# Essays

Learning lessons: the articulation of antisemitism on campus
**Cathy Elliott**

Antisemitism is on the rise in Europe, in our country and in our universities. We need to understand the forms it takes, and the ways in which it exceeds, as well as intersects with, debates about Palestine and Israel. A failure to listen attentively to claims about antisemitism is partly produced by a polarised and moralised discourse, in which Palestinian activism becomes a focal point of anti-racist campaigns in general. An antagonistic approach to Jewish voices can mean that the pain of antisemitism becomes unhearable in certain spaces. This is not inevitable, and must be addressed by resisting the binaries this discourse produces, and working patiently to respond to and resist antisemitism.

Every day that I have spent writing this article there have been stories about antisemitism in British politics in the headlines. No doubt they will still be in the news as you read this. Antisemitism appears to be on the rise both globally and nationally, recently provoking what may yet be a realignment in centre-left politics.[1]

It is, then, not coincidental that universities, student unions, students and teachers are also currently grappling with antisemitism and the myriad issues that come with it. Despite popular concerns both within and outside universities that students need to learn more about 'the real world', we know that universities are already part of that 'real world': the world of work, citizenship, living alongside other people, of unequal power, conflict, racism, the world still suffering and reeling from colonialism and the Holocaust. Presumably this is why the national media cares so much about campus politics.[2] There are many lessons about the real world that universities teach our students, not all of them entirely conscious or deliberate, and many lessons that students learn despite what we hoped to teach them. It is right that policy-makers and the general public care about this.[3]

UCL, the university in which I teach, is currently debating the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of antisemitism.[4] This move, which is by no means popular with everyone, follows on from a rejection of the same definition by the student union (SU).[5] In response, the university's Jewish Society (JSoc) put out a poll simply asking members about their experiences of antisemitism. Within a couple of hours, 78 students (between a third and a half of all our Jewish students) had responded, and 72 per cent of them reported that they had experienced antisemitism on campus. Forty-six students provided descriptions of their experiences, which included racial slurs, antisemitic tropes and conspiracy theories, hurtful remarks and 'jokes' about the Holocaust and Nazis, remarks about their appearance, and physical and verbal aggression and bullying.

We cannot accept this.

Antisemitism – like other oppressions – has its own language, tropes, code words and dog whistles.[6] One of the problems in addressing it, which is partly what the IHRA definition attempts to address, is that it is not always immediately obvious what antisemitism is, or why certain tropes or conspiracy theories are antisemitic. Therefore, academics need to learn as well as teach, as we work with students to challenge racism and enable the difficult conversations that it is our core business to engage in.

This work is often painful, as I have discovered in the last couple of years, since volunteering to run a small research project with three of my Jewish students to find out what life is like for Jewish students. The project originated as a response to specific difficult events, but as a non-Jewish tutor who teaches qualitative research methods, for me this was initially an opportunity to teach a small group of students some principles of small-scale interpretivist research.[7] My three bright and eager students interviewed twenty-six of their fellow Jewish students, thinking carefully about issues of informed consent, anonymity, sampling, reflexivity and systematic analysis. They recorded, transcribed and coded the conversations thematically and we made a podcast series about it together to disseminate our findings, which was warmly received by colleagues and students.[8]

This kind of work is a useful complement to large scale survey-based studies, such as that conducted by the National Union of Students in 2016/17.[9] Their study reported concerning findings about Jewish students' perceptions of antisemitism on campus at a national level. However, surveys do not allow us to go into detail about the stories behind the numbers. A small-scale but intensive, interview-based project like ours – which listened to a wide range of Jewish students from different years, departments and denominations, including those who do not get involved with religious or Jewish Society activities and would not be reached by JSoc – is able to provide a rich contextualisation and explanation of those findings.[10] It is of course limited by the fact that we were working with students from just one university, but as we have one of the larger Jewish student populations in the UK, it should offer some indications about *how* antisemitism operates in universities.[11]

We were deeply troubled by our findings and I have continued to struggle with how to think about antisemitism, as well as how we engage with conflicts that intersect with much larger national and international flows of power, when they emerge at the scale of our own work and lives. We found ample evidence of familiar forms of antisemitism that were not related to Palestinian activism operating alongside a polarised and moralised discourse about Palestine-Israel, which made it difficult for real and painful discussions about antisemitism to take place.[12] This problem was exacerbated by the particular form of debates about freedom of speech and how they intersect with concerns about antisemitism. This context makes it both urgent, and yet also difficult, to disentangle and address antisemitism.

**Antisemitism on campus**

All the Jewish students interviewed in our small project agreed that our university is, by and large, a safe and pleasant place to study. It is difficult to draw conclusions from this finding: people often play down deep injuries, since talking about them is painful. Nevertheless, most students only had one or two upsetting incidents they

wanted to tell us about, and whilst they did so with the vividness that characterises unhealed wounds and ongoing vigilance, they did not seem to be experiencing harassment as a daily experience. This is important to say, because it is not helpful to alarm (prospective) students.

The second thing to say is that much of the antisemitism we learned about had nothing explicitly to do with conversations about Israel or Palestine, which seems to run counter to claims about that a 'new antisemitism' is currently circulating. The proponents of the discourse of 'the new antisemitism' claim that Israel attracts disproportionate criticism not levelled at other states, in ways that are linked to hatred of Jews.[13] Critics of this position counter that allegations of antisemitism are used in bad faith to silence legitimate criticism of Israel. This highly polarised debate is well known to students and, of course, forms the politicised backdrop of any discussion about antisemitism. This matters, but not quite in the ways we expected.

Before discussing the 'new' antisemitism, I should stress that much of the antisemitism that students narrated was not 'old poison in new bottles':[14] the bottles were old too. We came across many students who were afraid of disclosing that they were Jewish because of experiences of being called names or having to listen to jokes about Nazis, antisemitic tropes about rich Jews or stingy Jews, or Jews controlling the media or the supermarkets, or the world, or having to endure judgement about whether or not they 'looked Jewish'. Students who were bored of tedious jokes about eating pork. A student who had been chased down the street just outside our main quad, apparently because he was Jewish. Jokes about the Holocaust, patronising explanations of the Holocaust from non-Jews ('goysplaining'), crass comparisons between the Holocaust and unrelated issues such as animal rights. Doubts about the Holocaust's importance were in one case signalled by the question, 'What do you think about the Holocaust?' The student on the receiving end had had family members murdered by the Nazis. We also came across belittling comments from tutors ranging from a refusal to make accommodations for religious festivals, to sexist remarks about women students being 'good Jewish girls', to extraordinarily rude, antisemitic comments, such as 'all you fucking Jews stick together, don't you?', to downplaying the horrors of the Holocaust in class.

There was clearly a pattern of ugly attitudes and behaviour just under the surface of campus life. This implies a surprising lack of literacy of the old tropes and conspiracy theories of antisemitism, and of empathy towards Jewish students, particularly when discussing the Holocaust. Quite often I despaired to see a lack even of the basic critical thinking – such as the ability to spot a conspiracy theory – that universities like to think we promote.

Several incidents were particularly troubling: one student had discovered Holocaust-denying leaflets in a part of the university where only staff and students had access, and another had discovered antisemitic graffiti in the toilets. The really sobering thing was that these students had no idea who to go to to report these incidents. We found that the SU was instinctively not trusted by Jewish students to take their concerns seriously. It seems likely to me that the SU officers would be sorry to hear this. I believe that they want the campus to be free of Holocaust denial and swastikas. So, how has it happened that Jewish students end up feeling that their SU will not be their ally against antisemitism of the crudest form?

**Moralising tones: 'the people who are right'**

In a nicely observed vignette in her recent hit novel, one of Sally Rooney's young characters judges that his mother 'has values' because she is interested in 'the cause of Palestinian liberation'. The matter is left there and the complexities are not discussed further at any point in the book.[15] No more needs to be said: we understand what we need to about her stance on any number of issues through this brief remark.

Another vignette may illustrate why this particular political commitment can feel threatening to Jewish students. Professor Steve Fielding of Nottingham University's School of Politics recently said on a podcast that as a young student:

> I refused to go into the Anne Frank house because, I told my friend, 'no I'm not going in there because of the way the Israeli government uses the Holocaust to manipulate support for its everyday policies'. At […] that very moment the Israeli military was doing terrible things in Lebanon. So, I come from that position, but I now have slightly changed my mind, partly from watching this film [*Denial*] but also from experiencing all kinds of stuff that is being said at the moment.[16]

It is important to note that this remark occurred in the context of a nuanced discussion about antisemitism, Holocaust denial and remembrance. Even so, the word 'slightly' plays an intriguing role in this off-the-cuff discussion. It is apparently not straightforward simply to feel mortified, in retrospect, by a callow refusal to enter a museum in Europe commemorating the murder of a teenage girl, along with most of her family, by the Nazis. How can this be? I want to be clear, here, that I do not want to attack or judge Fielding. Rather, I simply want to note that abandoning that youthful stance is evidently not easy, precisely because to say 'that is the position I come from' is to imply a whole set of linked political positions and allegiances, so that a certain amount of difficult reconfiguration must take place if that position is to be qualified or complicated.

Ruth Sheldon perceptively uses the category of 'melodrama' to understand what is going on here. Students are socialised into taking up particular roles in what feels like a two-sided ongoing debate, which is always pre-scripted and comes with its own already-given arguments and allegiances, in which everyone's mind is always already made up. As she points out, this debate is not just polarised, but also highly moralised.[17]

One useful way of thinking about this is to consider Palestinian activism as a kind of 'empty signifier', in the sense used by Ernesto Laclau, through which a whole range of implied political positions are joined together.[18] Laclau understands the linking of different political claims into a discursive field through the punning concept of 'articulation': both in terms of articulating a position, and also linked, like an articulated lorry. Chains of articulated discursive claims come to constitute a binary field. By the logic of this analysis, there is nothing inevitable about the Palestinian cause coming to be symbolic of a broader left politics.[19] This is not to diminish the *particular* importance of the intolerable plight of Palestinians. But it is to say that allegiances to Palestine comes to *stand in* as the materialised contemporary form of

radical politics, moral correctness and solidarity with the oppressed, even at the expense of taking seriously both remembrance of the Holocaust and the specific histories of persecution of particular Jews. Even the partial and caveated renunciation of any one of those articulated political allegiances then takes the kind of patient disentangling that Fielding has himself shown great willingness to engage in, but which seems to be intriguingly more difficult than we might expect.

One of my Jewish students has a kind of ironic shorthand that she uses to refer to fellow students who make use of the struggle for Palestinian self-determination as a signifier of their politics: 'the people who are right'. She is not referring, here, to those students who have thought carefully about the history and ethics of struggle in Palestine-Israel. Heavily involved in Palestinian activism, she has done much thinking on this topic herself. Rather, she is fearful of the pain caused in such discussions by analogies about Nazis, or playing down the importance of the Holocaust, or the use of antisemitic tropes. She is also nervous of an unreflective judgmental tone and moralising stance that collapses the full range of possible forms of being Jewish or being pro-Palestinian into a single binary opposition, exemplified by a remark she overheard when walking through campus: 'The Jews can have rights when they give the Palestinians rights'.[20] She says she half wishes that debates about the IHRA definition of antisemitism would go away so that she doesn't have to walk past protests against it. It is not just that the tone of the debate is intimidating, though it is. To her, the whole framing of the discussion also seems to shut down real conversations about the conflict, its sources, its histories, its complexities, the prospects for solutions, the difference that might be made by students.

In a similar vein, in our research we talked to many Jewish students – the large majority of whom were not Israeli, and none of whom mentioned supporting the current Israeli government – who were desperate to discuss in a nuanced way their own complicated personal opinions about Israel, but who felt silenced by the aggressive tone of questioning that arose the moment they mentioned their Jewish identities.[21] Fears of antisemitism are deep-rooted, and linked to long histories of persecution and oppression, so students' responses to these small acts of aggression, judgement and silencing have to be understood empathetically in that context. Jewish students felt, in some cases, anger and indignation, and in others guilt and shame. Either way, these feelings precluded students from learning about Palestine-Israel in meaningful ways, and also taught them invidious lessons about how to engage with difference, what it is safe to say, and whom to trust.

Despite their own criticism of the Israeli government and, in some cases, personal engagement with the Palestinian cause, the Jewish students we spoke to were fearful of the SU's public display of the Palestinian flag in their offices or their enthusiastic support for the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions campaign or Israel Apartheid Week, because of the way they have tended to intersect with a moralised, melodramatic antipathy towards Jews, and a lack of concern about their experiences of antisemitism. It thus did not seem to come as much of a surprise to my co-researchers when one of the SU officers later got publicly in trouble for sharing antisemitic memes on social media and making ill-judged remarks about Nazis. The work that would have needed to go into understanding and being able to recognise problematic tropes about conspiracies was foreclosed. Jewish students have likewise withdrawn from the work of drawing attention to the racism they face. And it seems possible that accusations of

antisemitism are assumed by SU officers to be vexatious because of the way they disrupt the articulated chain of demands that equates pro-Palestinian activism with opposition to Israel with anti-racism. The moralised discourse begins to unravel at the moment that antisemitism is taken seriously as a distinct claim; opposition to antisemitism cannot be articulated within the chain of demands.

We should, therefore, be very wary of moves to encourage articulation as a political strategy, of the type we have seen in left-wing movements.[22] In its production of equivalential discursive chains, articulation of political claims does not allow for the inclusion and negotiation of certain positions even as it amplifies others. This is not to imply that one cannot be both pro-Palestinian *and* opposed to antisemitism, but simply that the way the discursive chain is currently configured makes claims of antisemitism *unhearable* as a cause for concern to antiracists whose political positions are produced within this particular set of articulations.

**Free speech, censorship and the things we can hear**

Staff and students who are concerned about the IHRA definition of antisemitism, or who feel that accusations of antisemitism are made in bad faith, often talk about censorship. They fear they will not be able to voice criticism of Israel in the terms they wish to use.[23] This is a juridical approach to the issue of 'free speech', which focuses on the things people are *not permitted* to say by law or regulation.

I find it useful to understand this by drawing on Michel Foucault's analysis, in a very different context, of the 'repressive hypothesis' of power. [24] In brief, Foucault argues that we are always being told that we are forbidden to talk about, or have unsanctioned, sex. This story both derives from and reproduces a particular conceptualisation of power as the force that says 'no' and forbids. This way of thinking about power is in operation when we think in conventional terms about free speech: the censor is the power who silences our legitimate desire to speak.

Foucault does not, of course, deny that repressive power exists. However, he views it as a relatively rare and extreme form that is not typical of how everyday flows of power tend to work. Rather, he directs our attention to forms of productive power that are continually inciting us to talk about sex and to channel our desire and our energies into, for example, reproducing ourselves, or developing strategies of self-control. Crucially, the repressive hypothesis *itself* works to keep networks of productive power going: by focusing on repression, we are distracted from the web of productive power in which we are enmeshed.

What happens when we think about speech in terms of what we are *not permitted* to say? First, we focus on a struggle against potential censorship. For the avoidance of doubt, this is, as far as it goes, entirely right and reasonable: it is intolerable if Palestinians are unable to make claims in the places they live or in transnational spaces, or for students or academics to be required to be silent on issues of injustice.[25] This matters a great deal. But I want to contend that it is not the *only thing* that matters.

The second thing that focusing *only* on repressive power does is to distract us from the production, for good or ill, of pre-scripted melodramas and polarising sets of

articulated claims. In the *particular* circumstances of the university campus it is not obvious that the repressive power of the censor is the most troubling aspect of the situation we find ourselves in. Rather, we need to ask ourselves seriously why comparisons with Nazis seem to trip so easily from some tongues when Israel is discussed. Why is Israel persistently discussed as a 'racist endeavour' when so many other ethnonationalist or straightforwardly settler colonial states are not? Why did mentioning the name of Israel – and not any other country no matter how dark its history or role on the world stage – in a Business Studies class seem to silence the classroom as if a swearword had been uttered aloud? Why do some students wonder aloud what Jewish students think about the Holocaust, as if it were perhaps not so important as it is made out to be? Why might students demur from entering the Anne Frank museum but not, presumably, other museums, including those that sacralise war and exclusionary national narratives?[26]

There are some who diagnose a preoccupation with 'singling out' Israel or persistent use of offensive comparisons as a symptom of the speaker's 'true' antisemitic nature. This implies that we have a stable inner set of beliefs that are revealed by the things that we say, whether we know it or not. I suggest, rather, that our subjectivity is formed in complex and contradictory ways through our participation in broader discourses, whose implications, patterns and effects we may only distantly suspect. It follows from this position that we should look at the productive power that makes certain things sayable and thinkable – and that articulates particular moralised ways of thinking with other right-thinking causes – rather than at the repressive power that censors. Antisemitism is a set of discourses in which even antiracists can find themselves participating, rather than an indelible stain on a person's soul. And, as the discourses we use can be remade and rearticulated – with effort and work – it is also possible to stop participating in them whilst also maintaining other commitments perhaps in different and more careful ways. This is a practical and forgiving approach that focuses more on concrete actions that can be made right, than on demonising particular speakers.

When the IHRA definition was debated at the SU, many worries about free speech and censorship were (freely) expressed. The debate was more memorable, though, for the things that were said unchallenged: complacent denials of the existence of antisemitism on campus, booing, and what participants described as an ugly cheer when the motion to adopt it failed. Jewish students were, by and large, more troubled by the lack of empathy and dismissive tone taken towards their fears, than the bare fact of the motion falling. This recalled another student event entitled 'Am I An Anti-Semite?'.[27] The discussion (which I watched on video) troubled me not because of its focus on the legitimacy of criticism of the actions of the state of Israel, but rather because – despite its title – it did not address the fears of Jewish students who do face antisemitism. Plenty of students involved in Palestinian activism want to discuss and understand the ways in which criticism of Israel *is sometimes* antisemitic; their opportunity to do so is foreclosed by the dismissal of those claims through their subsumption into a discussion focused on the 'repressive hypothesis' of censorship.

**Conclusion: disarticulation?**

Jewish students face antisemitism on campus and do not trust their SU and generally anti-racist colleagues and teachers to show support. I have attempted to explain this

by positing that those students and staff are not essentially antisemitic, but rather are caught up in a broader articulated chain of equivalences that produces a moralised and binary discourse, marginalising claims of antisemitism because they cannot readily be understood within its frame of reference. This discourse, not accidentally but in some sense arbitrarily, positions students against each other in pre-scripted encounters in which all believe moralistically they are 'right'.

When I spoke about this project, I found to my surprise that some of my more right-wing friends, family members and acquaintances made common cause with me, for perhaps the first time. Ruth Sheldon describes beautifully how she noticed feeling judgmental towards pro-Israeli students in ways that foreclosed an empathetic response, until she traced her own feelings of complicity and shame.[28] I have a very different positionality, and as a teacher I tend to be quite open towards students with different political views from my own. However, when old sparring partners from different political traditions thought they had found an ally in me because I was speaking against antisemitism, I discovered feelings of shame, judgment and complicity that required some reflexive unpacking. Of course, anyone serious about politics must be able and willing to build alliances across political divides. However, I realised that a process of articulation was going on here that it was important to resist: if I opposed antisemitism, did that mean that I was renouncing the causes of my left-wing friends? In a polarised field, was I simply changing sides and being rearticulated into the opposing 'side', which supports the surveillance of Muslim students or the aggressive, militarised policies of liberal democracies? This feeling of discomfort and shame helped me understand why many non-Jews on the left speak out about antisemitism less than we should. We need to recognise this trap for what it is. All it does is rearticulate the same old binary narrative in ways that fail to challenge antisemitism. Instead we need to disrupt and disentangle those articulated chains of equivalence, and to take seriously the particular struggles taking place on our campuses and elsewhere. This will take patience and kindness, not aggressive posturing and angry denunciations.

The accounts of antisemitism we heard in the course of our research are distressing. Of course, this is not the only sort of racism we find in universities. My students frequently worried that there were other people on campus and in the wider world having a more difficult time than they, or their Jewish colleagues, were. They were deeply concerned, as I am, with Islamophobia and racism on campus, with the unbearable situation of Palestinians, with the consequences of hostile borders, austerity and injustice. All I could say to them was that there is no 'Oppression Olympics'; by understanding their own situation and finding the voice and the skills to oppose their own oppression, they would be participating in anti-racist struggle, even though they may not benefit from the exhilarating self-righteousness of a chain of equivalences. Through doing and communicating this research, they were gaining the skills they would need as future citizens or activists, with patience, empathy and kindness. These students are now going off to work in teaching, social work and academia. They give me hope. Despite the pain and fear associated with antisemitism, they are still mainly focused on what they can do to make the world better. Their final wish for the legacy of our project? They wanted other students to be able to take part in similar small-scale research projects, particularly anyone facing racism and most particularly Muslim students.

Universities are places of learning: students do indeed have a lot to teach us.

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Notes

[1] Community Security Trust, *Antisemitic Incidents: January-June 2018*, Community Security Trust, London 2018; J. Watts and L. Buchan, 'Labour MPs quit party in disgust at antisemitism, Jeremy Corbyn's leadership and Brexit stance', *Independent*, 18 February 2019: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/labour-mp-resign-leave-party-corbyn-luciana-berger-brexit-chuka-umunna-a8784186.html, accessed 2 April 2019.

[2] Just as one intriguing example, see H. Sullivan, 'Trigger unhappy: snowflake students can now skip exam topics they find "upsetting" and don't have to give a reason', *Sun*, 25 November 2018: https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/7824202/snowflake-students-can-skip-exams/, accessed 2 April 2019.

[3] The implicit lessons that students learn at universities are sometimes called 'the hidden curriculum'. See E. Margolis (ed), *The Hidden Curriculum in Higher Education*, Routledge: London 2001.

[4] P. Daniels, 'UCL may adopt IHRA definition rejected by Students' Union', *The Cheese Grater*, 28 January 2019: https://cheesegratermagazine.org/2019/01/28/students-union-ihra/, accessed 2 April 2019.

[5] B. Weich, 'UCL Students' Union votes down motion to adopt IHRA definition of antisemitism', *Jewish Chronicle*, 23 January 2019: https://www.facebook.com/groups/309887096581199/, accessed 2 April 2019

[6] See, for example, the trouble Suella Braverman MP recently landed herself in: S. Manavis, 'What is cultural Marxism? The alt-right meme in Suella Braverman's speech at Westminster', *New Statesman*, 29 March 2019: https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/staggers/2019/03/what-cultural-marxism-alt-right-meme-suella-bravermans-speech-westminster, accessed 2 April 2019.

[7] C. Turner, 'Police called to UCL over "violent" anti-Israel protest which left Jewish students barricaded in a room', *Telegraph*, 28 October 2016: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/10/28/police-called-to-top-university-over-violent-anti-israel-protest/ (accessed 2 April 2019); on research-based education, see: D. Fung, *A Connected Curriculum for Higher Education*, UCL Press, London 2017.

[8] The podcast is available by searching for JewCL on iTunes or any podcast app. I am grateful beyond words to Manya Eversley, Laura Katan and Sarai Keestra for their work on this project and the many conversations we have had during and since. An honourable mention also goes to Jake Cohen, who always pushes me to see a different side of things. And we are hugely grateful to the students who courageously spent time talking to us about painful experiences.

[9] NUS, *The Experiences of Jewish Students in 2016-17*, NUS, London 2017: https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/the-experience-of-jewish-students-in-2016-17, accessed 2 April 2019.

[10] A further useful resource that corroborates our findings is another qualitative study based on eight focus groups in five different cities: J. Boyd, *Searching for community: A portrait of undergraduate Jewish students in five UK cities*, Institute for Jewish Policy Research, London 2016.

[11] D. Graham and J. Boyd, *Home and away: Jewish journeys towards independence. Key Findings from the 2011 National Jewish Student Survey*, Institute for Jewish Policy Research, London 2011.

[12] There is no neutral way of referring to Palestine-Israel or Israel-Palestine. I am therefore following Ruth Sheldon, *Tragic Encounters and Ordinary Ethics: Palestine-Israel in British Universities*, Manchester University Press, Manchester 2016. I refer readers to her thoughtful account of the ethics of naming: pp 38-44.

[13] K. Kahn-Harris and B. Gidley, *Turbulent Times: The British Jewish Community Today*, Continuum, London 2010, Chapter 7.

[14] Ibid, p143.

[15] S. Rooney, *Normal People*, Faber and Faber, London 2018.

[16] S. Fielding and E. Burnell, 'Podnial', *The Zeitgeist Tapes podcast*: https://audioboom.com/posts/6983149-podnial, accessed 4 April 2019. The episode was first released in August 2018, during a period of intense debate about antisemitism in the Labour Party.

[17] Sheldon, *Tragic Encounters and Ordinary Ethics*.

[18] E. Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, Verso, London 2005.

[19] Sheldon, *Tragic Encounters and Ordinary Ethics*, pp14-16; see also D. Rich, *The Left's Jewish Problem: Jeremy Corbyn, Israel and Anti-Semitism*, Biteback Publishing, London 2016, for a much more detailed but less measured account.

[20] For the avoidance of doubt, the problem here is not only the idea that anyone should be stripped of their rights on the basis of 'group punishment', but also the elision of 'Jews', 'Israel' and the actions of the current Israeli government.

[21] We have a large proportion of international students in our student body, and we interviewed two students who identified themselves as Israeli. They were no more uncritical of their current government than anyone else. Other students mentioned links with Israel through family ties, youth movements, trips and so on. These sorts of links are very common among British Jews.

[22] G. Tremlett, 'The Podemos revolution: how a small group of radical academics changed European politics', *Guardian*, 31 March 2015: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/31/podemos-revolution-radical-academics-changed-european-politics, accessed 4 April 2019.

[23] For example, see U. Inspector, 'UCL students reject IHRA definition of antisemitism', *Pi Media*, 22 January 2019: https://pimediaonline.co.uk/news/ucl-students-reject-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism/, accessed 4 April 2019; D. Gayle, 'UK university censors title of Holocaust survivor's speech criticising Israel', *Guardian,* 29 September 2018: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/sep/29/manchester-university-censors-title-holocaust-survivor-speech-criticising-israel, accessed 25 April 2019; H. Aked, 'So much for free speech: Southampton University and the pro-Israel lobby', 15 April 2015: https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/opendemocracyuk/so-much-for-free-speech-southampton-university-and-proisrael-lobby/, accessed 25 April 2019.

[24] M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Vol.1 The Will to Power*, Penguin, Harmondsworth 1976. I have written about free speech and the repressive hypothesis of power at more length in C. Elliott, *Democracy Promotion as Foreign Policy:*

*Temporal Othering in International Relations*, Routledge, London 2017, chapters 2 and 6.

[25] See, for example, U. McGahern, 'The struggle to be seen and heard in Israel-Palestine', *Geopolitics* 2019: DOI: 10.1080/14650045.2019.1598006.

[26] For a great discussion of museums in naturalising and contesting national narratives, including museums that deal with the Holocaust, see J. Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2013.

[27] http://studentsunionucl.org/whats-on/events-activities/uclu-friends-of-palestine-am-i-anti-semite, accessed 6 April 2019.

[28] Sheldon, *Tragic Encounters and Ordinary Ethics*, chapter 2.