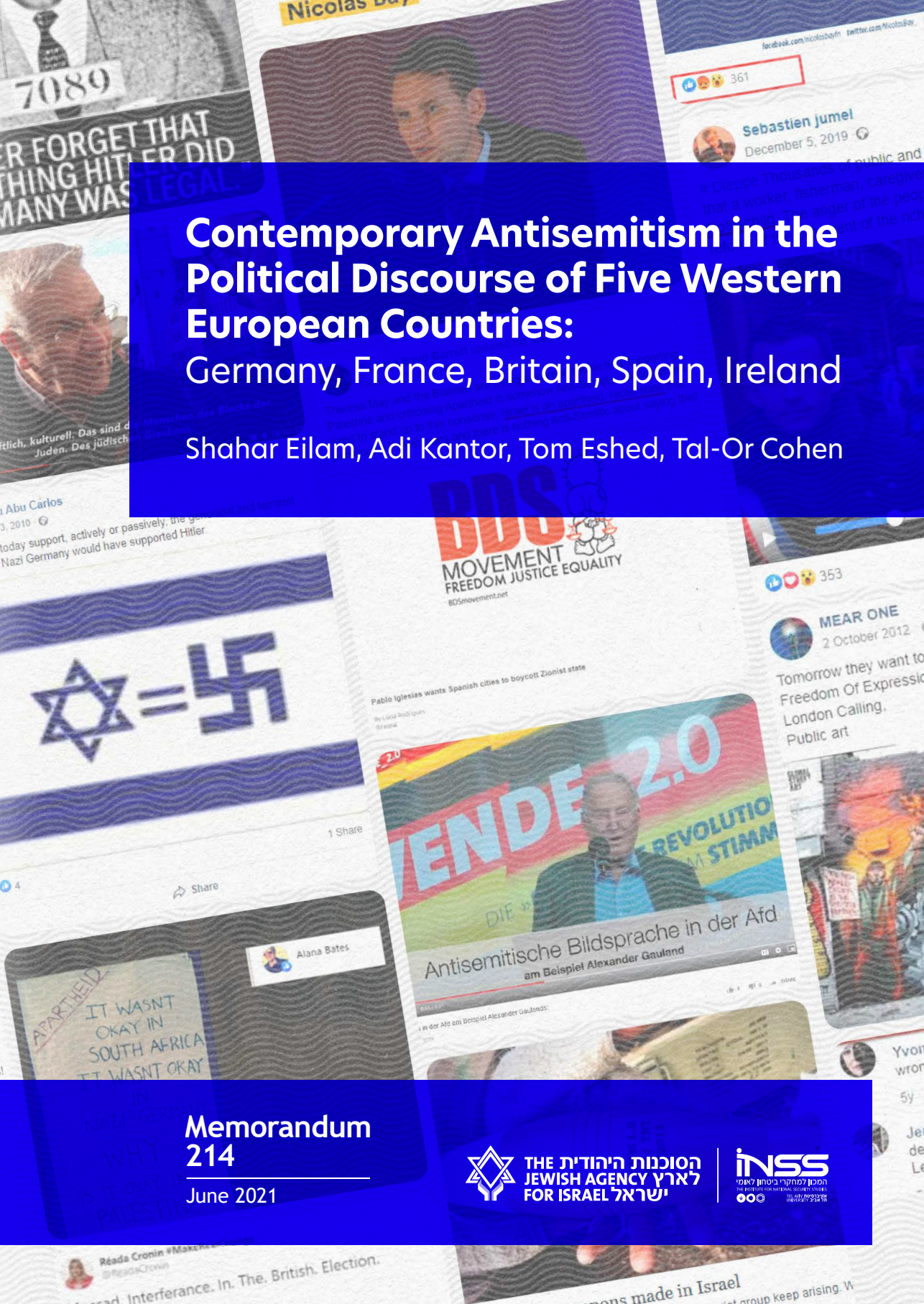


Contemporary Antisemitism in the Political Discourse of Five Western European Countries:

Germany, France, Britain, Spain, Ireland

Shahar Eilam, Adi Kantor, Tom Eshed, Tal-Or Cohen



Memorandum
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הסוכנות היהודית
JEWISH AGENCY
לארץ ישראל
FOR ISRAEL



המכון למחקרי ביטחון לאומי
INSTITUTE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES

**Contemporary Antisemitism
in the Political Discourse
of Five Western European Countries:
Germany, France, Britain, Spain, Ireland**

Shahar Eilam, Adi Kantor, Tom Eshed, Tal-Or Cohen



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Preface

76 years have passed since the end of World War II and the horrors of the Holocaust in Europe. Despite the ongoing commitment of most European leaders to preserve the memory of the Holocaust and to fight antisemitism, we have experienced a rise in antisemitism recently in a number of locations in Europe. Once again, Jews in certain cities and neighborhoods are feeling insecure and increasingly threatened as individuals and as communities.

History teaches us that antisemitism is a threat not only to Jewish communities but also to society as a whole and to the countries themselves. The fact that antisemitism is flourishing is an indicator of society's moral deficiency, and it heralds the coming of even further degeneration. Just like the response to the pandemic that humanity has recently experienced, antisemitism also calls for a strong and immediate response.

Therefore, it is incumbent on the political and civil leadership to mobilize, to join forces, and to take action to stop expressions of antisemitism.

The current study is the outcome of a joint project between the Jewish Agency and the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS).

The Jewish Agency is the largest Jewish organization in the world that focuses on encouraging Aliyah and bringing *Olim* (immigrants) to the State of Israel; on connecting Jewish communities to one another and to Israel; and in strengthening the resilience of Israeli society. Within this framework, the Jewish Agency is also active in reinforcing the security of Jewish communities and in fighting antisemitism.

The INSS is an independent and apolitical Israeli research institute, which is involved in a number of areas that are key to Israel's national security. In recent years, it has also been concerned with Israel's relationship with Jewish communities around the world and in issues that are part of that relationship, from the perspective of national security.

The core of the research is an attempt to shed light on the phenomenon of antisemitism within the political discourse of five Western European countries: Germany, France, Britain, Spain, and Ireland. This is done by analyzing recent expressions of antisemitism on social media by public officials in the political domain of those countries.

The research shows that antisemitism also exists in countries that emphasize the protection of minorities, as well as the fight against racism in general and antisemitism in particular.

Antisemitism exists both on the right and the left. Although it is not a new phenomenon, it has new and worrisome features; some traverse the various countries and others are specific to a particular country. The research emphasizes the need to continuously monitor the developments and trends in antisemitism, both those that are shared and those that are specific.

Antisemitism does not emerge and spread in a vacuum. It generally raises its ugly head when a society's atmosphere has been poisoned and in places experiencing a social, economic, or political crisis. From this perspective, we are undoubtedly living in an explosive and dangerous period. The current spirit of the times in Europe (and elsewhere in the world) is characterized by an atmosphere of growing political and public polarization as well as a process of social radicalization, alongside the weakening of the conceptual-political center and sometimes also the undermining of various state establishments and of the existing order. In parallel, and as part of the dominance of the digital domain, the role of social media and new media is growing, and they are refashioning the way in which people perceive reality and form their opinions and positions. Alongside the benefits and advantages of social media, it also contributes to a dangerous mix of facts, beliefs, opinions, and lies and constitutes fertile ground for the spread of a discourse of hate and incitement of various types. The result of all this is, partly, the penetration of anti-Jewish and antisemitic ideas from the social margins into both the mainstream and the public domain. Furthermore, antisemitism and the efforts to stop it often serve as a political weapon against one's opponents, as shown in this research. The "politicization" of antisemitism makes it difficult to maintain and strengthen the consensus around the fight against antisemitism and demonstrates the growing division

of opinion surrounding some of its components, primarily the anti-Israeli discourse on the left and the rewriting of history on the right.

It is in this complex reality, more than ever before, that elected officials and public opinion leaders of all types have an even greater responsibility to lead the struggle against hate and extremism, which constitute one of the biggest threats to modern society. Besides the leadership and setting a personal example, the struggle against antisemitism and hate requires greater public awareness of the threat that they represent; many partners need to be recruited in this struggle; education needs to be harnessed as the most important tool in this battle in the long term; and in parallel, restrictions and barriers should be set up to prevent the spread of the disease, including the imposition of a public, political, and legal price on elements that are responsible for antisemitic incitement.

The current research is another small step in this long and important battle. We hope you find it useful.

General (ret.) Amos Yadlin
Former head of the Institute
for National Security Studies

Isaac Herzog
Chairman of the Executive,
Jewish Agency for Israel

Introduction

This report examines and analyzes the phenomenon of antisemitism in the political discourse of five major Western European countries—Germany, France, Britain, Spain, and Ireland. It is the final report of a research project implemented during the second half of 2020 by a team of researchers at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), in collaboration with the Jewish Agency. In this regards, it is important to note that this study was finalized prior to the security escalation between Israel and Hamas in May 2021 and the surge of antisemitic events that followed it.

The research is based on systematic monitoring and mapping of public expressions of antisemitism by elected officials in the political systems of the five surveyed countries, over the period of one year, from late 2019 until late 2020. The result of the monitoring is a sample of antisemitic expressions, limited in time (the course of one year), in scope (several dozen elected officials), and in its findings (a few dozen expressions of antisemitism). As a result, the research does not purport to be a full and comprehensive report of the deeply rooted trends and developments relating to antisemitism in Europe; rather it focuses on a qualitative analysis of the current situation relying on expressions of antisemitism in the political discourse of selected countries, in an attempt to provide systemic insights into the phenomenon in general.

In recent years, we have witnessed a rise in antisemitism in the West, including the countries featured in this report. Notwithstanding the unique circumstances of each country, it is possible to draw conclusions that apply to all of them. All the countries surveyed here have experienced a rise in antisemitism, reflected by the growing number of reported antisemitic incidents and the severity of incidents in some of the countries, and by the tangible spread of antisemitic expression from marginal groups—at both

the left and right ends of the political spectrum—to the center of the public and political discourse.

The mapping carried out in this research indicates that some politicians in Western Europe—on both the right and the left—deliberately and maliciously use antisemitic ideas and expressions for political gains. This can be seen in the context of the increasing strength of extremist parties on both sides of the political spectrum who have contaminated the political and public discourse with antisemitic statements and attitudes.

Notably, this trend has occurred in parallel to the gradual weakening of the moderate political center. Thus, the growing manifestation of antisemitism may well be just one aspect of this general political phenomenon. Indeed, the present analysis indicates that in many cases the scale is tipping toward those who espouse antisemitism and away from those who try to moderate it, particularly given the process of sociopolitical radicalization, growing polarization, and the rise of once marginalized extremists at the expense of the moderate center. These processes have been accelerated by social media, which has been exploited to spread hateful content practically without significant limits, at least for the time being. This is accompanied by the violation of conventions of political discourse regarding what is both legally and normatively permitted and what is not. All this has contributed to antisemitism's becoming increasingly part of the political mainstream; the politicization of antisemitism as a means for political rivals to attack one another; and the appearance of cracks in the broad consensus both to preserve the memory of the Holocaust and to fight against antisemitism, which is manifested primarily by distorting and rewriting history mainly on the right and by anti-Israel discourse on the left.

Therefore, to combat the phenomenon of antisemitism in political discourse as well as to strengthen those who restrain antisemitic expressions and weaken those who encourage it, we recommend that efforts focus on the following goals and objectives:

1. To monitor expressions of antisemitism in the political discourse and to identify and quantify trends and deviations that call for a response.
2. To increase the political and legal price of expressing antisemitism or promoting antisemitic ideology, by means of documentation, exposure and condemnation, enforcement, lawsuits, and legislation as necessary.

3. To define and improve the limitations in publicizing antisemitic content in both social media and the traditional media.
4. To broaden political, organizational, and public support for the struggle against antisemitism and other types of hate.
5. To educate about the memory of the Holocaust and the values that compete with the phenomena of hatred and antisemitism.

This report briefly covers the sociopolitical context of the countries surveyed, the characteristics of their Jewish communities, and the existing data on local antisemitism. The report then presents the results of the mapping of current expressions of antisemitism in the political discourse on the right and the left. In the final section, we delineate the main insights and challenges posed by the phenomenon of antisemitism in the political discourse and then provide policy recommendations for addressing antisemitism over the long term.

Despite each country having its own unique circumstances, the insights and lessons learned from this survey can serve in the learning process and in formulating strategies to deal with the phenomenon in other parts of Europe and elsewhere. Furthermore, it should be remembered that antisemitism had destructive consequences for the entire society and should not be perceived as merely a local and domestic challenge for only the Jewish community. As a rule, antisemitism serves as a mirror for political, social, and economic problems facing states and societies, and this needs to be taken into account in the fight against antisemitism and in addressing the deeply rooted problems that feed it.

Research Methodology

Background and Scope of Research

This research addresses existing antisemitism in the political discourse in five Western European countries: Germany, France, Britain, Spain, and Ireland. Most of these Western European countries, some of which are home to the largest and most historic Jewish communities of Europe, have a legal and official record of being committed to fighting antisemitism. However, too often the elected officials and official representatives of these states—who are supposed to uphold and reflect the commitments of the countries they represent and serve—fall short of the state’s commitment to combat Jew-hatred and at times even perpetuate it.

The goals of this research were to: (1) understand the general context and the experience of the Jewish communities in each country in dealing with antisemitism, both physically and perceptually, (2) identify recent public antisemitic expressions that had been made, promoted, or endorsed by publicly elected officials and appointees for each country of interest, (3) account for the major themes, nuances, differences, and sameness in the antisemitic dialogue conveyed by political leaders and appointees for each country of interest, (4) gauge the reaction to such antisemitism by the public, media, and colleagues in politics; and (5) analyze the prevalence and impact of antisemitism in the political sphere of each country within the scope of this work.

We used the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s (IHRA) working definition on antisemitism as the basis for determining whether an expression constituted or sympathized with antisemitism or support thereof. This research project primarily examined recent examples of antisemitic expressions among political figures, dating back to June 2019 through September 2020.

The research methodology employed for this project was a two-pronged approach of traditional analysis that implemented tech-based solutions. Research using traditional methods focused on the complexities of the local Jewish population, political and government-institution analysis, survey and hate crime data review, and expert opinion. Innovative open-source analysis focused on collecting expressions of antisemitism by political figures in both mainstream and social media.

Traditional Analysis

To analyze each country, we employed traditional research methods, including examining relevant academic articles about each country, namely the history of the Jewish communities; summarizing key information on expressions of antisemitism, hate crimes from databases, and reports by other leading research institutions on the subject of antisemitism; identifying and analyzing the political discourse around major antisemitic scandals or expressions covered in the media; conducting interviews with local experts from each country on the Jewish community; and reviewing the political system and its addressing of antisemitism.

Technology-Based Research

Technology solutions for this project included the development of a custom dictionary of keywords and terms in all relevant languages, based on the text of the IHRA's working definition of antisemitism and local slang and code names for Jew-hatred, supplanted by additional shorthand and buzzwords; use of cutting-edge marketing and online engagement tools to generate a full picture of online activity by politicians who express antisemitism in any local news sources, international news outlets, published works, including any on-record reactions to national antisemitic scandals in the country of interest; and web-intelligence technological infrastructure for social media activity analysis, including Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. While the scope of this research specifically focused on analysis of recent antisemitic expressions, a public figure's past behavior of having expressed antisemitic attitudes or opinions were also indicators that they would be more likely to do it again, making a stronger case for the extent of the problem among specific figures of interest.

Throughout the research, we reviewed and analyzed upward of 100,000 content items from the political sphere of all countries using open-source technology. From this large data sample, over 1,000 content items were flagged as having a higher probability of being consistent with antisemitic expression in a political context. We carefully evaluated these items to compile a final dataset of 64 instances of antisemitic expressions or support thereof by an elected official. Most of these instances are presented in this report.

Social Media Platforms

The social media platforms analyzed for this research include Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. We did not review other fringe social media platforms such as Gab, VK, Voat, and others because, even though content posted to those platforms tends to be less regulated and more extreme, the user-base is significantly smaller. As part of this research method, we examined the social media accounts of the political figures in question to assess if and how they used antisemitic speech or expressed support thereof as part of their mainstream talking points, thus stoking Jew-hatred or prejudice among a wide-reaching audience. Furthermore, the mainstream social media platforms mentioned supposedly have higher community standards for speech and content and also have comprehensive hate speech policies. Therefore, the findings collected are also indicative of the Jew-hatred, both nuanced and overt, for which the mainstream social media platforms have failed to address in their current hate speech policies and community standards.

Twitter

Twitter was by far the most popular social media platform among all the political figures researched for this project. We analyzed the accounts of the political figures for each country by building queries using the earmarked keywords via the advanced search feature on Twitter and reviewing tweets made during 2019–2020. We scraped, extracted, and reviewed a separate massive data set of the re-tweets from all relevant accounts to analyze whether politicians were more likely to share or repost antisemitic content rather than post it themselves. Generally, the overwhelming majority of the relevant findings that violated the IHRA's working definition of antisemitism were tweeted or posted by the political figures themselves and were not shared material.

Facebook

The Facebook accounts of the political figures of each country were identified and assessed using the same dictionary of terms and conditions and advanced search feature. Facebook was the second most popular platform used by the political figures researched for this project. Most political figures only had a professional Facebook account or page; however, some would share posts from their personal accounts to their professional accounts or pages.

Instagram

Instagram was the least common social media platform used by political figures examined for this project. Spain was a notable exception to this rule, as almost all the public officials identified for review had open and active Instagram accounts. It was important to review Instagram to decipher if public officials were more likely to express or support antisemitism through the visual medium of pictures as opposed to written content. Findings suggested the opposite: Public figures analyzed here were more likely to express or promote antisemitic expressions or content on Facebook and Twitter, as opposed to Instagram.

Contemporary Antisemitism in the Political Discourse in Germany

Germans did not invent Antisemitism but Auschwitz is a German invention, which is why Antisemitism in Germany is different from Antisemitism anywhere else (MacShane, 2008, p. 34).

—Ignatz Bubis¹

In the year 2020, 75 years after the gates of Auschwitz were finally opened, and the world stood still in shock at the sights and scale of horror and death of the German so-called “Final Solution of the Jewish Question,” Jew-hatred seems to be again dangerously rising in Germany. In his speech given on the occasion of the Fifth World Holocaust Forum on January 23, 2020 in Jerusalem, German president Walter Steinmeier referred to this disturbing development:

The spirits of evil are emerging in a new guise . . . I wish I could say that we Germans have learned from history once and for all. But I cannot say that when hatred is spreading. I cannot say that when Jewish children are spat on in the schoolyard. I cannot say that when crude antisemitism is cloaked in supposed criticism of Israeli policy. I cannot say that when only a thick wooden door prevents a right-wing terrorist from causing a bloodbath in a synagogue in the city of Halle on Yom Kippur . . . the perpetrators are not the same. But it is the same evil (Landau, 2020).

We thank Ms. Julia Marie Wittorf for her assistance and contribution to the research and writing of this section.

Also the German minister of foreign affairs, Heiko Maas, expressed a similar concern a few days later, when referring to his fears regarding the possibility of Jews leaving Germany due to the recent rise in antisemitism:

almost every second Jew in Germany has already thought about leaving the country. It hurts even more . . . the fact that people of the Jewish faith no longer feel at home with us is a nightmare—and a shame, seventy-five years after the liberation of Auschwitz (Maas, 2020).

The concerns expressed by Steinmeier and Maas are substantial and alarming. High numbers of antisemitic attacks were recorded in 2019–2020 in Germany,² extending across the entire political spectrum. From the extreme far right to mainstream parties, as well as to the far left—antisemitism seems to be flourishing in all political realms. Moreover, the mass demonstrations against the Covid-19 measures throughout Germany in 2020 have served as fertile ground for spreading antisemitic statements, signs, and conspiracy theories, hence having contributed to the rise of antisemitism throughout the country (ZDF, 2020; Kern, 2021).³

Background

In the aftermath of World War II and after realizing the horrific dimensions of the Holocaust, only a small number of Jews who had survived the years of Nazi persecution and extermination chose to remain in Germany, with the majority of survivors of the once glorious German-Jewish community not returning to Germany. Toward the end of the 1980s, however, the community began to grow when a significant number of Jews arrived from the former Soviet Union (1989). After the reunification of Germany in 1990, the small Jewish community in former East Germany (GDR) also became part of the larger German-Jewish community in the Federal German Republic (FRG). Today, the Jewish council (Der Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland) is the official representative of German Jewry (World Jewish Congress, n.d.b).

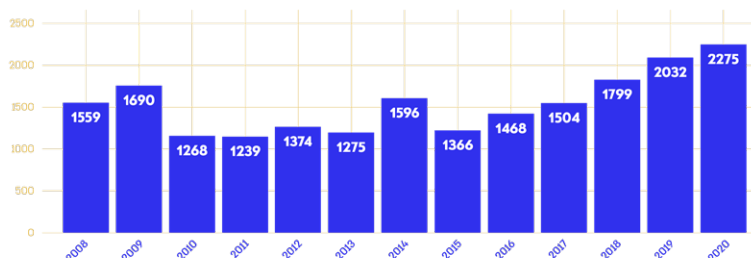
The number of Jews living in Germany currently is estimated to be more than 118,000 (DellaPergola & Staetsky, 2020, p. 14), with the largest communities in Berlin (more than 10,000), Munich (9,500), and Frankfurt (7,000). The Jewish community in Germany is the fourth largest in Europe (after France, Britain, and Russia) and the eighth-largest in the world. Most

of the Jews in Germany today are not descendants of the original community that existed before World War II but rather immigrants from the former Soviet Union as well as Eastern European Jews who arrived in the German Republic after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Their arrival helped to revive what was left of the historic community, which had lost almost all its members during the Holocaust. Today, in cities like Berlin, Hamburg, Bremen, Potsdam, or Schwerin, more than half of the Jews are native Russian speakers. It is important to note that there are also several thousand Israeli Jews living in Germany today (World Jewish Congress, n.d.b).

Despite their being an extremely small part of the population in Germany (0.14% out of a total population of more than 83 million), antisemitic attacks against Jews in Germany dramatically have increased. According to a report by the German government (see Figure 1), 2,275 antisemitic incidents were reported in 2020 (DW, 2021). In addition, recent findings show that even though the German police was able to identify 1,367 suspects, only five of them were arrested (Jansen, 2021).

The Federal Ministry of the Interior (Bundesministerium des Innern, für Bau und Heimat, 2020), referring to data from 2019, reported a total 2,032 antisemitic incidents in the country (see Figure 1). This is an increase of 13% compared to 2018 when only 1,799 antisemitic incidents were reported. Moreover, from 2017 to 2018, antisemitic incidents had increased by 20%. German criminologists argue that the real numbers are ten times higher than reported (Avrahami, 2020).

Figure 1. Overview of Antisemitic Incidents in Germany, 2008–2020



Note. Adapted from the Federal Ministry of the Interior, „Übersicht „Hasskriminalität“: Entwicklung der Fallzahlen 2001–2019; DW, “Germany sees spike in anti-semitic crimes—reports,” 2021.

Moreover, official reports show that in the year 2019, around 85% of the antisemitic incidents in Germany were perpetrated by people identifying with the far right, 8% adhering to a foreign ideology, 4% having a religious background, 3% from an unidentified background, and 0% from the radical left (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, 2020a, p. 17). Interestingly enough and contradicting the numbers provided by the police on radical left antisemitic incidents, the report of the Federal Association of Antisemitism Research and Information Centers (RIAS, 2020) indicated that 13 or 1.5% of the antisemitic cases in Berlin had originated with the radical left in 2019, compared to 44 cases reported in 2018 (RIAS, 2020, p. 26). Moreover, 9.8% of antisemitic incidents in Berlin reflected anti-Israel sentiment (p. 6), totaling 86 cases (p. 26); according to the same report, these cases pose the second biggest threat against Jews in Germany. Thus, reporting of antisemitic incidents by the official establishments, the different definitions used, and the criteria of recording and handling these incidents tend to be inconsistent and problematic.

The last general public opinion poll on antisemitism conducted in Germany by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in 2019 sought to examine to what extent Germans agree with 11 antisemitic statements or stereotypes (see Figure 2). For example, it found that about 49% of respondents agreed with the statement that “Jews are more loyal to Israel than to the country in which they live,” 27% expressed sympathy with the statement that “Jews have too much power in the business world economy,” and 42% agreed with the statement that “Jews still talk too much about what happened in the Holocaust” (Anti-Defamation League, 2019).

Figure 2. ADL Poll on Antisemitism in Germany



Note. From ADL, *ADL Global 100: An Index of Anti-semitism, Germany*, 2019.

The German intelligence and security mechanisms monitor right-wing antisemitism and cyber-hate discourse (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, 2020a). According to the 2019 report of the RIAS (2020), antisemitic attacks in the past year were attributed mainly to extreme right-wing terrorists. A total of 1,253 incidents, most of them by right-winger extremists, were reported in four federal states—Berlin, Bavaria, Brandenburg, Schleswig-Holstein (Hänel, 2020). Furthermore, according to Germany's Intelligence Agency (BND) and the Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (BfV) [Office for the Protection of the Constitution], 32,080 right-wing extremists were identified in 2019, of which 13,000 represent a "violent-oriented" threat (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, 2020b, p. 53). This total number of right-wing extremists rose considerably compared to 2018, when only 24,100 right-wing extremists were identified (Edmund, 2020; Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, 2020a).

Today right-wing extremist activity is considered Germany's biggest and immediate threat to its national security (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, 2020a; Bundeskriminalamt, 2020; Wissmann, 2019). Germany's interior minister, Horst Seehofer, referred to these latest findings of the BfV, stating that "over 90% of antisemitic incidents can be traced back to right-wing extremism. And, therefore, it is not an exaggeration to say this is the biggest security policy concern in our country" (Edmund, 2020). For many, the

most dramatic “wake-up call” was the antisemitic attack in a synagogue in the former East German city of Halle on October 9, 2019, on Yom Kippur, the Jewish day of atonement. Only a wooden door prevented the right-wing terrorist from entering the synagogue and massacring the Jewish crowd praying inside. According to the 2020 annual report on antisemitism by the Kantor Center, this attack “has become a landmark in the antisemitic activity in Germany that embodies all the present problems” (Kantor Center, 2020, p. 5).⁴ When referring to attacks committed by the far right, it is also important to consider that incidents like the terror attack in Halle also provide fertile ground for further attacks against Jews. According to the RIAS report, solidarity with the perpetrator of an attack is often expressed, contributing to an increase in the number of attacks against Jews (RIAS, 2020).⁵

Antisemitism, however, is not limited to only far-right circles but it also occurs within far-left circles. Potential left-wing extremists in 2019 numbered 33,500 and 32,000 in 2018, having increased by 4% in both 2018 and 2019 (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, 2020b). Tom David Uhlig, a researcher from Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (bpb) [Federal Agency for Civic Education] has stated that even though antisemitism is not an integral part of left-wing worldviews, it constantly accompanies the left-wing political movements. He argued that this phenomenon particularly appears as part of three main political positions: “criticism of capitalism,” “anti-imperialism,” and “politics of the past” (Uhlig, 2020). According to Uhlig’s argument, these positions have been characterized mainly by anti-Israel activism, such as the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS), which was defined recently by the German parliament as an antisemitic movement; the “militant Islamist milieu”; the “left-wing spectrum”; and also by the “political middle ground” (Hänel, 2020). According to the recent BfV report, 6,449 crimes motivated by left-wing extremism were recorded in 2019, having increased from 4,622 cases in 2018. More than 900 of the crimes were violent in nature. The report also stated that almost 650 incidents of Islamic terror committed against Jews had been identified in 2019 (Edmund, 2020).

Legislation Against Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial

After World War II, the National Socialist Party of Germany (NSDAP) was regarded as a “criminal organization” and became illegal. Bazylar (n.d.) has stated that “as part of efforts to overcome its Nazi past, Germany has

criminalized denial of the Holocaust and also banned the use of insignia related to Hitler's regime and [...] written materials or images promoting the Nazi message." Section 130 of the German Penal Code strictly bans "denial" or "playing down of the genocide committed under the National Socialist regime (§ 130.3)," including through the "dissemination of publications" (§ 130.4). According to Bazylar (n.d.), this section "includes public denial or gross trivialization of international crimes, especially genocide/the Holocaust." Moreover, in 1994, Holocaust denial became a criminal offense under a general anti-incitement law. According to this law, "incitement, denial, approval of Nazism, trivialization or approval, in public or in an assembly, of actions of the National Socialist regime, is a criminal offense. The 1994 amendment increased the penalty to up to five years imprisonment. It also extended the ban on Nazi symbols and anything that might resemble Nazi slogans" (Bazylar n.d.).

More recently, in May 2020, the Bundestag decided to define the BDS movement as antisemitic. "The resolution, which mentioned 'growing unease' in the German-Jewish community as antisemitism has increased, was brought to Parliament by Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservative Christian Democratic Union party and its Social Democratic coalition partner, as well as the liberal party and the Greens" (Bennhold, 2019).

In recent years, without denying the Holocaust, there has been a considerable rise in the phenomenon of questioning the number of victims who were murdered, relativizing the severity of the atrocities, and trivializing the Holocaust and crimes of National Socialism itself, also known as Holocaust revisionism (Hänel, 2020). To fight against this phenomenon, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance established a working definition of Holocaust denial (IHRA, 2016). In addition, due to the latest rise in antisemitic incidents and acts of terror across the country, the German government appointed a special commissioner for antisemitism to address the problem more seriously.

Antisemitism in the Political Discourse

When trying to assess the current scope of antisemitism in Germany, it is important to remember that antisemitic attacks do not occur in a total void. Social, historical, educational, and political contexts play a decisive role in

this phenomenon. Knowledge about the Holocaust within today's Germany has severely declined:

High school students, and 40% of Germans between the ages 18 to 40 know little or have even never heard about it [the Holocaust]; between a quarter to a third of the Germans surveyed held antisemitic beliefs and stereotypes; and Israel-related antisemitism, mainly originating from Muslim students and staff, is already becoming normalized among school students and teachers. Young teachers cannot cope; WWII keeps slipping away from the memory of the post-war third generation; family biographies play a smaller role; and children from immigrant families adopt different historical narratives (Kantor Center, 2020, p. 13).

Antisemitism today is not an isolated act of extremists alone; rather the political discourse constantly “triggers” and “nurtures” antisemitism, which serves as a tool in promoting political agendas and strategies. Heiko Beyer (2017), a researcher at the Federal Agency for Civic Education, expressed this notion when referring to the main antisemitic scandals that occurred in the German political discourse in recent years:

Both the defense against guilt and perpetrator-victim reversal of secondary anti-Semitism as well as anti-Zionism's criticism of Israel, which has become a fundamental anti-Semitism, *can be found in almost all social classes today* [emphasis added]. This can not only be shown by means of surveys . . . but also the—very different but broad—debates such as those about the then deputy federal chairman of the FDP Jürgen Möllemann (2002), the CDU member of the Bundestag Martin Hohmann (2003), the Left Party member of the Bundestag Inge Höger (2010), the SPD chairman Sigmar Gabriel (2012), the chairman of the AfD Thuringia Björn Höcke (2017) and the discussions about the statements by Jakob Augstein (2012) and Günter Grass (2012) point to such argumentation patterns in large parts of society.⁶

Antisemitism in the Far Right

When analyzing the rise of this phenomenon on the right, one must closely examine the rhetoric and activity “on the ground” as manifested by members of Germany’s far-right populist party, the Alternative for Germany (AfD). The AfD was founded in 2013 as an anti-EU party. In the first two years after its establishment, the party attempted to maintain a more “neoliberal right-conservative position and distance itself from neo-Nazi movements across Germany” (Salzborn, 2020, p. 121), by focusing mainly on economic issues. However, Salzborn has argued that this radically changed following the party’s split in 2015. From 2015 onward, “the AfD has positioned itself as openly antisemitic and racist” (Salzborn, 2020, p. 121). Today the AfD is mainly characterized by its racist, anti-migrant,⁷ “völkisch-nationalist” positions (Salzborn, 2018, pp. 74–75), as well as its anti-EU stance. In addition, its members reject the idea of parliamentarianism and representative democracy. According to the latest publications, and for the first time in German postwar history, the German domestic intelligence agency (BfV) even decided to place the the AfD under surveillance (Bennhold, 2021).

Researchers have not seriously addressed the role of antisemitism within the AfD and its attitude to the Nazi past, according to Salzborn (2018). In part, this may be due to the AfD’s political strategy of hiding its antisemitic roots by regarding Israel as its strategic ally in the fight against what they refer to as “the Islamic threat” and its wish to block migration into the country. With Israel and the Jewish community by its side, it was thought that no one could claim the party was antisemitic. However, this idea was doomed to fail. Salzborn (2018) has argued that “antisemitism has been gradually taking hold in the AfD . . . the AfD is shifting from a party of antisemites to an antisemitic party” (p. 75). According to Salzborn, this transformation has been gradual. First, the party and its leadership ranks became more tolerant of antisemitic positions. Then, they began denying antisemitism, together with false attempts to ban problematic party figures who had increasing tolerance for antisemitic positions (Salzborn, 2018).

The AfD manifests its antisemitic discourse in several ways. First, it uses terms taken from the Nazi era, such as *Volksgemeinschaft*⁸ (Fuchs, 2020). Salzborn (2018) has argued that

The *Gemeinschaft* [...] is conceptually opposite to the *Gesellschaft* (society), namely a form of association that is open, plural, accepting of contradictions, and ultimately voluntary. In contrast, the *Volksgemeinschaft* stands only for coercion, one that is repressive and totalitarian towards both the included and the excluded (pp. 76–77).

Another characteristic is the use of “victimhood” rhetoric. According to Salzborn (2018), this is the “desire” (p. 79) to express Nazi positions without being called a far-right extremist. This phenomenon takes place in a country where most citizens have not even begun to explore the question of their own grandparents’ “complicity in the Nazi regime” (p. 97). The “victim discourse” expressed by many AfD members is, in other words, the attempt to revise the past and to rewrite it in a way that would be more “convenient” to accept. This is done by reversing the “perpetrators” and the “victims.” According to Salzborn, when the Nazi past is revised, there are no more perpetrators—only victims. In this way, the blame for the Holocaust and the atrocities of World War II falls fully on Hitler and therefore the “German people” (p. 81) are no longer responsible. Salzborn has explained how this psychological process works:

It was not that Germans did something, but that something was done *to them* [emphasis added], in a rhetorical trick achieved by separating Hitler—as the personal embodiment of evil and Nazism—from his people, so that guilt can be expatriated and denied. In Gauland’s worldview it seems that there are no perpetrators, except Hitler and perhaps a few leading Nazis (p. 82).⁹

Antisemitic Discourse in the AfD—Selected Examples

In recent years, the AfD has been linked to several antisemitic incidents. One of the most memorable antisemitic cases was the “Gedeon affair” in 2016. Wolfgang Gedeon, a former AfD member, stated that “the Zionist influence is manifesting itself in a limiting of free speech” (Salzborn, 2018, p. 86), implying that Zionism has a more sinister role as a conspiracy or as a source of power exuding influence on Germany. Associated with several antisemitic scandals, Gedeon was quoted as saying:

Just as Islam is the external foe, the Talmudic ghetto Jews were the internal foe of the Christian Occident . . . As the political center of power shifted during the twentieth century from Europe to the U.S., Judaism, in its secular Zionist form, became a decisively powerful and influential factor in Western politics . . . The previous internal foe of the Occident is now a dominating power in the West, and the previous external foe of the Occident namely Islam, has overrun the borders through mass migration and penetrated deeply into Western societies, and is reshaping them in many ways (Salzborn, 2018, p. 86; Bender & Soldt, 2016).

Moreover, he has been responsible for antisemitic slogans such as the so-called “enslavement of humanity within a messianic empire of the Jews,” “Judaizing the Christian religion,” and “Zionizing the politics of the West,” and more (Saure & Maegel, 2016).

AfD party members also attempted to stop the state from funding memorial sites that related to the Nazi era, such as former concentration camps, with the goal of creating a new “culture of remembrance” (Salzburg, 2018, p. 82).¹⁰ In 2017, Björn Höcke, an AfD parliamentary leader in Thuringia’s states assembly and leader of the “Der Flügel” faction in the party, spoke in Dresden at an event of the AfD youth organization (see Figure 3). He argued that the bombing of Dresden should be regarded as a “war crime” and added that a “turnaround in remembrance policy” should be applied and regarded the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe as a “memorial of shame” in Germany, “planted . . . in the heart of its capital” (Salzburg, 2018, p. 83).

Figure 3. Member of AfD Condemns World War II Monument



Note. Germany: AfD's Höcke condemns Berlin's WWII monument as "memorial of shame," YouTube, January 17, 2017.

Moreover, in a recent tweet, Höcke was quoted as saying, "The resettlement program of the globalists must be ended immediately. In addition, it must now be clarified how many people were able to buy access to German social security in this way" (Höcke, 2020). It should be noted that the term "globalist" is often used as a slur for Jews (see Figure 4). Here the context fits the extreme right and antisemitic belief, according to which Jews "use their power to swamp Europe with refugees."¹¹

Figure 4. Antisemitic Tweet by Björn Höcke



Note. The image reads: “Resettlement Program—Corruption, Fraud and Smuggling at the UNHCR. From Björn Höcke [@BjoernHoecke], Twitter, January 14, 2020.

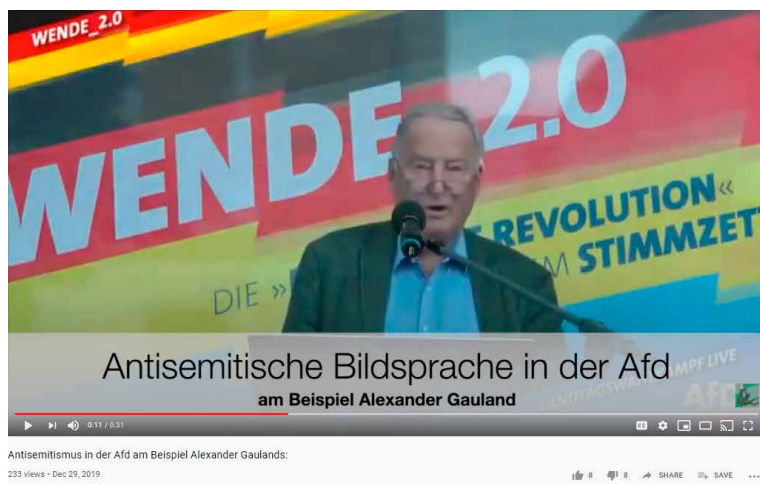
In addition to Höcke’s statements, Alexander Gauland, leader of the AfD in the Bundestag, repeated the same arguments in a speech in September 2017:

We have the right to be proud of the achievements of German soldiers from two world wars . . . There is no longer a need to reproach us with for these 12 years. They no longer pertain to our identity. This is why we also have the right to take back not only our country, but also our past. (Salzborn, 2018, p. 84; Faz.net, 2017).

Two years later, Gauland was recorded as saying that: “The real power is becoming more and more invisible and uncontrollable. The globalist octopus

has no interest in peoples and nations” (Friedensdemo Watch, 2019, see August 18, 2019; Figure 5).

Figure 5. Alexander Gauland, leader of the AfD



Note. From Friedensdemo Watch, 2019, Antisemitism in the AfD using the example of Alexander Gauland.

Another member of the party, Herold Peters-Hartmann, AfD district chairman of Würzburg, was quoted in an interview in February 2020 (see Figure 6) as saying: “We have a problem here. We have a really big problem here in Germany . . . We have another bloc that has a lot of influence. Economically, culturally. These are the people of the Jewish bloc—the people of the Jewish faith” (MuslimTvDe, 2020).

Figure 6. Member of AfD States that Jewish Bloc is a Problem



Note. Herold Peters-Hartmann, AfD district chairman of Würzburg, in interview stating that the Jewish bloc is a problem. From MuslimTvDe, The Islamophobia of the AfD, YouTube, February 26, 2020.

Antisemitism in the Discourse of the Far Left

Antisemitic discourse can also be found in the rhetoric of the far-left political parties in Germany. The basic assumption expressed by the far left is the notion of an “imaginary of power” which has been attributed to the Jews, Zionism, and Israel according to Moishe Postone, a pioneer in researching antisemitism (Thomas, 2010). In an interview, Postone explained that

The Jews are seen as constituting an immensely powerful, abstract, intangible global form of power that dominates the world. There is nothing similar to this idea at the heart of other forms of racism. Racism rarely, to the best of my knowledge, constitutes a whole system that seeks to explain the world. Anti-semitism is a primitive critique of the world, of capitalist modernity. *The reason I regard it as being particularly dangerous for the left is precisely because anti-semitism has a pseudo-emancipatory dimension that other forms of racism rarely have* [emphasis added] (Thomas, 2010).

Historian Jeffrey Herf added his interpretation of the anti-Zionist aspect of antisemitism, which is regarded as part of the left political circles:

Communist anti-Zionism was an ideological offensive against the State of Israel whose advocates insisted that the accusation that they were motivated by antisemitism was an imperialist or Zionist trick to defuse legitimate criticism of Israel's policies toward the Arabs and the Palestinians (Herf, 2017, pp. 130–131).

These ideological characteristics can be found also among some members of the German far-left party, Die Linke. The party was founded in 2007 as a result of a fusion between two parties: the successor of the Eastern German Communist Party (SED) and the Election Alternative for Social Justice (WASG), a group of social democrats and labor unionists whose origins were in the Social Democratic Party (SPD; Voigt, 2013, p. 335). Die Linke has become a “major player in German politics and has a strong influence on the European left in general,” according to Voigt (p. 335). He has argued that there are several explanations for the hatred of Israel among the members of this party. One of the main explanations is “anti-imperialism” (pp. 335–336). According to this view, “the world and society are split into two opposing groups: one group wants peace and the other group wants to pursue imperialism” (p. 339). Voigt has stated that “there is an exploiting First World and an exploited Third World,” which

inevitably leads to the personification of social relations, which makes it easy to pinpoint the persons responsible for exploitation and oppression. This encourages all those who refuse to use knowledge and rationality to understand the complex world we live in to entertain wild conspiracy theories. On the basis of old, deeply entrenched prejudices, Jews are perceived as those pulling the strings, while Israel is seen as the spearhead of Western imperialism in the Middle East and as an artificial state that is a foreign object in the organic body of Arab societies (p. 339).

Another important characteristic of the German radical left is the conceptual collaboration with Islamist groups. Voigt has argued that both share an “anti-imperialist ideology, a deep hatred of Israel and the United States, and a dystopian yearning for a simple, premodern world. Both ideologies also reject globalization and financial capital as a symbol of the exploitative capitalist society. Both tend to simplify the complexity of the modern world

into a clear-cut, black and white paradigm without shades of gray” (Voigt, 2013, p. 342).

Antisemitic Discourse in Die Linke

Die Linke politicians have both supported or promoted several incidents of virulent anti-Israel sentiment that has devolved into overt antisemitism. In January 2020, Annette Groth, a BDS activist and former member of Die Linke, joined BDS Berlin, Palestine Speaks, and the German branch of Jewish Voice for Peace and made a speech protesting the “criminalization” of the BDS movement (Publicsolidarity, 2020; Reuters, 2010; Freedom Flotilla Coalition, 2018). During her speech, she spoke against Israel, touching on classic antisemitic tropes when she claimed that “no other country imprisons as many children as Israel.”¹²

In addition, Heike Hänsel, vice-chairperson of Die Linke, (see Figure 7) hosted and moderated a webinar on the topic of Israeli annexation plans (Hänsel, 2020). One of the invited speakers was Mustafa Barghouti, a key member of the Palestinian BDS National Committee (see BDS National Committee, 2010). Despite being a German public official, Hänsel did not stop or react to antisemitic statements made by Barghouti during the webinar. Barghouti claimed that Israel created a system of “224 Ghetto stands in the Westbank and one big Ghetto stand in Gaza” (Hänsel, 2020, 13:30), thereby comparing Israel to Nazi Germany and perpetuating the reversal of the victim into the perpetrator described above to a German audience by exporting it to the Palestinian narrative.¹³

Figure 7. Member of Die Linke Hosting Webinar about Israeli Annexation



Israeli Annexation Plans for the West Bank

 **Heike Hänsel** was live.
July 21 · 🌐

Israeli Annexation Plans for the West Bank

Guests

- Dr Mustafa Barghouti [المستطفي البرعوثي](#), politician, former Palestinian presidential candidate
- Wesam Ahmad, Business- and Human Rights Coordinator, Al-Haq Organization [مؤسسة الحق](#)
- Aida Touma-Sliman, Member of the Knesset, Joint List, Hadash ([@https://www.facebook.com/aidatumal/](https://www.facebook.com/aidatumal/))
- Gaby Lasky, Meretz, lawyer and human rights activist (<https://www.facebook.com/GabyLaskyKnesset/>)
- Avrum Burg, former speaker of the Knesset (tbc)

Note. From H. Hänsel, Israeli Annexation Plans for West Bank [Video], Facebook, 2020.

Contemporary Antisemitism in the Political Discourse in France

On July 16, 1995, in a historical speech at the memorial for the Jewish victims of the Vél d'Hiv roundup of 1942 in Paris,¹⁴ President Jacques Chirac confessed the role of France in the tragic fate of its Jewish population during the German occupation and for deporting thousands of Jews to the death camps. After decades in which French leaders firmly refused to admit that French authorities had taken part in the systematic persecution, it took one brave leader standing in front of a small crowd of Jewish leaders and survivors of the death camps to state the following, marking an important milestone in the French contemporary memory discourse:

These dark hours forever sully our history and are an insult to our past and our traditions . . . yes, the criminal folly of the occupiers was seconded by the French, by the French state . . . France, the homeland of the Enlightenment and of the rights of man, a land of welcome and asylum, on that day committed the irreparable . . . breaking its word, it handed those who were under its protection over to their executioners . . . we owe them [the Jewish victims] an everlasting debt (Simons, 1995).¹⁵

Twenty-five years after, on July 16, 2020, France commemorated 75 years to the Vél d'Hiv roundup. In his commemoration speech, Emmanuel Macron, the president of France, stated that “on July 16 and 17, 1942, more than three thousand Jews were arrested. By the French, by the French State. Because they were Jews. Over eight thousand were detained at the Vél d'Hiv before being deported to Auschwitz. Never forget” (Algemeiner Staff, 2020).

We thank Ms. Julia Marie Wittorf for her assistance and contribution to the research and writing of this section.

Despite Macron's honest plea to never forget, an alarming rise in antisemitic incidents in France today illustrates a rather different reality. The number of antisemitic attacks in France in recent years implies that rhetoric of Holocaust memory in Europe does not necessarily correlate with facts on the ground. Moreover, since the 2000s, a clear rise in domestic antisemitism linked to global Islamic terrorism has been observed, manifested by attacks against synagogues and the Jewish population. One of the most horrifying cases that shocked the French republic in recent years was the March 2018 murder of Mireille Knoll, an 85 year-old Holocaust survivor who was stabbed to death in her apartment in Paris by two men who then set her body on fire (Kantor Center, 2019, p. 67). Other tragic and shocking cases of antisemitism in France include the torture and murder of Ilan Halimi in 2006; the Toulouse school massacre in 2012, in which four were murdered; the attack on the Hypercacher kosher grocery in Paris in 2015, culminating in the death of four people (World Jewish Congress, n.d.a) and the murder of 65 year-old Sarah Halimi in 2017.¹⁶

“The most extreme cases of violence against Jews in 21st century France (and Europe) were motivated, at least partially, by jihadist ideology which is inherently antisemitic,” argues historian and sociologist Günther Jikeli (2018, p. 299; see also Taguieff, 2004; Krämer, 2006; Tibi 2012). Jikeli asserts that that most of the peaks of antisemitic incidences since the year 2000 correlate to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict (in addition to other variables). “It seems that heightened tensions and violence in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict trigger some antisemitic acts in addition to an already high level of antisemitic incident . . . Antisemites often do not distinguish between the Israeli government, Israelis, and ‘the Jews.’” Furthermore, he cites that “the demonization of Israel becomes a demonization of all Jews and lowers the threshold to act upon negative attitudes toward Jews” (Jikeli, 2018, p. 303).

Background

Jews in France today represent less than 1% of the country's total population, around 450,000 Jews out of 65 million people (DellaPergola & Staetsky, 2020). They constitute the main Jewish community in Europe and the third largest Jewish community in the world, after the US and Israel. More than half of the Jewish population in France lives in Paris and its suburbs, followed by relatively large communities in Marseilles, Lyons, Toulouse,

Nice, Strasbourg, Grenoble, Metz, and Nancy. After 1945, a large number of North African Jews immigrated to France, as part of the French withdrawal from its colonies. Their arrival immediately doubled the size of France's Jewish community. Muslim immigrants also began arriving in France in parallel to the North African Jewish immigration. In general, until the beginning of the 1980s, the two communities—Jewish and Muslim—often lived harmoniously; this changed, however, due to failed attempts to fully integrate the Muslim community into French society. In addition, relations between the two communities were constantly tense due to continuous friction and violence between Israelis and Palestinians, especially during the First and Second Intifadas (World Jewish Congress, n.d.a).

The small percentage of Jews in France does not seem to correlate with the dramatic increase of antisemitic attacks against them in recent years. Researchers claim that antisemitic acts in France have reached a level that “has not been seen since World War I” (Zawadzki, 2017, pp. 295–296). According to a survey conducted by the American Jewish Committee (AJC) in France and published in early 2020, 70% of French Jews say they have been victims of at least one antisemitic incident in their lifetime; 64% have suffered antisemitic verbal attacks at least once; 23% have been targets of physical violence at least once; and 10% stated they were attacked several times. Moreover, 73% of the French public and 72% of Jews consider antisemitism a problem that affects all of French society (AJC, 2020a).

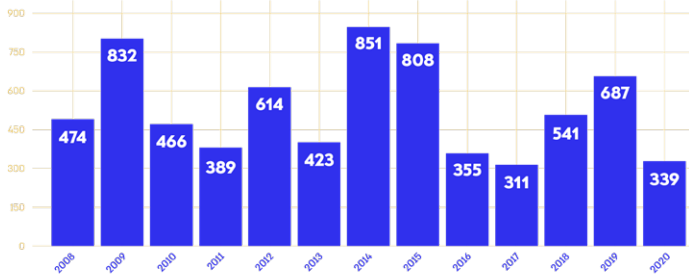
The last public opinion poll on antisemitism conducted in France by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in 2019 sought to examine the extent to which French citizens agree with 11 antisemitic statements or stereotypes (see Figure 8). It found that 32% of respondents agreed with the statement that “Jews are more loyal to Israel than to the country in which they live”; 29% expressed sympathy with the statement that “Jews have too much power in the business world economy”; and 31% agreed with the statement that “Jews still talk too much about what happened in the Holocaust” (ADL, 2019).

Figure 8. ADL Poll on Antisemitism in France



Note. From ADL, *ADL Global 100: An Index of Anti-semitism, France, 2019*.

The Kantor Center for the Study of Antisemitism stated in a recent annual report that “the number of recorded antisemitic incidents in France continued to rise in 2019, with a 27 percent increase over the dramatic rise of 74 percent in 2018” (Kantor Center, 2020, p. 94). In addition, the official data of the French Interior Ministry (2020) and the Service de protection de la communauté juive [Service of protection of the Jewish community] (SPCJ) show that most of the racist hate crimes recorded in 2019 were antisemitic in origin (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Overview of Antisemitic Incidents in France 2008–2020

Notes. Data adapted from European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Antisemitism: Overview of Antisemitic Incidents Recorded in the European Union 2009–2019*, 2020, p. 42; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Antisemitism: Overview of Data Available in the European Union 2008–2018*, 2019; and Service de Protection de la Communauté Juive, *Communiqué Antisémitisme en France*, 2020.

According to the Kantor Center (2020), the attacks peaked during the anti-government protests of the Yellow Vests (*Gilets Jaunes*)¹⁷ throughout 2019–2020, with 160 incidents documented during these protests out of a total of 687 antisemitic incidents (Kantor Center, 2020, p. 95). Vincent Duclert, who researches antisemitism in France at the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences, has argued that these protests provided “a new space for different kinds of antisemitism to come together: from the extreme right and extreme left, but also from radical Islamist or anti-Zionist groups, and some types of social conservatives” (Williamson, 2019). One of the victims of these protests was French Jewish philosopher and writer Alain Finkielkraut, who was attacked with antisemitic remarks such as “dirty Jew,” “dirty Zionist,” and slogans like “you’re a hater, you’re going to die, you’re going to hell,” “France is ours” and “return to Tel Aviv” while walking on the street in Paris (Kantor Center, 2020, p. 96; see Haaretz, 2019). The antisemitic events related to the Yellow Vests reflected a much larger increase in attacks against Jews, from desecrating Jewish graves with antisemitic inscriptions and swastikas, to publicly harassing Jews on the streets, and targeting Jews in the public, social, and political discourses (Kantor Center, 2020, p. 97).¹⁸

The COVID-19 crisis also contributed to the radicalization in anti-Jewish sentiment. In an interview conducted in the *Jerusalem Post* with Robert Ejnes, executive director of the Conseil Représentatif des Institutions Juives de France (CRIF), conspiracy theories implicating Jews in the spread of the virus have been numerous, especially on different social media platforms (Tercatin, 2020). As a result, Jewish institutions have prepared an “exit strategy” for synagogues, schools, and Jewish facilities due to growing concerns of the rise in antisemitism connected to the economic crisis, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although a report from 2020 claimed a drop of 50% in antisemitic incidents from 2019, reports of physical assaults remained about the same even though France was in lockdowns for long periods of time throughout 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic (SPCJ, 2020).¹⁹

Legislation Against Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial

France does not criminalize denial of the Holocaust. According to Bazyler (n.d.), the French law rather tends to “repress any racist, anti-Semitic or xenophobic acts.” In Law No. 90-615 of July 13, 1990, (article 9), known as the “Gayssot Act,” it is stated that it is an offense to question the existence and size of what was defined as “crimes against humanity” in the London Charter of 1945 and on the basis of the Nuremberg Trials (1945–1946). Moreover, it is stated in the criminal code that “any discrimination based on belonging or not belonging to an ethnic group, a nation, a race or a religion is prohibited.”

As for the connection between anti-Zionism and or anti-Israel positions and their relation to antisemitism, the French National Assembly decided to adopt the working definition of antisemitism of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance [IHRA] (2016) in December 2019 and defined anti-Zionism as antisemitism (Harkov, 2019). In an interview, French philosopher Finkelkraut referred to the rise of antisemitism among the far left combined with the rise of radical Islamism in the country:

In France, it [antisemitism] is part of the extreme Left and a growing part of the population with a migration background . . . it is particularly worrying that the extreme left defends radical, antisemitic Islam for two reasons: ideologically, because for them, the Muslims are the new Jews, the disenfranchised;

but also for tactical reasons, because today there are many more Muslims than Jews in France. So, left Islamism also has a future, and I'm afraid of that . . . I was actually the object of aggression with a proven antisemitic character. But I was not called "dirty Jew" but "dirty Zionist shit." *The peculiarity of contemporary antisemitism is that it uses the language of anti-racism. Because of the existence of Israel, the Jews are now considered racists. "Filthy Jew"—that was a morally disgraceful term. "Dirty racist" that is highly moral today* [emphasis added] (Weinthal, 2019).

Antisemitism and the Political Discourse

The political realm serves as fertile ground for antisemitism to flourish. Political parties are also using it as a tool to strengthen political interests and agendas. In France, this issue seems to extend across the political spectrum. Prof. Dina Porat, the head of the Kantor Center for Antisemitism, stated in 2018 that "the normalization and mainstreaming of antisemitism in public forums, debates and discussions is manifested in all media channels. Antisemitism is no longer an issue confined to the activity of the far left, far right and radical Islamists triangle—it has mainstreamed and become an integral part of life [emphasis added]" (Kantor Center, 2019, p. 6). The 2017 annual report of the Kantor Center referred to this phenomenon from a European perspective and clearly stated:

The recent strengthening of the extreme right in a number of European countries was accompanied by slogans and symbols which remind, not only the Jewish population, of the 1930s, despite the significant differences between the two periods. The electoral and political achievements of the extreme right should not distract attention from the fact that they are coupled with the rise in leftist antisemitism, that supports radical Muslim anti-Israeli attitudes expressed in antisemitic terms such as in the BDS [Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions] and Antifa movements, and certainly in the UK Labor party led by Jeremy Corbin. *The more time passes by, and World War Two and the Holocaust turn to be a distant past, the more the commitment towards Israel*

and Jewish security weakens, especially among the post-war generations [emphasis added] (Kantor Center, 2018, p. 6).

The contemporary political discourse in France serves as an example to understand these phenomena in a broader European perspective.

Antisemitism in the Far Right

France's National Rally party (*Rassemblement National*)²⁰ is known for its populist, nationalist, conservative, anti-migration and Eurosceptic positions, as well as being antisemitic and having a tradition of Holocaust denial, particularly during the leadership of Jean-Marie Le Pen, the founder of the party (Taub, 2020).²¹ His daughter and the party's successor since 2011, Marine Le Pen, has tried to shape a more moderate political strategy and managed to enter the mainstream political discourse in France.²² Le Pen also tried to reshape her father's extreme anti-Jewish positions, by moving away from being an anti-Jewish party to transforming into a "champion of French Jews" (Taub, 2020) and assuming the role of their "protector."

Reality, however, shows a more complex picture. When carefully examining the party's discourse and rhetoric in recent years, it is evident that antisemitism is still very much alive in the party, even if expressed differently than before. Taub (2020) explained this exact shift:

Experts say the National Front's shift may be intended more as a message to non-Jewish voters looking for moral cover in supporting a party that vilifies their primary sources of fear and anger: Muslims and immigrants. The National Front has long been widely viewed in France as toxic, but by declaring itself a shield for French Jews, *it may have found an effective way to allow many voters to justify breaking a taboo. That reflects a concept known as "moral license."* Framing the party as a champion of one minority enables voters to justify supporting its agenda in suppressing another [emphasis added].

Positioning themselves as "friends of the Jewish community" and as "allies of Israel" and using this "perfect" tactic to safely and quietly enter the mainstream discourse—members of the party have used their momentum to spread their radical, racist, and anti-migrant positions from "the inside." This tactic has been mainly characterized by "showing vigorous support

for Israel and boasting about their ties with its ruling party and leader over the past decade, while not forgetting to mention their visits to Jerusalem” (Papirblat, 2019).

One of the main characteristics of the antisemitic rhetoric of the National Rally is its constant and dangerous attempt to create a new national narrative by distorting historical facts (historical revisionism) about the responsibility and active role of Vichy’s France in the extermination of French Jews during World War II, or by downplaying the severity of its role in the atrocities. For example, during an interview in which Marine Le Pen referred to the Vél d’Hiv roundup in occupied Paris of 1942, she claimed that France “wasn’t responsible” (Nossiter, 2020). Le Pen argued that “if there was responsibility, it is with those who were in power at the time, it is not with France. France has been mistreated, in people’s minds, for years.” She also added that children in France have been taught that “they have all the reasons in the world to criticize it, to only see its darkest historical aspects. I want them to be proud of being French.”

An anti-immigration agenda and national Eurosceptic stances have been “key factors” (Kantor Center, 2018, p. 13) in the success of right-wing extreme parties in Europe, such as the National Rally. According to the Kantor Center (2018), immigrants who arrived in large numbers during 2014–2015, mainly from the Middle East and Afghanistan, generated a “public discourse concerning the presence of immigrants.” More specifically, “the rightist parties that declare pro-Israel and pro-Jewish stances hope for an alliance with the Jewish communities and Israel against the immigrants, most of whom are Muslims, but such an alliance cannot materialize: most of the Muslims are moderates, against whom no ill wish is being harbored: on the contrary, they are considered by Israel and the Jewish communities as potential allies” (Kantor Center, 2018, p. 13).

Historically and still evident today, strong anti-immigration sentiments and policies often result in visible antisemitism in the political sphere as well as in an increase of antisemitic incidents and sentiments among the public (see Ghosh, 2012; Miller, 2020; Schwartz, 2019). Marie Le Pen herself even let her veil slip, revealing what the Union of Jewish Students in France (UEJF) has characterized as the true antisemitic nature of the National Rally (UEJF, 2020). In response to an interview in which Enrico Macias, the renowned French Jewish figure and singer, said he would immigrate to

Israel if Le Pen won the next scheduled French presidential elections, Marie Le Pen tweeted that it was “another good reason to vote for me in 2022!” (See Figure 10) (Liphshiz, 2020).

Figure 10. Antisemitic Tweet by Marie Le Pen



Note. From Marie Le Pen @MLP_officiel, Twitter, October 11, 2020.

Aside from the historical perils of which the French Jewish community is painfully aware when one community is named as “other” or “not French,” often the anti-Muslim agenda of nationalist parties such as the National Rally also results in targeting the practices of observant Jewish lifestyles as well. For example, Nicolas Bay of the National Rally, currently serving as a member of the European Parliament, criticized Ecolo, a far-left Belgian political party, for supporting the right of Muslim women to wear the hijab (Muslim headscarf) and for the Muslim community to be able to ritually slaughter meat (*halal*). This normalized targeting of social practices of other religions by nationalist leaders could easily shift to orthodox Jews

and the practice of married orthodox women to cover their hair as well as the community's observance of *kashrut*.²³

Despite having publicly portrayed themselves as having changed their approaches to the Jewish community and Israel, some elected representatives from the National Rally cannot break their old habits of perpetuating Jew-hatred and often choose to do so directly with the public through social media. For example, Nicolas Bay has used his Facebook account and professional platform to perpetuate the conspiracy that George Soros²⁴ has “infiltrated” the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) by purposefully funding multiple European NGOs and establishing a “network” of 22 judges that are directly linked to him, to “impose an open society” (Bay, 2020). The day after this post was made, Bay continued to perpetuate the trope of Soros as a puppet master of the ECHR, once again labeling him as a globalist, in an interview with *Valeurs Actuelles* magazine (Lejeune, 2020). In the interview, Bay stated that

The project claimed by George Soros is that of a chemically pure globalized liberalism, the global society ruled by judges, which recognizes only uprooted and interchangeable individuals; free commercial exchange and the free movement of people becoming the cardinal values of society.

In addition to stirring up nationalist fears of EU institutions, Bay uses George Soros as a trope to suggest a wider well-funded “Jewish” infiltration of the EU institutions with the goal of perpetuating a conspiratorial globalist agenda (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Antisemitic References to “Jewish” Infiltration of EU Institutions by Nicolas Bay of the National Rally



Note. From Nicolas Bay, Facebook, February 20, 2020.

Prior to these statements, in March 2019, Bay came under fire when images surfaced on social media of his assistant dressed as a caricature of an Orthodox Jew, featuring claw-like hands and deformed facial expressions (see Figure 12). Bay responded by dismissing the accusation of antisemitism in the ranks of the National Rally, saying, “it was a disguise, a mere joke made in bad taste privately” (JTA, 2019).

Figure 12. Caricature of an Orthodox Jew by Assistant of National Rally Member Nicolas Bay



Collaborateur de Nicolas Bay, M. Guillaume Pradoura, un aide à l'Assemblée nationale, posant en 2013 en costume d'un Juif Haredi. (screenshot news.konbini.com via JTA)

Note. From JTA, An antisemitic caricature: The polemical photo of the parliamentary assistant of Nicolas Bay, May 18, 2019.

Antisemitism in the Far Left and Radical Islam

Antisemitism in the far left political spectrum in France has also increased in recent years. According to the Kantor Center's 2018 annual report, "conspiracy theories catalyze traditional antisemitism, anti-Zionism and combines anti-system and anti-global trends, manifesting itself in parts of the Yellow Vests movement," (Kantor Center, 2018, p. 14). For example, Sébastien Jumel, a representative of the French Communist Party for Seine-Maritime in the French National Assembly and participant of the Economic Affairs Committee (French National Assembly, n.d.a), made multiple references to the common antisemitic trope of the Rothschild family as rich bankers, insinuating that they are disconnected and simultaneously exploit the common Frenchman (see Figure 13). Jumel actively promoted these statements via both of his official social media accounts on Twitter and Facebook during the Yellow Vests protests.

Figure 13. Antisemitic Facebook Posts and Tweets by Sébastien Jumel, a Representative of the French Communist Party



Note. From Sébastien Jumel @sebastienjumel, Twitter, December 5, 2019.



Sébastien Jumel

December 2, 2019 · 🌐

...

WE DONT BEAT ON RETIRED

Three days away from the mobilization against a counter-reform of pension that threatens our system of retirement by distribution, our expression with Nicolas Langlois, mayor of Dieppe and Laurent Jacques, mayor of Tréport, my substitute. Retirees are not the golden generation, employees are not privileged.

" They are Dieppe, the Dieppe territory, the Tréport, the Bresle Valley, the employees of the industry, the fishermen, the garbage workers and all those whose painful work reduces healthy life expectancy after 60 years, railway workers, teachers threatened to have their pensions melted, the precarious jobs of social bond, such as accompanying students with disabilities, Atsem, childcare workers, hospital workers and Ehpad who live off inside a hospital crisis ruled since more than

10 years by the rule to calculate, all agents of the Public Service whose pension plan is

to link with wages and careers that are little evolving, they are Dieppe, the Dieppe territory, the Tréport, Eu, the Bresle Valley, these women whom the reversion protects today and who would be tomorrow in French society with this Macron reform even more unequal than men.

They are Dieppe, dieppe territory, Tréport, Eu la Vallée de la Bresle, this patchwork of citizens attached as an overwhelming majority of

French and French, to this WELL COMMON that is our system of retirement by distribution which France inherited from the fighting of the Resistance has made the choice.

A system that connects generations and provides opportunities for young people to access to a job when their elders start a new life.

They are not heirs or bankers at Rothschild and we would like to make them look privileged!

It's a prank, it's desinformation deployed to divide the people because the real privileged are those who don't need a supportive retirement system - as they don't need either APL or unemployment insurance for that matter - to sink golden days after 60 years, because they can count on big capital and a tax policy (ISF super pressure, flat tax...) that treated them. They have no social burden and government on March unloaded them from what they considered a " tax burden " immediately after Macron's election.

The fall in pensions that this reform would bring, the increase in the duration of contributions, the increase in retirement age, the end of a system that puts solidarity at the heart to clear the horizon for each and every one of a capitalization model are not a concern for the true privileged. On the other hand, it's good

a major concern for an overwhelming majority of French women.

In Dieppe, in Tréport in Eu in the Bresle Valley, as in the National Assembly, alongside union activists, we are in resistance against this policy of injustice whose pension reform project is the brilliant symbol, this policy that divides deeply France, explodes social, tax and territorial inequality, weakens schools, turns their back on the climate challenge, does not defend the real economy, refuses dialogue, fractures democracy and pushes the French people on the streets, on the rounds - points and on the boulevards.

In Dieppe, in dieppe territory, in Tréport, in Eu, in the Bresle Valley to defend the municipality that takes care, in the Assembly to defend the Republic that takes care."

🔗 See original · Rate this translation



Note. From Sébastien Jumel, Facebook, December 2, 2019.

Similar to during the Yellow Vest protests, significant social tensions that flared up in the summer of 2020 around the issue of race and police brutality also devolved into public antisemitism. A demonstration of 10,000 strong protesting the death of George Floyd at the hands of the police in the United States and organized by the French Adama Traore movement in solidarity with Black Lives Matter featured chants of “dirty Jews!” (Valeurs Actuelles, 2020) and “Jewish whores,” alongside chants alleging Israel to be the “laboratory of police violence.” The police reportedly had to block demonstrators from proceeding beyond the Place de la République in Paris. In July 2020, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the founder of the democratic socialist party La France Insoumise [“France unbowed”],²⁵ referred to an age-old antisemitic trope that Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus,²⁶ when asked about police violence during an interview on the French BFM-RTL TV news channel (see Figure 14). When Mélenchon called for normalcy and criticized the state of police violence as being totally out of control, the anchor asked if police should be expected not to react to violence by protesters and “stay put like Jesus on the cross” (Oster, 2020). Mélenchon answered, “I don’t know about Jesus being on the cross. But I know who put him there. Apparently, he was put there by his compatriots” (Oster, 2020).

Figure 14. Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the Founder of the Democratic Socialist Party La France Insoumise, Referring to Antisemitic Trope



Note. From BFM TV, Interview with Jean-Luc Mélenchon, July 15, 2020.

This was not the only antisemitic incident attributed by the leader of the far left party. Not limited to leaders of the far right, Mélenchon has expressed historical revisionist positions and has denied France's past during World War II and its active role in transporting the Jews to the concentration camps, tantamount to Holocaust denial. In 2018, Mélenchon attacked President Macron for admitting that the Vichy government was indeed the French government during the war, and that France—and not the Nazis—was responsible for deporting its Jews. Mélenchon stated that it is “totally unacceptable” (Haaretz, 2018) to say that “France, as a people, as a nation, is responsible for this crime”:

Never, at any moment, did the French choose murder and antisemitic criminality. Those who were not Jewish were not all, and as French people, guilty of the crime that was carried out at the time! On the contrary, through its resistance, its fight against the [German] invader and through the reestablishment of the republic when the [Germans] were driven out of the territory, the French people, the French people proved which side they were actually on . . . it is not in Mr. Macron's power to attribute an identity of executioner to all of the French that is not theirs. No, no, Vichy is not France! (Haaretz, 2018)

In addition to the above, in March 2020 the French far left party also expressed solidarity with the former leader of the British Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn, and attacked leaders of the Jewish community in France, including the CRIF, as well as in London for accusing Corbyn of antisemitism and organizing a campaign against him, as part of what Mélenchon referred to as “pro-Likud networks” (Sitbon, 2019). Mélenchon added that he would “never give in” to Jewish groups. Similarly, Mélenchon has characterized a Jewish member of the French assembly, Meyer Habib, as a “friend of Netanyahu's” as a way of smearing him and launched criticism against Israel in an unrelated incident when Habib criticized Mélenchon's statements on the murder of Sara Halimi (see Figure 15).²⁷

Members of La France Insoumise have also come under fire for defending and failing to call out antisemites who share a progressive agenda with the party (see D.D., 2017; European Jewish Congress, 2017). Mélenchon had defended his party's deputy, Daniele Obono, for supporting Houria Bouteldja,

a spokeswoman of the Indigenous Party of the Republic, an extreme left anti-colonialist party that is not currently represented in the French National Assembly (n.d.b). Obono characterized Bouteldja as “a comrade” in the fight against racism, even though she had described Jews in 2015 as “shields and fighters for French imperialism and its Islamophobic policy” and had posted a photo of graffiti that read, “Zionists to the gulag” on social media. When questioned if Bouteldja’s statements were antisemitic, Obono responded that she did not know.

Figure 15. Jean-Luc Mélenchon Referring to Jewish Member of the French Assembly as a Friend of Israel’s Prime Minister Netanyahu



Note. From Jean-Luc Mélenchon, @JLMelehcon. Twitter, January 21, 2020.

Contemporary Antisemitism in the Political Discourse in Britain

We need to address the casual acceptance of some of the old [antisemitic] tropes. I feel strongly about this because Judaism is a fundamental part of the British identity. If we were to see, as France has seen, Jews starting to leave the country, we would be diminished—we wouldn't be Britain anymore. It's not the old cliché about Jews being the 'canary in the coal mine,' it's about what makes Britain tick—and without Jewish people, Britain would not tick properly (Zieve, 2018).

—Lord Eric Pickles²⁸

During the last decade, and for the first time since the Holocaust and the end of World War II, antisemitism has become a central issue in the political and public discourse in Britain. It is one of the most controversial issues witnessed in Britain's political arena in recent years. The parliamentary elections in 2019 exposed the severity of the problem, although members of Parliament, particularly Jeremy Corbyn, the former leader of the Labour Party, made antisemitic statements before the 2019 elections. The gravity of the accusations of antisemitism and the many scandals that emerged from the Labour Party from 2015 to 2020 led to the dismal outcome in which many of Britain's Jews abandoned the party after having been its most loyal supporters for decades; for them, the Labour Party had been their political home (Mueller, 2019). According to Gillian Merron, the head of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and former minister on behalf of the Labour Party, "anti-Semitism in Britain is already not a hidden problem but one that visible and on center stage. Surprisingly, it is at the heart of our politics" (Eichner, 2019).

The rise in the degree of antisemitism in Britain did not occur in a vacuum. The phenomenon is part of the growing upward trend in hate crimes against minorities in Britain, particularly given the “refugee crisis” and the arrival of refugees to the UK since 2015 and given the result of the referendum on whether the UK should leave the EU—known as Brexit—in the summer of 2016 (Community Security Trust [CST], 2019).

During the years 2015–2016, more than one million immigrants arrived in Europe in the hope of gaining asylum. This wave of immigration posed a major challenge for the EU, primarily in terms of how to handle the immigration and the “distribution of the burden” among the member countries, which then included Britain. During these years, a political debate in Britain ensued between the supporters of a euro-sceptic “nation state” and those of globalism and a supranational system (the EU) (Rosner and Kantor, 2018, p. 7). Fear of immigration to Britain was seen as the motivating factor in support of Brexit (Nahari, 2016), with 51.9% of the voters supporting the UK’s exit from the EU compared to 48.1% who opposed it. The emotional and highly charged discourse on Brexit contributed to Jew-hatred and racism against other minorities throughout the UK (Rosner and Kantor, 2018).

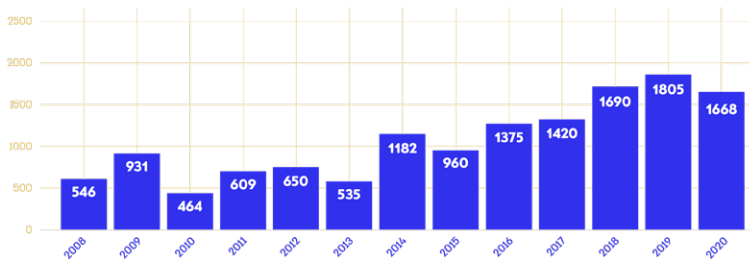
Background

The Jewish community in Britain numbers close to 300,000 people and constitutes the fifth-largest Jewish community in the world; in Europe, it is second in size only to France (World Jewish Congress, n.d.e). The Jews in Britain currently constitute 0.44% of the total British population and are concentrated primarily in and around the large cities, such as London and Manchester. It is a diverse community in terms of religious and cultural affiliation, as well as socioeconomic status. Jews are prominent in public life and are well represented in the government, the economic system, civil society organizations, the legal system, and the defense sector. In terms of religious-cultural affiliation, about 26% define themselves as traditional, 24% as secular, 18% as progressive, 12% as Orthodox, and 4% as ultra-Orthodox (World Jewish Congress, n.d.e).

The CST, the security organization of British Jewry, monitors antisemitic incidents. In 2019 it reported 1,805 antisemitic incidents, the highest number since the monitoring began in 1984 (see Figure 16). This is the fourth year in a row in which the number of antisemitic incidents rose (CST, 2019). In

2020 the number of antisemitic incidents dropped slightly, to 1,668 incidents, still a relatively high number considering the COVID-19 pandemic and the national lockdowns that have occurred since March of the same year. The CST also recorded 180 antisemitic incidents relating specifically to political parties in the UK, 175 of which were associated with the Labour Party (CST, 2020).

Figure 16. Overview of Antisemitic Incidents in Britain 2008–2020



Note. From CST, *Antisemitic Incidents Report 2020*.

A survey carried out by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in Britain in 2019 of a sample of the general population found that 11% of the respondents agreed with 6 or more antisemitic stereotypes about Jews (see Figure 17) (ADL, 2019). A public opinion poll about classic antisemitic stereotypes, conducted by the Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA), based on a representative sample of the adult population in Britain, found that 20% of the population thought it was “definitely true” or “probably true” that “British Jewish people chase money more than other British people.” 14% believed that “having a connection to Israel makes Jewish people less loyal to Britain than other British people,” and 10% believed that “Jewish people talk about the Holocaust just to further their political agenda.” Similar surveys over the last five years reveal that the public opinion toward Jews has not significantly changed since then and that the referendum on Brexit did not significantly affect the public opinion toward the Jewish minority in Britain (CAA, 2019).

Figure 17. ADL Poll on Antisemitism in Britain

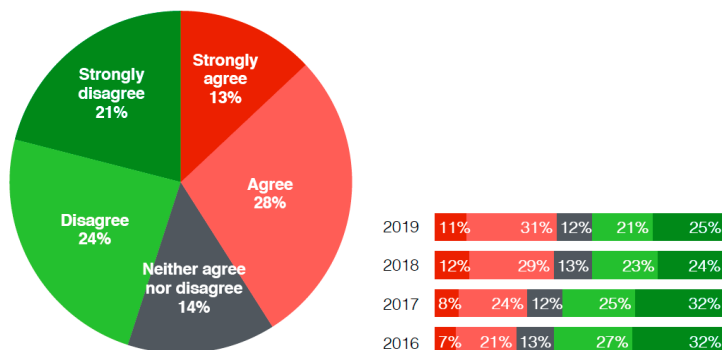


Note. From ADL, *ADL Global 100: An Index of Anti-Semitism, United Kingdom, 2019*.

Surveys carried out in recent years among British Jews reveal a deep-seated fear of antisemitism in the political system. In 2020, 41% of the respondents stated that they had considered leaving Britain during the last two years due to antisemitism (see Figure 18). Of those, 85% gave antisemitism in Britain's political parties as the main reason for why they had considered leaving Britain (see Figure 19) (CAA, 2020).

Figure 18. Percentage of Jews who Consider Leaving Britain due to Antisemitism

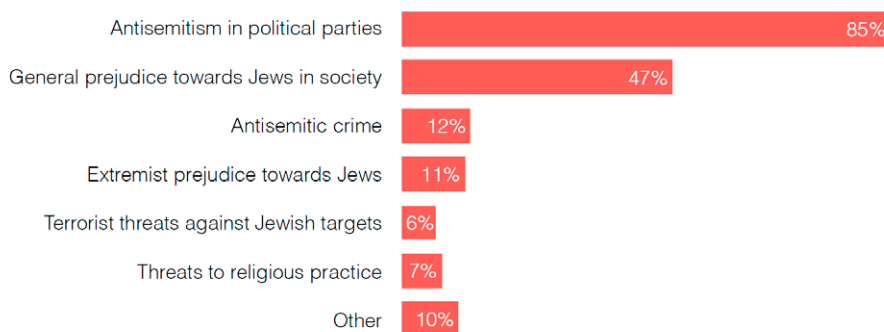
Question: "In the past two years I have considered leaving Britain due to antisemitism."



Note. From CAA, Antisemitism Barometer 2020.

Figure 19. Reasons Why Jews in Britain Consider Leaving

Question: "What are your main reasons for considering leaving the UK? Please select up to two options."



Note. From CAA, Antisemitism Barometer 2020.

British Efforts to Address Antisemitism

In December 2016, the British government officially adopted the definition of antisemitism formulated by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). The government also appointed Lord John Mann as an independent advisor in the struggle against antisemitism. Since 2016,

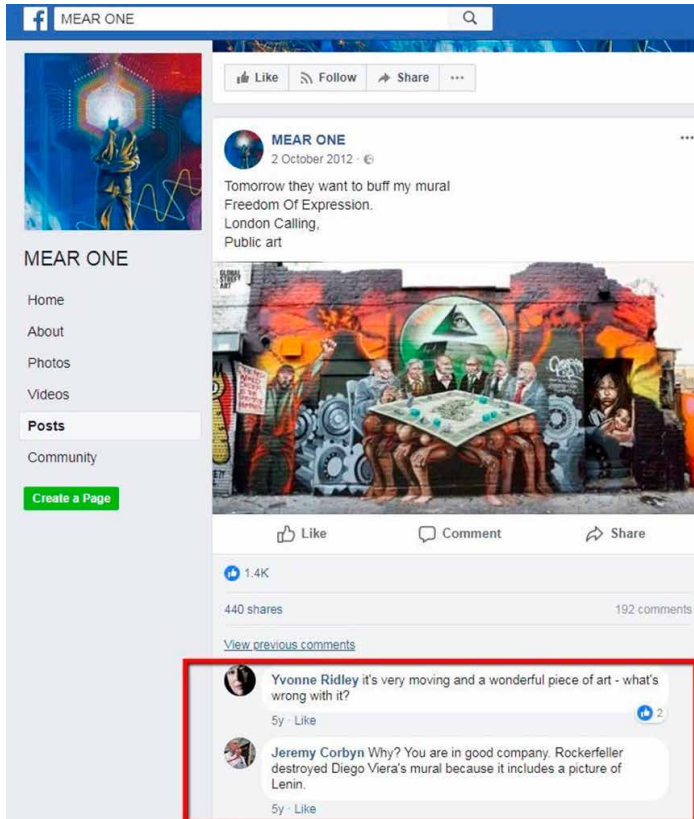
the Home Office has gathered information from the legal authorities on hate crimes (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2019). As previously mentioned, the CST is the main nongovernmental organization in Britain whose goal is to fight the phenomenon of antisemitism in Britain. It provides advice, training, and security services to Jewish organizations and institutions in the UK and also shares information with the legal authorities on hate crimes in general and antisemitic incidents in particular. Another important organization is the Board of Deputies of British Jews; it is the main body representing the community and also serves as the British branch of the World Jewish Congress. In January 2020, the Board of Deputies presented a document concerning antisemitism in the Labour Party, entitled “Ten Pledges to End the Antisemitism Crisis.” The document partly called for a rapid assessment of antisemitism in the party; the full adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism as its standard for evaluating antisemitism in the party; a prohibition on allowing individuals who have made antisemitic remarks to return to the party; and the adoption of educational programs to combat racism (Board of Deputies of British Jews, 2020).

Another organization addressing antisemitism is the Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA), which was founded in the summer of 2014 by British Jewish activists following a rise in antisemitic incidents in Britain during Israel’s military campaign of Operation Protective Edge in the Gaza Strip. Operating in cooperation with the legal authorities in the UK, the CAA reports on antisemitic incidents in British politics and elsewhere, engages in legal battles related to antisemitism, and publishes public opinion surveys on antisemitic views among the general public and the sense of security among Jews in Britain.

Antisemitism Among the Left and the Crisis in the Labour Party

According to David Rich, head of policy at CST, antisemitism in Britain has become a national political issue for the first time in decades, especially following the election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party in 2015. According to Rich, Corbyn represents a radical left-wing of the party, which views Israel as a racist apartheid state and Zionism as a colonialist movement that is part of Western imperialism (see Figure 20). In addition to these views, which Corbyn shares, party members who support Corbyn have subscribed to conspiracy theories—such as the involvement of the

Figure 20. Corbyn’s Defense of Antisemitic Mural



Note. From JTA, After six years, Corbyn now regrets defending “antisemitic” London mural, *Haaretz*, March 26, 2018.

Rothschilds in British politics and Israel’s involvement in the Islamic State terror organization (see Figure 21 and Figure 22)—all overtly antisemitic as they relate to Israel (Rich, 2018). Until Corbyn became leader of the Labour Party, antisemitism had not been considered a political issue in Britain. Even the phenomena of antisemitic incidents and the publishing of antisemitic cartoons in the media did not appear to be widespread throughout Britain and its politics, as combating antisemitism generally won support across party lines. A study that examined the correlation between antisemitic attitudes and British voting patterns found that agreement with antisemitic statements and stereotypes among Labour voters had peaked between 2016 and 2018 and then fell drastically in 2020 (Allington, 2020).

Figure 21. Labour Party Member “Likes” Article Relating Israel to ISIS



David Watson likes an article.
6 July 2015 · 🌐

Mmmm.....



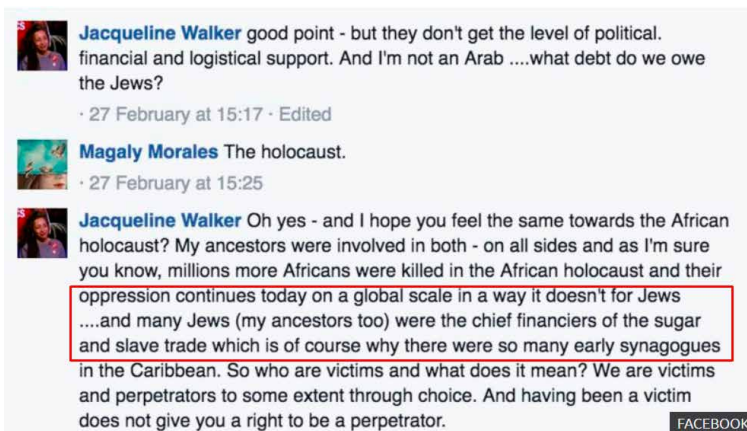
ISIS using weapons made in Israel
Questions about who is backing the ISIS terrorist group keep arising. Weapons seized from ISIS held positions in Iraq were made in Israel.

WWW.HANGTHEBANKERS.COM

👍 Like ➦ Share

Note. From Hurry Up Harry (Blog), Meet David Watson of Walhamstom Labour, April 27, 2016.

Figure 22. Antisemitic Comments by Labour Party Activist



Jacqueline Walker good point - but they don't get the level of political. financial and logistical support. And I'm not an Arabwhat debt do we owe the Jews?
· 27 February at 15:17 · Edited

Magaly Morales The holocaust.
· 27 February at 15:25

Jacqueline Walker Oh yes - and I hope you feel the same towards the African holocaust? My ancestors were involved in both - on all sides and as I'm sure you know, millions more Africans were killed in the African holocaust and their oppression continues today on a global scale in a way it doesn't for Jews ...and many Jews (my ancestors too) were the chief financiers of the sugar and slave trade which is of course why there were so many early synagogues in the Caribbean. So who are victims and what does it mean? We are victims and perpetrators to some extent through choice. And having been a victim does not give you a right to be a perpetrator.

FACEBOOK

Note. From BBC, Labour suspends activist over alleged anti-semitic comments, May 5, 2016.

This situation has changed in recent years, however, with the rise of Corbyn. From then on, antisemitism became a party issue, serving as a tool for the Conservative Party to use against Labour, and as the central claim made against Corbyn by his opponents in the Labour Party. In February 2016, for example, Alex Chalmers, the head of the Labour Club at Oxford University, resigned in protest against the club's support for "Israeli Apartheid Week," which included protest activities against Israel. Chalmers claimed that the club members had expressed anti-Zionist and antisemitic views, in addition to displaying a denigrating attitude toward the Jewish students. After the publication of Chalmers' accusations, others began voicing similar complaints about antisemitic statements made by party members and its leaders (Rich, 2018). For example, in 2014, Naz Shah, before being elected to Parliament, had shared a post on Facebook that suggested "transferring Israel to the US" (Milligan, 2016). As a result, she was suspended from the Labour Party for three months, after which she apologized for her statements and met with leaders of the Jewish community in Britain (Rich, 2018). Salim Mulla, the former mayor of Blackburn, also claimed that Israel was responsible for the Islamic State terror attacks in Paris in 2015 and the massacre at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in the US in 2012. Mulla was banned from the Labour Party in 2016 (Adar, 2016). As a result of these and other incidents, Jewish members of the Labour Party, as well as journalists and public figures, accused Corbyn, the party's leader, of creating an unprecedented, "convenient atmosphere" for antisemitism (Kirchik, 2019).

Figure 23. Facebook Posts by Labour Party Member Naz Shah

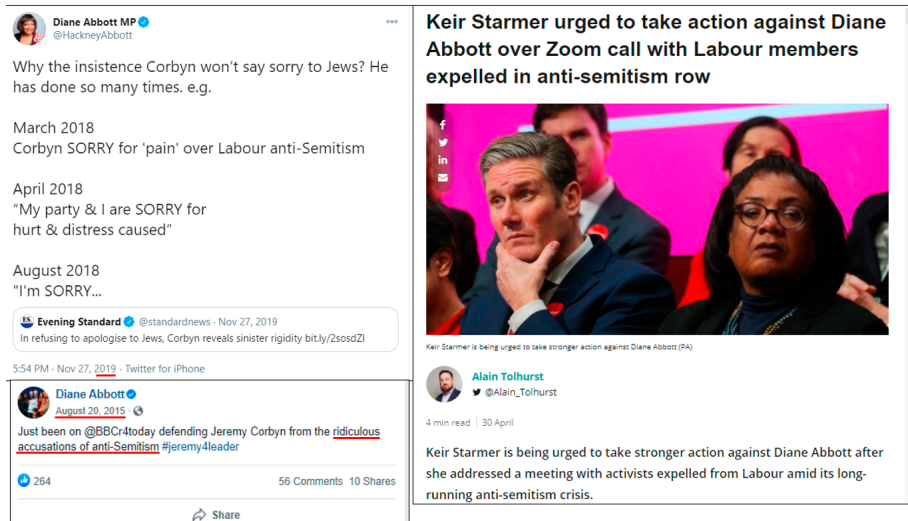


Note. From UK Parliament, Antisemitism in the UK: Political discourse and leadership, October 14, 2016.

A Labour Party report from 2016 on the issue of antisemitism within its ranks claimed that although it was not a widespread problem, some party members had made significant antisemitic statements (Scott, 2020). In 2018, additional criticism was voiced by the party’s members when the party adopted a definition of antisemitism that differed from that of the IHRA. This definition did not include the criteria that the IHRA had defined as antisemitism, which included accusing Jews as being more loyal to Israel than to their own nations; the claim that the very existence of the State of Israel constitutes an expression of racism; the comparison between Israel’s policy and that of the Nazis; and the application of higher standards to Israel than to other countries (BBC, 2018a; Butterworth, 2018). Given the widespread criticism of the problematic definition of antisemitism as adopted by the Labour Party, in September 2018, the party agreed to adopt the IHRA definition (BBC, 2018b).

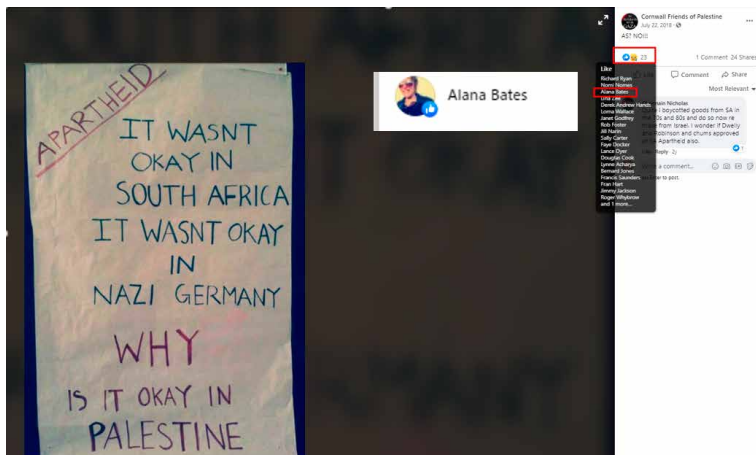
During the election campaign of 2019, the issue of antisemitism in the Labour Party gained even more prominence. Due to crisis of confidence in Corbyn's leadership and in his being able to combat antisemitism, a number of members who served the party resigned while many Jewish voters abandoned the party (McAuley & Eglash, 2019). In the elections themselves, Labour suffered one of its worst defeats in history. Following the elections, Keir Starmer, Corbyn's replacement as party leader, declared that he would openly combat antisemitism within the party and one of his first steps after being elected in April 2020 was to declare how he would do this (Mason, 2020). In this context, Starmer dismissed Rebecca Long-Bailey from her position as shadow Minister of Education in June 2020, after she had shared on social media an interview stating that Israel had taught the American policemen the violent tactics that they used (Walker, Stewart, & Carrell, 2020). Following her removal, Long-Bailey wrote in an article in the *Guardian* that she assumed full responsibility for her comments and claimed that they were erroneous allegations against Israel (Long-Bailey, 2020). Despite the change in atmosphere in the Labour Party under Starmer's new leadership, some British politicians from the left still deny that the Labour Party had a problem of antisemitism (see Figure 24), and they continue to make statements that violate the principles of the IHRA definition of antisemitism (see Figure 25).

Figure 24. Labour Party Politician Denies Problem of Antisemitism



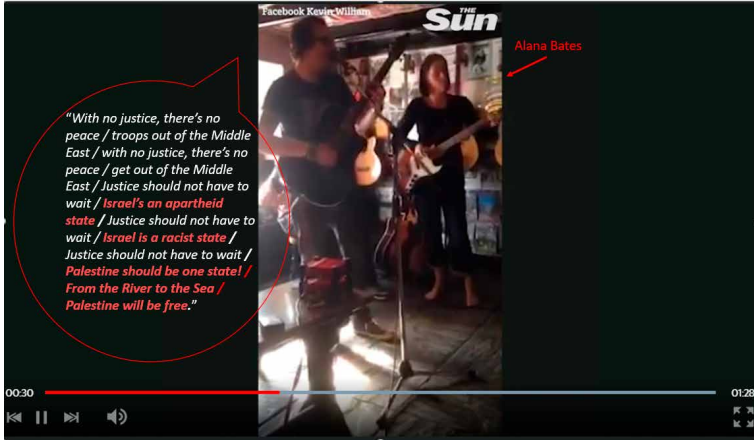
Note. From Diane Abbott (Labour MP), Just been on @BBCr4today defending Jeremy Corbyn, Facebook, August 20, 2015; Diane Abbott, Why the insistence Corbyn won't say sorry to Jews? Twitter, November 27, 2019; Alain Tolhurst, Keir Starmer urged to take action against Diane Abbott over Zoom call with Labour members expelled in anti-Semitism row, PoliticsHome, April 30, 2020. Graphics by INSS.

Figure 25. Antisemitic Post Linking Israel and Apartheid Liked by Labour Party MK



Note. From Facebook, July 17, 2018, showing post liked by Alana Bates (Labour MK). Graphics by INSS

Figure 26. Labour Party MK’s Song Calling Israel an Apartheid State



Note. Labour Party MP Alana Bates plays bass in a radical left rock group called the “Tribunes.” In 2018 the band released the song “From the River to the Sea” to the music-streaming platform Spotify. See Mathilde Frot, “Labour candidate says her song, from the River to the Sea, isn’t antisemitic,” *Jewish News*, November 11, 2019; Photo from Matt Coyle, “Red alert: New Labour anti-Semitism row as candidate’s band sing about, “racist,” Israel with lyric used by Hamas,” *The Sun*, November 11, 2019. Graphics by INSS.

Figure 27. Labour Party Candidate Making Antisemitic Tweets



Note. From Rosa Doherty, “Labour candidate apologises for saying Zionists ‘will not willingly assimilate with Palestinians,’” *The JC*, November 15, 2019. Graphics by INSS

At the end of October 2020, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), an independent and apolitical British organization, published a sharply critical report of the handling of antisemitism in the Labour Party during Corbyn's leadership. Moreover, it stated that Jewish activists in the party who had complained about the phenomenon were harassed by other party activists. The report concluded that while the party had improved its handling of complaints of antisemitism in the previous months, its analysis "points to a culture within the Party which, at best, did not do enough to prevent Antisemitism and, at worst, could be seen to accept it" (EHRC, 2020).

After publishing the report, the Labour Party briefly suspended Corbyn's membership. Labour later published plans for dealing with antisemitism in the party, which gained the support of the EHRC. The plan included the creation of an independent body that would examine complaints of discrimination in the party; the creation of an advisory body of Jewish members that would assist in the development of educational material about antisemitism; stricter guidelines on the social media; and greater assessment of past declarations by potential party candidates (BBC, 2020b).

Antisemitism Among the Right

The extreme populist right-wing parties has also played a role in fanning the hatred of Jews in Britain. As part of the charged public and political debate over Brexit, the populist right-wing movements in Britain, whose leaders have a rich past of antisemitic statements,²⁹ tended to use antisemitic jargon and stereotypes to promote their sociopolitical agenda, which was firmly opposed to Britain's staying in the EU. The virulently antisemitic statements made against George Soros, the Jewish Hungarian philanthropist,³⁰ is a prime example; he has been accused of "trying to bring in immigrants to corrupt a predominantly Christian nation" (Tamkin, 2020).

Nigel Farage, leader of the Brexit party, is one of the most prominent politicians on the extreme populist right-wing in Britain who has often made use of this new rhetoric. Founded at the end of 2018, the Brexit party sought to promote Britain's departure from the EU. Although the party did not manage to win a seat in the general elections in December 2019, it did hold 29 seats in the European Parliament up until the exit of Britain in January 2020. Over the years, Farage has promoted antisemitic conspiracies, such as accusing Soros of being the "biggest danger to [the]

western world” (Walker, 2019) and accusing “globalists” of funding the protest demonstrations against Brexit (Walker, 2020).

The accusations against Soros as the source of financing behind the campaign to remain in the EU were not limited to Farage’s party. In a speech to Parliament in 2019, Jacob Rees-Mogg, a member of Parliament from the Conservative Party, accused Soros as having financed the campaign to keep Britain in the EU (see Figure 28), despite not having any factual basis for the claim (Welch, 2019).

Figure 28. Conservative MP Accuses Soros as Financing Anti-Brexit Campaign



David Lammy [@DavidLammy], George Soros “funder in chief,” Twitter, October 3, 2019.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the antisemitic discourse within the right in Britain is not limited to the context of Brexit, an issue that dominated the political–public discourse and the media coverage over the past few years. For example, criticism was recently levelled at Crispin Blunt, a Conservative Party member of Parliament, for his comments in a campaign against circumcision and kosher slaughter at an official gathering of the Conservative Party, conspicuously held on the eve of the Jewish new year,

Rosh Hashana. Blunt accused the chief rabbi of the Jewish community in Britain specifically and the Jewish community in general of “demanding special status,” given the subsidies that had been allocated to the CST following the sharp rise in antisemitic incidents in Britain. He claimed that he simply wanted to “save the taxpayer money” and also stated that Britain should strive for a situation in which the Jews do not require special protection because everyone should feel safe and secure (Harpin, 2019).

Contemporary Antisemitism in the Political Discourse in Spain

Having a precious, rich, and complex Jewish past and a vibrant Jewish community, Spain decided to create a solid framework of rules and initiatives to fight relentlessly against antisemitism and every form of xenophobia and racism. There are, of course, many more nations—both present here and others—that are making similar efforts and progress; but, while I remain optimistic, I know—we all know—that we will always need to persevere together so that those words we have repeated so many times, “never again,” remain our guiding and unwithering principle.

—HM King Felipe VI of Spain,
World Holocaust Forum,
January 22, 2020

Antisemitism in modern-day Spain has never been an organized political phenomenon; rather it is a manifestation of persistent anti-Jewish stereotypes in Spain’s society and culture, based on religious and mainly Catholic foundations (Menny, 2014). The de facto absence of Jews in Spain from the 15th to the 19th centuries, however, means that antisemitism in the country cannot be explained simply by the conflict between the Christian majority and the Jewish minority. Therefore, the phenomenon in Spain should be explained in the context of “antisemitism without Jews.” According to the scholar Anna Menny, antisemitism in Spain is not generally directed against the country’s Jewish community but rather against the image of the Jew as representing the “stranger” or the “immigrant” (Menny, 2014).

Menny has argued that the current image of the Jews in Spain is influenced by three main factors. The first is the Catholic tradition within Spanish society. Spain’s national perception is partly based on the link between

its national identity and the Catholic religion, and it marks the Jews as the “other” in Spanish society. The strong ties between state and church have led to the persistence of anti-Jewish stereotypes in Spanish society. A second factor is Israel’s policy in the Middle East. Spain has witnessed a visible increase in antisemitic incidents and in the popularity of antisemitic attitudes around events that relate to the Arab–Israeli conflict, especially in the early 2000s, during the Second Intifada. The third factor is the attitude toward immigration in Spain (Menny, 2014).

Background

Currently there are an estimated 13,000 Jews in Spain, who account for about 0.03% of the total population (DellaPergola & Staetsky, 2020). Most of the community lives in Madrid and Barcelona. A large part of the community consists of Spanish-speaking Jews who returned to Spain after several hundred years of exile in northern Morocco. Ashkenazim (primarily from Latin America, but also from European backgrounds) also have moved to Spain in recent decades. The umbrella organization of Spanish Jewry is La Federación de Comunidades Judías de España, which is also the Spanish branch of the World Jewish Congress (World Jewish Congress, n.d.d).

According to a 2018 report by the Kantor Center, antisemitism is not particularly prevalent in Spain when compared to other European countries (such as Germany, France, and Britain). However, as in other Western countries, most of the reported antisemitic incidents have been carried out by the extreme right, the extreme left, and anti-Zionist and radical Islamic groups. In this context, vandalism against Jewish institutions has characterized most of the reported violent antisemitic incidents (Kantor Center, 2018). Furthermore, a survey carried out in 2010 revealed a significant drop in traditional antisemitic attitudes among the Spanish public, as a result of Spain’s ongoing secularization since the 1970s. In the latest public opinion survey on antisemitism that was carried out by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in 2019, members of a representative sample of adults were asked to what extent they agree with 11 antisemitic statements or stereotypes (see Figure 29). It found that 28% of the respondents agreed with at least six antisemitic stereotypes. The most worrying result was that 62% of the respondents agreed with the statement that “Jews are more loyal to Israel than to [this country/to the countries they live in].” Meanwhile, 49% agreed

with the statement that “Jews have too much power in international financial markets” (ADL, 2019).

Figure 29. ADL Poll on Antisemitism in Spain



Note. From ADL, *ADL Global 100: An Index of Anti-Semitism, Spain, 2019*

The latest reports of the Crime Statistics System (SEC), a database of reports from various law enforcement agencies in Europe, show that in 2018 nine antisemitic incidents were reported in Spain. In total, during 2013–2018, there between three and nine incidents annually, apart from 2014 when the Israeli military engaged in Operation Protective Edge in the Gaza Strip, leading to a spike of 24 antisemitic incidents.³¹ In 2018, the antisemitism database in Spain (El Observatorio de Antisemitismo en España) reported two antisemitic incidents on the internet, two in the media, two cases of vandalism, one physical assault, and five cases of Holocaust denial (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2017). In 2019, the legal authorities in Spain reported about five antisemitic incidents in total (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe [OSCE], 2020b).

Laws Against Antisemitism and Their Enforcement

Spain’s criminal code includes a section on hate crimes. As a result, the government of Spain gathers data on hate crimes from the law enforcement agencies and publishes them each year. The law enforcement agencies work to identify the motivation behind the hate crimes, while antisemitism is

included as a separate category alongside others, such as racism, discrimination against Muslims, and discrimination against the disabled (OSCE, 2020b). In July 2020, the Spanish government adopted the definition of antisemitism as defined by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) (Reine, 2020).

Antisemitism on the Political Left

Most of the cases in which political parties or politicians are accused of antisemitism in the current political discourse in Spain involve the populist left party Podemos, which was established in 2014. Some of the party's leaders are fervently opposed to Israel's policy in the context of the Israel–Palestinian conflict and they support the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement, which calls for the boycott of Israel (see Figure 30). In Spain's 2015 parliamentary elections, Podemos became the third largest party in the Spanish parliament, gaining 69 out of 350 seats and 21.2% of the popular vote. In the general elections held in Spain in 2016, the party united with another left-wing party and obtained a similar percentage of the popular vote. In the 2019 elections, the party joined the ruling coalition, even though it had lost a significant number of votes and became only the fourth largest party in the parliament (Hedgecoe, 2019).

Pablo Iglesias Turrión, the founder of the movement and its leader, moderated a talk show on HispanTV, owned by an Iranian citizen and mainly targeting Latin American countries, during 2013–2019. The Spanish police recently revealed that the media company owned by Iglesias had received about 9 million euro over the years from Iran, via various money transfer channels (Radio Farda, 2020; Lázaro, 2020). Over the years, his program had presented antisemitic content. For example, in April 2018 the guests on the show claimed that “the Wall Street Journal is controlled by the Jews,” and Iglesias had even shared them on his personal YouTube channel, which he then removed in July 2020 (Radice, 2020). Iglesias served as the second deputy prime minister and as a minister in the Spanish government, which has been in power since early 2020. In May 2021 he announced his retirement from politics.

Figure 30. Calls to Boycott Israel by Leader of Podemos



Pablo Iglesias wants Spanish cities to boycott Zionist state

By Lúcia Rodrigues
lbraspal

Spain has been a stumbling block for Israelis. The campaign of the BDS movement (Boycott, Development and Sanctions) is gaining the support of the Spanish population.

Pablo Iglesias, leader of PODEMOS, a left-wing party whose coalition took third place in the last presidential elections, classified Israel as a criminal and illegal country.

Note. From Lúcia Rodrigues, “Pablo Iglesias quer que cidades espanholas boicotem Estado sionista,” Instituto Brasil Palestina, July 4, 2018. Translation by Google.

Many of the elected officials from Podemos—primarily at the local level in various regions of Spain—have called for a boycott of Israeli organizations as well as Spanish companies that do business with companies in Israel, as part of a campaign called “Israeli apartheid-free zone.” Tens of local councils in Spain have also joined the campaign and have declared their commitment to boycott Israel. The local Jewish community in Spain has actively opposed the campaign and has resorted to legal means. It should be mentioned that the boycott is usually not aimed at Spain’s Jewish community, which is not particularly visible, but rather against Israel and Israelis. However, criticism of Israel, hostility toward Israel, and the use of antisemitic symbols commonly are juxtaposed. This has been particularly visible during visits by Israeli sports teams or musical groups; the cancellation of Jewish–American singer Matisyahu’s invitation to a music festival in Spain in 2015 is a prime example. The event was canceled after BDS organizations pressured the organizers

of the event that the singer declare his position on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. The government of Spain condemned the decision and Matisyahu in the end performed at the festival (Beauchamp, 2015).

Podemos has two representatives in the European Parliament, Manuel Pineda and Miguel Urbán, who both have a rich history of antisemitic statements. For example, in response to a public political scandal surrounding Angela Maestro (United Left, Spain) who gave a 8,300 Euro cash “donation” to Leila Khaled, a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine who had been involved in hijacking a plane to Israel, Urbán claimed on Facebook that the Zionist organizations were in collusion with conservative nationalists and were taking over Spain’s court system (see Figure 31).

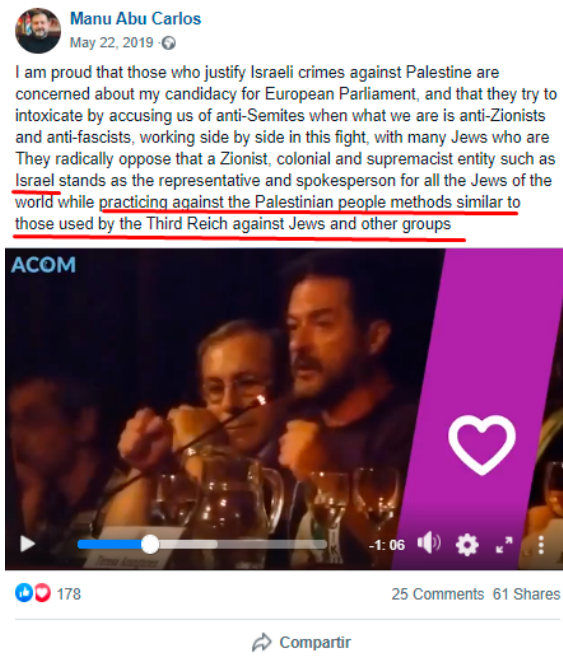
Figure 31. Antisemitic Statement by Podemos Representatives to European Parliament



Note. From Miguel Urbán, Facebook, October 17, 2019.



Note. From Manuel Pineda, Facebook, June 3, 2010.



Note. From Manuel Pineda, Facebook, May 22, 2019.

Manu Abu Carlos
May 15 · 🌐

On the 72nd anniversary of the Nakba, let's fight for the right of return: with Palestine always!

This May 15, 2020, marks the 72nd anniversary of the expulsion, by blood and fire, of a large part of the Palestinian people from their own land. It was a unilateral decision of the Zionist movement, a right-wing and racist ideology of Jewish sectors, which prevailed over an already unjust decision of the UN, occupying territories not foreseen in the partition plan and expelling entire Palestinian peoples, perpetrating massacres, and creating terror, initiating the policy of ethnic cleansing that seeks to cleanse the historic territory of Palestine of its ancestral inhabitants.

The Communist Party of Spain works to renew its militant commitment and solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinian people for their sovereignty and for international relations based on respect for international law and peace, to stop the campaign of ethnic cleansing and the violent repression of the struggle of the Palestinian people carried out by Israel for decades denying the right to existence of the Palestinians.

On May 13, Zaid Fadi Qaisy, a 14-year-old teenager, was killed by a shot in the head by an Israeli soldier near the Palestinian city of Hebron, and four of his companions were also shot, one of them seriously. Young people participated in protests over the announced annexation to the state of Israel of new lands and the legalization of Israeli settlements in the West Bank that had already been condemned and denounced by the UN. The renewed plunder of Palestinian land, the unilateral and illegal declaration of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and the liquidation of the two-state project to satisfy Palestine's right to sovereignty, have been endorsed and encouraged by Donald Trump and the government of United States, that have made the systematic violation of international law the axis of their foreign policy. The so-called Deal of the Century, the peace plan designed by Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law turned Washington's special envoy to the Middle East, is nothing more than the deepening of the total annihilation of Palestine and the culmination of ethnic cleansing, initiated with the Nakba.

Despite the military occupation, constant oppression and frequent assassinations, the Palestinian people resist, although most of their population has suffered repression, has passed through Israeli prisons and has seen many family members die and others mutilated. However, the resistance continues, the Palestinians continue to live life, esteem their land, reaching out for a peaceful solution that will make possible the return of more than five million refugees, the release of more than five thousand prisoners, respect, on an equal footing, for their political and social rights and the democratic coexistence of people of different ethnicities, languages and religions.

The European Union condemns the violation of the rights of the Palestinian people but does not act accordingly, while imperialism and Zionism seek to impose their dictatorship on the world through their military and economic power, although the struggle of the peoples of the world will end up defeating imperialist hegemony and Zionism will become a reminder of human infamy.

The Communist Party of Spain supports and encourages the activities of movements and associations to show solidarity with the Palestinian people, in defense of a world in peace, free from the scourge of colonialism and imperialism, and based on equality and international law.

https://www.pce.es/en-el-72o-aniversario-de-la-nakba-luche...



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https://www.pce.es/en-el-72o-aniversario-de-la-nakba-luche...



72° ANIVERSARIO DE LA NAKBA
LUCHEMOS POR EL DERECHO AL RETORNO:
CON PALESTINA ¡SIEMPRE!

ACE

👍❤️🗨️ 109

5 Comments 44 Shares

Note. From Manuel Pineda, Facebook, May 15, 2020.

Antisemitism on the Political Right

Support for the extreme right has increased in recent years, following a long period of not having any representation in the Spanish parliament. The most visible example is the Vox Party, which was formed in 2013. As in the case of other populist and nationalist right-wing parties in Europe and elsewhere, the Vox Party's agenda includes opposition to both immigration and to the separatist movements in the country (Matamoros, 2018). The party is often accused of anti-Muslim rhetoric and incitement against immigrants (Walker, 2019). In the most recent elections, held in November 2019, the party won 52 seats or about 15% of the popular vote, thus becoming the third largest party in Spain's parliament. Their popularity has grown since the previous elections in April 2019 when they won 24 seats and especially

when compared to the 2015 and 2016 elections, when the party failed to gain any seats in the parliament (Hedgecoe, 2019). One of its parliamentary candidates in the April 2019 election was Fernando Paz, a Holocaust denier. Following a media uproar, Paz withdrew his candidacy, apparently due to pressure from the party's leaders (EC, 2019).

The Separatist Discourse in Spain

The quest for independence of some of the regions of Spain has been central to Spain's politics for many years. The struggle of the separatist movements in these regions that seek their independence from the central government in Madrid has, at times, relied on antisemitic messages. One example is a comment made by Benet Salellas, one of the leaders of the Popular Unity Candidacy (CUP), a separatist leftist party in the Catalonia region (see Figure 32). Salellas referred to the Federation of Jewish communities of Spain as "the Zionist lobby" and further explained that in his role as a public official, "as defenders of the sovereignty of this parliament, we do not agree that whoever has to decide who is received or not received [in parliament] should be foreign agents" (González, 2016). Effectively, this statement drew on an age-old antisemitic trope about the local Jewish community not being loyal to the interests of their country of citizenship, and rather being Zionist agents loyal to foreign interests (i.e., dual loyalty).

Figure 32. CUP Leader Refers to Federation of Jewish Communities as Zionist Lobby



Note. From Germán Gonzáles, “La CUP indigna a las comunidades judías [The CUP outrages the Jewish communities],” *El Mundo*, May 26, 2016.

Contemporary Antisemitism in the Political Discourse in Ireland

Due to this lack of knowledge the term Nazism is bandied around in Ireland without knowing that it was, amongst other things, the premeditated, industrialized slaughter of six million Jews and many others that didn't suit the Nazi Regime.

A little education on what constitutes antisemitism would go a long way to correcting this problem. To that end, we would urge Sinn Féin and other political parties to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of Antisemitism.

The definition has been adopted by most countries in Europe and as Ireland is already a signatory to the IHRA we have de facto accepted it. It is now up to our politicians to adhere to it (European Jewish Congress, 2020).

—Maurice Cohen, Chair of the Jewish Representative Council of Ireland

The history of modern Ireland is characterized primarily by the period of British colonialist rule, which continued for several hundred years until the creation of an independent Ireland in 1919. This period of gaining independence from British rule is still an important factor in shaping the Irish national narrative. Currently, large segments of the Irish public are opposed to colonialism all over the world, thus explaining the widespread Irish support for the Palestinian claims in the context of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. The vocal criticism of Israel's policies sometimes has deteriorated into demonstrations of hostility toward Israel and even antisemitic stereotypes. Parallel to the public discourse, members of Ireland's political system have

expressed vehement criticism of Israel's policy in the occupied territories. In February 2019, the Irish Parliament approved a law prohibiting Ireland from engaging in commercial goods and services produced in the territories by a vote of 78 to 45. The passage of the law ultimately was unsuccessful due to the opposition of the Irish government. Nonetheless, Ireland is home to an active anti-Israel community and for many years it served as a leading proponent of the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement, which has tried to advance boycotts against Israeli organizations and products, to divest from Israel, and to impose sanctions on Israel, such as an embargo on Israeli weapons. However, despite the popularity of the BDS movement in Ireland, the proposed Irish legislation focused only on Israel's policies in the territories and its settlements rather than on all Israeli goods and businesses (Prager, 2019).

Background

Ireland has a small Jewish community, numbering about 2,700 (of which close to 500 are Israelis who have moved there in recent years) and totaling about 0.05% of the country's total population. Most Irish Jews live in the capital city of Dublin. The main body of Irish Jewry is the Jewish Representative Council of Ireland, which is highly active in government circles and the media. Furthermore, the Council brings together various Jewish organizations and focuses on both the fight against antisemitism and creating interfaith dialogue, in addition to supporting and encouraging a Jewish way of life within Ireland (World Jewish Congress, n.d.c).

The most recent public opinion poll on antisemitism by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) took place in 2014. The poll, which surveyed a representative sample of the adult population about 11 antisemitic statements or stereotypes, found that 20% of the respondents agreed with the majority of the statements (see Figure 33). In that context, about 52% of the respondents agreed with the statement that "Jews are more loyal to Israel than the country they live in"; 28% identified with the statement that "Jews have too much power in the business world"; and 19% agreed that "Jews have too much control over the global media" (ADL, 2014). Compared to other European countries, Ireland has not had many antisemitic incidents in recent years, and therefore it is difficult to determine whether antisemitism is indeed widespread within Ireland. Based on data from the field, Ireland has only had a handful of

recent antisemitic incidents (Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe [OSCE], 2019a), which usually have occurred within the religious-traditional context, particularly accusing the Jews that they killed Jesus.

Figure 33. ADL Poll on Antisemitism in Ireland



Note. From ADL, *ADL Global 100: An Index of Anti-Semitism*, 2014.

As of today, Ireland has still not independently adopted the definition of antisemitism by the IHRA, even though it is a member of the organization. Furthermore, Ireland does not have any law that relates specifically to hate crimes, their monitoring, or their prosecution. Although the Central Bureau of Statistics in Ireland and the Irish police collect information on hate crimes, the data is not accessible to the general public. Only in 2015 did the Irish police recognize antisemitism as a category of hate crimes. In 2019, the European Council against Hate, a human rights group established by the Council of Europe, called on the Irish authorities to improve their gathering of data on racist incidents in the country (OSCE, 2019a). According to reports by the Jewish community in Ireland, an average of three antisemitic incidents are reported each year, and most Irish Jews, with the exception of those who were alive during World War II, do not report that they have encountered antisemitism in their daily lives. However, despite the relatively few reports of antisemitic incidents in Ireland, an upward trend of antisemitic expression has been noted on social media.

Antisemitism in the Political Discourse

As already mentioned, the extreme right-wing parties in Ireland are not very visible and in general the Irish political system tends more to the left. Furthermore, the right-wing parties sway more to the left compared to similar parties in Europe, particularly on social issues, such as abortion, LGBTQ rights, and so forth. Currently, most of the antisemitic incidents within the context of the political discourse relate to criticism of the State of Israel.

Thus, for example, Richard Boyd Barret, a member of parliament from the leftist party People Before Profit, is a fervent critic of both the State of Israel and the Jewish community in Ireland, which assumes an antisemitic tone (see Figure 34). In 2007, for example, Alan Shatter, the only Jewish member of the Irish Parliament, called on the British Parliament to deny the manager of Hezbollah’s television channel Al-Manar—known for spreading antisemitic conspiracy theories—the right to enter the country; in response, Barret referred to Shatter as “disgraceful” (Independent.ie, 2007). In other instances, Barret has called Israel “an apartheid, racist state” and was quoted as saying “from my personal point of view, Israel is not a normal state and it should not be treated as such. Israel is a racist state. The state should be called the state of Palestine in which Muslims, Christians, Jews and people with no religion should live.”³² These statements were made by Barrett to the Israeli Ambassador to Ireland at the Houses of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade in September 2014, when Barrett doubled down on calling for the expulsion of Israeli diplomats from Ireland.³³

Figure 34. Antisemitic Remarks by Parliament Member Barrett



Note. From Richard Boyd Barrett, “Israel is not a normal state and should not be treated as such,” YouTube, September 4, 2014.

The anti-Israel rhetoric is primarily found among members of the Sinn Féin party, which is currently the leader of the opposition in the Irish Parliament (Harkov, 2020). Sinn Féin is a leftist nationalist party; in the past, it had been the political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and had sought to unite all of Ireland under independent Irish rule, often using violent means and terror. The party supports the unification of Ireland and Northern Ireland, although in the last elections, economic issues were at the center of the party’s campaign. Moreover, in recent years, the party has tried to distance itself from its image as a radical party in Irish society (O’Leary, 2020).

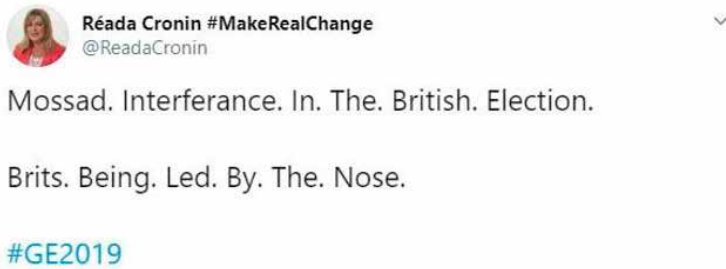
In February 2020, the Jewish Representative Council announced its intention to send letters to all members of the Irish Parliament asking them to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism. The announcement was in response to an item in the media about a series of antisemitic and conspiratorial tweets that were sent during the period 2012–2019 by Réada Cronin, a Sinn Féin member who was elected to the Irish Parliament in 2020. In the tweets (see Figure 35), Cronin compared Israeli policy to that of the Nazis,³⁴ wrote that Hitler was a “pawn” of the Rothschild family, and that the Israeli Mossad had intervened in the 2019 elections in Britain (Eichner, 2020).³⁵

Figure 35. Antisemitic Remarks by Parliament Member Cronin on Twitter



She has since deleted her Twitter account Credit: Refer to Caption

Note. From Danny De Vaal, “Account axed: Sinn Féin’s Reada Cronin deletes Twitter account amid anti-semitic tweet row as Mary Lou McDonald accepts apology,” *The Irish Sun*, February 20, 2020.



Tom Harwood @tomhfh · Nov 29, 2019
Jeremy. Corbyn. Is. An. Anti-Semite. twitter.com/ggreenwald/sta...

Note. From Mark Tighe, “Mossad ended Jeremy Corbyn campaign, tweets new Sinn Féin TD Réada Cronin,” *The Times*, February 16, 2020.

Following the incident, Cronin apologized for her comments. In addition, after the publishing of Cronin’s series of tweets, the president of the Sinn Féin party, Mary Lou McDonald, met with Maurice Cohen, the leader of the Jewish community in Ireland. McDonald condemned the comments and expressed willingness and openness to discuss the issue with the members of her party together with representatives of the local Jewish community (Press Association, 2020). Prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis, Cohen and the members of the Sinn Féin party had planned a discussion on the issue, but it was cancelled due to the pandemic (Judah, 2020).

Right-wing parties in Ireland have also made antisemitic statements. In the summer of 2020, an Irish right-wing group began distributing stickers that included an antisemitic caricature (The Beacon, 2020). At the moment, the extreme right does not have representatives in the Irish Parliament, despite attempts to get elected, including in the 2020 elections. The extreme right includes the National Party, which opposes immigration; the Irish Freedom Party, which supports Ireland exiting the EU; and the Anti-Corruption Ireland party, which also opposes immigration as well as the “threat” Islam is seen as posing to life in Ireland. Gemma O’Doherty, the leader of the Anti-Corruption Ireland Party, has accused George Soros, the Jewish philanthropist, of encouraging the immigration crisis in Europe. Despite having some presence on social media, the extreme right-wing parties currently have insufficient support to get elected to parliament. This can be explained partly by the fact that the Irish political discourse does not relate much to issues about immigration, in contrast to more acute issues related to the functioning of the healthcare system and the Irish economy (McDaid, 2020).

Insights and Policy Recommendations

The goal of this research was to examine and analyze contemporary manifestations of antisemitism, in the political discourse of five major European countries—Germany, France, Spain, Britain, and Ireland—over the course of one year, from June 2019 through September 2020. The basic assumption underlying this research was that the public and the political arenas mutually feed upon one another, such that the political discourse expresses the attitudes of the public to a large extent and influences the social processes and attitudes within the context of the public discourse and therefore also on today’s antisemitism. The main research questions asked were: How common was antisemitism in the political discourse among elected officials in these countries during the given time frame? How did antisemitism characterize the political discourse? How did the uniqueness of each country affect this context? Were there similarities between the countries in the way that antisemitism characterized their political discourse? In addition, the research emphasized the way the Jewish community in each country experienced and handled antisemitism.

The research was conducted by systematically monitoring and mapping public expressions of antisemitism by elected officials in the political systems of the five surveyed countries, during the given time period. This resulted in a sample of expressions of antisemitism, limited by time, scope (several dozen elected officials), and findings (several dozen expressions of antisemitism in total). Therefore, the research does not purport to provide a comprehensive account of the long-term trends and developments in the context of antisemitism in Europe; rather it presents a partial picture of contemporary expressions of antisemitism in the political discourses of the surveyed countries, in an attempt to systematically gain insights into the phenomenon in general.

The research also sought to understand how antisemitism was expressed in each of the five countries and if there were similarities and differences. Although the countries had shared characteristics, the research emphasized that the countries differed in terms of antisemitism. Therefore, the findings for the countries surveyed here do not necessarily reflect the situation in other European countries, particularly those countries in Eastern Europe where antisemitism has been more common, given the recent rise of populism and euro-skepticism, both serving as fertile ground for antisemitism. Nonetheless, the insights obtained from one country can contribute to the learning process and in formulating strategies for dealing with the phenomenon elsewhere. Furthermore, because the phenomenon of antisemitism has some shared characteristics, it is possible to formulate guidelines for a strategy to combat the phenomenon as a whole, as described below. The variations of the phenomenon across the different countries, however, calls for an in-depth regional study for formulating a unique regional response, as a complement to the general principles for dealing with antisemitism.

By analyzing the insights and conclusions reached in this study of contemporary antisemitism in Western Europe, it is worthwhile to emphasize that antisemitism is a problem of society as a whole rather than just being a local and domestic challenge faced by the Jewish communities. Antisemitism serves as a mirror to the political, social, and economic problems facing societies in general and countries specifically; that is, antisemitism should be viewed as a benchmark for sociopolitical changes in a country and even as a warning of approaching dangers that could also harm non-Jewish society.

Below are the insights and recommendations resulting from the research. The insights relate to the similarities and differences between the five Western European countries that were surveyed; the ways in which antisemitism is expressed in the political discourse both in the right and the left; and the main challenges in responding to the phenomenon. In the recommendations, we propose a number of guidelines for a more optimal policy in combating antisemitism, particularly for the leadership of the EU and its member countries.

Insights

“The Spirit of the Times” and its Influence on Antisemitism

The current era is characterized by a number of overarching global and regional trends, which have significantly shaped societies and countries and have directly influenced the scope of antisemitism. In recent years Europe has experienced a multifaceted crisis (economic, political, ideological, and social), which intensified during the past year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The European continent has also become extremely polarized between supporters of the European Union (globalists) and its opponents (euro-skeptics, including rising nationalistic forces), strengthened by populism, the rise of political extremism, and the relative weakening of the political center. Dividing Europe are issues such as immigration policy, the treatment of refugees, and the status of minorities. This public and political discourse, which takes place on social media as well as in the traditional media, is characterized by not only polarization, but also by radicalization, hatred, and the rapid and unchecked dissemination of lies, fake news, rumors, and conspiracy theories.

These contemporary political and social phenomena (the “spirit of the times”) have affected the construction of national “meta narratives.” Processes of political extremism and the rise of populism have led to divisions between groups and sectors, fanning hatred toward minorities, including Jews. Furthermore, catastrophic events, such as the recent waves of refugees, the healthcare disaster during the current COVID-19 pandemic, the economic crisis and slowdown as a result of the pandemic, tensions between unity and separatism, and protest events (like those of the Yellow Vests in France) have encouraged an upsurge in antisemitism at both extremes of the political spectrum. Although these trends have numerous adverse effects on non-Jewish society as well, it would be incorrect to dismiss these expressions of antisemitism as being the exception to the rule, since the phenomenon is again at the center of the sociopolitical discourse and is no longer just a negligible phenomenon in Europe’s margins.

Social media in particular has immensely influenced the “post-truth” discourse and the status of conspiracy theories. In that anyone can express their opinion as “experts” on social media, the public and political discourse

on social media has become superficial. In the absence of the traditional “gatekeepers,” there are no longer any boundaries about what is appropriate and what is not, nor between fact and fiction. This is essentially the democratization of information: Everything is permitted, everything is published, and anyone who wishes to write something can do so. This is ostensibly occurring in the name of freedom of expression and democracy, even when the tools of democracy are used to disseminate anti-democratic incitement. Moreover, social media is seen by the general public as the means of communication in the hands of the masses; this is, in fact, the reality, in which everything is possible, accessible, and there is almost no division between the center and the margins on social media.

At the same time, this reality facilitates the ability to monitor and identify antisemitic messages. Within the framework of this research, most of the truly antisemitic comments by politicians disseminated on social media were also later covered by the traditional media. As social awareness about antisemitism grows, the traditional media is more likely to address it. The media’s coverage of the discourse of hatred and its accompanying public and political arguments are, of course, liable to sometimes have adverse consequences of fomenting and accelerating the phenomena, alongside positive consequences, such as increasing awareness about antisemitism and its dangers as well as strengthening moderate viewpoints. This delicate balance between the media’s advantages and disadvantages requires a high level of awareness. While addressing the problem of antisemitism necessitates an awareness of antisemitism, it alone is not enough to sufficiently respond and cause its eradication.

Specific Regional Characteristics of Antisemitism

Alongside the shared characteristics of the “spirit of the times,” which have affected the level of antisemitism and its various forms of expression, some unique characteristics emerged among the countries surveyed (see Figure 36). These characteristics related to the country’s historical context, particularly foundational and influential events experienced. A country’s current sociopolitical context also has contributed to the shaping of the leading narratives and has determined the issues raised in the political discourse. Also significant are the characteristics of the Jewish community in each country,

foundational antisemitic incidents, and the manner in which the authorities and the Jewish community have dealt with expressions of antisemitism.

For example, the phenomenon of rewriting history in the context of World War II and the memory of the Holocaust, which has characterized the political discourse among the right in France and Germany—two countries that experienced the Nazi regime—does not resemble the political discourse in Britain, Spain, and Ireland. In Spain and Ireland, where the Jewish communities are particularly small, antisemitism is not necessarily directed at the Jewish community but rather at Israel and at the image of the Jew as the stranger; the Jewish communities, regardless of how small, are still harmed by these antisemitic expressions.

In examining the scope of the phenomenon and the way it is characterized in the political discourse in today's **Germany**, Germany has a unique history in terms of the Holocaust and World War II. Germany also has a historical obligation (primarily led by Chancellor Angela Merkel) to maintaining the memory of the Holocaust and fighting against antisemitism. Nonetheless, Germany has witnessed a significant increase in antisemitic incidents in recent years, as well as in the strengthening of radical groups on both the right and the left, in parallel to the gradual weakening of the establishment. The sociopolitical discourse in Germany has primarily centered on the issue of immigration and in the past year shifted its focus to the public's frustration with the growing economic downfall and the health crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the public in Germany has become increasingly critical of the Merkel government and divisive over the unity of Europe (between those who support globalism and those who back the nation-state).

Concurrent with the strengthening of the radical right and its entry into Germany's sociopolitical mainstream, extreme right-wing groups have carried out the majority of the violent incidents against Jews in the country. The terrorist attack in the city of Halle in October 2019 should be considered a formative event in this context. Similarly, alternative and/or half-true narratives with respect to the history of Germany and the Nazi regime have gained support, alongside the rewriting of history by distorting undeniable historical facts. Parallel to the rise of the right, the radical left has also gained in popularity and is responsible for virulent criticism of Israel, which increasingly includes antisemitic messages. In this context,

it is particularly worth noting that in some cases, antisemitism has been camouflaged as “criticism of Israel” (*Israelkritik*).

In Germany, the Jews are often perceived as “responsible for everything” and the word “Jew” remains a curse word that is deeply rooted in the German jargon. The general feeling among many Jews in Germany has been one of insecurity, with police stationed outside every Jewish institution in Germany. Jews have also been hesitant to report antisemitic incidents to the police, on the assumption that it will be in vain, while many of them feel that the system has failed them and has shown little concern for antisemitism (particularly, for example, when some of the supporters of the extreme right have found their way into the law enforcement agencies). Moreover, not all the incidents can be defined as antisemitic and instead are considered a right to freedom of expression; therefore the authorities do not invest much effort in investigating all the complaints of antisemitism. Furthermore, the burden of investigating antisemitism often falls upon the Jewish community rather than the authorities who are supposed to address the phenomenon.

In **France**, with the largest Jewish community in Europe, antisemitic terror attacks carried out by members of ISIS and other radical Islamic groups have seriously affected France in recent years. As for the political–public context, both the “Yellow Vests” protest and the COVID-19 crisis have served as platforms for antisemitic expression on both sides of the political spectrum in France. The tangibility of antisemitism in France has created feelings of insecurity within the Jewish community, causing French Jews to consider emigrating.

In France’s political system, antisemitism is manifested most visibly in the discourse of the extreme left (whose most prominent spokesperson is Jean-Luc Mélenchon). In addition, it is feared that violent acts by extremist Muslims will become increasingly common and that Jews will again be a prime target. On the other hand, the radical right has ostensibly renounced antisemitism, as a cover for advancing other types of hatred (particularly against Muslim immigrants). The far right has been involved primarily in rewriting the historical memory of the Holocaust and the active participation of occupied France in deporting French Jews to the death camps during World War II.

In **Britain**, the most prominent issue in recent years has been Brexit, or the question of leaving the EU and the tension between Britain’s unity

with the EU and its secession. These processes have been accompanied by antisemitic incidents, which have increased in intensity in recent years. In contrast to the other countries surveyed in this research, antisemitism was central to the political discourse during the Corbyn era, which was characterized by revelations of antisemitism in the Labour Party. Corbyn and the Labour Party leadership were criticized for not properly addressing antisemitism (and anti-Zionism) in the party, which negatively affected the party's achievements in the 2019 elections. This affair shook the Jewish community in Britain, affecting its sense of security and becoming a core issue for the Jewish community.

Britain's future raises questions: What will be the place of antisemitism in the political process in Britain in the coming years, after having contributed to the defeat of the Labour Party? Will the Jewish community in Britain return to its former position of stability following the defeat of Corbyn and the replacement of the Labour Party's leadership? Will Britain learn its lesson from the Corbyn affair and will fighting against antisemitism change its character? Finally, will Britain serve as a model and a warning sign to other countries?

Spain—with its small Jewish community—faces the phenomenon of “antisemitism without Jews,” characterized by expressions of antisemitism against a religious background, anti-Israel criticism, or discrimination against immigrants. The main trait identified within Spain's political discourse is the vehement criticism of Israel, which sometimes becomes clearly antisemitism. The leftist party Podemos, which began as a marginal and revolutionary party, has gradually gained in political strength; currently, it is part of the government coalition and is hostile toward Israel in both domestic and international arenas. The Jewish community in Spain perceives Podemos as a threat, while the secessionist and nationalistic discourse in Spain also is a source of antisemitism and a potential danger.

Antisemitism is not common in **Ireland**, which has a tiny Jewish community, although criticism of Israel—to the point of hostility—is certainly present in the political and public discourse. Ireland's independence from British rule a hundred years ago is a foundational experience in the national narrative, and it provides the conceptual prism through which the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is seen. This situation has led to the leftward tilt of the political system in Ireland and sympathy with the Palestinians, alongside vocal

criticism of Israel and its policy toward them. In this context, the Sinn Féin Party, which has grown significantly in strength—it is currently the leader of the opposition—is a major player in the hostile discourse against Israel. Antisemitic conspiracies also sometimes enter into the discourse, although not without censure by the current party leadership; however, it is too early to say whether real change is taking place within the party.

Figure 36. Similarities and Differences Between Countries of Western Europe

	Germany	France	Britain	Spain	Ireland
Number of Jews and percentage within the total population (in parentheses) ^a	118,000 0.14% (83 million)	450,000 0.69% (65 million)	292,000 0.44% (67 million)	13,000 0.03% (47 million)	2,700 0.05% (5 million)
Characteristics of the period	Multidimensional crisis (health, economic, political, and social); political polarization between supporters of unity and its opponents; strengthening of the extremes and populism and weakening of the center; debate over immigration; the domain of social media; the era of post-truth and fake news; diverse ties with Israel alongside sharp criticism.				
Historical impacts	Second World War, the Holocaust, and the division of Germany	Second World War and the deportation of French Jews	The Mandatory heritage	Expulsion from Spain, the civil war	Liberation from British rule and Irish independence
Unique sociopolitical context	Weakening of the political center and strengthening of the extremes; rise of the extreme right.	A large Muslim community, struggle against Islamists, the "yellow vest" protest.	Brexit (unity vs secession); large Muslim community, Corbyn and antisemitism in Labour.	Rise of the radical Left (Podemos); domestic secessionist dialogue.	Strong tendency to the left.
Foundational antisemitic events	Halle (2019)	Itan Halimi (2006), Toulouse massacre (2012), Hyper Cacher (2015), Sarah Halimi (2017), Mireille Knoll (2018)	Corbyn affair	'Apartheid-Free Zone' campaign; Meitayahu affair ^b	

Note. The numbers are taken from S. DellaPergola, and L. D. Staetsky, *Jews in Europe at the Turn of the Millenium*, Institute for Jewish Policy Research, 2020.

Antisemitism in the Political Discourse Between the Right and Left *“Traditional” antisemitism on the right*

Despite assuming that Europe is highly aware of antisemitism among the right and has assimilated lessons from the past, the extreme right (in addition to radical Islamic groups) has instigated most of the violent antisemitic attacks in Europe. The growth of the extreme right parties in the past years have led to a significant increase in their disseminating of antisemitic messages. The discourse of the extreme right usually blurs and distorts historical facts, attempts to paint themselves as the victims of history (victim consciousness), denies and minimizes the cooperation of their people or country in the systematic murder of Jews during the World War II, and makes racist claims against minority groups, especially immigrants, Muslims, and Jews.

In recent years, the discourse has been highly affected by the crisis of unity in Europe, centered on the struggle between euro-skeptics and supporters

of who support the EU. Although this discourse has distanced itself from antisemitism, it has helped the extreme right parties to gain entry into the political mainstream, where it received a stamp of approval for other types of hatred—primarily against immigrants and Muslims. Furthermore, they have transformed the image of the “Jew” into a political alibi. To avoid accusations of being antisemitic, some extreme-right parties identify themselves as “friends of the Jews,” “supporters of Israel,” and sometimes even as “defender of the Jews,” while at the same time, some of their members continue to make frequent and deliberate use of classic antisemitism.

The “new” antisemitism on the left

The phenomenon of antisemitism in the context of criticizing Israel is relatively new; it began a few decades ago, shaped by developments in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, and takes place in academic, public, and political discourses. It centers on blurring the boundaries between legitimate criticism of Israel’s policies and its behavior within the context of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, laden with anti-Israeli, anti-Zionist, and antisemitic rhetoric. The phenomenon is often characterized as being a slippery slope, in that legitimate criticism of Israel gradually deteriorates into using antisemitic stereotypes against Israel, Israelis, and Jews. In other cases, what is referred to as “legitimate criticism” of Israel is often used as a pretense for antisemitic and anti-Israel attitudes and a denial of accusations of antisemitism. The antisemitism that often appears in the discourse of the extreme left includes denying Israel’s right to exist as the national homeland of the Jewish people, portraying Israel and Israelis through antisemitic tropes and conspiracies, i.e., as a source of evil in the world, and comparing Israel to Nazi Germany. In addition, the extreme left in Western Europe has crafted a high level of sociopolitical antisemitism as opposed to the classic religious antisemitism that characterizes the Eastern European countries.

Convergence of the extreme right and left

The phenomenon of antisemitism has created an unlikely connection between opposing extremes on the left and the right, and it is their meeting that distinguishes antisemitism from most phenomena of hatred and racism. First, the expressions of antisemitism on the right and the left are manifested by similar—and sometimes identical—content: antisemitic images and symbols,

demonization of Jews or Israelis, and various conspiracy theories. Both sides of the political map also make use of social media and are no longer limited to a marginalized discourse conducted in closed and underground groups; sometimes they even meet and take inspiration from one another. In addition, these two political extremes often share a common target/enemy, which usually involves a struggle against the establishment and the existing order and often attribute the Jews as being responsible for the ills of the country.

Figure 37 shows a breakdown of antisemitic expression by elected politicians from both ends of the political spectrum in the five countries surveyed over the period of one year, from late 2019 until late 2020. The types of antisemitism are defined by the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) working definition. The research revealed that the primary forms of antisemitism expressed a malicious attitude toward Jews and used stereotypes (39%), compared Israel to the Nazis (36%), and denied the right of the Jewish people to self-determination (14%).

Figure 37. Analysis of Discourse

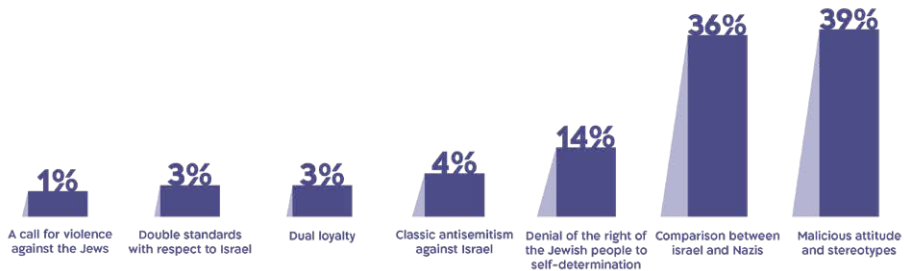
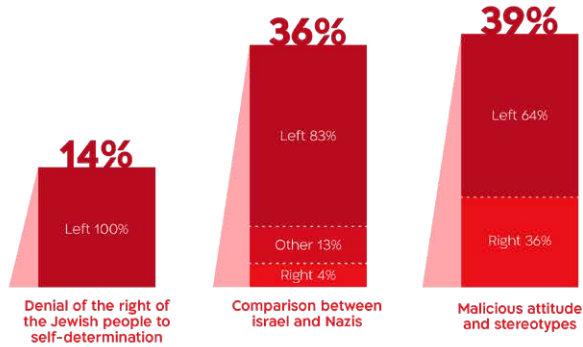


Figure 38 presents the three leading types of antisemitism according to whether they were expressed by politicians from the right or left. The chart clearly shows that the two political extremes converge in adopting malicious attitudes and antisemitic stereotypes.³⁶

Figure 38. Analysis of Discourse



The Main Challenges

The gap between overt and latent antisemitism

Are politicians careful in what they say? What is the political price of voicing antisemitism? Based on the findings of our research, and despite its limited scope, we can say with a reasonable degree of certainty that only a small proportion of politicians in Western Europe have made overt antisemitic statements, and even if they do, most of them do not repeat these statements.

Nonetheless, the phenomenon of latent antisemitism among politicians is presumed to be more widespread. Some elected public officials may refrain from publicly expressing antisemitism due to their own political interests and particularly due to the fear that they will pay the price for making public statements against Jews. The political discourse and its norms are influenced by the unbridled discourse that takes place on social media, which includes widespread exposure of messages of incitement and hate. In the past, this messaging did not have an effective public platform and was expressed primarily in restricted settings or in closed groups. Without diminishing the gravity of the problem of latent antisemitism and the antisemitic sentiments shared by many sectors of the population, as well as the growing dissemination of antisemitic content on social media, efforts need to be directed to ensure that antisemitism does not flourish and does not attain legitimacy, especially not in the political arena and among elected public officials.

The politicization of antisemitism

As in the case of many other issues, including those that enjoyed a broad political consensus in the past, the occurrence of antisemitism has also become a tool within the context of today's polarized political discourse. Populistic expressions of antisemitism contribute momentum to various political agendas, to attack political rivals, and to justify various attitudes and actions. As part of antisemitism's politicization, the two political extremes often identify antisemitism as being prevalent only among their political rivals, while ignoring antisemitic incidents within their own ranks; even worse they show support for those within their own camp who have voiced antisemitic views, as part of the clash with their political rivals. This reality undermines the welfare and security of Jews in Europe and weakens the political consensus to fight antisemitism, which was reached many decades ago and is essential in the struggle against antisemitism.

At the same time, the politicization of antisemitism potentially could encourage discussion and awareness of the problem and could lead to a joint response between Europe's Jewish minority and the non-Jewish majority (with other minority groups among them). One prominent example has been the effort of the Labour Party in Britain to deal with the antisemitic statements by its leader, Jeremy Corbyn, and some of his supporters and the subsequent campaign against antisemitism in the Labour Party. These internal efforts may have been insufficient, however, as evidenced by the party's failure in the 2019 elections and its decline since then.

Cracks in the consensus on the right and on the left

The broad political and public consensus in combating antisemitism of any type and from any source has been one of its most valuable assets. In recent years, this consensus against antisemitism has begun to break down. Behind this growing rift is mainly the distorting and rewriting of historical facts relating to World War II and to the memory of the Holocaust by political leaders in the context of the anti-globalist discourse on the right, in addition to the antisemitic expression that is manifested in the anti-Israeli and anti-colonial discourse by political leaders on the left. One of the main challenges in this context is deciphering and understanding the use of well-camouflaged codes within the language, which indirectly convey antisemitic messages that are not "permitted" in public (although this barrier was also breached in

recent years). Furthermore, surveys show that classic antisemitic views are still common among the general public along the entire political spectrum in both Western and Eastern Europe—the latter where the findings are even more worrying.

The strengthening of the margins and increased antisemitism in the political mainstream

The political power of extremist movements has increased in recent years, within the context of the multifaceted crisis affecting most of Europe. Antisemitism exemplifies these movements, and their growing power comes at the expense of the parties in the political center and the traditional institutions. Many of these once marginal movements have entered the political mainstream (such as the Podemos Party in Spain and the Alternative for Germany Party), and some have become part of the government, where they often hold key positions. This situation creates fertile ground for antisemitism. In other cases, their entry into the political mainstream has been gradual, becoming visible when marginal groups take control of the sociopolitical agenda of the political center (such as in the Labour party in Britain during the Corbyn era), including the creeping legitimization of antisemitic views and statements originating in the margins by the political center.

Recommendations

In recent years, we have witnessed a growing trend of antisemitism in the West and in particular in the Western European countries surveyed in this report. They all have experienced an increasing number of reported antisemitic incidents and in some of the countries, the incidents have been severe. In addition, these countries have all witnessed the spread of antisemitism from marginal groups—on both ends of the political spectrum—to the political mainstream, sometimes becoming the center of the political discourse.

The above analysis of antisemitism in the political discourse in the countries surveyed indicated that the balance between those having a moderating effect on antisemitism and those promoting it has tilted increasingly toward the latter. This disturbing trend is mainly due to the process of sociopolitical radicalization and polarization, which in turn has led to the rise of the extremist margins at the expense of the moderate center. These processes have been accelerated by social media, which is reshaping the triangular relationship between the political system, the media, and the public, and is being used to disseminate hateful and inciteful content almost without any restrictions or limits—at least for now—in addition to shattering norms that govern the boundaries of political discourse. This has also led partly to antisemitic attitudes penetrating the political mainstream, the politicization of antisemitism (with both its usage and the struggle against it as a means of attacking one's political rivals), and the appearance of cracks in the broad consensus surrounding the memory of the Holocaust and the struggle against antisemitism, which is primarily manifested by distorting and rewriting history (on the right) and in anti-Israel discourse (on the left).

Therefore, in responding to antisemitism in the political discourse and strengthening the more moderate elements and weakening those who accelerate the spread of antisemitism, we recommend to focus on the following goals:

- monitoring antisemitic expressions in the political discourse and identifying and quantifying trends and deviations that call for a response.
- increasing the public, political, and legal price paid by whoever expresses antisemitic views or espouses antisemitic ideology. This should be accomplished by documentation, exposure, and condemnation, as well as enforcement, legal prosecution, and legislation if needed.

- formulating or improving limitations to the dissemination of antisemitic content in both the traditional and social media.
- expanding the basis for political, organizational, and public support of the fight against antisemitism and other forms of hatred.
- educating about the Holocaust and about values that compete with hatred and antisemitism.

Below are the recommended components for formulating a response to antisemitism in the political discourse. These recommendations are directed primarily toward the leadership of the EU and its member countries:

1. The need for a broad coalition in the struggle against antisemitism

The politicization of antisemitism, which differentiates between expressions of antisemitism from one camp or another, endangers the ability to respond effectively to the threat. Efforts should be directed toward preventing all uses of antisemitism as a tool for attacking a political rival, especially between competing political extremes. As described above, we have witnessed antisemitism in various forms on both the right and the left, in the political margins as well as the political center. Therefore, the struggle against antisemitism must be firmly and clearly directed against antisemitism of any type, from any source, and particularly against any extremist phenomena before gaining legitimacy within the broader political–public discourse.

To this end, building broad coalitions and cooperation in the fight against antisemitism is essential for creating a far-reaching consensus among all the relevant EU countries. The aim of achieving this consensus is to improve awareness of the gravity of antisemitism and its consequences in the long and short term for the security of the countries in general and their Jewish citizens specifically, in addition to maintaining the resilience and values of the entire population. Building coalitions and cooperation will create the basis to formulate strategies to fight antisemitism and to manage efforts to eradicate it.

2. A multi-effort, integrated response

The accumulative experience in dealing with antisemitism indicates that the response should involve a combination of simultaneous efforts and tools from a variety of fields. These include widespread and ongoing monitoring, measurement, and assessment for formulating strategies and managing the

struggle; education on all levels and professional training in how to combat antisemitism, preserve the memory of the Holocaust, and fight racism and hatred of the other; focusing efforts on the traditional and social media; bringing about legislation, justice, and law enforcement; and ensuring the safety and security of the Jewish community.

3. The role of leadership

Leaders throughout Europe need to be encouraged to act determinedly, rapidly, proactively, and uncompromisingly against antisemitism at home and in other countries, regardless of whether the antisemitism is overtly or latently expressed, while also addressing the deep-seated problems, of which antisemitism is one of the symptoms.

4. Overall state responsibility

The fight against antisemitism requires overall responsibility of the state. Given the complexity in responding to antisemitism, a dedicated government entity should coordinate the efforts and maintain contact with the Jewish communities. In addition, each country should create its own capabilities and processes for dealing with antisemitism, which will include all the relevant authorities, institutions, and non-government organizations, as well as the local Jewish community.

5. Adoption and internalization of the IHRA definition of antisemitism

It is extremely important to push the adoption of the IHRA definition throughout Europe as a standard definition, as a compass for dealing with antisemitism, and as a means of increasing awareness and internalizing the need to eradicate antisemitism among the general public. The main challenge facing countries and organizations that have already adopted the IHRA definition is to translate its principles into effective working processes and into control mechanisms among law enforcement, the education system, and elsewhere.

6. Monitoring, measurement, and assessment

Monitoring, measurement, and assessment are important components for increasing awareness of antisemitism and for supporting decision making,

especially in assisting entities that deal with antisemitism to help them identify its sources, its characteristics, and its trends and to formulate efficient responses.

Currently, major gaps exist in the monitoring and measurement of antisemitism. Even when systematic monitoring takes place, the criteria for measurement, the extent of information and knowledge sharing, and the ways of sharing and using information vary immensely. Based on this research, it is recommended that the EU countries continually monitor antisemitism within the political discourse. This step can contribute to raising awareness of antisemitism and serving as a lever for its effective prevention.

7. Repairing the cracks in the battle against antisemitism

The research noted the major cracks that have occurred in the consensus that was created to battle antisemitism. These include the distorting and rewriting of history, which has incited both the populist and extreme right-wing discourse in Europe and the growing toxic anti-Israeli discourse that has antisemitic nuances among both the left and Islamist circles. For addressing these phenomena, we recommend enlightening the public and defining the proper and legitimate discourse within a clear and principled framework, of honoring the memory of the Holocaust and recognizing Israel's right to exist as the national homeland of the Jewish people.

8. The fight against antisemitism in social media

The discourse of hatred in social media, including the growing expression of antisemitism, is one of the main challenges for contemporary society. Dealing with this challenge is still in its early stages and requires joint effort by countries, non-government organizations, and social media platforms. This endeavor should focus on creating effective legislation and regulation; defining the ways in which social media platforms should be responsible for the content posted by users; constructing an infrastructure to comprehensively and effectively monitor antisemitic content that is posted online; removing harmful content in a timely manner; and efficiently handling violators.

9. The Corbyn affair as a warning sign

The exposure of antisemitism in Britain's Labour Party under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn surprisingly placed the issue on Britain's political agenda,

shocking both the country and the party. It also stirred Britain's Jewish community, which has been worried about its future and its existence. The Corbyn affair can impart lessons about what is happening or could happen in other European countries and how we must combat antisemitism before it is pushed to the center of the political arena.

10. The role of Israel and the Jewish communities

Although each country should assume responsibility for fighting antisemitism, Israel and the Jewish communities also need to build a common front against it, in addition to standing against hatred and negative and violent stereotypes that marginalize other groups. In this context, Israel and other Jewish communities need to strengthen the assistance that they give in this field to both European countries and their Jewish communities, particularly those that are in distress and unable to obtain the protection and support they need from their governments.

11. Continuation of research efforts and strategic planning

As in many other instances, this research has exposed the lacunae in information and knowledge as well as the need to expand research efforts, to increase the understanding of key issues, and to acquire better tools for formulating strategy to combat antisemitism. It is recommended that research and strategic planning efforts focus on the connection between the degree of antisemitism within political discourse and antisemitic attitudes among the public; the link between antisemitic attitudes, comments on the various social media platforms, and actual in-person events; the effect of antisemitism on the security of the Jewish communities; the gaps between overt and latent antisemitism; the means of preventing the spread of antisemitism; analysis of the causes of social radicalization that leads to increased antisemitism; monitoring and quantifying antisemitism in the political discourse of other European countries, while expanding the knowledge about antisemitism in key countries; and lastly, building an infrastructure for the widespread monitoring of antisemitic discourse, particularly on social media.

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Notes

- 1 Ignatz Bubis (1927–1999) was a German-Jewish leader and former chair of the Central Jewish Councils in Germany between 1992–1999.
- 2 In 2017, a video went viral about a verbal antisemitic attack against the owner of an Israeli restaurant in Berlin-Schöneberg (Nachim, 2017). A year later, a group of people vandalized a Jewish restaurant in Chemnitz (Tagesspiegel, 2018). In 2019, the regional chief rabbi in Hamburg and his colleague were attacked on the street (Kempkens, 2019). Numerous antisemitic attacks have occurred in Berlin, such as in Friedrichshain where a young man was assaulted in front of a club while speaking in Hebrew (Cerruti & Betschka, 2019). In the district of Charlottenburg, two men attacked a man wearing a traditional Jewish prayer shawl as reported in ZEIT Online (2019). In 2019, two Jews were killed in an attack on a synagogue in Halle (Saale) during the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur (Kohrs 2019). In early October 2020, a Jewish student was attacked and badly injured in front of a synagogue in Hamburg, and the police were investigating the crime as attempted murder (Faz.com, 2020).
- 3 For more about antisemitism as it related to the Covid pandemic in Germany, see the latest annual report of the Israeli Ministry of Diaspora Affairs (2021).
- 4 In this regard, several alarming cases in recent years have been characterized by extreme right-wing terrorist activity. This includes the murder of the CDU politician Walter Lübcke in summer 2018 (Le Blond, 2019; NSU Watch, 2020), the terror attack in the city of Hanau in February 2020 (Bartsch et. al, 2020; Initiative 19. Februar Hanau, 2020), and the dismantling of one of the units of the Special Forces Command (KSK) in July 2020, after revealing a right-wing terrorist activity inside the unit (Hemicker, 2020; Litschko, 2020).
- 5 For example, on October 15, 2019, six days after the terror attack in Halle, the slogan “Free Stepi” (referring to the name of the terrorist of the Halle attack) was written on one of the concrete stones of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, located in the central Berlin district of Mitte (Hänel, 2020).
- 6 These public debates show a very divided public opinion regarding statements by both political and cultural representatives that could be construed as antisemitic. Interestingly, these cases involve a broad exchange of views, which includes readers and internet users and is not limited to only public figures. For example, in 2002, the former liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP) politician Jürgen Möllemann defended

a colleague who had accused Israel's prime minister, Ariel Sharon, of carrying out a "war of extermination" and using "Nazi-methods" against the Palestinians while speaking of a "Zionist lobby" in Germany, which (allegedly) silenced critics of Israel. Möllemann supported his colleague by stating that critics of Sharon were immediately labeled as antisemites, which he strongly opposed. Following the public outcry, Möllemann distributed a pamphlet verbally attacking Ariel Sharon and Michel Friedman, the former vice president of the Central Jewish Council in Germany, holding them responsible for the growing antisemitism in Germany (FAZ.net, 2002). After immense pressure from all sides, Möllemann left the FDP four weeks later. Another infamous incident is the case of Günther Grass. In 2012, the German author and Nobel Prize winner criticized Israel for its nuclear submarine deal with the German government in the poem "What must be said," published in *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (Grass, 2012). There, he argued that any criticism regarding the armament of the Jewish state was seen as taboo and condemned as antisemitism. Critics of the poem accused Grass of neglecting the serious threat of the Iranian regime, which lead to Israel's unavoidable need for self-defense in the first place.

- 7 Christian Lüth, former AfD press officer, said in an assumed confidential conversation: "Afterwards, we can still shoot them all [the migrants] later. That is not a problem at all. Or we gas them, suit yourself" [Wir können die [Migranten] nachher immer noch alle erschießen. Das ist überhaupt kein Thema. Oder vergasen, oder wie du willst] (Fuchs, 2020).
- 8 The term *Volksgemeinschaft* is translated as the "people's community." The German National Socialist Party historically used this term to exclude unwanted "others" from the "Aryan" community. They established this term and others in the German language and culture as a means of moving racist and fascist ideology into political action (see Volovici, 2016).
- 9 Alexander Gauland is the leader of the AfD and the party's first honorary chairperson.
- 10 In 2017, the AfD parliamentary group in Baden-Württemberg called for the elimination of state funding for a concentration camp memorial (Gurs) to "balance" culture and remembrance. According to the AfD, the main interest in this act was to create a "positive self-identification with Germany and our history." The AfD also proposed that funding go toward bringing visitors to "sites of significance" in "German history" (see Salzborn, 2018, p. 82; Muschel, 2017).
- 11 Perpetuating the use of terms such as "globalist" or "octopus" to imply a "Jewish world agenda or takeover of global and governmental institutions" is consistent with the second criterion of the IHRA (2016) working definition of antisemitism: "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." According to the "resettlement" conspiracy theory, Jews allegedly are part of a worldwide elite and

- actively involved in settling (Muslim) migrants in Europe. Their supposed goal is to diminish the German people—not by war but as part of a “secret and controlled mission” (Ayyadi, 2017).
- 12 Suggesting that Israel tortures and targets children is consistent with the classic antisemitic trope of Jews targeting children for violence and perversion and refers to the ninth criterion of the working definition of antisemitism: “Using the symbols and images associated with classic anti-Semitism to characterize Israel or Israelis” (IHRA, 2016).
 - 13 These comments are consistent with the seventh and tenth criteria of the IHRA (2016) working definition: “Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination” and “Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.”
 - 14 As described in Yad Vashem online archives (n.d.): “On the 16th of July, 1942, some 4,500 French policemen began a mass arrest of foreign Jews living in Paris, at the behest of the German authorities. Over 11,000 Jews were arrested on the same day, and confined to the Winter Stadium, or *Velodrome d’Hiver*, known as the *Vel’ d’Hiv*, in Paris. The detainees were kept in extremely crowded conditions, almost without water, food and sanitary facilities. Within a week the number of Jews held in the *Vel’ d’Hiv* had reached 13,000, among them more than 4,000 children. [...] In the two months that followed the *Vel’ d’Hiv* arrests some 1,000 Jews were deported to Auschwitz every two or three days. By the end of September 1942 almost 38,000 Jews had been deported to Auschwitz from France. In 1945 only some 780 of them remained alive.”
 - 15 See original speech in French: Fondation Jacques Chirac. (1995). *Allocution de M. Jacques Chirac, Président de la République, prononcée lors des cérémonies commémorant la grande rafle des 16 et 17 juillet 1942*. <http://www.jacqueschirac-asso.fr/fr/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Allocution-Vel-dhiv.pdf>.
 - 16 In April 2021, highest French court ruled that the killer of Sarah Halimi cannot stand trial and will go unpunished due to his mental state, brought on by the use of cannabis, at the time of Halimi’s murder. The ruling led to protests of members of the Jewish community in Paris as well as in other places around the world.
 - 17 As Chrisafis (2018) has claimed, the Yellow Vests is a French movement established in 2018 when the gas prices were rising dramatically. People throughout France organized protests via social media wearing yellow high-visibility vests as a shared symbol. Supporters demanded tax cuts, salary increases and even a radical change of the political system. As the protests became more violent and destructive the authorities claimed that the movement attracted extreme right and left-wing “professional” rioters. In the far right, the protests were used to underline the “eviction” of the white population of French origin from expensive cities such as Paris. See also S.P. (2018); Leclerc (2020).
 - 18 Antisemitic harassment reported in France throughout 2019 can be broken down as follows: 15% were offensive or threatening comments made in person; 16% made

offensive gestures or stared inappropriately; 10% received offensive comments on the internet, including social media (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2019). According to the American Jewish Committee (AJC), “nearly half of French Jews (46%) said that they had suffered antisemitic verbal abuse at work. But the phenomenon is not limited to professional life. Over half of French Jewish (55%) have been insulted or threatened in the street and nearly six out of ten Jewish children (59%) said that they had suffered physical abuse in school. The survey also found that religious French Jews are at higher risk of being attacked because they are more identifiably Jewish. Over seven in ten (74%) religious Jews reported that they had suffered at least one act of antisemitic verbal abuse—a 10% higher score than in the overall Jewish sample”(AJC, 2020b). Giordano (2019) states that “France has Europe’s biggest Jewish community—about 550,00—antisemitic attacks are common, with more than 500 alone in 2018.” Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODHIR) states that hate crimes reported by police for 2018 with antisemitic motivation numbered 183, of which 4 were desecration of graves, 43 were attacks against places of worship, and 358 were threats/threatening behavior (2020).

- 19 For more information on anti-Semitism related to the Covid pandemic in France, see the latest annual report of the Israeli Ministry of Diaspora Affairs (2021). [https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/generalpage/report_anti240121/en/anti-semitism_2020%20YEARLY%20REPORT%20-%20FINAL%20\(EN\)_v7.pdf](https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/generalpage/report_anti240121/en/anti-semitism_2020%20YEARLY%20REPORT%20-%20FINAL%20(EN)_v7.pdf).
- 20 Known as the National Front until 2018.
- 21 Le Pen called the gas chambers “a detail” in World War II and referred to the word “oven” while offending a French Jewish singer (Willsher, 2014). In 2016, he stressed his racist and nationalist positions in a BBC interview (BBC Newsnight, 2016). For more details, see also Palheta (2017).
- 22 In the French presidential national election of 2017, Emanuel Macron’s centrist party gained 66.1% of the votes while Marine Le Pen’s far-right nationalist party achieved 33.9% of the votes in the second round. For detailed results of each electoral constituency, see Aisch et. al. (2017).
- 23 See the recent decision of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruling that animals in the Belgian region should be stunned before slaughter (AFP and Toi Staff, 2020).
- 24 George Soros, a Hungarian of Jewish origin who was born in 1930, is a “billionaire philanthropist and founder of Open Society Foundations” (Reuters, 2020), a group of foundations supporting several public civil initiatives and political activities worldwide, including the fight against institutional racism.
- 25 During the 2017 presidential elections in France, Mélenchon obtained almost 20% of votes and finished fourth behind Emmanuel Macron and far right leader Marine Le Pen and conservative François Fillon (Sibton, 2019).
- 26 The antisemitic blood libel that “the Jews killed Jesus” was historically promoted by the Catholic Church for centuries until it was recanted in 1965 by the Nostra

Aetate (Latin for “In Our Times”). Since then the Catholic Church and many popes have made significant efforts to put the antisemitic trope of holding all Jews accountable for the death of Jesus to rest and renew a positive relationship with the Jewish people. This type of blood libel is consistent with the third criterion of the IHRA (2016) working definition of antisemitism: “Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even acts committed by non-Jews.” For more information on *Nostra Aetate*, see the Vatican (1965); Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2015); Poggioli (2015).

- 27 These allusions and smears are problematic as they are consistent with the second criterion of the IHRA (2016) working definition of antisemitism: “Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as a collective—such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy theory or of Jews controlling the media, economy government or other societal institutions.”
- 28 Lord Eric Pickles is the United Kingdom’s special envoy for post-Holocaust issues.
- 29 Allegations of antisemitism were also made against other members of the Brexit party; see <https://antisemitism.org/politics/brexit/>.
- 30 George Soros is a Hungarian-born Holocaust survivor who now lives in the US. He is involved in a large number of philanthropic ventures all over the world. He is the target of a variety of antisemitic conspiracy theories accusing him of controlling the global economy, of supporting political protests worldwide, and of encouraging illegal immigration.
- 31 Operation Protective Edge was a large-scale military operation by the IDF in the Gaza Strip during July–August 2014, following a period of continual rocket attacks from Gaza targeting communities in southern Israel.
- 32 According to the IHRA working definition, anti-Semitism can be defined as “denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.
- 33 According to the IHRA working definition, antisemitism can be defined as “applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.”
- 34 According to the IHRA working definition, antisemitism can be defined as “drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.”
- 35 According to the IHRA working definition, antisemitism can be defined as “using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism [in this case world Jewish conspiracy] to characterize Israel or Israelis.”
- 36 This refers to the second example of the IHRA working definition, which is “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.”

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- No. 214, June 2021, Shahar Eilam, Adi Kantor, Tom Eshed, and Tal-Or Cohen, *Contemporary Antisemitism in the Political Discourse of Five Western European Countries: Germany, France, Britain, Spain, Ireland*.
- No. 213, May 2021, Kevjn Lim, *China-Iran Relations: Strategic, Economic, and Diplomatic Aspects in Comparative Perspective*.
- No. 212, April 2021, Udi Dekel and Lia Moran-Gilad, *The Annapolis Process: A Missed Opportunity for a Two-State Solution?*
- No. 210, February 2021, Udi Dekel and Lia Moran-Gilad, *The Annapolis Process: A Missed Opportunity for a Two-State Solution?* [Hebrew].
- No. 209, February 2021, Kobi Michael, Alon Tal, Gallia Lindenstrauss, Shira Bukchin Peles, Dov Khenin, and Victor Weis, eds, *Environment, Climate and National Security: A New Front for Israel* [Hebrew].
- No. 208, February 2021, Ephraim Lavie, Meir Elran, Khader Sawaed, and Shmuel Even, *The Resiliency of the Arab Society in Israel During the COVID-19 Pandemic* [Hebrew].
- No. 207, January 2021, Liran Antebi, *Artificial Intelligence and National Security in Israel*.
- No. 206, November 2020, Orna Mizrahi, Udi Dekel, and Yuval Bazak, *The Next War in the North: Scenarios Strategic Alternatives and Recommendations for the State of Israel* [Hebrew].
- No. 205, September 2020, Liran Antebi, *Artificial Intelligence and National Security in Israel* [Hebrew].
- No. 204, September 2020, Kobi Michael and Michal Hatuel-Radoshitzky, *Seventy Years to UNRWA—Time for Structural and Functional Reforms*.
- No. 203, September 2020, Ofir Winter, ed., *Existential Threat Scenarios to the State of Israel*.
- No. 202, July 2020, Sasson Hadad, Tomer Fadlon, and Shmuel Even, eds., *Israel's Defense Industry and US Security Aid*.
- No. 201, May 2020, Sasson Hadad, Tomer Fadlon, and Shmuel Even, eds., *Israel's Defense Industry and US Security Aid* [Hebrew].
- No. 200, May 2020, Zipi Israeli, *The National Security Index: Trends in Israeli Public Opinion* [Hebrew].
- No. 199, May 2020, Kobi Michael and Michal Hatuel-Radoshitzky, *Seventy Years to UNRWA—Time for Structural and Functional Reforms* [Hebrew].
- No. 198, December 2019, Ofir Winter, ed., *Nothing is Forever: Existential Threats to the State of Israel* [Hebrew].

This report, produced by the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), in collaboration with the Jewish Agency for Israel, examines and analyzes the phenomenon of contemporary antisemitism in the political discourse of five major Western European countries—Germany, France, Britain, Spain, and Ireland. The research is based on systematic mapping of public expressions of antisemitism by elected officials, over a period of one year, from late 2019 until late 2020.

The findings indicate that some politicians in Western Europe—on both the right and the left—deliberately and maliciously use antisemitic ideas and expressions for political gains. This can be seen in the context of the increasing strength of extremist and populist parties on both sides of the political spectrum, which have contaminated the political and public discourse with antisemitic statements and attitudes.

Indeed, the present analysis indicates that the scale is tipping toward those who espouse antisemitism and away from those who try to moderate it, particularly given the process of sociopolitical radicalization, growing polarization, and the rise of once marginalized extremists at the expense of the moderate center. These processes have been accelerated by social media, which has been exploited to spread hateful content almost without any significant limits, at least for the time being.

All this has contributed to antisemitism's increasingly becoming part of the political mainstream; the politicization of antisemitism as a means for political rivals to attack one another; and the appearance of cracks in the broad consensus both to preserve the memory of the Holocaust and fight against antisemitism. These cracks are manifested primarily by distorting and rewriting history mainly on the right and by anti-Israel discourse on the left.

Although it has unique characteristics, antisemitism must not be perceived as a local and domestic challenge for Jewish communities alone but rather as manifesting a much wider phenomenon of hate speech, hateful discourse, and sometimes even violence. The increasing politicization of antisemitism demonstrates the magnitude and influence that its destructive consequences have for the entire society, Jews and non-Jews alike, and therefore it needs to be recognized as a global concern.