

# 11. Empathy, holocaust memory, and the Palestine–Israel conflict in British universities

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## 11.1 FREUD AND JEWISH HISTORICAL PURPOSE

It is always possible to bind together a considerable number of people in love, so long as there are other people left over to receive the manifestations of their aggressiveness ... In this respect the Jewish people, scattered everywhere, have rendered most useful services to the civilizations of the countries that have been their hosts; but unfortunately all the massacres of the Jews in the Middle Ages did not suffice to make that period more peaceful and secure for their Christian fellows. (Freud [1930] 1985, pp. 302–303, 305)

These lines are from Sigmund Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents*, published in Vienna in 1930. We can surmise from their tone that at that time, despite the rising popularity of Nazism in neighbouring Germany, Freud was not seriously worried about the Jewish future. Antisemitism, he is suggesting here, served an important purpose. It was a key mechanism of what he calls in *Civilization and its Discontents* the 'cultural super-ego': the taming and channelling of our aggressive instincts so that they do not disrupt the social order.

The ethical and cultural demands made on us by Western civilization, such as the Christian exhortation to 'love thy neighbour', were, Freud thought, psychically impossible. An approximation of this Christian ideal could be achieved, though, by directing aggressive feelings towards those not considered as neighbours, such as Jews. This was Freud's explanation for antisemitism, which in 1930 he seemed to consider inevitable, and even a suitable subject for some darkly ironic humour. As a cultural lightning-rod, the repeated massacres of medieval Jews, he noted, had 'unfortunately ... not suffice[d]' to exhaust the violent urges of the Christian majority; speculatively suggesting that a few more massacres might conceivably have done the trick.

As the 1930s progressed, Freud thought a lot more about the social and psychological significance of Jewish difference. In his *Moses and Monotheism*

(Freud [1938] 1985), completed in exile in London following the Anschluss, he put forward his final thoughts on this, which are historically very far-fetched, but theologically and politically extremely penetrating. Developing a theory that he had first advanced over two decades earlier in his *Totem and Taboo*, 1913, he argued that the psychological contortion at the heart of Christianity was that it offered an uneasy ritual atonement for humanity's first transgressive trauma: the killing of the father by the 'primal horde' (Freud [1938] 1985, pp. 324–326).

This act was originally committed, Freud speculated, by the Jews themselves, who had found the abstract monotheism insisted upon by Moses too demanding. In order to liberate themselves from these demands, they joined together to kill Moses, and then repressed the memory of their collective crime. They then adopted from another tribe the less intellectually exacting worship of a volcano God named Yahweh. Much later, however, they were struck with a sense of guilt. This is the Freudian 'return of the repressed', which was addressed through the emergence of Christianity. In its central narrative of Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection, Christian worship restaged and atoned for this primal killing. Behind the accusation repeatedly levelled at Jews – 'You killed our God!' – there lay, Freud suggested, a more psychologically elaborate charge: 'You will not *admit* that you murdered God ... We [that is, us Christians] did the same thing, to be sure, but we have *admitted* it and since then we have been absolved' (Freud [1938] 1985, pp. 333–334).

Freud observed, with none of his earlier ironic humour, that in rejecting the ritualized consolation offered by Christianity the Jews were left in an extremely vulnerable position: having 'taken a tragic load of guilt on themselves; they have been made to pay heavy penance for it' (Freud [1938] 1985, p. 386). He nonetheless clearly regarded Judaism as the superior religion. Rather than accepting Christianity's comforting illusions, Jews continued to believe, according to Freud, that they were God's favourite children. This provoked deep envy and resentment in others, but also spurred their impressive worldly achievements. Despite his own atheism, Freud perceived – and to some extent seemed to share – a sense of Jewish collective self-confidence, which he understood as ultimately derived from features of Judaism that were inextricable from those that gave rise to antisemitic hostility and hatred.

The idea of Jewish historical purpose is deeply rooted in both Judaism and Christianity, and is closely associated with the notion of Jews as God's 'chosen people'. In the Christian tradition, Jews are considered to retain this status despite their failure to recognize Jesus, and to be destined, after much suffering in punishment for that error, to play a key role in the coming of the future messianic age. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Jewish suffering was frequently associated, by both Jews and non-Jews, in many different ways, with the special role or purpose of Jews in human history and

destiny. The leading German Jewish thinker Franz Rosenzweig, for example, in his cryptic theological masterpiece *The Star of Redemption*, 1921, followed the long-standing Jewish tradition of interpreting Isaiah's 'suffering servant' as a reference to the Jewish people as a whole. The Jews, according to this interpretation, are destined to be persecuted by others until the messianic tree, of which they are the root, finally bears fruit. Freud's own arguments bore some similarity to this, with the insights of psychoanalysis standing as his secularized version of the Jews' messianic gift to the world. Jews had retained and developed their clear-mindedness, according to his account, not simply despite their persecution and suffering, but in an important sense because of it (Sutcliffe 2020, pp. 229–234).

## 11.2 JEWISH HISTORY AND THE RISE OF HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

The mass murder of millions of Jews by the Nazis transformed the place of antisemitism in European and global consciousness. Before the Second World War, many widely respected thinkers, both Jewish and non-Jewish, regarded antisemitism as an inescapable phenomenon, understandable as a response to the economic success of many (though by no means all) Jews, and in some way also meaningfully related to the fundamental unfolding of human history. The enormity of the Holocaust seemed to make this attitude towards Jewish suffering untenable, and perhaps even obscene. This prompted a profound rethinking of the relationship between the persecution of Jews and the wider significance and lessons of Jewish history.

The postwar recoil from traditional conceptions of Jewish world-historical purpose was heightened by the fact that the Holocaust was itself in no small measure driven by an inverted version of them. 'Redemptive antisemitism', as the historian Saul Friedländer termed it in 1997, was a cornerstone of Nazi ideology. The Nazis' obsessive, relentless, and at the end of the war manifestly militarily counterproductive implementation of the Holocaust can only be adequately explained, he convincingly argued, by the quasi-messianic dimension of their antisemitism. The eradication of Jews, they believed, would herald a new dawn of Aryan racial purity, in which Germans would conclusively replace Jews as the 'chosen' people at the vanguard of history (Friedländer 1997, pp. 73–122).

This grotesque reworking of one of the most deep-seated lineages of Judaeo-Christian theology was barely graspable amid the shocked aftermath of the Nazi era. The warped obsessiveness of Nazi antisemitism, though, was glaringly evident. The most widespread initial response to this was to turn away from anything that seemed tarnished by proximity to this obsession. This included close interest in the Holocaust itself. In the immediate postwar

years, across the world, Jewish suffering, the idea of Jewish purpose, and the magnitude and mechanics of the Nazi slaughter, were all largely shrouded in numbed silence.

From the early 1960s, however, the Holocaust emerged as a focus of public attention and increasingly as a touchstone of historical meaning. The initial catalyst for this change was the trial, in Jerusalem in 1961, of one of the leading Nazi overseers of the extermination, Adolf Eichmann. The then Israeli Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, staged this trial at least as much for international as for domestic audiences, seeking to connect the Holocaust to the danger posed to Israel by the Arab nations that surrounded it (Zertal 2005, pp. 91–127). In the same year, the Israeli Holocaust institution Yad Vashem opened in Jerusalem.

No longer associated with shame or repressed pain as it was in the 1950s, the Holocaust has since then become the linchpin of the Jewish state's self-presentation in global politics. The Nazi genocide has come to be widely understood as the culmination of a relentless and in essence unchanging history of European antisemitism (Wistrich 1992; Feldman 2018). Memorialized in those terms at Yad Vashem, to which almost all visiting dignitaries are brought, it underwrites expectations of empathy with Israel's sense of continued existential vulnerability. Jewish suffering has thus been restored to the centre of a renewed account of Jewish world-historical purpose. On this account the achievements of the state of Israel stand as the most compelling example of the resilience and tenacity of the Jews in the face of their suffering. The survival and protection of the Jewish state has also become almost inextricably bound up with opposition to antisemitism (a charge often levelled at critics of Israel, and now associated more with Islam than with Christianity).

This linkage fed into the rise, in Western public culture and especially in the area of Holocaust education, of what can aptly be described as 'redemptive anti-antisemitism'. Learning about the Holocaust is of unique moral value, educators in recent decades have widely argued, because confronting antisemitism in its most murderous form is a means of fortifying students' opposition to all forms of hatred and prejudice. For Jews, diffusing the lessons of the Holocaust – as historical educators and, for Holocaust survivors, as unique historical witnesses – has become a renewed form of mission to others (Sutcliffe 2022).

### 11.3 EMPATHY, ANTI-ANTISEMITISM, AND THE PALESTINE–ISRAEL CONFLICT

The breakthrough decade for Holocaust education was the 1990s. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, key sites such as Auschwitz, swiftly reinterpreted under new post-Communist governments, became vastly more accessible to

Western visitors. A surge of awareness that the youngest Holocaust survivors were now entering old age spurred scholarly and community drives to collect, record, and disseminate their testimonies. The optimistic political mood of the decade, most importantly, imbued a sense of hopefulness into the project of learning from the horrors of the past, and from the Holocaust in particular. The end of Apartheid in South Africa – and the Oslo Peace Process Accords signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1993 and 1995 – raised hopes that, after the end of communism, these bitter antagonisms inherited from the Cold War world might also be on the brink of resolution.

The 1990s were also an extremely publicly emotional decade, in which it was widely hoped that the power of empathy might offer a pathway towards social and political healing. Expressions of feeling filled the ideological vacuum that was created by the sudden end of the Cold War. One wellspring of this was a new style of public conversation that had recently emerged on American daytime television: the confessional talk show, popularized from 1986 by Oprah Winfrey. Oprah's therapeutic ethic, emphasizing healing through the empathetic sharing of suffering, in the 1990s diffused more broadly across the West (Illouz 2003, pp. 47–76). It also influenced the communicative style of political leaders such as Bill Clinton and Tony Blair.

The surge of attention to the Holocaust in the 1990s was shaped by this cultural mood. The classroom presentation of the Nazi genocide as a key lesson in civic empathy, and as a gateway to broader anti-racist consciousness-raising, first emerged among progressive American educators in the 1970s, but did not become mainstream until the 1990s, when Holocaust education expanded very rapidly across the West.

Holocaust 'memorial museums' around the world today infuse the historical presentation of the Nazi genocide with quasi-religious meaning. As the scholar Avril Alba aptly states, these sites function as a new form of 'sacred secular space' in which Jewish suffering is 'offered up as a redemptive message to the world' (Alba 2015a, 192). The experience of visiting Auschwitz and other extermination camps, particularly on educational youth trips, has widely assumed the redemptive religious aura of a pilgrimage. These trips strongly emphasize imaginative empathy with the Holocaust's victims. They are underpinned by the belief that these sites in some sense enable their visitors to 'bear witness' to the suffering that took place there. The UK government-sponsored 'Lessons from Auschwitz' programme, for example, presents itself as redemptively building bridges from Holocaust memory and anti-antisemitism to the fortification of opposition to all forms of prejudice and hatred (Alba 2015b; Tollerton 2020, pp. 156–173).

Since the early years of the new millennium, though, the wider political context surrounding the relationship of antisemitism to other forms of hatred and prejudice has become increasingly turbulent. With the attacks of 11

September 2001, the irenic optimism of the 1990s came to an abrupt halt. Fear of Islam and Muslims surged across the West. The bridge-building and political healing through empathy in which Holocaust educators and politicians in the 1990s had invested such high hopes was, it swiftly became clear, a lot more complicated than they had imagined.

After 9/11, violence and death in Israel and Palestine became, in the eyes of many, the most vivid front line of the new ‘war on terror’. The sharing of suffering became, in this context, a terrain not of healing but of bitter contestation. Whose suffering was more deserving of empathy: the Israelis’, or the Palestinians’? Images of suicide-bombed Israeli cafés and buses vied for international media attention and public sympathy, in the spring of 2002, against images of the rubble of Jenin and other Palestinian settlements assaulted by Israeli forces (Stein 2005). These tussles were renewed in the wake of the Israeli ground assault in the Gaza Strip at the start of 2009.

#### 11.4 GAZA (AGAIN) AND EMPATHY ON CAMPUS

Fifteen years later – in 2024 – Gaza is once again at the front of our minds. Once again, a war there, over land, rights, and lives, has translated into a discursive war here over empathy. Once again, those who align with either side accuse the opposing camp of a shocking lack of empathy with the human suffering on their side.

Emotional partisanship is not in itself something that should surprise or shock us. Empathy is inevitably selective. We simply cannot feel empathy towards everybody, all the time. David Hume – the eighteenth-century Scottish philosopher who was, among other things, the first major theorist of empathy (or, as it was called then, ‘sympathy’) – thought that human closeness and similarity were the key factors in determining the strength of our fellow-feeling for others. Many other thinkers on the topic over the past three centuries have agreed with him (Sutcliffe 2023).

In response to the events since 7 October 2023, most of us would probably expect, for example, a synagogue-attending Jew with family in Israel to feel instinctive empathy first of all for the civilian victims of the Hamas attacks on that day. From a Palestinian with relatives in Gaza, one would expect a different instinctual empathetic focus. These responses are heightened by history. Feelings of collective vulnerability, for many Jews and Palestinians, are rooted in their respective historical calamities in the 1940s: the Holocaust and the Nakba (Bashir and Goldberg 2019).

It has been widely reported that since 7 October there has been a widespread feeling among Jews in Israel and around much of the West of disappointment, dismay, and anger at the lack of empathy, especially from those on the political left, over the hundreds of civilian Israelis who were killed on that day

(Booth 2023; Medina and Lerer 2023). This may well be the authentic emotional experience of many Jews and of others who identify with Israel. It is, however, of dubious validity as a political argument to attack the feelings of others, or to demand that they empathize differently. Supporters of Israel have also typically aligned their emotional sympathy with their political outlook. Although many hundreds of Jews have regularly attended the many national marches since 7 October in solidarity with the people of Gaza, in the mainstream Jewish community the focus has been on solidarity with Israel, and there has in general been little space for empathy with Palestinian suffering. In times of bitter conflict, people tend to take sides, and empathy is almost invariably partisan.

Why, given this, have there been such widespread expectations, in mainstream Western political and media debate, of sympathy with Israeli victimhood, and such readiness to cast sympathy with Gazans under suspicion of antisemitism? In the weeks immediately after the Hamas attacks, Suella Braverman, then the UK Home Secretary, urged police chiefs to consider whether in some contexts the chanting of long-standing slogans of the Palestine solidarity movement, and even simply the display of a Palestinian flag, might be deemed antisemitic, and therefore deserving of prosecution as racially aggravated offences (Braverman 2023). This extreme exceptionalism could not have gained traction without the close and ubiquitous association in British public discourse, especially since the 1990s, of Holocaust memory with especially vigilant opposition to antisemitism.

The emotional force of the Holocaust was explicitly invoked by the Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations in late October 2023, when he addressed the Security Council with a yellow star emblazoned on his jacket with the words 'never again' in its centre (Bigg 2023). The slogan 'never again is now' has circulated widely since October 2023, and has generally been understood as a justification for Israel's relentless military onslaught on Gaza. In Germany, where this association carries a particularly powerful emotional resonance, the words '*nie wieder ist jetzt*' were projected onto Berlin's Brandenburg Gate in sky blue under a star of David to mark the anniversary of Kristallnacht on 9 November 2023. Opponents of Israel's attacks have countered with a modified formulation: 'never again for anyone'.

Criticism of the protests against the overwhelming destruction and tens of thousands of deaths caused by the Israeli army in Gaza has often focused on the allegation of antisemitism. This charge has been particularly widely made against the Palestine solidarity student encampments, and has often been tied to a wider critique of campus left-wing politics. There has been much mobilization of the 'Jews don't count' argument influentially made by the British Jewish comedian David Baddiel, who posits that those on the political left antisemitically exclude antisemitism from 'counting' as a form of prejudice

because they are only concerned with anti-Black racism and other privileged forms of victimhood (Baddiel 2021). According to the political scientist Yascha Mounk, for example, left-wing campus activists antisemitically define and condemn Israel as a white colonialist oppressor state, while restricting their solidarity to those ‘intersectional’ causes, such as ‘Black Lives Matter’, that they position on the victim side of the wider anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist struggle (Mounk 2023).

These disputes have not been as shrill in the UK as they have been in the United States. The British political and campus environment has, though, long been considerably more attentive to concerns over Jewish students’ possible experiences of antisemitism than to Muslim students’ equivalent concerns. Substantial documented evidence of British Muslim students’ experiences of surveillance, discrimination, exclusion, and silencing has been largely ignored by politicians, educationalists, and university leaders (Scott-Baumann et al. 2020). Up to the July 2024 general election, though, successive Conservative education ministers heavily pressured universities to adopt the intellectually discredited definition of antisemitism devised by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), on the grounds that it provides an important tool for protecting Jewish students from emotional injury. The IHRA document casts suspicion of antisemitism over a very broad and vaguely defined swathe of potential criticism of Israel. There is clear evidence – documented in a report from the academic subject association BRISMES (the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies) – that the definition has constrained legitimate free speech within British universities on the Israel–Palestine conflict (Lerman 2022, pp. 237–239; ELSC and BRISMES 2023).

Most scholars and teachers of the Holocaust across the world over the past few decades have understood their work as fostering deeper empathy not only with the victims of the Nazi genocide, but also with those who have faced – and still face – other forms of collective prejudice and hatred. They have believed that teaching about the Holocaust, understood as a cosmopolitan benchmark of human atrocity, reinforces with unique emotional power and conceptual clarity the key moral lessons of history. This perspective is deeply enshrined in Western moralized pedagogies, and has been elevated, as Enzo Traverso has persuasively argued, to the status of a ‘global civil religion’ (Traverso 2016, pp. 113–27).

It is clear, though, that empathy can very readily become a terrain of controversy and rivalry. If Freud is right that the bonds of fellow-feeling within communities have long been reinforced by channelling collective animosity and hate towards designated ‘out-groups’, then this realization should not come as a surprise. We should also not be surprised to see the alliances and vectors of collective hatred shift over time, and to see memories of past persecution play a role in different landscapes of empathy and enmity in later periods. Since

the beginning of the latest, unprecedentedly violent and destructive round of conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, we have witnessed more explicitly and disturbingly than ever before the entanglement of Holocaust memory with the perpetuation of injustice, hatred, and killing. On university campuses in the UK and elsewhere, our established models of Holocaust education are not helping to promote wider empathy and deeper understanding. They are perhaps even inflaming the climate of accusation and antagonism that has surrounded institutional responses to the conflict.

### 11.5 JEWS, MUSLIMS, AND THE POLITICS OF ANTI-ANTISEMITISM

The troubling political consequences of the entwining of moralized Holocaust memory with redemptive anti-semitism are most starkly evident in Germany. Esra Özyürek, in her excellent recent book *Subcontractors of Guilt* (Özyürek 2023), has shown how Germans with Arab or Muslim immigrant backgrounds, especially young men, are now cast as ‘re-importers’ into the country of the antisemitism that ethnic Germans consider themselves to have successfully overcome. This displacement of antisemitism onto Arab and Muslim immigrants – despite the fact that hate crimes in Germany, against Jews and other minorities, are overwhelmingly committed by white right-wing extremists – also imposes on them a demand that they acknowledge and atone for their presumed antisemitism in order to be accepted as ‘proper Germans’. In practice, though, even those ‘new Germans’ who comply with this demand continue to encounter everyday racism and Islamophobia (Özyürek 2023).

Since October 2023, extremely severe constraints have been placed in Germany on public expressions of empathy and solidarity with Palestinians, on the grounds that these might veer into antisemitism, and thus threaten the security of Jews. This has led to a crisis of lopsided public empathy. Muslim- and Arab-background Germans, including the largest Palestinian community in Europe, feel silenced; while empathy with Jews and Israelis predominates in media discourse and in the pronouncements of German politicians from across the mainstream spectrum (Oltermann 2024). The stigmatization of Palestine solidarity, including and even especially by Palestinians and those of other Muslim or Arab heritages, as tententially antisemitic has fuelled increasing talk of expelling from Germany those deemed not to have properly integrated. Sweeping plans for mass expulsions were discussed at a recently exposed lake-side gathering near Berlin attended by figures from the far-right AfD party, which has been described by some as a second Wannsee Conference (Connolly and Kassam 2024).

In the UK too, similar strains are apparent. Whilst the expression of solidarity with the plight of Gazans is much more open and vigorous than in

Germany, there have also been many tendentious attempts to tar this with antisemitism (Bland 2024). The election in July 2024, in traditionally solidly Labour seats, of five independent candidates who emphasized the issue of Gaza in their campaigns, highlights the depth of frustration, especially but not only among British Muslims, with the failure of Labour as well as the Conservatives to respond adequately to the killing and destruction wrought by Israel. On campuses this frustration has also run high, with protests and encampments seeking action from university leaders staged across the country. If we are to prevent a deepening sense, in universities and beyond, that some voices are privileged above others, and that this imbalance is inflected with racism and Islamophobia, then we urgently need a reset.

The public expression of emotions, as Sara Ahmed has reminded us, is deeply political. Participating in collective expressions of empathy offers us the appealing prospect of ‘feeling better’, having visibly associated our feelings with a recognized victim group, rather than with their oppressors (Ahmed 2014, pp. 191–203). Empathy-led Holocaust education over the past few decades has often reinforced such a sense of complacent self-congratulation. If we have learned the lessons of the Holocaust, and internalized them by communing with the suffering of its victims, then surely, we think to ourselves, we must be on the side of the angels.

## 11.6 FOUR SUGGESTIONS

Holocaust education and remembrance is now very clearly not fulfilling the hopes invested in it in the 1990s. It has become, rather, the most emotionally charged and intellectually blocked terrain of dispute in the global campus (and media) wars that accompany the deepening tragedy in the Middle East, of which no end seems even remotely in sight. In order, at the very least, to rein in the ways in which our moralization and instrumentalization of the Holocaust might be making it harder rather than easier to find a way to navigate towards a just and sustainable peace in that region, we need to rethink our guiding principles. I have no easy answers to offer, but I do have four more limited suggestions.

Firstly, we should now steer away from inducing emotional responses to the Holocaust as a pedagogical strategy. Instead, more emphasis should be placed on the hard work of historical learning and understanding. We should also steer away from the idea that the Holocaust offers us any straightforward lessons. As the leading Canadian Holocaust historian Michael Marrus has memorably put it, the main lesson of the Holocaust is ‘beware of lessons’ (Marrus 2016, p. 160).

Secondly, we need to recognize that there is an extremely knotty relationship between Jews and suffering that is woven into the roots of Jewish,

Christian, and secular Western culture. The roots of this thinking are too deep to allow us to straightforwardly step outside of this entwinement or liberate our responses to the Holocaust from it. By understanding this cultural legacy more clearly, though, we can to some extent neutralize its impact. We also need to think carefully about the ways in which this cultural framework is related to the Western tendency to downgrade or overlook the suffering and long-term injuries caused by European colonialism.

Thirdly, we need to recognize that we empathize differently from each other, in ways that reflect our different experiences and affiliations in the world. It is therefore a bad idea to try to impose on others a 'correct' emotional response to a historical event such as the Holocaust, or to what happened in Israel on 7 October 2023 and has happened in Gaza since then. Instead, we should try to understand how and why horrific events take on different emotional meanings for different people. This effort to understand the feelings of others, without sharing them, is itself a more limited, and often more productive, form of empathy.

Finally, we need to recognize that empathy cannot get us very far outside of a wider moral framework. Empathy on its own, as Samuel Moyn has recently argued with respect to human rights, is 'not enough' (Moyn 2018). It can easily lead us astray, reinforcing our prejudices and partisanship rather than challenging them, unless it is accompanied by a firm commitment to justice and equity.

How might our university leaders, and academics in the field of Holocaust education, take immediate actions in support of the spirit of these four suggestions? Teaching and research into the Nazi genocide takes place in many different contexts in British higher education. Its main centres, though – most notably the Centre for Holocaust Education at University College London (UCL), and the Holocaust Research Institute at Royal Holloway – are somewhat siloed. A wider move to a more comparative framework, perhaps under the rubric of genocide studies, would be a positive development. These comparisons must include the rhetorics of hate and mass displacements and killings in the contemporary Middle East, difficult though these explorations are likely to be for many teachers and students. It is also essential that constraints on open discussion of events in the Middle East are removed. The intellectual shortcomings of the IHRA definition of antisemitism – which only a small number of British universities, such as SOAS, refused to adopt despite heavy pressure from the former Conservative government to do so – are abundantly clear. Discarding it across the British higher education sector would send an overdue but symbolically strong rejection of the political instrumentalization and selective channelling of Holocaust- and antisemitism-related empathy on campuses.

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