

Campaigning against Antisemitism – or not ...

I'd like to join the Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA) – but I can't – because it isn't ... a campaign against antisemitism, that is. Founded less than four years ago, the posts on its Facebook page make it seem little more than a campaign to remove Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader and thus make it impossible for him to form a Labour government in the UK. And it appears that some Labour MP's would prefer a continuation of this Tory administration rather than a Labour government under Mr Corbyn. Some of the posts are openly Tory. The question is why? Why attack Jeremy Corbyn on the basis of racist antisemitism when he has spent his life speaking out against all forms of racism? The reason must be his long-term support for justice for the Palestinians and his critical stance toward many Israeli actions.

The CAA (www.antisemitism.uk) is also a campaign against anti-Zionism; and that is why I can't join. As a human being opposed to racism in any form, and as an evangelical Christian, I have to be opposed to Zionism, hence my anti-Zionism. I am not Judeo-phobic (possibly a more exact term than antisemitic). I don't hate Jews; the ones I know I rather like. And I'm also very aware what my faith owes to biblical Judaism. But more than that, I can't join the CAA because its very existence is dangerous to its supposed cause. I'll come to that later, see below.

Zionism is not Judaism, far from it, and just because Netanyahu and the Chief Rabbi say it is doesn't make it so. Attempts to conflate the two fail at the level of historical fact as well as of theology. Zionism was conceived in the nineteenth century as a secular, utopian socialist response to the persecution of Jews in Europe. It had no traction and no attraction for Sephardi (including Mizrahi) Jews who had lived relatively happily for hundreds of years in their local communities from North Africa to the Far East.

On the CAA's website page for the definition of antisemitism – <https://antisemitism.uk/definition/> – the word 'Israel' appears 13 times suggesting that their real concern is not racist antisemitism but criticism of Israel. This from the Home page: *antisemitism can be expressed as anything from ancient blood libels and conspiracy myths to antisemitism disguised as political discourse about Israel.* It is the final phrase that is problematic: who and on what basis decides that political discourse regarding Israel is antisemitic, disguised or not?

In their 'Guide' on antisemitic language the CAA include two items at least that should be challenged. They write:

The use of 'Rothschild' (e.g. 'A Rothschild plot') is invariably a device to avoid saying 'Jew' or 'Jewish'. This is a dangerous 'catch-all'. Notice the use of the parentheses. They give an example that ought to illuminate the sentence; the sentence should be able to stand on its own. So, any use of the word 'Rothschild' is always and without exception (that's what 'invariably' means) a device to avoid saying 'Jew' and therefore is 'antisemitic'. But 'Rothschild & Co' is an international banking conglomerate whose practices must be open to the same challenge as any other bank. And, if the owners/partners happen to be named 'Rothschild' why should they be immune from being named? Nevertheless, according to the CAA use of the word/title identifies one as antisemitic. That is extremely dangerous territory.

For the term 'Zionist' they write: *An extremely complicated and often confusing term, as it can be used quite legitimately in political discussion. Zionism is simply the belief of the Jewish people in their right to exist, free from persecution, in their own country. Those claiming to be only anti-Zionist, not anti-Semitic, are denying Israel's right to exist, which is considered to be one of the*

manifestations of antisemitism. Criticism of specific policies of the Israeli government is not antisemitic.

'Zionist' is increasingly being used as a way of avoiding saying Jew. People who do this will usually exhibit other forms of antisemitic behaviour.

Most people who criticize Israel would object to the definition in the second sentence in the quote. We do NOT deny the right of Israel to exist, only that that 'right' must not be at the expense of the indigenous population. In the third sentence *considered* by whom? Palestinians exiled from their homes and still stateless 50 to 70 years after the event might reasonably regard Israel's existence as the cause of their distress. That doesn't make them antisemitic.

The final sentence of the first paragraph is right but in practice when such criticisms are articulated they are almost always criticized as antisemitic by supporters of Israel. It is often said that we should not criticize Israel unless we also criticize other (usually identified as 'worse offender') nations. Such comments are dangerous because unintentionally they point to possible equivalences.

The second sentence, *Zionism is simply the belief of the Jewish people in their right to exist, free from persecution, in their own country*, is not exactly true. The inexactitude lies first, in the assumption of a homogeneous *Jewish belief* where there is much evidence to the contrary. And it is not 'their own country' they want, but land already occupied. It had to be made 'theirs' by invasion and conquest contrary to international law, and they are making more of it theirs through illegal settlement.

The first sentence of the final paragraph on the meaning of 'Zionist' is revelatory: it shows what is actually at stake. The CAA use this as a method of excluding from Jewry those many Jews who object either to Zionism as an ideology or to what is done in Zionism's name. (The distinctions are much more complex than just these two.)

I use the term to refer either to Jews who hold a Zionist ideology, or to Christians who hold a similar ideology. The CAA provide no evidence for their assertion that the word is increasingly used as a way of avoiding saying 'Jew', nor for why they regard the term as *extremely complicated and often confusing*.

In referring to the 'Blood Libel' it is important to point out that some Jews are indeed intent on killing Palestinians, whether children or not. It is not all or even most Jews; but it is specifically some rabbis and senior politicians in Israel who have expressed such views publicly. We might view the large numbers of Palestinian casualties as solid evidence.

On its 'Barometer' page (Research/effects on) the CAA claims that

one in three British Jews has become so fearful of mounting antisemitic crime and the failure to excise antisemites from politics that they have considered leaving Britain altogether. Just as British people increasingly reject antisemitism, British Jews are feeling unprotected and hounded out due to the failure of our institutions to protect the many from the few racists among us.

That finding is contradicted by other Jewish organisations, ones that reject the claim of the Board of Deputies that they speak for all British Jews. And see below.

On the CAA 'News' page (1) of the 18 items all but one refer to Corbyn or the Labour Party, and on the first seven pages I can find not a single reference to a Conservative. That despite the CAA itself recording four incidents by Tories. It is worth looking at some recent letters to *The Guardian* as a corrective.

The CAA uses the ‘Definition’ of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) which has only been adopted more widely under considerable pressure and with significant caveats. Their website includes their ‘expert legal opinion’. For an alternative legal opinion see here: <http://freespeechonisrael.org.uk/ihra-opinion/>. According to the CAA the opinion states: *The definition is a clear, meaningful and workable definition. The definition is an important development in terms of identifying and preventing antisemitism, in particular in its modern and non-traditional forms, which often reach beyond simple expressions of hatred for Jews and instead refer to Jewish people and Jewish associations in highly derogatory, veiled terms (e.g. ‘Zio’ or ‘Rothschilds’).*

Public bodies in the United Kingdom are not ‘at risk’ in using this definition.

Public bodies may not be *at risk*, (of what? legal challenge?) but freedom of speech may be. Does the definition meet the claimed criteria of ‘clear, meaningful and workable’? This is what it says – without the eleven bullet point examples:

Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

Logically, the definition is meaningless. The second sentence depends for its sense on the first, which is so ambiguous as to be worthless – ‘*a certain perception ... may be expressed*’, so, not ‘any’ perception, but *certain* ones; so who says which ones? That’s not a definition but a suggestion. And they *may be expressed* so presumably ‘may not’ be addressed, and if not, what? Seriously? The definition is neither clear nor meaningful and only becomes ‘workable’ with the examples and descriptions. (Frankly, had I produced this my managers would have told me to stop wasting time and money.)

Presentation is critical. Headline and summary: things we read first and last are likely to make the greater impression. So the IHRA definition proceeds:

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic.

There are at least two problems with these qualifying clauses. The first clause in the first sentence is qualified by the second. Question: is criticism of Israel’s blockade of Gaza, for example, a ‘targeting’ – why use that heavily loaded term – and, does such criticism conceive Israel as a Jewish collective? It is self-contradictory: Israel regards itself as a Jewish collective, what other sense can be made of its demand to be a ‘Jewish nation’? But the problem is worse. Are we allowed to distinguish between ‘a’ Jewish collective and ‘the’ Jewish collective?

The Israel critics I know make a clear distinction between Jewry – every person who self-identifies as Jewish – and Israel’s Zionist activities. On the other hand Zionist’s regard Israel as ‘the Jewish collective’ over the objections and reservations of non-Zionist Jews worldwide (see Netanyahu’s call to French Jews following the Paris attacks and the CAA’s own ‘research’). On the rest of the definition; of the first 4 bullet points I have no criticism: apart from bullet 4 they could and should apply to any and all people groups. But the remaining bullet points are highly problematic.

- *Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.*

There are at least two problems here, both with the final phrase and the word ‘exaggerating’. First, the number of deaths is a genuine historical question that doesn’t detract from the horror of the events. Shirer quotes various figures including from Reitlinger who arrived at a figure ‘between, 4,194,200 and 4,581,200’ (William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, Secker & Warburg, 1959, p. 978 note 71). The figure apparently given in the Nuremberg indictment was 5,700,000 or approximately half of the 10 million Jews living in territory occupied by the Nazis. A horror by any standard; but still room for scholarly exploration.

Secondly, should the state of Israel at some future date claim a figure of, say, 8 million or more, would not that be an exaggeration and were it to be challenged would that be antisemitic? Loose definitions may prove dangerous.

- *Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.*

The problem with this point is that some Jews in some countries (particularly the USA and the UK) may well be more loyal to Israel than to their home nation. That, for instance, is how Israel became a nuclear power. If it is true how can it be antisemitic to say so? The subsequent clause is a dangerous ‘catch-all’ being too vague.

- *Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination (e.g. by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour).*

This is problematic because the two clauses don’t relate. The claim that Zionism is racist does not deny Jews a right to self-determination. It is a statement capable of verification. The real issue here is that ‘Jewish’ self-determination has been given priority over the rights of Palestinians. It’s a ‘double-jeopardy’ situation, forcing Israel’s critics to choose between the racism of Zionism and that of antisemitism.

- *Applying double standards by requiring of Israel a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.*

Who decides what constitutes double standards? What if the behaviour required is that to which Israel has signed up, e.g. the Convention on the Rights of the Child? And why, when someone criticizes e.g. China or Russia over their human rights record, does not the Board of Deputies (BoD) ask, ‘But what about Israel’s human rights abuses?’ This is another catch-all that would not be allowed for any other nation. For example, when I criticize the UK’s sales of weapons to Saudi Arabia am I asked, by the BoD, ‘What about arms sales to Israel?’ No I am not.

- *Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g. claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterise Israel or Israelis.*

One problem with this is the explanation given that Herod wasn’t Jewish and that the priests were government place-men. As to the first, that rather depends on what is meant by Jewish. His father, Antipater was an Edomite whose faith was Judaism and Herod had been brought up as a Jew. Jewishness cannot be genetically and that view has biblical support. Herod may not have been a ‘good Jew’, but, like so many things, that too depended on viewpoint: Pharisee, Sadducee and Essene, for example.

As to the second, Rome had no interest in getting involved in a local religious dispute. The Jewish Sanhedrin included the two major groups, Pharisees and Sadducees, so Jesus’ death was at the instigation of Jewish leaders. There is no question that it was Jews who arranged

for Jesus to be put to death. But to extrapolate from that to the guilt of the whole of Jewry throughout time is utter nonsense. Most Jews in Judea/Galilee could not have known of the events of that first Easter, and half of Jews already lived outside Palestine in the first century, so couldn't possibly have known until much later, if at all.

But it seems to be assumed that 'classic antisemitism' has been defined and classified. If so it should be referenced. The real problem, though, lies at the end of the sentence. Had it read, '... *characterise Jews as a collective*' there would be little difficulty; but '*Israelis*' can mean almost anything **except** *the collective of Jews*, ('Israel' is equally problematic). 'Israeli' is a term **unofficially** applied to Israel's citizens whether they are Palestinian Arab or Jewish. Further, more than half the world's Jewish population still lives outside Israel. Another ambiguity is whether the term is plural or singular – does it mean all Israelis or can it mean just one who may in fact be a 'money-lender', i.e. banker?

- *Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.*

If there are comparisons should they not be drawn? Is Israel uniquely incapable of racism? A question that highlights the danger of identifying a population with its governments' actions. More than half the Palestinian population was expelled in 1947-9 and many remain in refugee camps. If there is evidence for parallels, and there is, it is for Israel to show how they are not. An outraged cry of 'antisemitism' will eventually be counterproductive because eventually genuine cries will be ignored.

- *Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.*

Holding any group collectively responsible should be regarded as racist unless there is overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Such could hardly be the case for Jews, scattered as they are across the world and occupying diverse positions on Zionism and Israel. So, I agree with this. Except, once again, Jews are singled out as special, especially if they are identified as 'Israeli'. Let's turn the statement round in its own context:

Racism is - holding Palestinians collectively responsible for the actions of Hamas (for example).

So this should come with the caveat that Israel's holding all Palestinians responsible for the acts of a few, and their carrying out illegal community punishments, is equally racist. Implicit in this is that some actions of the state of Israel may be criticized. So why for example does the CAA and the BoD not criticize Israel; ever? The only recent criticism I can find is in June 2017: for the *decision of the Government of Israel not to implement a plan to create separate spaces for mixed prayer at the Western Wall*. Very liberal: but nothing about Israel's treatment of Ethiopian Jews, nothing about discriminatory treatment of Palestinians in Israel, nothing about illegal settlements, nothing about settler attacks on children and their destruction of Palestinians' animals and crops.

On its Antisemitism/political parties [page](#) the CAA lists 39 cases of antisemitism in the Labour Party 5% with 'good outcomes' and 64% with 'bad outcomes'. It lists four Tory cases. Two Tory cases had 'bad outcomes', those of Andrew Bridgen and Alan Duncan, where 'bad' equals unsatisfactory from the CAA's viewpoint. However, in both cases the comments about which the CAA complain are well supported by evidence. In the USA there is the America-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and Christians United for Israel (CUFI) providing massive support both financial and political for Israel, and there is solid evidence that complaining about Israel is a good way to make sure you don't get elected to senior office. In the UK, despite successive

governments' words about Israel nothing is ever done, and any criticism or action brought to the UN Security Council will be vetoed either by the USA or the UK. That is pretty solid evidence of *susceptibility to well-funded powerful lobbying groups and the power of the Jewish lobby in America.*

Following the link to the [methodology](#) page we find the fascinating example of Ken Loach. Loach expressed an opinion based on his own personal experience. Most of us would regard that as reasonable. But the trap is in item 2, *'Denying antisemitism exists where there is clear evidence that there has been a breach of the definition.'* Ken Loach is deemed to be in breach of the definition but I challenge you to tell me how. There is nothing in the definition or the examples to justify the CAA's use of Loach as an example, but throw enough mud and some will stick.

What their 'Research Method' flags up from their first proactive sweep is interesting. Taking the 14,500 selected tweets – of which the disturbing ones were a small minority – the incidence of 'disturbing' material was less than 0.003%. Not everyone 'tweets' and many who do don't 'tweet' massively; so the 'population' caught up in the sweep is small relative to the whole of the UK. Thus we have a minority of a minority of a minority which produces an absolute maximum figure, not of one person in 1500 but one tweet in 1500 (please note: I am not a statistician). I don't complain about the method, just the conclusions.

Starting at the top of the 'Labour' list with Diane Abbott on 1st May 2016, it is difficult to see how this is even an 'incident'. It assumes guilt on the basis of the accusation whereas their real complaint is that Abbott disagreed with the statement that Labour has a problem with antisemitism. She may be wrong, but it is an opinion to which she is entitled, and it is not antisemitic.

The CAA 'outcome' is actually commentary from the Zionist viewpoint; the 'double indignity' accusation could equally be levelled at Zionists for their attack on Labour Party members. Scrolling down, many of the incidents are a mixture of facts, questions, and stupidity with few actually racist.

Take Bob Campbell for example. Wisdom in using social media is essential – be aware that something you link to may be linked to something darker, and you will be held responsible. In the 1st paragraph on him we are told he *claimed, among other things, that the state of Israel kidnaps children and tests chemical weapons on Palestinians*. I can't verify the incident but the question is, 'are the claims justified?' Which is not the same as, 'are they true?' There is an important distinction between things we have evidence for and things for which the evidence we have is conclusive.

Both 'Defense for Children International' and the UK government have published reports of the detention of Palestinian children contrary to international law, i.e. illegally. B'tselem, an Israeli human rights NGO, publishes similar evidence. 'Breaking the Silence', an Israeli NGO comprising ex-IDF soldiers, gives testimony that many such incidents are not issues of state security.

As to 'chemical weapons' there is significant evidence that such weapons may have been used in Gaza. (It is known that Israel supplied American-made chemicals to Saddam Hussein during the Iraq-Iran war).

The 25th May 2015 incident, if it occurred (I have not verified), is wholly unacceptable and at least an apology is required. But the 14th November 2015 incident is a reasonable claim based on available evidence. The Golan Heights is internationally recognised as Syrian territory. It is reliably reported that the US firm Halliburton has discovered large deposits of oil under the Golan, and Israel is seeking ways to exploit this with the help of the USA.

NB. As of 30th April 2018 I've looked at all of the incidents and many of the tweets/posts complained of. Some could be characterised as unwise but most are reasonable comment. Two

merited action, which was taken. (Interestingly CAA classifies a person as an ‘incident’. If, however, we take a more normal approach to ‘incident’ and take specific dates; for the Labour Party there are 119 of which 2 are antisemitic, so under 2%. When we look at the other political parties the proportion is 18.5%.)

As with Abbott so with Corbyn. Here the CAA wields the ‘[Livingstone Formulation](#)’. David Hirsch is an emollient arguer for a better way for peace for both Israelis and Palestinians. Except, I can’t see where he and his supporters are bringing pressure to bear on *our governments*. Boycott may not be ‘the answer’, but doing nothing is not an option. Words unsupported by action are meaningless.

Example 1 – This is from the CAA website:

On 4th April 2016, Merseyside MP Louise Ellman [said](#): “The leader [Jeremy Corbyn] has spoken out clearly that he is against antisemitism, but it is not just about words, there has got to be some action, and we haven’t seen enough of that.”

Ms Ellman had witnessed and experienced antisemitic [abuse](#) in her constituency Labour party. Her comments prompted Mr Corbyn’s brother Piers — who has a [history](#) of antisemitic posts — to [tweet](#): “Absurd! JC and all #Corbyns are committed #AntiNazi. #Zionists can’t cope with anyone supporting rights for #Palestine.” When [prompted](#) by a reporter to clarify his interpretation of his brother’s comments, Mr Corbyn is [reported](#) to have said: “No, my brother isn’t wrong.” He went on to say: “My brother has his point of view, I have mine.”

Following the ‘reported’ link takes us to an article in the [Sun](#) archives, but, as is common with news media, the headline doesn’t exactly fit what is reported. Whether Piers Corbyn is a ‘whacky climate scientist’ or not is irrelevant to the issue. And all J. Corbyn said is that his brother is entitled to his opinion and that in one particular respect he was not wrong – in calling Louise Ellman’s demand for a ‘clampdown’ absurd. Again, this is not an antisemitic slur, it is an opinion, not about antisemitism but about the need to ‘clampdown’. And the comment ‘actually we fundamentally agree’ is taken out of context as will be obvious from reading the article. At this point Jeremy Corbyn is not speaking directly about the ‘Zionist’ comment but pointing out that his family upbringing was *fighting racism from the day we were born*.

What is the ‘Livingstone Formulation’? According to its creator (David Hirsh) it

functions to de-legitimise scholarly or political analysis of antisemitism by treating analysis of antisemitism as an indicator of anti-progressive discourse. This mode of refusal to engage rationally with antisemitism is often facilitated by the treatment of antisemitism as a subjective sentiment rather than as an external objective social phenomenon.

In the paper (see link page 6, above) David Hirsh then gives examples. Before dealing with the problems in the ‘definition’ here is his first example:

Jenny Tonge, a Liberal Democrat member of the House of Lords, said at a fringe meeting of her party’s conference: The pro-Israeli Lobby has got its grips on the Western World, its financial grips. I think they’ve probably got a certain grip on our party (Hirsh, 2006).

This seems to be an antisemitic claim because it articulates a mindset in which a Jewish conspiracy controls the Western world through its financial muscle. It is not a claim about influence or lobbying, but about singular and global financial control.

It is worth reading the rest, including Jenny Tonge’s response:

I am sick of being accused of anti-Semitism when what I am doing is criticising Israel and the state of Israel. (InMinds.co.uk/, 2007);

because when you look at Hirsh's example, he has done exactly what Tonge complains about. She spoke of the 'pro-Israeli lobby' which Hirsh has conflated as a 'Jewish conspiracy'. That is not what Tonge said and it is not what she meant as she and her many Jewish supporters continue to make clear. For instance, in the USA the pro-Israel lobby includes many Christians; similarly in the UK, although to a lesser extent.

So to Hirsh's 'definition': *The Livingstone Formulation functions to de-legitimise scholarly or political analysis of antisemitism by treating analysis of antisemitism as an indicator of anti-progressive discourse*; and, my own bit of analysis. Jenny Tonge, speaking at a fringe meeting of her party may be allowed some leeway in 'shorthand speaking', but Hirsh's 'analysis' doesn't get beyond first base. He has altered her text from 'pro-Israel lobby' to 'Jewish conspiracy' and 'a certain grip' to 'singular and global financial control'. 'A certain grip' is a quite vague statement and even the earlier part, *its ... financial grips*, is capable of wide interpretation.

This is not scholarly analysis but sounds rather more like special pleading. Again because the definition simply assumes 'antisemitism' while the accused are claiming otherwise. This is further shown in the final sentence of the quote above: *This mode of refusal to engage rationally ...* The assumption seems to be that accusations of antisemitism must be taken at face value. As is happening in the Labour Party at present (April 2018), the demand from some Jewish 'leaders' and BoD is for the accused to be condemned and punished as guilty without bothering to establish the facts. If the claims of antisemitism are genuine the best and simplest thing is to report the crime to the police.

Many of us who criticise Israel's policies and practices towards the Palestinians would welcome an analysis of our complaints rather than the, all-too-usual, 'that's antisemitic' or the equally irritating, "what about Hamas?" Those cries serve the purpose of deflecting attention from Israel's actions, with its critics having to defend themselves instead of defending the Palestinians who remain without rights.

In a later paragraph Hirsh references himself, writing: *Everybody agrees that criticism of Israel can be entirely legitimate, and that it is open to debate, discussion and the examination of evidence to work out which criticisms are justified and which are not, and which kinds of criticism may be bigoted or antisemitic* (Hirsh, 2007). The claim is questionable but Hirsh, and by implication the CAA, leave themselves open to exactly this point for their criticism of Jeremy Corbyn. They claim that he says the right words but doesn't do anything, while Hirsh and his colleagues seem more intent on seeking out antisemitism than in confronting Israel's policies and practices that provide it a breeding ground.

I have contacted my 'Israel-supporting' MP many times on issues to do with Israel's treatment of Palestinians. I have had many replies from 'Ministers' mouthing similar platitudes but does anyone 'do' anything? When did BoD or the Jewish Leadership Council make a sensible, practical suggestion for bringing peace to the region in which they are so interested?

I don't intend to deal in detail with every item on Hirsh's blog, but here is a quote regarding David Ward:

David Ward, Liberal Democrat MP for Bradford East, took the opportunity of Holocaust Memorial Day to announce that he was saddened that the Jews, who suffered unbelievable levels of persecution during the Holocaust, could within a few years of liberation from the death camps be inflicting atrocities on Palestinians ... (Quinn, 2013).

Lesley Klaff (2014) characterises this mode of comparison as 'Holocaust Inversion': inversion of reality (the Israelis are cast as the 'new' Nazis and the Palestinians as the 'new'

Jews), and an inversion of morality (the Holocaust is presented as a moral lesson for, or even a moral indictment of, 'the Jews').

I have no idea whether Klaff was directly referring to Ward's comment or not. It will be obvious to anyone with any knowledge of events in Palestine in the 1940s and afterwards that atrocities were inflicted on the Palestinians. It is a matter of historical record. There is nothing in Ward's statement as recorded by Hirsh to suggest equivalence. To move from Ward's reasonable expression to *a moral indictment of 'the Jews'* is not merely unscholarly, it is a form of lie. It is for Hirsh to show the direct link between Klaff and David Ward's comments (as posted on Hirsh's blog) and then to show how Ward's comments fit Klaff's criteria: he should, but he does not.

Back to the CAA and Jeremy Corbyn. One paragraph begins:

On the 30th of June, 2016 Ruth Smeeth MP suffered antisemitic abuse at the launch of Baroness Chakrabarti's report into antisemitism in the Party

Clicking on the link '*suffered*' – which sounds like judgement in advance of the evidence – takes us to another CAA page which details the complaint by Ruth Smeeth MP. Here, Mr Corbyn is criticised for failing to *intervene in what she (Smeeth) said was an antisemitic incident*. Somewhat surprisingly the accompanying video has been removed. A search on 'YouTube' produces various outcomes. On one showing her leaving, Smeeth is clearly unhappy at the accusation of collusion with the *Daily Telegraph* but it is also clear that she did not leave the press conference 'in tears'.

Question: how can the accusation of collusion with a newspaper – proven or not – be antisemitic? Would it be racist if aimed at a person of colour, and what if the accusation were true? To seem to characterise an observation about a single Jewish person's relationship to a particular newspaper as using the classic trope of 'Jewish complicity with the media' is simply deceitful. It goes well beyond the available evidence.

To be accurate the CAA 'incident' should have read something like, *On the 30th June 2016 Ruth Smeeth MP was involved in a situation which she believed to be antisemitic*. Antisemitic abuse via messaging and including death threats is not the way we should conduct our democracy, as Corbyn pointed out. But, if the party has suddenly ceased to be *a safe space for British Jews* who is to blame? Jeremy Corbyn has only been leader for two years and racism doesn't appear overnight.

Another complaint refers to Jonathan Freedland, a British journalist. In the article referenced much of what he writes sounds balanced and fair. But his specific criticisms of Corbyn aren't. It is possible to praise someone for an action or statement whilst being unaware of other actions and statements that are reprehensible (e.g. Eisen and Raed Salah). It would be more convincing were not critics of Israel frequently denounced as antisemitic without any evidence other than their demand e.g. that Israel comply with its obligations under international law. In the real world peace is only made by meeting 'enemies', people we don't like. We may discover they are much like us but if not refusing to meet and talk accomplishes nothing.

The final complaint about Jeremy Corbyn relates to a video posted on his FB account in September 2016. As far as I can see there is nothing in the video that fits the IHRA definition. The 'tired of hearing about ...' response was to five questions Mr Corbyn was frequently confronted with: it's reasonable.

Finally, Ken Livingstone. Follow the link and listen to the whole of the interview with Vanessa Feltz. Once again, you may disagree with Livingstone but is what he said antisemitic? On the final frame the CAA have superimposed the words,

Today Ken Livingstone claimed that Hitler was a Zionist and that antisemitism is not racism

Having watched the video you will know that this statement is false. Livingstone stated very clearly that 'antisemitism is racism' and his claim wasn't that Hitler was a Zionist in the modern sense, only that in 1932 Hitler and Zionism had similar aims. That is undeniable fact except the year was 1933. In my view it is wisest to state that truth in the broader context of a discussion of the Zionist movement at the time and those similar aims as epitomised in the Haavara agreement, not as a response to a reporter's question on the pavement. But, as Livingstone points out, the context for the remarks by Naz Shah was genuine anger at the treatment of Palestinians in Gaza.

I suggested above that the Campaign Against Antisemitism was dangerous. It argues, correctly, that Jews should be treated no differently to any other group. So, for instance, it is antisemitic to say that 'Jews are money-grabbers' because it criticizes a whole community based on the behaviour of a small minority. It is as racist as to suggest that all black people are drugs dealers because some of them are. The danger here is that the CAA does exactly what it criticizes by treating Jews separately from other groups experiencing racism. It undermines its case when it singles out Jews for special treatment, especially when the evidence it uses is so thin.

A second danger follows from this. Singling out Jews for special treatment emphasises difference and thus provides encouragement for real racists. Providing ammunition for those people who want to divide us, CAA actually contributes to the problem they claim to confront. It is surely racism and therefore antisemitic to treat Jews as a special case.

The following websites are recommended.

<http://freespeechonisrael.org.uk/> <https://www.christianzionism.org/>

<https://meec.org.uk/>