

## Beyond the Dichotomy: Disentangling Antisemitism and Anti-Zionism

Diaspora Alliance responds to Labour Friends of Israel's pamphlet, urging MPs to promote values of collective liberation and equality in the fight against antisemitism.

We are living in a time of deep crisis in Israel/Palestine. Threats to the judiciary have provoked widespread unrest; the harshening undemocratic reality has been deemed [apartheid by Israeli human rights organisations, including B'Tselem and Yesh Din](#); and Palestinians are suffering their deadliest year in decades – since the start of 2023, [Israeli forces have killed close to 200 Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, including more than two dozen children](#). **Amid these developments, we believe that Labour Friends of Israel's recent pamphlet, 'Antisemitic Anti-Zionism' functions as an out-of-touch distraction at best, and a cover for an oppressive reality at worst.**

The current moment requires us to mobilise support for real democracy and justice in Israel/Palestine - indeed, in recent days [over 1000 Jewish academics and public figures have signed an open letter](#) calling for meaningful political leadership from the international community. By contrast, the LFI pamphlet places an obstacle in the way of these efforts by changing the subject to antisemitism and offering no reflections at all on the current situation. **The ongoing entrenchment of the occupation and deepening repression demand political leadership from the international community – and not thinly-veiled rhetorical attacks on those trying to resist this violation of human rights and international law.**

The pamphlet argues that “antizionism” – which it distinguishes from anti-Zionism, defined as opposition to Zionism as a political movement – is an antisemitic worldview that originated in the USSR, under which Israel/Zionism is seen as ultimately responsible for the world's ills. Despite the distinction the paper makes between “antizionism” and anti-Zionism, the discussion throughout conflates the two positions and, in so doing, asserts that any and all opposition to Zionism which goes beyond criticising ‘Israeli culture and policy’ is antisemitic. The pamphlet seeks to dissuade its readers from engaging with Zionism as it *is*, and from understanding anti-Zionism – which is opposed to the political program pursued in the name of Zionism – as legitimate. In so doing, **it gives every encouragement to the anti-democratic and increasingly authoritarian Israeli government.**

LFI's pamphlet tries to root antizionism in Soviet, as opposed to Palestinian experience, and in so doing crucially fails to acknowledge that the contemporary anti-Zionist movement is led by Palestinians, who oppose the ideology which drives the denial of their rights and their continued dispossession and oppression by the Israeli state. Far from engaging with Zionism from the perspective of those who are most materially affected by it, LFI's pamphlet erases Palestinians all together. LFI's misrepresentation of anti-Zionism serves to silence Palestinian lived experiences, delegitimise any expression of Palestinian national identity, and prescribe any expression of support for Palestinian liberation as a result. **This not only**

**dehumanises Palestinians by rendering their opposition to their own oppression as irrational bigotry, but also ostracises those Jews who, in solidarity with Palestinians, identify as anti- or non-Zionist.**

Antisemitism is a pernicious phenomenon that frequently drives conspiracy theories and which can take root across the political spectrum. It must be robustly addressed and educated on as part of a wider commitment to anti-racism, both in our political parties and in wider society. LFI's pamphlet incorrectly renders attempts to hold Israel accountable for its violations of international law and human rights as being inherently antisemitic or motivated by antisemitism. **Far from eliminating antisemitism, this approach generates confusion about what antisemitism is (and what it is not), making it harder to identify and combat when it arises, and silences Palestinian human rights advocacy in the process.**

Instrumentalising antisemitism in this way — particularly to attack Palestine advocacy — creates scepticism as to whether antisemitism is a real problem or just a political cudgel, and thus undermines the fight against antisemitism. This serves only to diminish Jewish safety. **We will only ever truly dismantle antisemitism by working alongside other marginalised groups, including Palestinians fighting for their freedom and human rights. Palestinian freedom and Jewish safety are not mutually exclusive goals; rather, they are intertwined, and part of a broader struggle for collective liberation.**

### **About Diaspora Alliance**

Diaspora Alliance is a Jewish-led, international organisation that builds solidarity and coalitions with other diasporic and minority communities with whom we share common values and face overlapping threats. We are committed to explaining and opposing antisemitism and linking and collaborating with other groups confronting racism, authoritarianism, and ethnonationalism. We likewise oppose any instrumentalisation of antisemitism which creates confusion and mistrust, disrupts collaboration between groups, and weakens global solidarity with struggles for human rights, not least in relation to Palestine. We are currently operating in the US, the UK, and Germany.

### **Contact:**

[info@diasporaalliance.co](mailto:info@diasporaalliance.co)

[www.diasporaalliance.co](http://www.diasporaalliance.co)