SUBMISSION TO

THE SHAMI CHAKRABARTI INQUIRY

INTO

ANTISEMITISM AND OTHER FORMS OF RACISM IN THE LABOUR PARTY

FROM THE STEERING GROUP OF

INDEPENDENT JEWISH VOICES

Prepared by Antony Lerman* with the IJV Steering Group
June 2016

Independent Jewish Voices is a network of Jews in Britain, from a wide range of backgrounds and with a wide range of views, who share a commitment to key principles regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: putting human rights first, observing international law, rejecting all forms of racism, and upholding the right of both Palestinians and Israelis to a peaceful and secure existence. We believe that these principles, rather than group loyalty, should determine the parameters of legitimate debate.

We believe that the broad spectrum of opinion among the Jewish population of this country is not reflected by those institutions which claim authority to represent the Jewish community as a whole. We further believe that individuals and groups within all communities should feel free to express their views on any issue of public concern without incurring accusations of disloyalty.

Members of the Steering Group:

Geoffrey Bindman, Adam Fagan, Katy Fox-Hodess, Anthony Isaacs, Lawrence Joffe, Ann Jungman, Antony Lerman, Merav Pinchassoff, Yossi Rapoport, Dimi Reider, Jacqueline Rose, Donald Sassoon, Lynne Segal, David Shulman, Tamar Steinitz, Henry Stewart, Nadia Valman, Miri Weingarten.

Antony Lerman is a Senior Fellow at the Kreisky Forum for International Dialogue, Vienna; Honorary Fellow, Parkes Institute for the Study of Jewish/non-Jewish relations, University of Southampton; former Editor and now Associate Editor, Patterns of Prejudice*, leading academic journal on social exclusion and the demonization and stigmatization of the Other; founding Editor,* Antisemitism World Report*, 1992-98; member of the Runnymede Trust Commission on Antisemitism 1992-94; member of the Parekh Commission on the Future of Multiethnic Britain 1998-2000; member of the Advisory Committee of the Imperial War Museum Holocaust Exhibition.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The battle against antisemitism is undermined whenever opposition to Israeli government policies is automatically branded as antisemitic. (**para 1.2**)

- Any rules on antisemitic hate speech or action, and any reform of existing rules, must be based on informed awareness of the nature of the subject matter deemed to be so offensive. So the key question for the Inquiry is: When does an individual's critical comment on Israel and/or Zionism constitute antisemitism? (**1.3-1.4**)

- The Inquiry must provide the Labour Party with as clear guidance as possible on this question. This entails having a clear understanding of two issues: What is antisemitism today and how has confusion about its meaning become so widespread? What is meant today by the word 'Zionism', and by extension 'anti-Zionism'? The IJV SG's submission seeks to provide this. (**1.5**)

- The post-Second World War consensus on what constitutes antisemitism has broken down and since the early 1980s Israel has been promoted as the central object of antisemitic hate. This is reflected in the fact that practically no discussion today about current antisemitism takes place without Israel and Zionism at its centre. The consequence of this is the emergence of a fundamental redefinition of antisemitism, commonly referred to as the 'new antisemitism', which sees anti-Zionism and antisemitism as one and the same and describes Israel as the 'collective Jew among the nations'. (**2.1-2.2**)

- By this definition, it is sufficient evidence of antisemitism for someone to hold any view ranging from criticism of the policies of the current Israeli government to denial that Israel has the right to exist as a state, without having to subscribe to any of those things which historians and social scientists have traditionally regarded as making up an antisemitic view. (**2.3-2.10**) This a fundamentally flawed project but also unnecessary because definitions based on established understandings of antisemitism can quite adequately help in determining when a discourse on Israel and Zionism becomes antisemitic. This submission contains just such a definition, which is based on the work of Dr Brian Klug. (**2.14-2.16**)

- In the early days of the Zionist movement it was possible to see both Zionism and anti-Zionism as each referring essentially to one thing. But Zionism rapidly became more complicated and developed conflicting strands. Nevertheless, the vast majority of Jews opposed it until after the Holocaust. Today, many hundreds of thousands of strictly orthodox Jews are anti-Zionist, together with significant numbers of progressive and secular Jews. Moreover, very many Jews are non-Zionist. Jews do not speak with one voice. (**3.0-3.3, 3.7**)

- To argue that anti-Zionism *is* antisemitism is therefore nonsensical, unless you accept the preposterous idea that all the Jews who opposed Zionism were antisemites. (**3.4**)

- Today, Zionism follows the path of maximalist nationalism and settler colonialism, driven largely by right-wing politicians, rabbis and settlers pursuing an ethnoreligious, messianic and exclusionary agenda. (**3.5-3.9**) This maximalist Zionism is the only form of Zionism that has any political agency or power today. All the constructions of Zionism by those who propagate

'new antisemitism' theory are designed to spread the net of the 'new antisemitism' ever more widely in such a way as to outlaw recognition of this basic reality. To Palestinians it means the ongoing denial of their civil, political and human rights and the impossibility of achieving Palestinian national self-determination. (**3.10**)

- The Labour Party should not heed any calls to protect Zionism from strong criticism, as if it were axiomatic that such discourse constituted bigotry against Jews. (**3.10**)

- It is surely essential that the Labour Party make space for those who are victims of the Israeli government's maximalist Zionist project and for those who wish to speak out on behalf of such victims. Likewise it must make space for the voices of Jews, Muslims and Blacks who have experienced, or are involved in the struggle against, antisemitism, Islamophobia and anti-Black racism. (**3.11**)

- There *are* undoubtedly instances when a discourse critical of Israel and Zionism displays clear antisemitic characteristics. An informed application of the definition of antisemitism in **2.14-2.16**, taken together with the need to understand that questions of context as set out in **2.17-2.18** are fundamental, will help to identify when critical discourse on Israel and Zionism is clearly antisemitic. Giving any credence to the notion that anti-Zionism is the same as antisemitism, or to the 'new antisemitism' notion that Israel is 'the Jew among the nations' would be a mistake. Criticism of Israel is not inherently antisemitic. (**3.13**)

- We therefore urge the Inquiry to use the definition of antisemitism and accompanying context guidelines (**2.14-2.19**) in its deliberations about recommendations and to recommend that they be adopted by the NCC of the Labour Party for the purposes of implementing its rules on expressions of antisemitism.

- It is impossible to take the politics out of antisemitism or Zionism. Members of the Labour Party have always had serious differences over controversial political issues. The only way to deal with them is through open and robust debate. We believe that by incorporating in its recommendations the understanding of what antisemitism is today and what Zionism and anti-Zionism mean today, as set out in this submission, the Chakrabarti Inquiry will be making a major contribution to creating an open space for uncensored debate on these matters in the Party. (**3.14**)

- We also recommend that those found to have expressed antisemitic, racist or Islamophobic remarks and are disciplined should nevertheless be given the opportunity of seeing the error of their ways and learning a new way of behaving. This, after all, would be concomitant with the Labour Party's historic mission to be at the forefront of education and dialogue in society on all matters relating to combating racism. However, dwelling obsessively on the controversy over whether critical discourse on Israel and Zionism is antisemitic can only be counterproductive when traditional antisemitism in Europe is resurgent, discrimination against Muslims in the UK is rife and much of the media lead in spreading anti-immigrant and anti-foreigner sentiment. (**4.1-4.3**)

THE IJV STEERING GROUP SUBMISSION

1.1
On 1 May 2016 the Steering Group of Independent Jewish Voices (IJV) issued a statement on 'Allegations of antisemitism in the Labour Party' which expressed concern at 'the proliferation in recent weeks of sweeping allegations of pervasive antisemitism within the Party', fearing that some were 'baseless and disingenuous', some involved 'ill-chosen language' and some 'clearly crossed the line'. The statement warmly welcomed the setting up of an independent inquiry and the fact that the Party had 'demonstrated its commitment to rooting out antisemitism with the seriousness of its response'. On 17 May, we issued a press release announcing our intention to make a submission to the Chakrabarti Inquiry and stated that 'The Inquiry will perform a very valuable service if it restores some sense and balance to how we debate the issue [of antisemitism] and IJV intends to do what it can to help in this task.'

1.2
We do not make this submission as members of the Party—some of us are members, some of us are not—but as a network of progressive Jews vehemently opposed to all forms of racial and religious prejudice, and deeply concerned that the battle against antisemitism is undermined whenever opposition to Israeli government policies is automatically branded as antisemitic. Criticism of Israel is not inherently antisemitic.

1.3
It seems to us perfectly reasonable and absolutely correct that a progressive political party of principle takes strong and appropriate action against anyone who brings the party into disrepute, whether that involves corruption, covertly working for another political party whose interests are not those of the Labour Party or making antisemitic or any other kind of racist remark. However, given our status, we do not feel it to be our task to prescribe for the Labour Party what the rules and regulations on these matters should be. (However, we will make a comment on one particular proposal for a rule change that we understand has been suggested.) But any such rules on antisemitic hate speech or action, and any reform of existing rules, must be based on informed awareness of the nature of the subject matter deemed to be so offensive.

1.4
The key point here is that framing rules to deal with hate speech expressed by members in private or public does not, in and of itself, solve the problem the party was faced with as regards alleged expressions of antisemitism by certain members. Before any member can be disciplined, a judgement has to be made as to whether they have contravened the rules and regulations. It's how the party makes that judgement, how and on what grounds it decides that what an individual said, wrote, tweeted, posted on Facebook or whatever is antisemitic, that constitutes the nub of the problem. And since most of the allegations relate to instances where Israel and/or Zionism has been subjected to critical comment, that nub involves deciding on whether such critical comment on Israel and/or Zionism does or does not constitute antisemitism. The question most often used to encapsulate this is: Is anti-Zionism one and the same as antisemitism?

1.5
We therefore believe that the Inquiry must provide the Labour Party with as clear guidance as possible on how to distinguish between fair comment and antisemitic comment on Israel and Zionism, how to know where fair comment on Israel ends and antisemitism begins. This entails having a clear

understanding of two complex issues: first, what antisemitism is today and how confusion about its meaning has become so widespread; second, what is meant by the word 'Zionism' today: a crucial question given that '*anti*-Zionism' is so often the term applied to discourse about Israel that is deemed to be antisemitic.

1.6
Some critics of the party would like to give the impression that it is the Labour Party and the left in general which has difficulty in making the 'right' judgement call about this; that most reasonable people can recognise where anti-Zionism slides into antisemitism; that it is because the Labour Party, especially under its new leader Jeremy Corbyn, harbours hard core left-wing activists whose criticism of Israel is especially harsh and uncompromising, that it, uniquely, cannot understand where that severe critical discourse becomes synonymous with antisemitism. This, some critics argue, is a problem specific to the left.

1.7
This is a deeply flawed and inaccurate representation of the controversy which lies at the heart of what the Inquiry faces. So, for the Inquiry to be able to respond to the challenge now facing it, it is critical to understand that *practically no discussion today about current antisemitism, whether in political or academic circles, takes place without Israel and Zionism at its centre*.

2.0
HOW THE SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF ANTISEMITISM HAS BEEN UNDERMINED

2.1
For those who have been studying and combating antisemitism for decades, it's hard to believe that anyone born since the end of the Cold War hasn't known a time when Israel was *not* at the centre of discussions about the state of current antisemitism. But there is clear evidence that, broadly speaking, 40 years ago there was still a shared understanding of what antisemitism was. And Israel was hardly ever mentioned. True, historians differ over a precise definition—quite understandably, given that the term was coined only in the 1870s, and was then used to describe varieties of Jew-hatred going back 2,000 years. But, in practice, during the first three or four decades after the Second World War, antisemitism was commonly linked to the classical, negative, dehumanising stereotypical images of 'the Jew' forged in Christendom, adopted and adapted by antisemitic political groups in the nineteenth century and further developed by race-theorists and the Nazis in the twentieth century. That process of reformulation and revision did not end with the Holocaust. The most significant development in antisemitism after 1945 was the rapid emergence of Holocaust denial. Interestingly, while it seems some began to refer to this as the 'new antisemitism', most researchers and academics analysing and writing about the phenomenon had no difficulty in seeing it as essentially a new manifestation of consensually-defined, multifaceted antisemitism.

2.2
Today, not only has that consensus broken down and Israel is promoted as the central object of antisemitic hate. Something much more far reaching has occurred. A fundamental redefinition of antisemitism has taken place. And the term that most fully encapsulates this redefinition is 'new antisemitism', which began to come into vogue and gain traction in discussions about contemporary antisemitism from the end of the 1970s. Yet it only gained status as the dominant narrative in such discussions after the turn of the century when certain events appeared to give credence to the notion that antisemitism, mainly manifested in critical discourse on Israel and Zionism, was significantly

resurgent worldwide. These events included the collapse of the Camp David negotiations in July 2000 (presented by Israel and its most enthusiastic supporters as a Palestinian betrayal), the outbreak of the second Palestinian intifada in the autumn and the anti-Israel and anti-Jewish manifestations at the UN Conference on Racism in Durban in August-September 2001, and they were all claimed to be evidence of a deeply rooted, extreme, irrational anti-Zionism, seen by outspoken supporters of Israel as conclusive proof that the country was now incontrovertibly the 'Jew among the nations'. When the New York Twin Towers were destroyed on 11 September and conspiracy theories soon emerged laying the blame on 'Jews' and 'Zionists', this event too was used to validate the 'new antisemitism' notion. Since then, increasingly politicised arguments about the validity of the term have raged back and forth.

2.3

But in recent years we find it being used more infrequently, not because in the court of academic or popular opinion the term has been deemed inappropriate. On the contrary. 'New antisemitism theory', as it is sometimes called, has become increasingly embedded in understandings of antisemitism that essentially see anti-Zionism and antisemitism as one and the same. It has therefore become less necessary for the proponents of this concept to qualify this understanding of what antisemitism is with the word 'new'.

2.4

We see this in the seemingly unstoppable dissemination of the so-called 'working definition' of antisemitism originally posted on the website of the now defunct European Monitoring Centre on Racism, Xenophobia and Antisemitism (EUMC) in 2005, a 'definition' that fleshes out what constitutes 'new antisemitism', in other words where comment on Israel and Zionism can be deemed antisemitic, by providing five so-called examples of this kind of discourse. (The full text of the so-called 'working definition' can be accessed here.) However, it is an undisputed fact that the EUMC never formally adopted this definition, that it merely offered it for discussion, that its successor organization, the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) did not put it on its website and, furthermore, categorically stated that it was not using this definition in its work and would not be endorsing it in any way.

2.5

Nevertheless, those who have supported and drawn on this 'working definition' since its inception refuse to acknowledge that it has no official standing and they continue to propagate it, often omitting the 'working definition' qualifier and describing it erroneously as *the*, formal EU definition of antisemitism. Most recently, almost the entire 'working definition' has been subsumed into a new 'working definition' issued by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and announced in a press release issued on 27 May. (The IHRA, founded in 1998, describes itself as 'a body of 31 Member Countries, ten Observer Countries, and seven international partner organisations, with a unique mandate to focus on education, research and remembrance of the Holocaust'. The press release states that the IHRA is supported by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.)

2.6

It is therefore important to understand that the controversy over whether anti-Zionism is antisemitism is not unique to the Labour Party, or to the left in general, or to the advent of the Corbyn leadership, but dates back at least three or four decades. Widespread Western sympathy for Israel and Zionism began to erode in the wake of the 1967 war. Israel's occupation of Palestinian land and its emerging apparent reluctance to withdraw from it, in part made manifest by the growing movement to establish

Jewish settlements beyond the 1967 Green Line, provoked growing organized opposition, particularly on the part of the Palestinians, but also among left-wing groups in the West. At the same time, the adoption of UN General Assembly resolution 3379 in 1975 that said 'Zionism equals racism', largely at the instigation of the Soviet Union and supported by its client states, caused considerable disquiet in Jewish and non-Jewish pro-Israel circles.

2.7
In the UK these developments generated much discussion within the organised Jewish community, but the focus of attention was on the erosion of *liberal* support for the Jewish position and on a largely academic discussion about the relationship between anti-Zionism and antisemitism, about which there was considerable, reasoned disagreement. But in the following two decades, those discussions took on an increasingly political and polemical character as the notion of the 'new antisemitism' developed.

2.8
The 'new antisemitism' has been clearly defined by one of its earliest, leading and most assiduous proponents, the Canadian professor of law and former minister of justice in the 2003-6 Liberal government, Irwin Cotler:

> In a word, classical anti-Semitism is the discrimination against, denial of, or assault upon the rights of Jews to live as equal members of whatever society they inhabit. The new anti-Semitism involves the discrimination against, denial of, or assault upon the right of the Jewish people to live as an equal member of the family of nations, with Israel as the targeted 'collective Jew among the nations'. (*National Post*, Toronto, 9 November 2010)

2.9
As Israeli and Jewish-organized pro-Israel activity expanded and strengthened in response to the growing international criticism of Israel, the 'new antisemitism' formulation was found to be ever more useful. It provided a seemingly logical and plausible basis for branding anti-Zionism as inherently antisemitic. It strengthened the argument that the Arab world's hostility to Israel was rooted in antisemitism. And it pinned the antisemitic label also on the political left, anti-globalization movements, jihadist and Islamist movements and the Muslim world more generally, the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign, the left-liberal press, anti-racist groups—the list is long. It further provided the platform for the formulation of the EUMC 'working definition', which in its turn was in part the basis of the US state department's definition of antisemitism, now being used to stifle debate about boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) on US university campuses. And from the beginning of the twenty-first century, Israeli governments dramatically increased their involvement in gaining international acceptance of the 'new antisemitism', both by bolstering Jewish communal approval of the notion and raising it in bilateral as well as multilateral discussions with other countries. When the EUMC 'working definition' entered the public domain in 2005, the Israeli government lost no time in making use of it to deflect criticism of its behaviour.

2.10
The process by which the shared understanding of what constituted antisemitism was undermined was multifaceted. But in the UK, three crucial elements of that process were: the increasing popularity of 'new antisemitism theory'; the propagation of the EUMC 'working definition'; and a misreading of the Macpherson inquiry's definition of a racist incident as 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person', and is now the definition used by police when antisemitic

attacks are reported. This has been and still is being used by some Jewish groups as justification for claiming that Jews alone should be able to define what antisemitism is.

2.11 'New antisemitism'

There are three fundamental flaws in the concept of the 'new antisemitism'.

2.11.1

First, 'new antisemitism theory' contains the radical notion that to warrant the charge of antisemitism, it is sufficient to hold any view ranging from criticism of the policies of the current Israeli government to denial that Israel has the right to exist as a state, without having to subscribe to any of those things which historians and social scientists have traditionally regarded as making up an antisemitic view: hatred of Jews per se, belief in a worldwide Jewish conspiracy, belief that Jews generated communism and control capitalism, belief that Jews are racially inferior and so on. Given that the definition of the 'new antisemitism' is fundamentally incompatible with any definition relying on elements which historians accept make up an antisemitic view, for anyone who agrees with the definition of the 'new antisemitism' it's but a short step to conclude that it replaces all previous definitions and then further to argue that no other kind of antisemitism exists. (Given the resurgence of traditional forms of antisemitism in Europe today, such an argument is preposterous.) This is the fundamental redefinition of antisemitism referred to above.

2.11.2

Second, the formulation takes no account of the fact that the creation of the state of Israel gave Jews collective power of a kind they had not had for 2,000 years. Broadly-speaking, Jews went from being the objects of history to being history's subjects, able to act in the modern world to control the Jewish fate as never before and, by Israel's policies, to control the lives of minority groups in its midst and impact the fates of states adjacent to it. And like every other state, its policies, constitutional arrangements and human rights behaviour are therefore rightly subjected to scrutiny.

2.11.3

Third, while it sounds plausible to set up 'the individual Jew' and 'the collective Jew' as comparable categories and equate the hostility experienced by both, it is a category error to do so. A state is an amoral institutional framework for organizing the lives of all those who live within it. An individual is a sentient human being ultimately at the mercy or otherwise of the state. A state is not a human being writ large. With Palestinian Arabs making up 20 per cent of its population, and its Jewish population very diverse and multicultural, to describe the state as 'the collective Jew' is a nationalist myth. It further dehumanises the Palestinian minority, making it easy to turn legitimate criticism of the state for its treatment of them into an antisemitic assault.

2.12 The EUMC's 'draft working definition' of antisemitism

Turning to the EUMC 'working definition' (hereafter 'WD'), it is worth first pointing out that its url on the EUMC's website always carried the word 'draft'. We highlight here two of its fundamental flaws:

2.12.1

According to the definition of a definition, the 'WD' is not a definition. The Merriam Webster dictionary defines the word 'definition' to mean 'a statement expressing the essential nature of something' or 'the statement of the meaning of a word'. The EUMC document, running to 514 words, cannot be considered as expressing only the essential nature or meaning of the word 'antisemitism'.

2.12.2
The 'WD' contains 2 lists of 'contemporary examples of antisemitism'. The first list is relatively unproblematic. The second, headed 'ways in which antisemitism manifests itself with regard to the state of Israel taking into account the overall context', provides 5 examples, 4 of which are highly contentious.

2.12.2a
One is 'Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination'. But denying the right of a people to self-determination is by no means uncommon and can be justified on various non-racist grounds. Here are a few examples. First, while the notion that 'people' living in a certain region where there is or has been a common language and historical experience have the right to self-determination in the sense of deciding on how they should be democratically governed, this does not legitimise ceding such a right to 'a people' or a 'nation'. The establishment of the devolved assembly in Wales illustrates this. Second, the argument against a people's right to self-determination could be made on anti-racist grounds given that self-determination for one national group within a particular territory very often involves denying rights to other minority peoples/national groups within that territory. Finally, while states containing a number of national groups often face political difficulties arising out of the justified or unjustified claims made by those groups, the central state authority could reasonably claim that giving one such group the right to self-determination might destabilise the state, unleashing forces that are difficult if not impossible to control, and result in violence and civil war. The point is that denying a people the right to self-determination *could* be racist—one such example would be saying Jews have no such right because they are 'sub-human' or because they will use their status to 'unleash their unique evil upon the world'—but it could be many other things.

2.12.2b
The other 3 examples in the 'WD' are similar: they *could* be antisemitic, but there could be various reasons why they are not. One example *not* included is 'support for the existence of the state of Israel'—and yet there have always been antisemitic advocates of Zionism: Lord Arthur Balfour, for example, the British Foreign Secretary who announced the government's approval of a home for the Jews in Palestine in 1917 in what came to be known as the Balfour Declaration. In 1905, he strongly supported proposed legislation to restrict Jews from Eastern Europe immigrating into Britain. The fundamental problem here is that a definition of prejudice relying on a number of examples contains a fatal flaw: practically any statement about the group concerned might be construed as racist, but then again, it might not be. To proceed in this way is of no help in identifying racism or antisemitism. A definition is only useful if it provides you with the general analytical tools with which to assess a statement or an act. Simply to say x '*could*' be antisemitic is the same as saying x '*could*' not be antisemitic. You might as well say nothing at all.

2.13 The Macpherson Report's definition of a 'racist incident'

2.13.1
The report of the Macpherson inquiry into the death of the Black teenager Stephen Lawrence defined a racist incident as: 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'. This has been widely interpreted as a comprehensive definition of racism, meaning that only the group that experiences racism is entitled to define what that racism consists of. In other words, only Jews can define what antisemitism is because they are the ones who experience it. We find this argument repeated constantly by some of the Jewish organisations that claim responsibility for the

defence of the Jewish community, and by some parliamentarians who are outspoken in the issue of antisemitism. But while it would be highly unlikely that any person concerned about the problem of antisemitism, whether they are Jewish or not, would disagree with the fundamental principle that the voice of someone who believes they have been the victim of an antisemitic attack *must* be heard and *must* be paramount, there is no consensus among Jews as to the definition of an antisemitic attack and no consensus on what antisemitism is more generally.

2.13.2
Macpherson's wording on what constitutes racism is somewhat opaque. He provides a definition of 'institutional racism' and of a 'racist incident', but neither the text on a racist incident nor the report's definition of institutional racism, whether taken singly or in tandem, constitutes a comprehensive definition of racism. What is clear is that he never intended to decree that every minority group should be given exclusive rights to define what constitutes racism and prejudice against it. While the police were directed to record the incident as racist if the victim said it was, if the perpetrator was prosecuted and brought to trial, it was up to the court to decide whether or not the incident was racist.

2.13.3
Macpherson simply failed to provide a comprehensive definition of racism. He was principally concerned to address the problem of racist attitudes among the police, which made them ignore by default the claims by victims of racist incidents that racism was the motive. The onus was placed on the police to record the testimony of the victim, not to make a conscious or unconscious judgement about it. The decision as to whether it was a racist incident or not was always going to be determined in law.

2.14 A workable definition of antisemitism
It's not as if there are no perfectly serviceable definitions of antisemitism that would help in identifying instances where critical discourse about Israel and Zionism is clearly antisemitic. One such is provided by the work of the Oxford University academic Dr Brian Klug, a leading expert on modern uses and abuses of the term antisemitism. Klug emphasises that, to the antisemite, 'the Jew' is 'not a *real* Jew at all' and therefore, as in his following short definition, should always appear enclosed in quote marks: 'At the heart of antisemitism is the negative stereotype of "the Jew": sinister, cunning, parasitic, money-grubbing, mysteriously powerful, and so on. Antisemitism consists in projecting this figure onto individual Jews, Jewish groups and Jewish institutions.' He fleshes out this imagined 'Jew' as the antisemite would see him:

> The Jew belongs to a sinister people set apart from all others, not merely by its customs but by a collective character: arrogant yet obsequious; legalistic yet corrupt; flamboyant yet secretive. Always looking to turn a profit, Jews are as ruthless as they are tricky. Loyal only to their own, wherever they go they form a state within a state, preying upon the societies in whose midst they dwell. Their hidden hand controls the banks, the markets and the media. And when revolutions occur or nations go to war, it's the Jews—cohesive, powerful, clever and stubborn—who invariably pull the strings and reap the rewards.

2.15
In his chapter ''Interrogating "new antisemitism"' in the 2014 collection *Race, Culture and Difference in the Study of Antisemitism and Islamophobia*, edited by Nasar Meer, Klug then extends the definition to cover discourse about Israel and Zionism by arguing that if a text projects the figure of 'the Jew' directly or indirectly onto Israel, for the reason that Israel is a Jewish state, or onto

Zionism, for the reason that Zionism is a Jewish movement, or onto Jews, individually or collectively, in association with either Israel or Zionism, then that text is antisemitic.

2.16
Klug acknowledges that applying these definitions to real phenomena is by no means always straightforward. But that does not justify adopting definitions of antisemitism which are cut adrift from the classical antisemitic tropes that were, and still have to be, essential to any consensus definition of antisemitism.

2.17
In and of itself, no definition can provide all the tools necessary in order to be able to make a judgement about the alleged antisemitic nature of a written text, spoken words or some other kind of manifestation. The late Professor Herbert Strauss, a leading expert on antisemitism who founded the respected Antisemitism Research Centre at the Berlin Technical University in 1980, often said: 'With antisemitism, context is everything'. Alongside the guidance provided by any definition, a range of questions need to be addressed. What is the background of the person involved? Do they have any record of making or repeating antisemitic remarks? Might they be ignorant of the implications of a certain kind of vocabulary or particular word? What was their intention in using the language that they used? What are the circumstances in which they wrote or said or retweeted the words or text in question? Have they been associated with any explicitly antisemitic group? If another person was a direct or indirect target of an alleged expression of antisemitism, what was their experience? This is not an exhaustive list.

2.18
It would be far simpler if making judgements about antisemitism was an exact science. It isn't. Just as a judgement about the significance of antisemitism in any country can very rarely be based on any single piece of evidence, so too determining whether an individual is expressing antisemitic remarks or can be said to *be* antisemitic, can very rarely be based solely on the content of what they had said or written. This may not make the Labour Party's task any easier, but understanding the significance of context is fundamental.

2.19
We urge the Inquiry to use this definition of antisemitism in its deliberations about recommendations and to recommend that it be adopted by the NCC of the Labour Party for the purposes of implementing its rules on expressions of antisemitism. We further urge that due consideration be given to context in any judgements made about individuals alleged to have made antisemitic remarks.

3.0
THE COMPLEXITY OF ZIONISM AND ANTI-ZIONISM

3.1
Both critics of Zionism—or some who style themselves anti-Zionists—and those who call themselves Zionists—or simply support Zionism—can on occasion be reductionist. For such critics and anti-Zionists a simple definition makes it easier to mount an all-encompassing attack on Zionism. For some Zionists and their supporters a simple definition makes it easier to defend Zionism and/or to label criticism of it as antisemitic. Here are examples of each kind of definition:

3.1.1
In a recent interview, the veteran Israeli anti-Zionist and Marxist, Moshé Machover, said: 'in its essence [Zionism] is a political project, the project of colonising Palestine by Jews and turning it into a nation-state with an overwhelming Jewish majority.'

3.1.2
The Jewish Labour Movement's proposal to strengthen the Labour Party's rules in order to make it easier to discipline members who engage in antisemitism, Islamophobia, and racism, states: 'Zionism is no single concept other than the basic expression of the national identity of the Jewish people, a right to which all people are entitled.'

3.1.3
While it would be wrong to say that these definitions are entirely incorrect, as formulated they oversimplify, exclude any other kind of definition and are clearly incompatible. But remove 'in its essence' from 3.1.1 and 'no single concept other than' from 3.1.2 and it would be possible to argue that both definitions are partially correct, and not entirely incompatible when seen in the context of the complex history of Zionism. And yet the two sources, both Jewish of course, are implacable foes of each other, but also both, in some sense, belong to the Jewish left.

3.2
One of the leading pro-Zionist historians of Zionism, Gideon Shimoni, when considering the origins of the Zionist idea and its transformation into a political movement by Theodor Herzl at the end of the nineteenth century in *Zionism in Transition* (1980), edited by Moshe Davis, writes that 'The fundamental idea of Zionism may be stated thus: return of Jews to Zion and restoration of Zion as a homeland for the Jews.' ('Zion' symbolises the 'terrestrial land of Israel'.) And what is undeniable is that the first anti-Zionists were Jews. Religiously orthodox Jews, especially those living in Eastern Europe or the Eastern European Jews who had migrated to countries like Germany, Britain and the USA, opposed it—on religious grounds: Zionism was fundamentally secular. The assimilated Jews of the West, especially those who were adherents of Reform Judaism also opposed it—on the grounds that it sought to impose on them a dual loyalty, flatly undermining their efforts to assimilate and be seen as fully equal members of the societies and nations in which they lived and with which they predominantly identified.

3.3
For many decades Zionism was supported by a small minority of Jews. It only gained the support of the majority of Jews after the Holocaust and in the run-up to the founding of the state of Israel. Even then, it took Reform Jews some years before, as a movement, they fully relinquished their anti-Zionism.

3.4
For those who argue that anti-Zionism *is* antisemitism, the above potted but accurate history of Jewish opposition to the aim of promoting the return of Jews to their 'ancestral homeland', which by the late 1930s had become the aim of establishing a Jewish state, constitutes a flat contradiction—unless you accept the preposterous idea that all the Jews who opposed Zionism were antisemites.

3.5
Some might modify their contention that anti-Zionism *is* antisemitism by saying that to oppose Zionism before 1948 was acceptable because, however flimsy by 1939, alternative forms of Jewish

existence in Europe were possible. But they would then argue that to deny the legitimacy of the Jewish state, given the horrors of the Shoah and the fact that Israel actually exists, is indeed antisemitic since it seems to license a second such genocidal catastrophe which would result from the deprivation of Jewish rights and the expulsion of Jews from Israel-Palestine. But this argument too is very hard to sustain.

3.5.1
First, it does not automatically follow that denial of the legitimacy of the state means denying Jews their civil and human rights. On the contrary. Those who question Israel's legitimacy often then argue that a single secular democratic state should be created in its stead so that the rights of all—Jews, Palestinians and any other groups in Israel-Palestine—can be enshrined in law and made real. Both Jews and Palestinians would give up any claims to exclusive national rights, but would not have to give up rights to peaceful and civic forms of national self-expression. A Zionist may advance reasoned arguments against the viability of such a proposal, but there would be no a priori grounds for saying it was antisemitic.

3.5.2
Second, religious Jewish opposition to political Zionism and to the notion that Israel has any justified claim to specific Jewish legitimacy as a state remains a potent force, although these days it is confined to the strictly orthodox (or ultra-orthodox) Jews. We are not here referring simply to the Neturei Karta, the outspoken, not to say vociferous, but very small Jewish sect, numbering perhaps 5,000, who openly proclaim their anti-Zionism and seek the dismantlement of the Jewish state. But rather to the increasingly significant body of strictly orthodox Jews living in Israel, the United States, Britain and elsewhere who number around 1.3 to 1.5 million and make up approximately 10 per cent of the world Jewish population of some 14 million. They have largely accommodated themselves to the existence of Israel and, especially those in Israel, have exploited the existence of the state to enable themselves to perpetuate and enlarge their numbers and strengthen their communities. Their anti-Zionism is not expressed in any political form, but they fundamentally reject the notion that Israel is a Jewish state and have no ideological affinity with the secular Zionist movement.

3.5.3
Third, while not in the majority or anything like it among Jewish populations around the world, anti-Zionist secular and left-wing Jews, and members of Reform or Liberal Jewish congregations who, to varying degrees and in varying ways, question Israel's legitimacy, can be numbered in their tens of thousands, possibly even hundreds of thousands. So again, unless you accept the absurd idea that all of these Jews are antisemites, this Jewish opposition to Zionism gives the lie to the equation between anti-Zionism and antisemitism.

3.6
In any event, while it was possible in the early days of the Zionist movement to see anti-Zionism as meaning essentially one thing, as Zionism became more complex, with the development of conflicting strands, anti-Zionism could no longer be defined in such an uncomplicated way. So today, anti-Zionism could mean opposition to Zionism as the exclusive nationalism in Israel-Palestine, but the acceptance of some form of it in the framework of a bi-national state. It could mean rejection of the Zionism that drives settlement and annexationist activity in the West Bank, but acceptance, however reluctant, of the Zionist status quo in pre-1967 Israel. It might be another way of saying that Zionism will never have legitimacy unless and until it fully abides by all UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions relating to Palestinian refugees, human rights and the occupation of Palestinian

land. Or it might indeed mean that Israel has no legitimacy as a Zionist-Jewish state and must be subsumed into a single, secular democratic state.

3.7

What is easy to forget, given the rigidly binary discourse that insists on dividing up the world into 'Zionist' or 'anti-Zionist', 'antisemite' or 'anti-antisemite', is the fact that reality is far more complicated. There are, for example, hundreds of thousands, if not a million or two, of Jews who are non-Zionist, or who simply don't categorise themselves in relation to words like 'Zionist' or 'Zionism', or who have some attachment to Israel but see it as devoid of any political or nationalist content. A similar observation can be made about most general populations in Western countries, where large swathes of people have no opinion whatsoever on Israel, Palestine, Zionism, or anti-Zionism, and whose knowledge of Jews is fundamentally characterised by ignorance. Ignorance may lead to negative stereotyping of the 'other', but it may also manifest itself as benign indifference. In our understandable determination to root out any signs of racist, antisemitic or Islamophobic manifestations, we may all too easily deny to general populations, Jews, or any other minority groups, the complexity of their humanity and the diversity of their inter-group relations.

3.8

Mainstream orthodox Jews, those represented in part in the UK by Ephraim Mirvis, the Chief Rabbi of the United Synagogue denomination (which encompasses less than 50 per cent of Jewish households affiliated to a synagogue), are now among some of the staunchest defenders of Israel and Zionism. While there was always a sector of moderate orthodoxy that embraced political Zionism, it was only after 1967, when some orthodox Jews saw the capture of Palestinian land—what the orthodox call by the biblical names of Judea and Samaria—as the fulfilment of the messianic promise of imminent Jewish redemption, that the mainstream orthodox community across all Jewish communities became enthusiastic Zionists. This belated 'conversion' stands in stark contrast and contradiction to Rabbi Mirvis's recent extraordinary claim (*Daily Telegraph*, 2 May 2016) that 'Zionism is a belief in the right to Jewish self-determination in a land that has been at the centre of the Jewish world for more than 3,000 years. One can no more separate it from Judaism than separate the City of London from Great Britain.' First, a people's right to national self-determination is a secular concept that post-dates the Enlightenment and was only codified in the twentieth century. Second, while political Zionism did not deny the significance of the connection between Judaism and Zion, for Judaism, by contrast, that connection had nothing to do with the actual problems of Jewish existence—such as anti-Jewish hostility, where Jews should settle, political activity or self-help—and everything to do with the cosmic dispensation of God, the relationship between God and the Jews, as well as exegetical or mystical explorations into the manifestations of God's will or acts of piety and penitence.

3.9

It should be clear by now that what those who speak in defence of Zionism mean by it varies greatly. Their definitions might be simplistic, as in 'support for the existence of the Jewish state of Israel'. They might emphasise its political and ideological sub-movements, each signified by a prefix to the word Zionism: labour-, socialist-, revisionist-, religious-, cultural-, liberal- etc. They might stress its quest for freedom: 'the national liberation movement of the Jewish people'. Or prioritise the connection with the Jewish diaspora: 'the principle that the state of Israel belongs not only to its citizens but to the entire Jewish people.' Now while there may be some partial historical relevance to some of these definitions, and others may reflect what many Jews feel about their connection to Israel, they ignore Zionism's actual historical trajectory and what it has become. In reality, one form of

Zionism triumphed, marginalising all others: the political Zionism promoted by David Ben Gurion (and many other Zionist leaders), Israel's first prime minister, who struggled to create a sovereign Jewish state in Palestine. But once this was achieved, Zionism did not stop there and under the mostly right-wing governments that have been in power since 1978, creating a sovereign Jewish state turned out to be—some would argue that it always was—an ongoing project, taking on a religious, messianic and increasingly open right-wing, ethnocentric character that required the continuous dispossession of the indigenous inhabitants, the Palestinians, both within the pre-1967 borders and in the occupied Palestinian territories. (To say this does not mean denying that there were also indigenous Jews in Palestine, some of whose presence went back centuries, well before the advent of Zionism in the late nineteenth century.) Whether the path of maximalist nationalism and settler colonialism this Zionism has taken was inevitable from the beginning is open to discussion, though both aspects of Zionism were present from the inception of the modern Zionist movement.

3.10
But the key point here is that this maximalist Zionism is the only form of Zionism that has any political agency or power today. As even the prominent liberal Zionist Peter Beinart, former editor of the *New Republic*, acknowledges, bigotry is what characterises today's Zionism: it denies Palestinians the right to vote, it denies them the right to live under the same law as Jews, it strives for permanent control over them and opposes Palestinian statehood or any kind of genuine Palestinian national self-determination. Deflecting perfectly legitimate criticism of and vociferous opposition to this by labelling it 'antisemitism' simply won't wash.

3.11
It would therefore be entirely wrong for the Labour Party to heed any calls to protect Zionism from strong criticism, as if it were axiomatic that such discourse constituted bigotry against Jews. Imagine for a moment that you were a member of the Labour Party of Palestinian origin, with personal or family experience of what Peter Beinart describes, of what Israeli human rights organisations chronicle and monitor, of what a number of prominent Israeli journalists write about week after week. You are appalled at the idea that antisemitic comments are being made on social media by some members of the Party, especially since some of these comments purport to support the Palestinian cause by demonising Jews, and you know full well that this is not only wrong, it is also fundamentally counterproductive for the Palestinian struggle. And yet when you want to raise for discussion what policy the Party will adopt to help bring an end to the iniquity experienced by the Palestinians as a result of the pursuit of today's Israeli government policies and the version of Zionism they purport to enact, if you are told that this is not allowed because questioning Zionism is anti-Jewish bigotry, will you seriously continue to think that you have a place in this Party?

3.12
It is surely essential that the Labour Party make space for those who are victims of the maximalist Zionist project of the Israeli government and for those who wish to speak out on behalf of such victims. Just as it must make space for the voices of Jews who have experienced, or are involved in the struggle against, antisemitism, the voices of Muslims who have experienced, or are involved in the struggle against Islamophobia, the voices of Blacks who have experienced, or are involved in the struggle against anti-Black racism—indeed all such victims and fighters against all forms of prejudice, discrimination, racist incitement, homophobia and so on.

3.13

There *are* undoubtedly instances when a discourse critical of Israel and Zionism displays clear antisemitic characteristics. But we believe that an informed and flexible application of the definition of antisemitism in 2.14 and 2.15 above, and consideration of the contextual factors outlined in 2.17 and 2.18, will be sufficient to identify such instances involving Party members. Giving any credence to the notion that ant-Zionism is the same as antisemitism, or to the 'new antisemitism' notion that Israel is the 'the Jew among the nations' would be a mistake.

3.14

Finally, it is important to remember that we cannot take the politics out of antisemitism or Zionism. They cannot be reduced to fixed social phenomena immune to controversy and dispute. Some may wish that they could be de-politicised, but this would not only be false, it would also preclude the discussion of the kind of political activity associated with combating antisemitism, defending liberal forms of Zionism or criticising maximalist forms of Zionism. Members of the Labour Party have always had differences over political issues, and some of those differences have been very serious. The only way to deal with them is through open and robust debate. The same therefore needs to apply to issues of antisemitism, racism and Islamophobia. And also to broader issues on which not all people on the left agree, such as globalization, neoliberalism, nationalism (including Zionism, whether in its liberal formulations or its dominant aggressive and maximalist form). We believe that by incorporating in its recommendations the understanding of what antisemitism is today and what Zionism and anti-Zionism mean today, as set out in this submission, the Chakrabarti Inquiry will be making a major contribution to creating an open space for uncensored debate on these matters in the Party.

4.0

PLACING THE PARTY AT THE FOREFRONT OF EDUCATION AND DIALOGUE ON RACISM

4.1

We believe it is entirely appropriate for the Labour Party to review its rules regarding internal procedures to deal with members who make antisemitic or any other kind of racist remarks. Nevertheless, there should be some logic and symmetry regarding the disciplinary procedures, which makes us especially wary of the proposal coming from some quarters that anyone found guilty of expressing antisemitism should be banned for life from membership of the Party. We feel it appropriate for us to comment on this because it goes to the heart of what we have explained above is the fundamental problem—understanding what antisemitism is today.

4.2

To ban someone for life for expressing antisemitic remarks is to assume that racism is an incurable disease, or that the person expressing antisemitic views is innately evil and incapable of reform. While it is certainly true that for some their racism is ingrained and they will never change their views—just as some common criminals are incapable of breaking the cycle of a life of crime—there should at least be a presumption that a person *can* change, that they can see the error of their ways and learn a new way of behaving.

4.3

We believe that the Labour Party should be at the forefront of education and dialogue in society on all matters relating to combating racism. Taking antisemitism seriously, especially in light of the rising tide of far-right populism in Europe, the resurgence of traditionally antisemitic political parties such as Jobbik in Hungary and Golden Dawn in Greece, and the anti-immigrant and anti-foreigner sentiment spread by much of the media—which is largely directed at Muslim migrants, but so easily slides into negative stereotyping of traditional others such as Jews and has for many years been directing its fire at the Roma—is very welcome. But we hope that the Inquiry's additional focus on 'other forms of racism including Islamophobia' will be just as serious, especially given the strength of structural and institutional racism that results in high levels of discrimination and deprivation among Black people, other ethnic minority groups and Muslims.
