifestations of racism similar to those experienced daily by communities associated with other minority groups, such as poor housing, poverty, racial profiling, police brutality, etc - do *not* play much role in discussions on antisemitism. This is perhaps because they are not a particularly major part of the daily lives of assimilationist-by-choice, non-visible/non-orthodox white Jews. It is *not* antisemitic to note that the *material* experience of most Jews in Britain is better than that of other minorities: the reasons for this are to be found in the kind of intersectional and historical analysis that mainstream debate so determinedly ignores. Yet in the post-2015 trajectory of British party politics and media, public discussion over antisemitism (again only on the left) has been afforded more time, space, attention and centrality - and has thus been more visible - than discussions on all other forms of racism. For many Jews it is indeed hard to acknowledge bravely and truthfully that this disparity, sadly, represents one brick in the great wall of white privilege.

When Williamson issued his threatening letter, he officially joined the ranks of those who single out antisemitism and differentiate it from other forms of racism. In so doing, he was helping to further increase the alienation and separation between minority Jews and members of other ethnic and racial minority communities who are equally vulnerable, and sometimes more so. These tactics are more likely to enhance, than curtail, antisemitism.

Worse still, the view and perception of Jews among student and non-student minorities within universities - particularly those who are non-white, with working-class backgrounds and first generation academics (like me) - are not likely to improve as otherwise desired when antisemitic racism appears as the sole manifestation of racism with which the government is concerned: it is antisemitism alone that has been officially cherry-picked by Conservative - and some Labour

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- politicians in order to penalise academic institutions and harm their work. This singling out stands only a modest chance of being viewed in a comradely way by non-white working-class students (or academic staff). It is also worth reminding ourselves that the public funds that universities were threatened with losing - for the dubious benefit of us, Jews - is based on tax income from academics of all religious, ethnic, class and racial affiliations, deducted irrespective of one's scholarly support, opposition or indifference to the IHRA definition.

It would be very helpful to informed debate if university leaderships could acknowledge these complexities and take a stand on the need for freedom of thought on such issues. They could play an important role in defusing the pressure to adopt a counterproductive definition of antisemitism which is unlikely to assist in diminishing antisemitism. Universities that during the financially-suffocating pandemic did not withstand governmental pressure and adopted the IHRA definition should now reconsider. Their act needlessly puts at risk the long-term interests of Jewish academics and students, particularly in terms of solidarity from the vibrant rainbow of minority constituencies that struggle conjointly against all forms of racism (antisemitism included).

*A few sections of this article were previously published online: <https://contendingmodernities.nd.edu/global-currents/inhra-careless-conflations/>.*

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## Notes

1. <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism>.
2. John Hyman and Anthony Julius, "Calling a truce with left-wing antisemitism": The Case Against the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism', *Fathom*, May 2021: <https://fathomjournal.org/calling-a-truce-with-left-wing-antisemitism-the-case-against-the-jerusalem-declaration-on-antisemitism/?highlight=jda>.
3. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaff/136/136.pdf>.
4. For Vorster see <https://www.nytimes.com/1976/04/10/archives/vorster-and->

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rabin-meet-in-jerusalem.html. For Orbán (and others) see <https://www.972mag.com/yad-vashem-petition-war-criminals/>. For Wilders: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyTh9ap-Rgk>. Fini: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2003/11/24/israel-embraces-italian-neo-fascist>. Bolsonaro and Duterte: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/08/opinion/sunday/yad-vashem-holocaust-memorial-israel.html>. Strache: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-austria-strache-idUSKCN0X91NX>. Bannon: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/at-zoa-event-bannon-asks-jews-to-join-his-war-on-gop-establishment/>.

5. <https://www.972mag.com/yad-vashem-petition-war-criminals/>.

6. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/boris-johnson-book-jews-control-media-general-election-a9239346.html>.

7. <https://www.israeliacademicsuk.org/the-letter>.

8. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaff/136/136.pdf>.

9. See <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/press-and-media/ofs-reports-significant-increase-in-universities-signing-up-to-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism/>.

10. For more on this see the discussion on the UCL UCU website: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ucu/campaigns/faqs-16-questions-ucl-and-ihra-definition-anti-semitism#q9>. The UCL Council adopted the IHRA definition in 2019 - including the Select Committee's stipulations - before Williamson's letter. But, after a campaign by academics at the College, its Academic Board urged the Council to find an alternative definition. Consultation is currently in process.

11. For example of this conflation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MloZvHU3wwg>. For a discussion of advocacy of this position: <https://www.aljazeera.com/program/investigations/2017/1/10/the-lobby-young-friends-of-israel-part-1/>.

12. Moshe Behar, 'Palestine, Arabized-Jews and the Elusive Consequences of Jewish and Arab National Formations', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol 14, No 4, 2007, pp 581-611: [https://www.academia.edu/9648832/Palestine\\_Arabized\\_Jews\\_and\\_the\\_Elusive\\_Consequences\\_of\\_Jewish\\_and\\_Arab\\_National\\_Formations\\_2007\\_](https://www.academia.edu/9648832/Palestine_Arabized_Jews_and_the_Elusive_Consequences_of_Jewish_and_Arab_National_Formations_2007_).

13. <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/10/21/state-department-weighs-labeling-several-prominent-human-rights-groups-anti-semitic-430882>.

14. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/17/opinion/george-soros-israel-hungary.html>.

15. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30246820?seq=1>.

16. <https://www.upenn.edu/pennpress/book/14250.html>.

17. [https://brill.com/view/journals/pyio/4/1/article-p366\\_16.xml?language=en](https://brill.com/view/journals/pyio/4/1/article-p366_16.xml?language=en).

18. [https://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/publications/202101\\_this\\_is\\_apartheid\\_eng.pdf](https://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/publications/202101_this_is_apartheid_eng.pdf).

19. <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/JU/JU00/20171107/106610/HHRG-115-JU00-Wstate-SternK-20171107.pdf>.

20. For the full text of the Basic Law: Israel as the Nation State of the Jewish People see: [https://web.archive.org/web/20180719173434/https://knesset.gov.il/spokesman/eng/PR\\_eng.asp?PRID=13978](https://web.archive.org/web/20180719173434/https://knesset.gov.il/spokesman/eng/PR_eng.asp?PRID=13978); for the Basic Law of Return see : <https://knesset.gov.il/>

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laws/special/eng/return.htm.

21. <https://contendingmodernities.nd.edu/global-currents/in-search-of-a-game-change-r/?fbclid=IwAR1YGhGWD9FPw4kVbd84L7gVfgoygKOU0uwt3LH3zF2joKPIqOnGVJPpc84>.

22. <https://www.adalah.org/en/law/view/536>.

23. <https://www.adalah.org/en/law/view/533>.

24. The publication in March 2021 of the government commissioned report on Race and Ethnic Disparities (the Sewell Report), which sought to minimise black people's experience of racism, is further evidence of this skewed focus. See for example:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/31/deeply-cynical-no-10-report-criticises-use-of-institutional-racism>.

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

26. <https://www.thejc.com/comment/leaders/to-all-our-fellow-british-citizens-1.491812>.

27. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTgHLwQjGWs>.

28. <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/2017%20Election%20Briefing.pdf>.

29. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ephraim-mirvis-what-will-become-of-jews-in-britain-if-labour-forms-the-next-government-ghpsdbljk?fbclid=IwAR32X9i2mRCpnCU7N69INrNuOu6BNCDBctx9m1Jvk2BDWovE3tFgbVj9Kk>.

30. <https://chiefrabbi.org/biography/>. As this biography shows, Mirvis chose to study inside the West Bank, in Yeshivat Har Etzion. For more information on this institution: <https://www.haretzion.org/about-us/history>.

31. <https://www.hmd.org.uk/resource/first-they-came-by-pastor-martin-niemoller/>.