

Once Again, Palestinians Are Shafted by The British Government, Responding to Pressures from pro-Israeli Lobby

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I am appalled and angry at the British government's adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance ([IHRA](#)) definition of anti-Semitism following pressure by various Jewish Zionist groups for the same reason I am against another document the British government was pressured into adopting – the [Balfour Declaration](#) of 1917, “a short letter by Arthur Balfour to arguably one of the most influential Jewish families – the Rothschild's.”

It is much shorter than the IHRA, and [included](#) this sentence in it:

“It being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of non-Jewish communities [in Palestine].”

As history records, everything possible has been done to “prejudice the civil and religious rights of non-Jewish communities” in Palestine, namely Palestinian non-Jewish Arabs, Christian and Muslim, who stand today without the right of [self-determination](#) in their own shrinking homeland, their material dispossession an [ongoing](#) Israeli project today.

In the [White paper of 1922](#), while playing off Jew against Arab Palestinian, Winston Churchill attempted to mollify the latter by stating the Jewish immigration to Palestine would be controlled, that the rate of Jewish immigration would be determined by how much the economy of Palestine could absorb, [adding](#),

it is contemplated that the status of all citizens of Palestine in the eyes of the law shall be Palestinian, and it has never been intended that they, or any section of them, should possess any other juridical status.

From then on, American Jews (in the form of the American Jewish Committee) joined their counterparts in Britain to do all they could to stir public opinion to demand a Jewish state in Palestine. For example, The New York Times described the following scene on Nov. 3 and 24, 1930:

In Madison Square Garden, twenty-five thousand people – with another twenty-five thousand outside – heard a roster of famous Jews, Zionist and non-Zionist,

pillory the British Government.

The Zionist forces that have succeeded in forcing both parties in the British government to adopt a definition of anti-Semitism that equates anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism are the same forces that influenced the British government to acquiesce to the dismemberment of Palestine, a [Nakba](#) from which we continue to suffer.

As a Palestinian, I categorically reject both campaigns within the British government, the first to dispossess me, and the second to define as “anti-Semitism” my inalienable right to resist the Jewish state in Palestine that has colonized and usurped my homeland by force.

The issue of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance ([IHRA](#)) definition of “antisemitism” revolves around whether that definition is in part [racist](#) itself, as the IHRA includes five points specifically focused on Israel that, in essence, equate anti-Semitism with anti-Zionism.

Many in the media take it for granted that the majority of Jews worldwide identify with Israel, a settler-colonial state in Palestine that is the bitter fruit of the Jewish Zionist movement.

Thus, whenever there is an issue having to do with Israel, you see many references in the media to the opinions and reactions of the “Jewish community” or “Jews” in the aggregate.

Writing in the Jewish Chronicle, Daniel Sugarman [asks](#):

‘What is the IHRA definition of antisemitism? And why has Labour outraged Jews by rejecting it?’

Other articles, such as the Financial Times report (Labour’s Emily Thornberry endorses IHRA definition of anti-Semitism by Henry Mance and Jim Pickard in London, September 2, 2018), or the [JP post](#) “Outcry by UK Jewry as Labour adopts controversial antisemitism guidelines”, refer to the reaction of “UK Jewry” in the headline or in the body of the report.

Indeed, whenever Western governments talk about Israel in terms of protecting it, they mean they are protecting Jews [from Palestinian Arabs](#) and other “Arabs” generically.

They mean they are protecting Israel’s “right” to exist as an exclusivist, [apartheid](#) Jewish state in Palestine. They mean they are protecting Israel from [Palestinian refugees demanding return](#) to their homeland.

The world gets the equation that Jews/Judaism/Zionism = Israel, not simply from Israel itself and its [co-option of the Holocaust](#), or from Western governments and their guilt over the anti-Semitism they themselves historically spawned, but also from Zionist thought, which is Jewish nationalist thought, history and culture.

In the U.S., the board of the [Foundation for Jewish Studies](#), an independent organization whose mission is “to provide adults with high quality, in-depth encounters with Jewish thought, history, and culture”, [deals with](#) dissenting Jewish voices in the following way:

While we strongly support Israel, our programs focus only on what our mission designates, and what we have offered has been regarded as at the highest intellectual level... The Foundation does not support Professor Diner's personal political statements, but we support free speech and civil discourse.

Squelching free speech rather than racist practices in Israel is what's unacceptable in the statement of the FJS Board above, as it is often in [discussions of BDS](#) speech or attacks on IHRA.

Peter Cohen has this to [say](#) about the controversial IHRA points:

Under the IHRA definition – in which no less than 5 of the points are specifically focused on Israel – it is “antisemitic,” for example, to draw “comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.” Thus, while it is clearly acceptable to compare Hamas to the Nazis ([as Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu has done](#)), Iran to the Nazis ([as Netanyahu has also done](#)) and BDS activists to the Nazis ([as Israeli Education Minister Naftali Bennett has done](#)), it is apparently racist to do so in the specific case of Israel. Presumably this extends to very specific and factually-grounded comparisons, such as the counting of calories going into Gaza to the counting of calories in concentration camps by the Nazis, or the Nazi policy of “concentrating” Jews into ghettos (and later into camps) with the Israel policy of concentrating Palestinians into sealed Gaza and West Bank towns that are encircled by a tightening matrix of walls, settlements, outposts, bypass roads, closed military zones and checkpoints, or [the use of the “Dahiya Doctrine” in the Shujaiya and Rafah neighborhoods of Gaza in 2014](#) to the collective punishments used by the Nazis in retaliation for Resistance attacks. Are such comparisons really more unacceptable than the practices that elicit them?

In July 2018, Jewish Voice for Peace spearheaded a [joint statement](#) by a worldwide coalition of Jewish groups condemning “attempts to stifle criticism of Israel with false accusations of antisemitism.”

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) **definition** of antisemitism, which is increasingly being adopted or considered by western governments, is worded in such a way as to be easily adopted or considered by western governments to intentionally equate legitimate criticisms of Israel and advocacy for Palestinian rights with antisemitism, as a means to suppress the former.

This conflation undermines both the Palestinian struggle for freedom, justice and equality and the global struggle against antisemitism. It also serves to shield Israel from being held accountable to universal standards of human rights and international law.

These Jewish voices support “legitimate critiques of unjust Israeli policies” but still cannot decry and reject as unjust (i.e., delegitimize) the very existence of Israel as such.

But the Palestinian “Struggle for freedom, justice and equality” is, in fact, a [struggle for decolonization](#). For us, it's the existence of Israel, not simply its policies, that must be decried.

There are, of course, Jews who have always opposed the existence of Israel on [religious](#)

[grounds](#). And, at the beginning, there were also [Jews in Israel](#) who opposed it. In the UK when the Balfour Declaration was being cooked up, there were dissenting Jewish voices [that got lost](#).



Today, anti-IHRA Jews in the U.K. have been [swept away](#), once again, by the Zionist juggernaut.

As Jewish people in Manchester, England, we resent the despicable racism shown towards the Palestinians by Guardian stalwarts such as Jonathan Freedland, Polly Toynbee, Jessica Elgott, Eddie Izzard, Nick Cohen, Marina Hyde and Gaby Hinsliff among others, all saturating comment sections on mainstream news websites with attacks designed to bring down the UK Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, and to protect Israel from accountability.

In commenting on the adoption in full of the IHRA by UK'S Labour Party, Tom Suarez [marvels](#) at Zionism's conditioning of Jews and others to adopt its ideology:

There is no parallel to this on earth, no other political entity's claim of ownership over people by virtue of their ethnicity. Any such claim would be universally condemned as outrageous, as abusive, and at best, laughable. But Zionism has conditioned us to believe one of the most repugnant of classic anti-Semitic tropes, that of Jews as a tribe, a 'race' apart, somehow distinct from the rest of humanity, and placed a pariah state in the Middle East as the tribal leader.

But today also, in the wake of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement (BDS), we are beginning to hear Jewish voices, in mainstream media, pointing to Israel's illegitimacy. Here is professor of philosophy Joseph Levine at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst [saying](#) just that:

"In fact, I claim you can't find any genuine argument [against BDS] that isn't guilty of breaching the limits of the reasonable in this way for the alleged right to establish the Jewish state in Palestine."

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Note: Much of the above was first published on Quora as answers to two questions.

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