



HOUSE OF LORDS

Committee for Privileges and Conduct

7th Report of Session 2016–17

The conduct of Baroness Tonge

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The Committee for Privileges and Conduct

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The conduct of Baroness Tonge

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE FOR PRIVILEGES AND CONDUCT

1. The Committee for Privileges and Conduct has considered a report by the House of Lords Commissioner for Standards on the conduct of Baroness Tonge (Annex 2), together with a report by the Sub-Committee on Lords' Conduct (Annex 1). The Sub-Committee's report summarises the case. The Commissioner found that Baroness Tonge had breached the Code of Conduct in respect of the rule agreed by the House that members must obtain Black Rod's permission for a meeting on the House of Lords' part of the parliamentary estate to be filmed and photographed. The Sub-Committee recommended that Baroness Tonge should make a formal written apology for the breach to its chairman. We endorse that recommendation.
2. The procedure in cases such as this is set out in the Guide to the Code of Conduct. Under this procedure, the Commissioner investigates allegations against members. She reports her findings to the Sub-Committee which, if the Commissioner has found the member to have breached the Code, recommends any action that the member should take and any sanction that the House should apply. The Sub-Committee does not reopen the Commissioner's findings, which are reported without amendment to the Committee for Privileges and Conduct. The member may then appeal to that Committee against the Commissioner's findings or the Sub-Committee's recommended sanction, or both.
3. Baroness Tonge did not appeal against the findings of the Commissioner or the sanction recommended by the Sub-Committee on Lords' Conduct. She has written a formal apology to the Sub-Committee chairman (Annex 3). No further action is required in this case and we make this report to the House for information.

ANNEX 1: REPORT FROM THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON LORDS' CONDUCT

1. The Commissioner for Standards has submitted the attached report on the conduct of Baroness Tonge.
2. The commissioner's report covered three allegations about Baroness Tonge.
3. The first allegation related to a meeting Baroness Tonge chaired and hosted in House of Lords committee room 2A on 25 October 2016 to launch the "Balfour Apology Campaign", which seeks an apology from the UK Government for the Balfour Declaration of 1917. It was alleged that the content of the meeting was antisemitic and that, by allowing this to happen, Baroness Tonge had failed to act on her personal honour, and so breached paragraph 8(b) of the Code of Conduct. The commissioner considered that a member may fail to act on personal honour if (a) the member hosts a meeting on the parliamentary estate with the intention of promoting antisemitism or (b) the meeting is not hosted for that purpose but is taken over by those promoting antisemitism and the member does not take steps to address that. Applying that test, the commissioner found that in this case the meeting was not held with the intention of promoting antisemitism nor was taken over by those promoting antisemitism. Therefore the commissioner found that Baroness Tonge had not failed to act on her personal honour and so had not breached paragraph 8(b) of the Code of Conduct.
4. The second allegation also related to the meeting on 25 October 2016. The meeting was filmed and photographed, with the footage posted on social media. Members are required to obtain Black Rod's permission for meetings on the House of Lords' part of the parliamentary estate to be filmed and photographed. No such permission was obtained. The commissioner therefore found Baroness Tonge in breach of a rule agreed by the House on the use of facilities, and so in breach of paragraph 10(c) of the Code of Conduct. Baroness Tonge admitted this breach and apologised to the commissioner for it.
5. The third allegation related to an event Baroness Tonge hosted on 14 December 2016 in House of Lords committee room G to discuss the book *State of Terror*. The event was catered, which means it was subject to the banqueting rules. Those rules have been agreed by the House so a breach of them constitutes a breach of paragraph 10(c) of the Code of Conduct. One of the banqueting rules is that functions cannot be used for book launches (with certain exceptions which did not apply to this event). The commissioner found that the event hosted by Baroness Tonge did not amount to a book launch, as the book had been published two months previously, had already had two (external) launch events and was not on sale or display at the event. The commissioner therefore found that Baroness Tonge did not breach paragraph 10(c) of the Code of Conduct in respect of the event on 14 December 2016.
6. Therefore one breach of the Code of Conduct was established: breach of the rule agreed by the House that members must obtain Black Rod's permission for a meeting on the House of Lords' part of the parliamentary estate to be filmed and photographed. In accordance with paragraphs 135 and 136 of the Guide to the Code of Conduct our role has been to consider whether a sanction is appropriate for this breach and, if so, to recommend one.

7. We note that Baroness Tonge said to the commissioner that she was unaware of the requirement to obtain Black Rod's permission, and that the camera crew had indicated that they had approval to film. We further note that at the first opportunity Baroness Tonge admitted to the commissioner that she was in breach of this rule and apologised for it. Nonetheless, it is members' responsibility to ensure they are familiar with, and abide by, the rules that apply to meetings they host on the parliamentary estate. Therefore **we recommend that Baroness Tonge should make a formal written apology for this breach.** The practice is for such an apology to be made by a letter addressed to the chairman of the Sub-Committee on Lords' Conduct and published with this report.

ANNEX 2: REPORT FROM THE COMMISSIONER FOR STANDARDS

Summary of the complaint and investigation

1. On 25 October 2016 Baroness Tonge hosted and chaired a meeting in House of Lords committee room 2A in the Palace of Westminster. The meeting was organised by the Palestinian Return Centre to launch the “Balfour Apology Campaign”. The meeting was filmed and photographed; both were published on the internet, including on the website of the Palestinian Return Centre. Journalists were present. Two days later *The Times* reported on the meeting under the headline “Jews blamed for Holocaust at ‘shameful’ House of Lords event”.¹ It was also reported in the *Jewish Chronicle*.² Both newspaper articles mentioned a blog by David Collier,³ who attended the meeting. A transcript taken from the recordings of the meeting is in appendix A.⁴
2. On 31 October 2016 I received a complaint from Karen Elizabeth Leon about the meeting. The complainant suggested Baroness Tonge breached the Code of Conduct because discussion at the meeting was “very anti-Semitic with the usual comments made about non-Israeli Jews”; was an “anti-Jewish litany and holocaust deniers’ rant”; that Baroness Tonge “did not rebuke her speakers or stop them at any time”; and that “blatant racism and anti-Semitism was made ... public by her meeting and her speakers.”⁵
3. I also received a letter dated 27 October 2016 from Mark Regev, the Ambassador of Israel.⁶ He expressed “alarm” about the event, suggesting that its content involved “disseminating antisemitism, promoting Holocaust revisionism and encouraging support for Hamas”. He commented that remarks that “Jews themselves had caused the Holocaust” and “the ‘Zionist movement’ holds power over Parliament” were “clearly grounded in bigotry and hatred”. He referred to paragraph 9 of the Code of Conduct,⁷ which requires members to act on their personal honour. The Ambassador did not identify an individual alleged to be in breach of the Code; his letter was about the event. Therefore the letter could not be treated as a formal complaint,⁸ but as it was relevant to the complaint already received I disclosed it to Baroness Tonge.
4. I carried out a preliminary assessment of the complaint. On the basis of it I decided there were two matters which warranted investigation. First, whether in hosting and chairing the meeting Baroness Tonge may have not acted on her personal honour. Secondly, whether she may have breached the Code by not acting in accordance with a rule on the use of facilities agreed by the House: that permission should be obtained for such an event to be filmed and photographed.

1 *The Times*, 27 October 2016.

2 *Jewish Chronicle*, “‘Shameful’ House of Lords event condemned after audience ‘blames Jews for Holocaust’”, 27 October 2016.

3 Appendix E.

4 I am grateful to House of Lords Hansard for producing the transcript.

5 Appendix C.

6 Appendix B.

7 Fifth edition: July 2016.

8 I asked the Ambassador if he intended to make a formal complaint about Baroness Tonge and, if he did, if he could clarify which particular remarks during the meeting he considered may have breached the Code of Conduct. The Ambassador’s office replied that he did not wish to add to his original letter.

5. I wrote to Baroness Tonge on 8 November 2016 seeking her response to the matters under investigation.⁹ She replied on 21 November 2016.¹⁰
6. On 17 November 2016 I received a further complaint, from six members of the House: Lord Beecham, Lord Carlile of Berriew, Baroness Deech, Lord Mitchell, Lord Palmer of Childs Hill and Lord Stunell.¹¹ They complained that the meeting was “host to appalling antisemitic comments and Holocaust denial by audience members”; that the audience “applauded statements ... that Hitler only decided to kill all the Jews after he was provoked by anti-German protests led by a Rabbi in Manhattan, and that “the Zionist movement has that power and it has that over our own Parliament”.” They considered comments at the meeting about the Holocaust and Zionism to be “historically and factually inaccurate” and “a classic antisemitic trope.” They referred to Baroness Tonge hosting and chairing the meeting and invited me to investigate if the Code had been breached.
7. I advised the six members that I would consider their complaint as part of my investigation into whether Baroness Tonge had failed to act on her personal honour.¹² I provided the six members with the transcript of the meeting and invited them to identify the particular remarks during the event which they considered to be antisemitic or which otherwise may have breached the Code of Conduct. At that time there was no official government definition of antisemitism for me to refer to, and as they wrote to me as members of the All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism I was keen to get their detailed views.
8. Lord Beecham replied in an email of 24 November 2016.¹³ He referred to comments by “audience member 11” about the Holocaust and Zionism, and suggested that Baroness Tonge’s failure to rebut or question those remarks breached the Code.
9. Lord Palmer of Childs Hill replied in an email of 27 November 2016.¹⁴ He too suggested Baroness Tonge was at fault for not “distancing herself and the meeting from very offensive remarks”, particularly those by “audience member 11”.
10. I wrote further to Baroness Tonge on 25 November 2016 asking questions arising from her previous response and disclosing to her the complaint by the six members.¹⁵ I also disclosed to her the follow-up emails from Lord Beecham and Lord Palmer of Childs Hill.
11. Baroness Tonge replied on 30 November 2016.¹⁶ The chairman of the Palestinian Return Centre, Majed al Zeer, wrote to me on 5 December 2016 in response to a request I had made to Baroness Tonge.¹⁷ I interviewed Baroness Tonge on 12 December 2016.¹⁸ I asked the Gentleman Usher of the

9 Appendix D.
 10 Appendix E.
 11 Appendix F.
 12 Appendix G.
 13 Appendix H.
 14 Appendix I.
 15 Appendix J.
 16 Appendix K.
 17 Appendix L.
 18 Appendix M.

Black Rod, David Leakey, who is responsible for enforcing the House's rules on filming and photography, for a statement on those rules.¹⁹

12. On 16 December 2016, while my investigation into the above two complaints was under way, I received a further complaint, from Jonathan Hoffman.²⁰ He alleged that on 14 December 2016 Baroness Tonge hosted an event in a meeting room in the House of Lords at which the book *State of Terror* by Thomas Suárez was launched. The complainant alleged that the book contained antisemitic material.
13. After a preliminary assessment I decided to investigate one aspect of this third complaint. This was whether Baroness Tonge may have breached the Code by not acting in accordance with the House's rules on the use of facilities—specifically the banqueting rules—by hosting a book launch at a catered event. Related to this was whether, if Baroness Tonge had breached two sets of rules on hosting events in Parliament in short order, she had failed to act on her personal honour. I wrote to Baroness Tonge on 5 January 2017 seeking her response to this matter.²¹ She replied on 8 January 2017.²² Lord Warner, who was present at the meeting, sent me his view of it on 15 January 2017.²³

Launch of Balfour Apology Campaign on 25 October 2016

Alleged failure to act on personal honour: relevant definitions

14. The Balfour Apology Campaign is designed to obtain an official apology from the UK Government for the Balfour Declaration of 1917. Here is the description of it and the meeting on 25 October 2016 from the Palestinian Return Centre's website:

“The Palestinian Return Centre is hosting an event inside the UK Parliament a week ahead of the 99th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration which will be on November 2nd. The Balfour Declaration, which had no basis of legal authority, promised the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, where the indigenous Palestinians amounted to 90% of the total population.

After the Balfour Declaration Palestine became the victim of colonialism and Britain's legacy is still evident today as Palestinians continue to be denied the right to self-determination and suffer from living under military occupation or as refugees. As the 100th year since the Balfour declaration approaches, the Palestinian Return Centre has decided to re-launch its campaign which started in 2013 called Balfour Apology Campaign which asks the UK Government to officially apologise for its past colonial crimes in Palestine.

19 Appendix N.

20 Appendix O.

21 Appendix P.

22 Appendix Q.

23 Appendix R.

Committee Room 2a, Houses of Parliament

Tuesday 25th of October at 7pm

Hosted and chaired by
Baroness Jenny Tonge

Panel Includes

Professor Manuel Hassassian, Ambassador of the Palestinian Mission to the UK

Betty Hunter, Honorary President of Palestine Solidarity Campaign

Britain's legal and moral obligation

Karl Sabbagh, Historian and Writer

How successive British governments fell in love with Zionism, until it was too late

Majed Al-Zeer, President of the Palestinian Return Centre

On the Balfour Apology Campaign

More speakers to be announced".²⁴

15. In December 2016 the Government adopted the working definition of antisemitism agreed in May 2016 at a plenary meeting of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. It is:

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”²⁵

16. I have used this definition and the examples which accompany it in considering the complaints.
17. As an allegation about Zionists was the subject of complaint I have used this dictionary definition of Zionism:

“a movement for (originally) the re-establishment and (now) the development and protection of a Jewish nation in what is now Israel ...”²⁶

The Code of Conduct and personal honour

18. I have considered whether in hosting and chairing of the meeting Baroness Tonge failed to act on her personal honour. In reaching conclusions about what was said at the meeting I seek only to address this question; nothing

24 <http://www.prc.org.uk/portal/index.php/activities-news/workshop-seminar/3523-launch-of-the-balfour-apology-campaign-join-us-in-the-house-of-lords>

25 The definition was accompanied by examples of antisemitism, which are at this link: https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/sites/default/files/press_release_document_antisemitism.pdf

26 Oxford Dictionary of English, second edition (Oxford University Press).

which follows should otherwise be taken as endorsing or criticising the cause launched at the meeting or the views expressed there.

19. Under paragraph 8(b) of the Code of Conduct members “should act always on their personal honour”. This is elaborated on in paragraph 7 of the Guide to the Code of Conduct, which quotes from a report of the Committee for Privileges:

“The term ‘personal honour’ has been used within the House for centuries to describe the guiding principles that govern the conduct of members; its meaning has never been defined, and has not needed definition, because it is inherent in the culture and conventions of the House. These change over time, and thus any definition of ‘personal honour’, while it might achieve temporary ‘legal certainty’, would quickly become out-moded ... the term ‘personal honour’ is ultimately an expression of the sense of the House as a whole as to the standards of conduct expected of individual members ... members cannot rely simply on their own personal sense of what is honourable. They are required to act in accordance with the standards expected by the House as a whole. ‘Personal honour’ is thus ... a matter for individual members, subject to the sense and culture of the House as a whole.”

20. Paragraph 9 of the Guide continues:

“a written Code can never cover every eventuality. Paragraphs 8(a) [which requires members to comply with the Code] and 8(b) of the Code, taken together, mean that members are required not only to obey the letter of the rules, but to act in accordance with the spirit of those rules and the sense of the House. This includes the rules agreed by the House in respect of financial support for members or the facilities of the House.”

21. This case raised the question of how the requirement to act on personal honour applies to a member who hosts a meeting in the House of Lords’ part of the parliamentary estate.
22. Two of the complainants referred to “deeply offensive” and “very offensive” remarks being made at the meeting.²⁷ I considered whether the sense of the House would be that a member hosting a meeting on the parliamentary estate should be required to take steps to prevent grossly offensive comments being made, or to intervene once such a comment has been made. I concluded that a test of “gross offensiveness” would not be appropriate, for three reasons.
23. First, any test of gross offensiveness would be subjective.
24. Secondly, the sense of the House as a whole is likely to favour preserving freedom of speech on the parliamentary estate, both because it is important in its own right and because of the symbolism of restricting it on the parliamentary estate.
25. Thirdly, any requirement on members to monitor the content of everything said at meetings they host and/or to intervene where offence may have been caused might have a “chilling effect”. Such a requirement might result in members erring on the side of not hosting meetings on the parliamentary

²⁷ Appendices H and I.

estate; or they might become excessively vigilant in intervening during meetings, perhaps to the hindrance of the free exchange of views.

26. Instead, I consider that the sense of the House is that a member should not host a meeting on the parliamentary estate with the intention of promoting antisemitism (or any other form of discrimination based on protected characteristics) and, if a meeting on the parliamentary estate was not hosted for that purpose but was taken over by those promoting antisemitism, that the member should take steps to address that.

Consideration of alleged failure to act on personal honour

27. Applying the above test to this case, I now consider:
- (a) whether there were examples of antisemitism at the meeting;
 - (b) if so, whether those examples amounted to a takeover of the meeting by those promoting antisemitism;
 - (c) if so, whether Baroness Tonge took steps to address the takeover.
28. I deal first with the complaints that there was Holocaust denial and Holocaust revisionism at the meeting, that this was applauded by the audience and that Baroness Tonge made no effort to stop or challenge these remarks. There are three references to the Holocaust in the transcript. First:

“There are two issues. Is Britain in general historically and politically responsible? If so, one obligation is there on today’s Government to make an apology for the action of their predecessors. Let us take two examples: slavery and the Holocaust. These are issues where people, entities and groups have sought apologies in the past and received them. These are apologies not for actions that were done by those in power at the time of the apology; these are apologies for events that happened in the past, for which nevertheless their successors as politicians and statesmen have accepted there is some value and necessity to apologise in that situation.”²⁸

29. Secondly:

“No matter how often the truth is spelled out, by Jewish historians as well as others, the denials continue. Jenny mentioned my publishing company. We have a book that has just come out called *State of Terror*, which is an appalling catalogue of the violence and terror in the 1940s and into the 1950s when the state of Israel was founded—terror not just by small Jewish terrorist groups but supported by large numbers of Jews who lived in Palestine. It was a blatant and self-justifying attempt to get the British out of Palestine and take over the land. That needs an apology. Holocaust denial is quite rightly seen as a gross insult to the memory of millions who suffered under Nazi Germany but Nakba denial is a daily occurrence for Palestinians. It is a real obstacle to any peace settlement. To put it another way, the psychological effect of an apology would be to remove a major roadblock, proving that for the first time the Israelis were serious about addressing the injustice and arguing for a peace treaty.”²⁹

28 Appendix A, opening speech by Karl Sabbagh.

29 *Ibid.*

30. The above two quotes include nothing that could be interpreted as Holocaust denial or revisionism.
31. The third mention of the Holocaust was by “audience member 11”. He was apparently a member of the Neturei Karta sect of Judaism.³⁰ The sect is described thus: “Neturei Karta opposed the establishment of and retain all opposition to the existence of the so-called “State of Israel”.”³¹ At the meeting he was wearing the sect’s distinctive dress, apparently based on that of an 18th-century Polish nobleman.³² He was one of three or four members of Neturei Karta who arrived part-way through the meeting.³³ He was not one of the invited speakers; he asked a question from the floor. The members of Neturei Karta had apparently not registered to attend the meeting.³⁴ This was the exchange:

“Audience member 11: I’m not wanting to distract from the situation in Palestine, but surely one of the best ways to atone for the mistakes of the past is to prevent the same type of thing happening in the future. I am referring specifically to the situation now in Syria and Iraq. Just as the so-called Jewish state in Palestine was created by—it doesn’t come from Judaism [*inaudible*—so this Islamic state in Syria is nothing to do with Islam. It is a perversion of Islam, just as Zionism is a perversion of Judaism which serves certain non-Semitic interests. It is just carrying on. Just as the main victims—I’m again not wishing to belittle in any way the suffering of the Palestinians, the Arab and Christian Palestinians and Muslim Palestinians at the hands of the Zionists.

I once said to a daughter of one of the Palestinian refugees who had to leave after the ’48 war [*inaudible*] ending up having to leave Palestine, I said, not wishing to belittle the sufferings that they had had at the hands of the Zionists and these victims [*inaudible*] spiritually and physically at the hands of the Zionists due to the Holocaust, one of the main Zionist speakers in America, so-called Rabbi Stephen Wise, a Reform heretic so-called rabbi, is quoted in the *New York Times*, I think it was 1905, “There are 6 million”—note the number—“bleeding and suffering reasons to justify Zionism.” Thirty years later he made the boycott on Germany, the economic boycott on Germany, which antagonised Hitler over the edge to then want to systematically kill Jews wherever he could find them, as opposed to just a Judenrein, to make Germany a Jew-free area of land, which is enough. But that isn’t noted by one of the rabbis. That’s what pushed him over the edge. His personal secretary Ribbentrop was in Nuremberg during the trials. He said to Rabbi [*inaudible*], “Well this is what, he became a madman after this boycott. Judea declares war on Germany.” In Manhattan, they had I think 100,000 or more people marching for the economic boycott in 1935. It was the same Reform heretic rabbi who holds that 30 years prior put the number 6 million in the *New York Times*. Again, it doesn’t come from Jewish interests. It’s not promoting the whole ideology—

Baroness Tonge: Thank you very much. I think it’s very important that the word “boycott” has come up, because BDS, the campaign to

30 Appendix E.

31 www.nkusa.org/aboutus/index.cfm

32 Appendices E, K and M.

33 Appendices E (blog by David Collier), L and M.

34 Appendices L and M.

boycott Israeli goods and services and for divestment from Israel, a lot of us think—most of us think—that it’s very, very important indeed. [Applause.] In this year of apologising for Balfour, that is one really effective action we can make stronger and stronger and stronger to show the Israeli government that we do not like them, they are not a good thing and they have got to stop what they’re doing and leave the Palestinians. I mean, Karl is a non-two-state-solution man, because he feels that it’s gone, I think, too far now and it’s a bit difficult when you go out there to see that two states. But whether it’s a two-state solution or one state, the Palestinian people have to have total freedom and equal human rights and political rights and physical rights and they have to have their homes and lands back. I mean, there’s no question about it and BDS is the thing we can do to put pressure on Israel. We can put pressure on our Government to apologise for Balfour, but we can put pressure on the Israeli government by BDS. Now, more questions.”

32. This contribution by audience member 11 is more problematic than the previous two. It is unclear what points the speaker was trying to make. Baroness Tonge said while audience member 11 was talking she “could barely hear what he was saying and I was looking for an opportunity to interrupt and go on to another contributor, which I did when I heard him use the word ‘boycott’. I used this to move the meeting on to discuss the BDS movement (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions). At that point the audience clapped in relief and we moved on.”³⁵ Baroness Tonge repeated in a subsequent letter to me and at our interview that she had not understood what audience member 11 was saying at the meeting, or even after reading the transcript of it.³⁶ Others present stated that they had trouble understanding the speaker, saying he was “garbled” and “unintelligent”.³⁷ Thus my findings are based on the transcript of what audience member 11 said, the purpose, and even the meaning, of which is unclear.
33. Having read Mr Collier’s blog, I understand that the reference to
- “Rabbi Stephen Wise, a Reform heretic so-called rabbi, is quoted in the *New York Times*, I think it was 1905, “There are 6 million”—note the number—“bleeding and suffering reasons to justify Zionism.””
- is a device used by Holocaust deniers to seek to show that the numbers of Jews killed in the Holocaust was exaggerated. The complaint by the six members of the House said this was a “classic anti-semitic trope.” I accept that reference to this apparent mention of six million in 1905 is used by Holocaust deniers and is antisemitic when used in this way.
34. However, the rest of audience member 11’s contribution appears to show that he accepted the reality of the Holocaust. The fact that Holocaust deniers use this device cannot be evidence that someone who accepts that Hitler wanted “to systematically kill Jews wherever he could find them” is a Holocaust denier.
35. The Israeli Ambassador complained that the event promoted “Holocaust revisionism” and that remarks that “Jews themselves ... caused the

35 Appendix E.

36 Appendices K and M.

37 Appendix K (statements by Jonathan Coulter and Jocelyn Hurndall).

Holocaust” were “clearly grounded in bigotry and hatred”.³⁸ The six members of the House complained that the audience “applauded statements ... that Hitler only decided to kill all the Jews after he was provoked by anti-German protests led by a Rabbi in Manhattan”.³⁹ These complaints clearly arose from the contribution of audience member 11. The allegation that Jews caused the Holocaust is an example of Holocaust revisionism and clearly fits within the official definition of antisemitism.

36. However, this is not what audience member 11 actually said. He referred to an economic boycott led by Rabbi Wise, but he did not say that the boycott was by Jews or Zionists.
37. Mr Collier’s blog makes a link with neo-Nazi websites that claim that the economic boycott of Germany was carried out by Zionists who were therefore to blame for the Holocaust. I have no reason to doubt Mr Collier’s claim. People who monitor such neo-Nazi websites are likely to be aware of this type of Holocaust revisionism. But those who do not have this specialist knowledge cannot be expected to decode incomplete references to allegations which do not, in the words used, appear to be antisemitic, or even anti-Zionist.
38. Complaints were made that the audience applauded the remarks of audience member 11, and that Baroness Tonge made no attempt to stop him speaking. As noted above, Baroness Tonge said she was looking for an opportunity to interrupt audience member 11, and did so when he used the word “boycott”. The video and transcript bear out her recollection; they show that she interrupted him and that the applause followed her reference to the current boycott campaign, rather than the remarks of audience member 11.
39. I note from the recording of the meeting that the next speaker was sitting in the same part of the room as audience member 11, and that Baroness Tonge had to ask her to repeat her question.⁴⁰ This supports the suggestion that audience member 11 was inaudible as well as incoherent.
40. Another specific complaint was that a reference was made to the Zionist movement having power over Parliament.⁴¹ The complete quote (from audience member 8) is:

“The trouble is that 100 years on, and I’m not talking about world Jewry, I’m talking about that segment which we call the Zionist movement, which has that power. It has it over our own Parliament. It has been able to put people into a very invidious situation.

When I look around middle-class society, there is a lot of awareness of what’s gone on. I can see this when I talk at the churches, at the political parties, even to my own family. There is a massive fear factor of being outed or denigrated or, to put it in the words of Sir Alan Duncan, of being “trashed, traduced and bullied” because you speak up for Palestinians. We have created that situation for ourselves and we need to tell people that. Ultimately we will pay for this in suppression of free speech and the ability to discuss things openly among ourselves. We cannot have the sort of open debate that we had about Scottish independence, which

38 Appendix B.

39 Appendix F.

40 Appendix A, contribution by audience member 12.

41 Appendix F.

horrified me—the idea of tearing our country in two—but it was carried out in a relatively civil manner if you compare it to the sort of nastiness you get if you stand up for the Palestinians and the smearing that can come not only from Zionists and people who are not even Jewish but who are playing that game—there are some of them here in Parliament. So please let’s take that message out to the people as well. [*Applause.*]⁴²

41. It is clear that what was being alleged was that those who speak up for Palestinians can be denigrated, which creates a fear of speaking out and results in free speech being suppressed.
42. One example of antisemitism is that of:

“Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective—such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.”
43. Audience member 8’s allegation of controlling Parliament is not made against Jews, but against Zionists and non-Jews who “smear” those who support Palestinians. The issue of whether anti-Zionist criticism is coded antisemitism is contentious, must be situation-specific and is not one on which I can give a general answer. However, as the speaker explicitly stated that he was not referring to world Jewry, and as he did not criticise Jews as such or the power of Jews as a collective, I do not think that this remark fits within the definition of antisemitism.
44. There were also non-itemised complaints that the event was “very anti-semitic;”⁴³ was an “anti-Jewish litany;”⁴⁴ involved “disseminating anti-semitism;”⁴⁵ and was “host to appalling antisemitic comments.”⁴⁶ In light of these I have considered whether anything else was said at the meeting to justify these complaints.
45. While reading the transcript I noticed that the remarks of at least one speaker were not recorded.⁴⁷ At several points remarks were unable to be transcribed so are marked “inaudible”. The recording was in three parts, and it seemed there were gaps between them. I was concerned that there was a possibility that antisemitic comments could have been made during a gap in the recordings or transcript.
46. I have checked the recordings (which are online) against the transcript to see if I could hear what the transcribers found inaudible. I was not able to distinguish clearly any of the words labelled inaudible, but at most they were a few words long and part of longer sentences which were not about the Holocaust or antisemitism.

42 Appendix A, audience member 8.

43 Appendix C.

44 *Ibid.*

45 Appendix B.

46 Appendix F.

47 After the contribution by audience member 6, Karl Sabbagh refers to another contributor’s comments, which Mr Sabbagh described as “the picture of the Israeli parliament as a haven of peaceful co-existence, with the Arab MPs and Israelis.” (Appendix A.) I could find no prior comment about the Israeli parliament. However, Mr Collier’s blog did refer to a contributor, Mike Abramov, who “spoke up for Israel”. (Appendix E.)

47. In case there were antisemitic comments that could have been made in the gap between the second and third recordings, I looked at all the specific examples given in Mr Collier's blog. He referred to "four incidents that I need to describe, to expand on this issue of growing antisemitism".⁴⁸
48. One was the comment by Mike Abramov (see footnote 47). The others were all captured in the recordings, and included the contributions of audience member 8 and audience member 11, both considered above.
49. The remaining "incident" referred to in the blog was the comment by one of the invited speakers, Betty Hunter, that "Israel is not a democracy."⁴⁹ Ms Hunter also referred to "the colonialism of the Israeli state" and said that "the new colonialism of Israel was all based on violence", particularly against Palestinians.⁵⁰
50. The official definition of antisemitism makes clear that "criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic." Ms Hunter's criticisms of Israel were that that "violence ... is waged on the Palestinian people daily";⁵¹ that "more and more land" is being confiscated, with settlements "encroaching all over the West Bank and in East Jerusalem";⁵² and that not all of its citizens "have the same rights."⁵³ Whether or not these criticisms are justified, they are clearly similar to criticisms levelled at other countries, including at the meeting, and including by Ms Hunter, who was critical of racism in the United States and elsewhere.⁵⁴
51. I fully understand that supporters of Israel may find these criticisms hurtful and unfair, but I do not consider that her remarks fit the definition of antisemitism above as they refer to alleged political decisions.
52. Many of the criticisms at the meeting that were not directed at successive British governments were directed at alleged Israeli political decisions which have adversely affected Palestinians. As with my finding with regard to Ms Hunter, I do not consider that these criticisms fit the definition of antisemitism above.
53. The definition antisemitism states that it can also be expressed by the use of "sinister stereotypes and negative character traits." I heard and read no such stereotyping at this event. When talking about the views and actions of Jews, official speakers and audience members acknowledged that Jews in Israel, in Britain and around the world have a variety of political opinions, including differing opinions about Israel and its policies. There were no suggestions that Jews have particular characteristics that distinguish them from others. Speakers also referenced support for Zionism by non-Jews, which indicates that Zionism is recognised as a political or religious cause, not a Jewish trait.
54. One of the complainants alleged that the event involved "blatant racism".⁵⁵ Although no comment was identified in connection with this allegation, it may have been connected to Mr Collier's remark in his blog about the

48 Appendix E.

49 Appendix A, made in response to audience member 7.

50 Appendix A, made in Betty Hunter's opening remarks.

51 *Ibid.*

52 *Ibid.*

53 Appendix A, made in response to audience member 7.

54 Appendix A, made in response to audience member 7.

55 Appendix C.

contribution of audience member 14. That person spoke at the end of the meeting and said:

“Just to say thank you. It is marvellous work. Keep it up. We belong to large groups all over the world. Not necessarily one specific community but religious groups at large are totally upset with everything around Israel, whether it’s being antagonistic against the Palestinians, harming them and indeed harming the Jewish religion itself. So you keep it up. You should never be impressed and fear that the Israelis will come back to you and say you’re an anti-Semite, which they will. It is their best tool. Don’t look at it. Ignore it. It is not true. If anybody’s anti-Semitic, it’s the Israelis themselves. [*Applause.*]”

55. It was claimed in the blog and the newspaper articles that the last sentence of this received applause. I have set out the whole quote so that the last sentence can be put in context.
56. The sentence itself is offensive and untrue. However, in context I do not believe it amounts to racism, as it is clearly directed at those whom the speaker believes make untrue allegations of antisemitism against those who support the Palestinian cause.

Finding on alleged failure to act on personal honour

57. It is clear from the transcript that the event as billed—to launch the Palestinian Return Centre’s Balfour Apology Campaign—was what took place, and that the event was not intended to promote antisemitism. I find that there was no takeover of the event by people promoting antisemitism, and that therefore Baroness Tonge was not obliged to deal with any such takeover.
58. For the above reasons I find that Baroness Tonge did not breach paragraph 8(b) of the Code of Conduct in her hosting and chairing of the meeting on the parliamentary estate on 25 October 2016.

Alleged breach of rules on filming and photography: background

59. Under paragraph 10(c) of the Code of Conduct members must “act in accordance with any rules agreed by the House in respect of ... the facilities of the House.”
60. The rules on filming and photography in the House of Lords’ part of the parliamentary estate were agreed by the relevant committee of the House.⁵⁶ They are set out in the *Handbook on facilities and services for Members and their staff*.⁵⁷ They are in a leaflet for members entitled *Filming Rules* and have been covered in the members’ newsletter *Red Benches*.⁵⁸ Thus they have been well advertised to members.
61. At the heart of the rules is the requirement to obtain Black Rod’s permission for any proposed filming or photography in the House of Lords’ part of the parliamentary estate before the event. This requirement is longstanding. It was set out in a 1996 report by the House of Lords Offices Committee,⁵⁹

56 Minutes of the meeting of the Administration and Works Committee on 11 February 2014 (available on the parliamentary website).

57 “Rules on filming within the House of Lords”, *Handbook on facilities and services for Members and their staff* (October 2015), page 56.

58 Editions 44 (August/September 2014) and 57 (June/July 2016).

59 A predecessor of the House of Lords Commission.

which was agreed by the House that year.⁶⁰ Thus the requirement for Black Rod's permission has been agreed by the House, and so a breach of that requirement constitutes a breach of paragraph 10(c) of the Code of Conduct.

62. The rules on filming and photography contain a set of underlying principles. One principle is that any filming or photography must be for private use only. Permission must be given by Black Rod in order for filming or photography to be published more widely, including on websites and social media. Such permission will not normally be given if the event being filmed would "show preference to one cause over another."⁶¹ The reason for that rule is to prevent the House being used as a platform or backcloth to promote on broadcast media a cause, agenda or interest.⁶²
63. In a statement to me Black Rod said that he normally has to decline requests to film unless (a) the event is in support of the House's corporate or official role (such as the launch of a select committee report); (b) the event is a press conference in one of the rooms permitted for them; or (c) the member gives a convincing assurance that the recording is for purely private, internal or domestic use, and is not to be posted or broadcast on public media.⁶³

Consideration of alleged breach of rules on filming and photography

64. Baroness Tonge admitted that she had not complied with the rules on filming and photography.⁶⁴ She said she had not been aware of the rules. She did not know in advance of the event that it would be filmed. When she arrived and saw the cameras she asked the camera crew if they had permission; the cameraman replied that he had.⁶⁵ The camera crew (who were from the Al Jazeera Mubasher channel) assumed that their National Union of Journalists' press accreditation gave them sufficient access. They said they often filmed events in Parliament and pass through security without difficulty.⁶⁶ They were not stopped by security staff on this occasion.
65. The fact that this meeting was filmed and photographed without the requisite permission had the effect of associating the House of Lords with an event which showed "preference to one cause over another". It supported the campaign for an apology from the British Government for the Balfour Declaration over the opinions of those who take a different view.
66. That said, without the recording it would have been impossible for me to deal with the complaints about breach of personal honour by using the best possible evidence.

Finding on alleged breach of rules on filming and photography

67. Members are under an obligation to ensure they are familiar with, and abide by, the rules governing meetings they host on the parliamentary estate. In this instance, Baroness Tonge said she was not familiar with the rules, and relied on the indication of the camera crew that they had sufficient permission.

60 House of Lords Offices Committee, (3rd Report, Session 1995–96, HL Paper 83); agreed by the House on 3 June 1996 (see LJ (1995–96) 442–43 and 464).

61 *Op. cit.*

62 Appendix N.

63 Appendix N.

64 Appendices E and M.

65 Appendix M.

66 Appendix E (email from Islam Ali, AJM Correspondent, Mubashar Channel, to Baroness Tonge).

I have no reason to doubt that, but it does not remove Baroness Tonge's responsibility for ensuring that the event complied with the rules.

68. I find that Baroness Tonge breached paragraph 10(c) of the Code of Conduct by not obtaining permission for the event on 25 October 2016 to be filmed and photographed. I repeat that Baroness Tonge has admitted this breach, and apologised to me for it.

Event on 14 December 2016

Alleged breach of banqueting rules and alleged failure to act on personal honour: background

69. On 14 December 2016 Baroness Tonge hosted an event in House of Lords committee room G at which Thomas Suárez discussed his book *State of Terror*. The event was catered. That means that the House's banqueting rules⁶⁷ applied. These rules were agreed by the House,⁶⁸ so a breach of them is a breach of the Code of Conduct. If a breach in this respect was established, I would also consider whether Baroness Tonge had failed to act on her personal honour by breaching two sets of rules on hosting events in Parliament in short order.
70. Rule J of the banqueting rules states:
- “No commercial promotion or demonstration, or book or product launch, is permitted by any person or external organisation, including on publicity material for the function. The only exceptions permitted are for book launches for books written by Members or primarily about them or for publications produced by UK Registered Charities.”
71. The book *State of Terror* is subtitled “How terrorism created modern Israel”. It clearly is not a book written by a member or primarily about members, and it was not produced by a UK registered charity. Therefore, if the event on 14 December 2016 amounted to a book launch, it would have been in breach of the banqueting rules.

Consideration of alleged breach of banqueting rules and alleged failure to act on personal honour

72. In her response⁶⁹ to this complaint Baroness Tonge said that the book was published in early October 2016. There were two book launches held then⁷⁰ at which the book was on sale. Reviews appeared in two journals and on social media around that time. Baroness Tonge said that the publisher asked if a further book launch was possible in the Lords. She said it was not.
73. However, Baroness Tonge said that as there was interest among her friends in the book she decided to hold a private party in which the author would discuss his book. She said that no books were on sale at the event and she did not see a copy of it in the room. No press or media were present or invited; all the 30 or so people there were friends or colleagues of hers or the author's. Refreshments were paid for by a friend of hers.

67 House Committee, *Banqueting rules* (1st Report, Session 2014–15, HL Paper 8).

68 They were agreed on 30 July 2014.

69 Appendix Q.

70 One in the Mosaic Rooms, the other in SOAS University of London.

74. Baroness Tonge enclosed a letter from the managing director of the publishers of the book, which confirmed her account.⁷¹ Separately, Lord Warner emailed me.⁷² He was at the event. He said that the publisher had made clear at the event that it was not a book launch and that copies of the book could not be purchased there. He said that the book had already been launched and that it was clear many of those at the event on 14 December 2016 had already read it. He outlined the contents of the book and thought there was “no reason why we as parliamentarians should not be able to meet and discuss difficult issues in our committee rooms”.

Finding on alleged breach of banqueting rules and alleged failure to act on personal honour

75. I find that the event hosted by Baroness Tonge on 14 December 2016 did not constitute a book launch. The event took place two months after the book was published, and after two (external) formal book launches. The book was not on sale or display at the event. As the event was not a book launch I find that Baroness Tonge did not breach the banqueting rules and so did not breach paragraph 10(c) of the Code of Conduct. It follows that she did not breach the requirement to act on her personal honour by not complying with those rules.

Summary of findings

76. In this report I find that Baroness Tonge:
- (i) did not breach paragraph 8(b) of the Code of Conduct in respect of the meeting in committee room 2A hosted and chaired by her on 25 October 2016;
 - (ii) breached paragraph 10(c) of the Code of Conduct by not obtaining permission for that meeting to be filmed and photographed—a breach admitted by Baroness Tonge;
 - (iii) did not breach paragraph 8(b) or 10(c) of the Code of Conduct in respect of the event in committee room G hosted by her on 14 December 2016.
77. This is the first occasion on which a member has been found in breach of the Code for failure to comply with the rules on filming and photography. I therefore consider it appropriate to refer the case to the Sub-Committee on Lords’ Conduct.

Lucy Scott-Moncrieff, CBE
Commissioner for Standards

71 Appendix Q.

72 Appendix R.

Appendix A: Transcript of the meeting chaired by Baroness Tonge in the House of Lords to launch the Balfour Apology Campaign, 25 October 2016

Video 1 [5:30]

Baroness Tonge: My name is Jenny Tonge. I am a member of the House of Lords and I have been involved—to put it mildly—with the campaign for a free Palestine for about 15 years and I am getting into trouble still. That is the fun of it.

Tonight is really extremely exciting. It is to me and it is to the people here. Tonight we are about a year away from the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration. So tonight is the beginnings of the apology for the Balfour Declaration, which was British—we did it, folks. All the Brits here, it is on our heads. We were responsible for the Balfour Declaration.

As you know, it was in two parts. The first one was giving the Jewish people a homeland and the other half was so long as they did not interfere with the physical or human rights of the indigenous people of the area. So there were two halves to that Balfour Declaration.

What we plan to do is launch the apology for Balfour tonight. There is a petition apologising for the Balfour Declaration with Downing Street at the moment, waiting for approval. Hopefully, in the next week it will go online. We then want to get 100,000 signatures and all of you have got to help with your tweeting, your Facebooking and your letter writing or whatever you do. If we can get 100,000 signatures, it will trigger a debate in the House of Commons.

But in any case there will be people in the House of Commons and people in the House of Lords who will be raising this issue all through the next year, as will the Palestinian Return Centre, EuroPal—all of the organisations—PSC. Everyone involved campaigning for Palestine is coming together in this year and every month there will be an event. I am reliably informed by Majed from PRC that there is going to be an event every month, so we are actually going to be quite busy. The first of those will be a book launch next month some time. It is to launch this book, called “Britain’s Legacy on Palestine”.

Video 2 [53:55]

[Video begins mid-sentence.]

Majed Al-Zeer: ... the British history had been written. The faith and aspirations of the entire nation were planned for decades to come. So instead of independence, Palestinians were to get wars, camps, refugees, blockades, massacres and many more of their painful memories. Indeed, Britain’s intervention through the Balfour Declaration lacked legal basis and clearly put doubt on the political ethics of Britain. For decades to come and after the announcement of the Balfour Declaration, Britain continued its colonial policies to settle one nation over another. Britain’s role extended to building a state for Israel and directly contributed to the displacement of the Palestinians. Commenting on the outcomes of the declaration, Avi Shlaim—I am sure any Palestinian historian knows the name—states: “Britain had no moral right to promise national rights for a tiny Jewish minority in a predominantly Arab country. It did so not for altruistic reasons but for selfish, if misguided reasons”. He also writes: “I can only agree with Sir John Chancellor that the Balfour Declaration was a colossal blunder: it has proved to be a catastrophe for the Palestinians and it gave rise to one of the most intense, bitter, and protracted conflicts of modern times”.

The declaration resulted in the suffering of millions of Palestinian refugees across the diaspora. We have refugees in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Let us say something about the Palestinians in Syria. Half a million Palestinian refugees are being targeted and are facing another exodus when they are fleeing the country for their lives. In Lebanon, refugees are marginalised and have no hope for the future, with no jobs and a lack of social and educational services.

Meanwhile, Palestinians in Gaza have been subject to the continuing inhumane Israeli siege for a decade and three deadly wars that killed thousands of them. People there are still living in awful conditions, and hope seems far from reach for them, while in the West Bank, apartheid rule and illegal settlements have become a reality. In Jerusalem, a rapid Judaisation campaign by Israeli security is aiming to expel the remaining Palestinians from the city. The Palestinian refugees in Iraq were also affected by the many wars that hit the country and, since 2003, the British establishment has recognised the fact that Palestinians are suffering.

Here is one example. We should carry this quote with us until 2 November 2017. A British specialist Sir Winston Churchill said before a special committee in 1957, here in the House of Commons, and here I quote: “Hundreds of thousands of Arabs”—Palestinians—“driven from their homes and existing precariously in the no-man’s-land created round Israel’s frontiers is cruel and dangerous”. He acknowledged at that time that there are some sort of dangers against the Palestinians who fled their land. I make it clear on behalf of the Palestinians who are here tonight that Britain’s policy of Palestine and Israel remains the same since the Nakba: a biased foreign policy toward Israel and a carelessness about the Palestinians. As we are approaching the centenary of the Balfour Declaration in 2017, we are keen to have an official recognition of the Palestinian people’s plight.

Let us make it clear here: Britain is the number one responsible for our agony. By this I refer to the official position of successive governments who have failed to admit their historical mistake. We differentiate here between the official position and the British people. Of course, the British people in their masses and on the basis of their values certainly refuse what their governments inflicted on us. The time has come to amend for the mistake of Balfour by—and we are calling for those aims—recognising the colonial history of Britain in Palestine and acting accordingly. Of course, this must include public apology and reparation et cetera.

Number two: work towards the self-determination of the Palestinian people where Britain should stop its biased foreign policy which favours Israelis. This will also include Britain making sure that Palestinian rights are granted back, especially the right of return. This is why our campaign, the Balfour apology campaign, is being launched today—or tonight.

Our key demand here is that the British Government apologise for its great mistake against the Palestinians. Our campaign will educate the public and inform them of Britain’s role in Palestine. We are collecting signatures across 2016 and 2017, demanding that the Government atone for its mistake. Our campaign was initially launched in 2013, and we are in co-ordination with the different campaigns in the UK and we work together with them shoulder to shoulder. We are to employ many tools for the purpose of this campaign. The petition is one tool that we are using.

Finally, we are glad of the aforesaid Palestinian position, which starts to call on Britain to apologise for Palestine. Indeed, the speech of President Abbas at the UN General Assembly was very crucial, and we should admit that and the support of

the Palestinian Embassy here and Dr Manual Hassassian. I can't remember him missing any event which was organised by the Palestinian Return Centre since he came to the country as ambassador; he was here always for Palestine. He sends his greeting to the event and he gave us his full support.

Finally—this is the crucial point for Palestinians in the UK—we are standing here with two identities: as British citizens and as Palestinian citizens. We have some sort of duties in the UK as British and we have our duties as Palestinians for our people.

Audience member 1: Maybe as Palestinian victims.

Majed Al-Zeer: Palestinian victims if you want to say so. At the end of the day we can do a lot. We have momentum in this country and the pro-Palestine campaign has shown that we can do a lot—with Jenny, with other Palestinian supporters in the House of Commons and the House of Lords, we will achieve it. Our time as a target to achieve the 100,000 is not 2 November 2017, it will be the start of summer 2017 just for us to build on what we have achieved at 100,000, to just put [*inaudible*]. Thank you so much.

Baroness Tonge: Thank you very much. [*Applause.*] I just want to, before we go on to our next speaker, welcome two other people. First of all, we must welcome Israel Radio in the form of Jerry Lewis, who is here. We are very honoured to have him here and I will tell you for why: because he was the first person to broadcast my comments, which gave me such fame and notoriety and gave the Palestinian cause such an immense boost in publicity. So I think we should give him some applause. [*Applause.*] He is here tonight. We are greatly honoured.

The second person I want to welcome has come with [*inaudible*] and it is Professor Yakov Rabkin from Montreal University, which is a long way away. Thank you very much for coming. Now we will move straight on to our second speaker, whose name I have to confess I first came across at Qatar airport. I was waiting for a flight to somewhere in Africa, where I go, and I came across this book by a man called Karl Sabbagh—it was in English, not in Arabic—and I thought, “This looks interesting, this is the story of a real Palestinian; a story about this family. I will get this”. I read it for the rest of my trip. I was then very thrilled to realise that this man is English. He lived in Richmond, where I lived for quite a while. He does not live there now but we are very much in touch. He is an author. He is a Palestinian author and he is English, too. He is now a publisher and is publishing a very good book in future which he might tell you about. Karl, thank you so much for coming.

Karl Sabbagh: I live in Oxfordshire, so I come to London by train, and when I go by train I like to have something to read. In my home I have several walls full of books, one of which was an entire wall of books about Palestine—a small selection of what's possible. I pulled one off the wall and sat on the train reading it. There is one page in it which is so apposite, so instead of saying what I was going to say to start with, I am going to read you this page. It is a little-known book, you probably can't get copies of it; it's a pamphlet really about Palestine, published in 1946. The author gives 12 pledges made by Britain to different groups, some of them made in white papers, some of them made in official statements in Parliament or in speeches by ministers, some of them made to Jews, some of them made directly to Palestinians. I think these 12 pledges really sum up why Britain has to apologise, because of course so few of them were kept. I would like to read them to you. They

are all referenced. I am not going to tell you where they all came from, but they are all absolutely solid British promises.

Palestine's future was to be settled in accordance with the wishes of the peoples concerned. Her people would have an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development. They do not include Jews of other countries—the immigration of Jews. Jews to have a national home in Palestine with entry in appropriate numbers. This was not to impair either the civil or religious rights of the non-Jewish majority or the political and economic freedom of the people the Zionists found there. Zionism was not to burden those people or to cost any of them their employment.

Remember, each of these was said during the space of the 1920s and the 1930s as firm statements from the British Government, largely to Palestinians.

Palestine would not be converted as a whole into a Jewish national home, still less would it be allowed to become a wholly Jewish state. The Zionist organisations would have no part in the country's general administration. Palestine would have a legislative council with a large proportion of members elected on a wide franchise. The people inhabiting Palestine in 1918 were to have freedom and independence on the principle of the consent of the governed. Number 11: this meant the establishment of a national government and administration deriving its authority from the initiative and free choice of the indigenous population.

This one I think this was in the white paper of 1938: Palestine will become an independent state by 1949, Jews forming about a third of the population and having a share in the government.

I think we know how many of those pledges—firm pledges—by the British government were kept. In fact, as we know, only the two that related to the Jews have any sort of relevance in the end. Is an apology therefore justified? Well, I would like to look at it from three angles. I think first of all, in any situation where people talk about an apology, there has to have been some harm caused, otherwise what are you saying sorry for? The second thing is the apologist—the person, the entity being asked to apologise—must have been responsible for that harm.

And the third thing is—I shall elaborate on it later—that the apologist could have avoided making the action but nevertheless chose to make it. Then there is a fourth issue, which I shall finish with, which is: what good would an apology do anyway? That is quite relevant because, whatever we try to do over the next year, some people are going to say, “Well, I might accept all of this but what good would it do?”

Let us look at these elements in the case of the Balfour Declaration. What harm has been caused by it? Today there are 11 million Palestinians in the world, none of whom have the rights that they are entitled to and all of whom have had property stolen and destroyed. Those in the diaspora are banned from the country of their ancestors. Those who managed to avoid being expelled from that land are subject to racism and other forms of discrimination in Israel and occupation in the West Bank. Eight million Jews in Israel are persuaded by their government that they are all under constant threat in an economy that depends on aid from outside, much of which is spent on arms instead of improving their lives. There is a state, Israel, split between religious extremists, nationalist bigots and secular Jews who are forced to observe religious customs in which they have no interest. And there is a Middle East, whose political and social tensions are interwoven with the Arab/

Israel disputes, which has suffered three wars caused by Israel at times and in places of its own choosing over the last 60 years. That is a catalogue of harm that I hope any reasonable person would agree is a picture of *[inaudible]* how much of this is to do with the Balfour Declaration.

In a sense, you could say that the suffering of the Palestinians, and indeed the Israelis after 1948, is entirely due to the Israelis. But Israel would not have been founded if it had not been for the Balfour Declaration. When you think that Israel and its supporters in Britain are today making representations to the Foreign Office to commemorate the Balfour Declaration, they must think it had something to do with the fact that they exist. They see it at least as the major cause of their triumph over Palestine and the Palestinians. If that is the case, we too are entitled to see it in the same way, although to seek commiseration rather than commemoration.

There are two issues. Is Britain in general historically and politically responsible? If so, one obligation is there on today's Government to make an apology for the action of their predecessors. Let us take two examples: slavery and the Holocaust. These are issues where people, entities and groups have sought apologies in the past and received them. These are apologies not for actions that were done by those in power at the time of the apology; these are apologies for events that happened in the past, for which nevertheless their successors as politicians and statesmen have accepted there is some value and necessity to apologise in that situation.

Is there a connection between British actions and what happened in 1948 that is centred on the Balfour Declaration and which demands an apology from what I would call the inheritors of the original government who made those decisions? Let us look at it. The Balfour Declaration was just a letter. It was a letter written by Zionists to be sent to Zionists via the Foreign Office so that it got a signature from Balfour, but effectively the wording was determined by Zionists. It ended up not quite as strong as they had hoped. I suppose we should be slightly grateful for that; there was this vague side-reference to the non-Jewish inhabitants which I think the people who wrote it were not very happy about. Nevertheless, it was just a letter. It was not a treaty. It could not have been a treaty; who would it have been between? Treaties are between nations. There was only one nation involved and then there was another group of lobbyists.

However, the key event that changed the situation—or at least gave a bit more ammunition to future British governments when they tried to justify what they were doing in Palestine—was that it became incorporated into the British mandate. This was a long document in which the League of Nations allowed or called for different countries to supervise countries in the remnants of the Ottoman Empire after the Turks had been conquered. In fact, the mandate for Palestine was rather different from the others in that it included material from the Balfour Declaration.

Now, what is often not realised is that it did not include the Balfour Declaration, or rather it made the Balfour Declaration stronger. The Balfour Declaration says that the government would endeavour to “facilitate” the idea of a national home in Palestine. By the time it got into the mandate, I am not sure at what point this little change happened but the mandatory power, Britain, said it would “secure the establishment” of the Jewish state. So suddenly, we have gone from a letter expressing mild interest and support for something into a statement which can be taken as a binding commitment. From then on, successive governments quoted the mandate and the Balfour Declaration at every turn as they inexorably put into motion statutes and the processes that suppressed the rights of the indigenous inhabitants, while promoting the interests of the Zionists.

In fact, in a sense, any apology needs to be broader than the Balfour Declaration alone. It needs to be for successive governments treating the Balfour Declaration as something it wasn't. It wasn't a treaty, it can't have been a treaty. Even when it was incorporated in a mandate, the Balfour Declaration was an illegitimate paragraph, recognising some non-existent rights of a non-existent people, in a political sense.

During the 30 years of British control of Palestine, there was constant recourse to the Balfour Declaration clause on the mandate, in white papers, parliamentary debates, personal discussion, communication with Palestinians—some of that list of 12 relates to that. Of course, there was no attention paid to the other clauses of the mandate, which required the British government to safeguard the interests of the indigenous population—the so-called non-Jews in Palestine, who formed 90% of the population at the time of the declaration.

The existence of the mandate and the terms of the declaration were used willingly and deliberately by successive British governments of all political persuasions to turn Palestine into a Jewish state. To ask why they did this, particularly after any initial justification—for example, to enlist the support of Jews in America and Russian in the war effort—had long passed. It would take up too much time today to look at the reasons, but it is actually irrelevant to the question of Britain's responsibility.

Certainly, one factor in the continual recourse to the Zionist angle in Palestine was the search for a quiet life by politicians. If you read the diaries or the memoirs or the letters of British politicians at the time, the uproar that would erupt among the Zionists if British statesmen ever did anything that addressed the rights of the Palestinian Arabs was something to be avoided at any cost, even if, as was the case, it was storing up trouble for the future.

I will just give you one example of many of what could happen if anybody tried to recognise the rights of the Palestinians. When Lord Passfield issued a white paper in 1930, which for the first time recognised officially that Palestinian Arabs had rights which could be jeopardised by the Jewish national home project, the Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, received an angry phone call from Chaim Weizmann, the leader of the British Zionists, told him to sign a document drawn up by the Zionists—another one—after the Balfour Declaration—disowning his own government's white paper. MacDonald meekly did this, supported by his Cabinet by the way, apart from Passfield obviously, and the white paper was consigned to the dustbin. This new document was known to the Arabs, who had welcome the original white paper, as the Black Letter.

At every point when the rights of the Palestinians were jeopardised, the British sided with the Zionists against the indigenous inhabitants. There was the idea of a legislative assembly, which was enshrined in all the mandates that the mandatory power, that should guide the populations towards governing themselves. There were two efforts to set up a legislative assembly in Palestine, one in 1922 and one in the 1930s. The second was so biased against the Arabs, who at the time were nearly 90% of the population; it was structured in such a way that a combination of nominated British representatives and Jewish representatives could attain a majority over the Arab representatives. You can see why that might not be very attractive to the Arabs. The second attempt, in the 1930s, although not perfect, was accepted by the Palestinians, but it was not accepted, as then the Zionists protested because it made it possible for there to be situations where the Palestinians could actually have some say in their own lives.

So these are examples of deliberate actions by Britain that sprang from the Balfour Declaration. One historian said of that period, “The centrepiece of British policy was that Britain would withhold representative institutions to Palestine as long as there was an Arab majority”. This is not some rabid anti-Zionist saying this; it is Martin Gilbert, who was a major apologist for the Zionists, but he knew what was going on. Can anybody really maintain that the Balfour Declaration was not the defining document in British policy towards Palestine?

Before we get to my final point, did Britain have to do all the things it did that led to the land being taken away? Obviously the case for an apology for a course of action is weakened if any of the alternatives would have had even worse consequences. Take the Iraq war. There is an argument often made a few yards from here that, whatever has happened since Saddam Hussein was removed, the events over the last 13 or so years in Iraq would have been even worse than they are today if there had not been an Iraq war. People who support that view would say that Britain does not owe the Iraqis an apology; on the contrary, the Iraqis should be grateful.

I cannot think of any view of British actions in Palestine, starting with the Balfour Declaration, that says that if the British had not done that, it would have been worse for the Palestinians. I really do not think anyone can argue that. The British Government did not have to allow waves of immigration. They did not have to give an unelected body of European Jews privileged access to the administration of Palestine, they did not have to allow discriminatory employment law to allow Jewish organisations not to employ Arabs, and of course they did not have to work actively to prevent some kind of legislature while the Arabs were in the vast majority. So on the grounds of harm caused, responsibility for that harm and the choice to do it when there were other options, I hope I have shown that there is a strong case for demanding an apology from Britain.

There is one other question I should like to address: what benefits would an apology bring? This is an issue that relates also to Israel and its stance over the decades. As a Palestinian who has talked to lots of Palestinians, I feel that one of the biggest insults to us is the denial of the truths about dispossession. Israel is a prime practitioner of this. Decades of lies by Israeli politicians have persuaded their own citizens and many of their supporters that the Palestinians are making stuff up.

No matter how often the truth is spelled out, by Jewish historians as well as others, the denials continue. Jenny mentioned my publishing company. We have a book that has just come out called *State of Terror*, which is an appalling catalogue of the violence and terror in the 1940s and into the 1950s when the state of Israel was founded—terror not just by small Jewish terrorist groups but supported by large numbers of Jews who lived in Palestine. It was a blatant and self-justifying attempt to get the British out of Palestine and take over the land. That needs an apology. Holocaust denial is quite rightly seen as a gross insult to the memory of millions who suffered under Nazi Germany but Nakba denial is a daily occurrence for Palestinians. It is a real obstacle to any peace settlement. To put it another way, the psychological effect of an apology would be to remove a major roadblock, proving that for the first time the Israelis were serious about addressing the injustice and arguing for a peace treaty.

I just happen to have a minute’s worth of words to say [*inaudible*]. There would be a similar effect on British policy if the British apologised. Recognition of the injustice would mean that future governments could no longer sidestep the issue. It would mean that at some level Britain accepted responsibility for its share in the

situation today and might do more about it than just parroting the long-dead two-state solution. To paraphrase Monty Python: it is no more. It has ceased to be. It has expired and gone to meet its maker.

For all those reasons, I think it is timely for Britain to make an apology, I think it is necessary for Britain to make an apology and I think it will actually do some good if Britain makes an apology. Thank you. [*Applause.*]

Baroness Tonge: Thank you very much indeed, Karl. That was fascinating and you are only a minute over, which is pretty good. Do the sardines at the back there want to try to swim their way over to the opposite corner? You can perhaps push your way round and you would have a little bit more room there. There is quite a bit of space around the desk there. There is a chair in the middle. [*Short break as people move around the room.*]

Thank you very much. I am sorry for that break. Actually you ought to be in the gap there. You're blocking everybody at the back there. Are you talking about the Palace of Westminster? There is air conditioning in the two main chambers. I think there was supposed to be some here, but that is the reason we have all got to vacate and close down. Okay, now we come on to our final speaker, who is someone I have known for a long, long time. She used to be in charge of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign. She is now our president, or honorary something or other. Anyway, she is always there, and she is the most insistent attender. What I have always said about PSC is that in the dark days when there was nothing there, PSC was keeping the flag flying and organising marches and producing the leaflets, They have done a fantastic job over the years, so we are absolutely thrilled to bits, Betty, to have you here at the launch of the Apology for Balfour.

Betty Hunter: Thank you very much, Jenny. Thank you very much, Majed, for inviting me here to this very important occasion. 2017 is an incredibly crucial year in the quest for justice for the Palestinian people. I do not think we can stress that enough, really.

In a sense, I wish we had started having this discussion a little earlier, in preparation, because I think the importance of it should start from the beginning of January, because I believe that the Israeli state will be organising itself to turn the year into a year of celebration. It is our task to ensure that the British public knows the truth and does not see it as a year of celebration. I think it was Karl who said see it as a year of commiseration—that is our job, that is our task, and I think we have to look at how we do it.

But I do want to say a few general words as well. The whole issue of where Balfour came from, we have to remind ourselves, and I am talking about ourselves, the British people here, because it is our responsibility. It arose out of colonialism, British colonialism. We spent the First World War in talks, carving up the Middle East and other areas of the world between the old empires—Britain, France, Russia and everything else. That is what we were doing behind the backs of the indigenous people. That really was the *modus operandi* and Balfour came from that. We had so much double-dealing. Karl read out the promises that went to some Palestinians for independence and so on, and at the same time the promises of the Jewish homeland. All of them were about extending European imperialism. What has happened since then is that we have seen in fact a new colonialism—the colonialism of the Israeli state. We have to see it as colonialism. We have to call the settlements colonies as well, to explain to the British public that the British Empire did not go away in the 1950s and 1960s. We did not hand everything

back and give freedom to the peoples who had been in our empire. There is this particular issue of our historical, well, “terribleness”, I think—I cannot think of the word I would use. The historical facts are a tragedy, and it is the Palestinian catastrophe this is ongoing. That is what we must take responsibility for.

I do think we need to acknowledge that the new colonialism of Israel was all based on violence. All the territory was gained by violence, from the war against the British army when it was there in the 1940s, the Nakba of 1947 and 1948, 1967, 1973 and now the violence that is waged on the Palestinian people daily—the killing, the wounding, the stealing and the confiscating of more and more land. Settlements are now encroaching all over the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. This is all Israeli colonialism and we have got to stand up to that and explain this historic injustice to the people of Britain.

Gaza is another particular area of violence against the Palestinian people. Only yesterday, Avigdor Lieberman said that they were absolutely ready to go back to Gaza and make sure that no Hamas are left in that land. We know that the last two wars that were fought—actually, not wars but attacks and massacres—in Gaza led to thousands of people being massacred. So we know what the intention is.

The problem for us is that Britain and the UN, despite resolutions and platitudes, have allowed all this violence to continue, rewarded rather than punished. I think it was Karl who talked about the Israeli state being funded from outside, particularly its weapons and so on. We are doing that—maintaining this terrible injustice on the Palestinian people. The settlements are just horrendous. Settler violence, because no one is standing up to it, is increasing all the time—these armed colonialists who are in the land of Palestine.

In my opinion, and I think in that of everybody else here, Britain is responsible for the continued cowardly condoning of this historic tragedy that was put on the Palestinian people. They condone the denial of Palestinian human rights, civil rights, national rights. Basically, when the Israelis deny what they are doing it is as if they are enjoying the subjugation of the Palestinian people. It is really quite horrendous that we are still witnessing what we are witnessing and not doing anything about it.

A hundred years is a long time to wait for justice. Seventy years is a long time to wait. Fifty years is a long time to wait. 2017 commemorates those three major events, and that is why it is a particularly crucial year. One of the things we have learned after the con trick of the Oslo Accords is that only decisive international action can change the situation of the Palestinian people. It is only when we can unite and start organising.

I think things have developed. Since the second intifada we have witnessed a very significant change in international support for the rights of the Palestinian people, even to the extent now that in America we can see people standing up and actually saying things—Jewish Voices for Peace and other organisations. We always say that the politicians change when their electoral careers are at stake. So we have to keep up this pressure because that is what motivates politicians—their careers, their future.

So the demand for an apology from the British Government is important but I have to say, Majed, I do not think it is enough.

Because let us face it, in America there was the apology in 2008 from the House of Representatives on slavery. They had to acknowledge the problems of slavery

and the Jim Crow situation in the United States. They did acknowledge, as well as apologise, which I think is important, as we talk about denial being something that has to be rejected. But also it says something about commitment to rectify the lingering consequences. Actually, those words mean nothing because we know that there is absolutely, really deep racism in the United States and we see that with Black Lives Matter and so on still having to be organised. I don't think apology is enough, but I think it can be a significant and symbolic thing to campaign upon. I think we have to go further forward. What we have to demand from our government is that they support the establishment of a Palestinian state with full rights for all of the Palestinian people, including the right of return. And I think we have to popularise this. Maybe the petition is a way of popularising and telling people about this history. That is the way I see the petition.

I think, from 1 January, we have got to take this message out. We can't wait until November. I think it is great that in November we have a really big coming together, but throughout the year, we have to be really on our toes and taking every opportunity to take the message out, because I think the message from the other side will be being taken out, and we do not want the British people to be conned into maintaining the Government's support for Palestine. I would say that it is our responsibility to actually construct a popular mass campaign. I think we have done quite well in the last 15 years, but I am afraid it is not enough. If we don't manage to change the balance of forces in 2017, we might have missed a very important opportunity because the media and the politicians, internationally as well as in Britain, will be looking at what's going on. But it is the British responsibility to do something about it and to take some kind of leadership. I think there's probably a difference between what the Palestinian people make as their demands on the Government—we obviously have to have official demands made and so on—and what the British people demand, as people who stand up for freedom and justice for all people, to say enough's enough from our Government, we won't stay in this situation of allowing colonialism to persist in our name.

The Israelis like to say that there were no such things as Palestinians—Golda Meir and others. Netanyahu has said, despite his public statements, that there will be no Palestinian state. I think from day one in 2017, we've got to work together to make sure that we stop our Government's collusion in this ongoing Israeli project. It is our responsibility. It starts in this building, and we've got to go out from here and start organising.

I would hope that there would be unity over the different demands but, frankly, we have got to get going now. [*Applause.*]

Baroness Tonge: Betty, that was absolutely terrific. Thank you very much. I will open this up to all of you, but I thought as we have got a visitor here who has come a long way, it would be nice—he's promised me four minutes, which I'm afraid isn't long enough. But Professor Yakov Rabkin from Montreal University is just going to say a few words to us. Do you want to come and sit there? You need the mics; there are lots of mics. Then I will open it up. [*Laughter.*]

Professor Yakov Rabkin: Good evening. Thank you for giving me the floor. I am here at the invitation of my publisher, Pluto Press, who published my book here in London a few months ago, *What is Modern Israel?*. I found out that there would be this meeting. It coincided with the Jewish holiday that ended just an hour ago so I walked from Stamford Hill, which was a very nice walk.

Seriously, I think it is very important to ask for—to demand—an apology. In Australia, there is a Sorry Day when the Australians apologise for what has been done to the aboriginal people. Very importantly, they have stopped doing it. Apology is not enough; you have to first stop the injustice. As far as the displacement of Palestinians is concerned, the injustice keeps going on. That is a crucial distinction because the dispossession has not ended. Therefore the apology we are talking about, although it is more relevant than perhaps many other apologies that we have heard about.

The Balfour Declaration and the atmosphere in which it was taken disregarded totally the opinions of the local population. I have a quote in my book—I did not have time to find it so I will just paraphrase it—that at that time they said, “We are totally unconcerned about the opinion of a few hundred thousand people who happen to inhabit the Holy Land”. I stress “happen to inhabit”. That was very conscious and very open. We have to understand that the reasons we have heard today for the Balfour Declaration are indeed valid, but there is another reason that I think is very important: Christian Zionists. If I remember, it was Lloyd George who said that he knew the geography of the Holy Land better than he knew the geography of England. In that atmosphere, Lord Shaftesbury and other people whose statues I just passed were extremely committed to the ingathering of Hebrews as a way of speeding the second coming of Christ. That is a whole programme that has not died because most of the support for the state of Israel, like most of the ovations that we heard when Netanyahu spoke at the US Congress, comes from representatives of Christian Zionists. Pastor Hagee says there are 50 million in the United States. That is a significant number. This is something that, again, is continuing. It is not just history that we are talking about.

Finally, and I think this is relevant to the climate of the discussions in Britain, as far as I can tell Balfour himself was no friend of Jews. In fact, he opposed the immigration of Russian Jews to Britain in 1905. We should not be surprised, just as the founder of political Zionism Theodor Herzl was not surprised and wrote in his diary, “Anti-Semites will be our best friends and allies”. It has been so for the last 100 years. This, again, has to be understood. Indeed, it was a Jewish member of the Cabinet who protested vigorously against the Balfour Declaration and called it overtly anti-Semitic. That happened right here on these premises. Thank you so much. [*Applause.*]

Baroness Tonge: Thank you very much indeed. Just to give you a plug, *What is Modern Israel?* is Yakov Rabkin’s book. All the way from Canada, thank you.

Now, the floor is yours. One more thing I shall say—because I know people will start drifting off towards 9 o’clock, when we have to leave the room—is that I have said there will be a whole year of activities. Those activities are also dependent on you. All of you must belong to a larger group of people, whether it is your bridge club, your football club, your yoga group, your day centre, your choir—everybody belongs to a group. I find it quite effective to say to that group that you belong to, “Come along. Can we have a social evening and we will talk about this?” In fact, the last time I did that I actually raised £2,000 for Palestine. There are a lot of people here tonight. If you could all go to each of the groups you belong to and say, “Hey, this is the reason. It’s Balfour apology year. Please, please let us have an evening—coffee, wine tasting, whatever you like—and I want to talk about this situation.” Everybody must be doing that. So you have a job to do before I see you all again. Now it is over to the floor. We have 50 minutes or so. Not long speeches, please.

Audience member 2: Andy Simons. I am fully appreciative of this, especially the new volume that the Palestinian Return Centre is putting out about this. I just want to make the point—it is not so obvious—that activists, as we are, think everything is important, such as Palestinian child prisoners, but to people out in the world that is not so important because they have not heard of it. The media over the next year will be doing publicity for us and for Balfour. The word “Balfour” will be on Radio 4, on Channel 4 and here and there throughout the year, so it is good if we use this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to promote it. I would like to ask when the open letter, the petition, will be put online.

Baroness Tonge: It should be in the next 10 days.

Video 3 [45:41]

Audience member 3: I’ve gone back to my university subject, which is politics. I am reading a book, which is 30 years old, over the last few weeks. It does strike me that something we need to consider to broaden our message is that geopolitics does not happen in isolation. Britain does not do things in isolation. A book I’m reading today, *The Ottoman Endgame*, reminded me of Churchill: Churchill, obviously, obfuscating certain actions which were happening to, you know, spite the French. Let’s remember that we have lots of different nations who were actually, when you consider world politics and when you consider increasing your armaments—and I’m going back 30 years with this book—these weapons, one nuclear warhead, could take out eight cities. So today can you imagine? We must be talking hundreds of cities. I don’t follow weapons to the minute but we must remember this. The point I’m trying to make is who can we connect with, who can we appreciate? Obviously Britain did not act in isolation. A lot of what Britain did actually was out of fear, the same way that Israel, a lot of it, is acting out of created fears. I think we need to remember that obviously what has been done in Britain’s name was done out of fear or “We’re carving up that state of the world”. I mean, nation-state politics didn’t exist. It was a European phenomenon in the sense that we know it. So I think there’s a point in that. I hope so.

Baroness Tonge: I think “fear” is a very good word. I do think I would be very fearful if I lived in Gaza. I would be very fearful if I lived in the West Bank. I know there are Israelis who are also very fearful and we have to acknowledge that. Now, let’s go to this side.

Audience member 4: Thank you. I have three points. The first one is I just recall in the mid-1970s when Stanford University in the United States issued field research about Palestinians who were born outside Palestine. They concluded and found that Palestinians who were born outside Palestine are more insistent, more claiming their rights in Palestine than their fathers or grandfathers. This is one point. So Palestine is in the mind of Palestinians whether they were born in Palestine, like myself—Majed is not; he is very young—or outside Palestine.

The other thing is for the next 20 to 30 years, we have generations like myself who were born in Palestine and are still feeling that they are victims, more than the victims, of what happened. That in itself is confirmation that Palestine, with all our friends and supporters in the UK and elsewhere, will not be forgotten. We have genuinely tried to cling, with full respect to whoever says no.

The third one is—maybe Majed will agree with me; I hope so—we would like Mahmoud Abbas to retire before 2017, because he is a liability on Palestinian issues, with due respect to the ambassador who is here—is he here?

Audience members: No.

Audience member 4: Okay. So this is the third thing. Otherwise thank you for listening to me, for I'm old [*inaudible*].

Baroness Tonge: Thank you. One more point and then I'll ask the speakers if they want to say anything.

Audience member 5: I am Jafar Ramini, a Palestinian writer and political analyst. Thank you very much for all that you have said tonight. It's 100% true. I have one correction for my brother Majed. It wasn't a mistake. The Balfour Declaration was a deliberate act to implant a colony/nation into our midst and get rid of us, as was the Sykes–Picot agreement. It was a deliberate act. I want to thank the professor. What a difference between a Jew and a Zionist. [*Applause.*] Most Jews who are around the world who admit that Israel does not stand for them should come forward and stand with us because what we want is co-existence. We don't want to throw anybody in the sea. We want to reclaim our rights and we want the world to stand with us for claiming our rights. Mr Sabbagh, thank you very much, sir, for all the information, especially this book. I spend 99% of my time reading, writing and speaking about Palestine. This is new to me. Thank you very much. I have just one point for the professor and my brother Majed about the Zionist Mr Churchill, who is the darling of this nation. He equates us with the dog you find in the manger. As you can see, we're not dogs; we're human beings. But he was racist. So was Balfour. He did not do it for the love of the Jews. He did it because he did not want the Jews in his midst. It is the biggest case of NIMBY in history. Thank you very much.

Audience member 6: Two catholic observations. There is a Scottish connection.

Baroness Tonge: Please stand up. Are you able to stand?

Audience member 6: Sorry. First I want to thank Betty by the way for her presentation. This thing that Betty mentioned, this movement, she's done an enormous amount and she deserves our thanks. [*Applause.*] There is a Scottish dimension to this whole thing. This is [*inaudible*] another guy in my part of the world, whose [*inaudible*] were actually very painful, a divide and rule policy. So there is another Scot. In this [*inaudible*] the Scottish dimension. I suggested to a Scottish parliamentarian that in fact Scotland ought to take some role in this too. Perhaps the Scottish Parliament could take a position. You know, it's not about apology. It's also about ownership. One of the problems of Britain's past—England's past, I should say—is that England finds it very difficult to own its past. I don't want an apology. I want ownership of the past—for example, what happened in Tasmania. I want Scottish people, for example, to have a monument in Scotland remembering that every time they sip a glass of wine, they are sipping the blood of native Australian people who were murdered by Scots who settled in Tasmania. In the same way, I want Scots to remember that Balfour was a man who had who had [*inaudible*] not just to contemporary Scotland but also to Palestinians and Arabs and Muslims.

The second point is this. This campaign cannot remain within Britain. The other problem with Britain is that we're good at campaigning about old issues and getting nowhere. We've got to get the whole world to petition Britain and encourage people across the world—in Asia, in Africa, in Latin America—to demonstrate outside British embassies, saying, "Listen, this is what you did in 1917 and we want you to own this past." We should encourage the Brits to do that.

We should encourage the people who we're in contact with across the world to commemorate this as well, to bring placards outside British embassies week in and week out, so that Brits remember the past.

Baroness Tonge: Thanks very much. Can I just say a word about that? There are groups in many countries of the world—I'm in touch constantly with a group in Australia and they are very, very keen also to celebrate the formation of the land of Palestine in our minds and that is what we've got to do. We've to keep saying, "Palestine, Palestine, Palestine" to these people. It is happening all over the world, but there is a limited amount to what we can do. But what we can do is with our own groups. If we can spread it that way and they'll have contacts abroad who will, you know, have contacts abroad.

Audience member 6: Should we also approach the [*inaudible*] to apologise?

Baroness Tonge: Well, but they're coming round. I must say something about Scotland. We have had a huge influx of SNP Members of Parliament. [*Applause.*] They are bringing fresh blood into this. They are really leading the charge. They have chaired meetings. They're really going for it. So don't despair. It really is gathering speed. One thing that I can't resist is: I think somebody said at the beginning that the Balfour Declaration was because the British Government wanted a quiet life. That always amuses me: "Go on, let's write them a letter. That'll sort them out." A quiet life—100 years later and we're still at it. Karl, you wanted to come back.

Karl Sabbagh: I just wanted to make a few short points. I was really amused by the picture of the Israeli parliament as a haven of peaceful co-existence, with the Arab MPs and Israelis. Anybody who has seen the YouTube video of Haneen Zoabi being sworn at and persecuted and shouted at and being accused of being a terrorist when she was trying to make a speech in Parliament, and anybody who met Awad Abdel Fattah, who was here a few weeks ago, speaking as the secretary-general of one of the Palestinian political groups and is now in prison—or was, last I heard of him—will fail to recognise any of that rather optimistic picture from our Zionist participant.

I think, on Balfour, to ascribe his motives to anti-Semitism is a bit strong because I don't think he had any particular motives for anything much at the time. He wasn't very bright. I assume he wanted a quiet life. There's a book that I'm also publishing in this country in the early part of next year, called *Palestine: The Reality*, by a man called Jeffries, which has been out of print for many years. We suspect that all the copies were taken and bought to prevent it being spread when it was published at the end of the 1930s, because it is an extraordinary inside account of people like Balfour, Montagu and Sharif Hussein—a lot of wonderful stuff. But the story I really enjoyed in that is where, at the peace talks at Versailles, Balfour's secretary presented him with the notes relating to what he was writing up about a meeting the previous day. Balfour looked at this and said, "What is this here?" This secretary said, "Oh well, that's what you said yesterday, sir." Balfour looked at it and he said, "Well, I don't remember saying it and in fact I don't even agree with any of it." You know, he was just rather a muddled thinker, so I don't think much went through his head when he signed the letter written by the Zionists.

I was interested in the Scottish dimension, because I spoke at a meeting on this very corridor earlier this year and I was looking at the clearances and the analogy with the clearances in Scotland and the way people were expelled from their lands by the rich landowners, among whom was the Balfour family, funnily enough.

I think the Scottish experience of that has enabled them or led them towards a greater sympathy for Palestine.

Baroness Tonge: A very good point. Majed then Betty.

Majed Al-Zeer: Actually the job of the campaign is not a matter simply calling for an apology. I am very much with the point of Karl. He mentioned that it will be trying to state the case of denial. We are hardly now in a situation for them to recognise that they have committed a crime by mistake. So apology [*inaudible*]. David Cameron, before he left his office, was calling for a celebration for the Balfour Declaration. He wants to celebrate the centenary of the Balfour Declaration. Karl mentioned a figure that the Jewish population in Palestine is 8 million. I think they are around 5. We are talking about 13 million Jewish in the whole world, 5 of them are in Palestine. There is the possibility of 7 million immigrants coming to us—anybody who wishes to.

Baroness Tonge: A million in Gaza.

Karl Sabbagh: It's only Wikipedia, so—

Majed Al-Zeer: With regard to Churchill, he is very racist. Quotes showing him to be racist and to be charged in a criminal court are there. He mentioned that there is a dangerous case against the Palestinians. This is something that we just want to mention. Focusing on Israel is very important for us as Palestinians. We have our internal politics, which we should minimise next year, because we need our achievement to be big. Abbas [*inaudible*] wants to go against Britain and he wants an apology and he wants to go legally against Britain, which is something which we should go for. I am very optimistic for the campaign, with such a big turnout here, and I am optimistic that we will have the 100,000 signatures before 2 November this year. We have another occasion which is very special in November 2017. It will be the 70th anniversary of issuing Resolution 181, in 1947. It is also the 40th anniversary of the United Nations declaring 29 November as international day of solidarity with the Palestinians. So in November 2017 we have three occasions.

Baroness Tonge: Betty.

Betty Hunter: I don't want to say a lot really but I want to remind ourselves of a very crucial point, which is put in the media all the time and was sort of repeated tonight, and that is that Israel is not a democracy.

Audience member 7: Oh yes it is.

Betty Hunter: It is not a democracy because not all of the citizens have the same rights. They can't live in the same places. They can't get the same jobs. They can't go to the schools together. They don't get the same amount back from the taxes, which are equal—that's very equal between the Palestinian Israelis and the Jewish Israelis. The benefits do not go to the Palestinian population. We have heard about what happened, as Karl said, to the elected representatives to the Knesset. We just have to remember the campaign that has been going on all year about the Bedouin people, who are being driven from their land in their tens of thousands. There have been many more already driven from their land, but this is the current catastrophe for them. So it's not a democracy. That's another issue that we have to explain to the British public when we're campaigning. [*Applause.*]

One of the eternal problems—and it was the problem in Australia, in America and everywhere else—is racism. We do abhor racism in all of its forms, including anti-Semitism, but let's accept that the racism that we hear people express all the time is against the Arab people, Muslim people and so on. This is the current racism which is, if you like, being thrown at us all the time. I'm not saying any racism is okay, because it's not. Those of us who are activists have said that we will oppose all of racism and that's what we should be upholding. I just wish that that was the case for Israelis, that they would reject racism too, and also our Government and so on, because they do accept it, silently, silently—I'm not suggesting they're overt—but it's something that we have to combat if we are to get anywhere. I do think the year's important. I do think the petition's important, Majed, but I want to look at how we're taking the position forward, how we're reaching out to people. Jenny's talked about us doing it, you know, with all of our contacts and friends. Let's do that, but also we will need some significant events and international staff. I agree that we could do that. But it's on our backs. It's our burden here in Britain and we have to take on that responsibility. [*Applause.*]

Baroness Tonge: Audience turn again. You then you then you.

Audience member 8: Hello. I think we need to focus as well not just on the history and the need for an apology for the history but on the present-day implications. By taking the path of least resistance and doing the lazy thing, by not wanting problems, we have created a rod for our own backs. The Balfour Project wrote a really excellent *Companion Guide*. I'd recommend anybody to read it. It was done by very erudite people and is really worth reading. One of the points that it makes is that Chaim Weizmann did a sort of confidence trick back in 1916–1917. He made the British establishment think that world Jewry had power that it just did not have. The trouble is that 100 years on, and I'm not talking about world Jewry, I'm talking about that segment which we call the Zionist movement, which has that power. It has it over our own Parliament. It has been able to put people into a very invidious situation.

When I look around middle-class society, there is a lot of awareness of what's gone on. I can see this when I talk at the churches, at the political parties, even to my own family. There is a massive fear factor of being outed or denigrated or, to put it in the words of Sir Alan Duncan, of being “trashed, traduced and bullied” because you speak up for Palestinians. We have created that situation for ourselves and we need to tell people that. Ultimately we will pay for this in suppression of free speech and the ability to discuss things openly among ourselves. We cannot have the sort of open debate that we had about Scottish independence, which horrified me—the idea of tearing our country in two—but it was carried out in a relatively civil manner if you compare it to the sort of nastiness you get if you stand up for the Palestinians and the smearing that can come not only from Zionists and people who are not even Jewish but who are playing that game—there are some of them here in Parliament. So please let's take that message out to the people as well. [*Applause.*]

Baroness Tonge: The man in the checked shirt and then this lady here.

Audience member 9: I just want to say that this is very important, as someone whose great-grandparents were Jewish—that was their faith. They were from Russia and they were refugees. They came here. They maybe could have stayed; they maybe fled. The reasons are difficult to know. The records are destroyed, of course. Now, as a British person, it is my responsibility, in memory of my great-grandparents, to work on an ongoing basis for the rights of Palestinian people

to return. It is not done in my name; it is not my faith. Judaism is a choice. It is something that you can choose. It is a religion. It is not a nationality. It is a religion, a religion of choice. I choose not to have it. I do not have a religion, yet my great-grandparents, who came here—there could be disputes with others in this room about that, but as an atheist, as a passionate believer in human rights and dignity and peace for everybody on the planet, I will stand resolutely with the Palestinian people’s right to return to their home and for everyone around the world to live in peace.

One final thing I think is important in terms of building the movement, having been involved recently with the Women’s Boat to Gaza campaign, which attempted to break the blockade of Gaza and which was attacked—13 peaceful women, two over 70 years of age, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate—they wanted to whisk them out of Israel pretty quickly when they stole their boat in international waters. We should draw particularly on the fact that one of the key moments was when Roger Waters and then Pink Floyd, with 29.5 million followers on Facebook, made an announcement by video. They supported the Women’s Boat to Gaza mission. We need to tap into those pools of people, celebrities, those in music, in the sporting and cultural world. That’s what we really need to break it beyond just this. That’s what the Zionists are fearful of—when we mainstream it, with the former Olympic athletes on board from South Africa, Leigh-Ann Naidoo, and Lisa Gay Hamilton, the US actor who was going to be on board, and a former colonel in the military in the US. When we mainstream it, we take it outside of just being a solidarity issue and bring it into the living rooms, the dining rooms and the workplace all round the world. We will win. The Palestinian people will have the right to return and my great-grandparents would be proud of me. [*Applause.*]

Baroness Tonge: The lady here. You’ve got to follow that!

Audience member 9: I will try. As a Palestinian, first of all, I would like to request and ask you all that, when we have precious time, like we do today, we ignore comments made by racist Zionists, as our friend here said. We shouldn’t be wasting time with the kind of comments that we all know are basically lies. We have more important things to do, like determining what exactly we are going to be doing over this year. You mentioned the Balfour Project. I read the *Companion Guide*. It wasn’t as strong as I hoped it would be. This is what I wanted to talk about. They have an event on 5 November and I was absolutely shocked to see that the guests are mostly British people and a few Jews. I contacted the organiser and she said, “Yes, we’re inviting Jews and British people”. She admitted that they have not invited any Palestinians. I told her, “You’re repeating the exact same mistake that the *Companion Guide* says you did 100 years ago and you’re trying to rectify. So how exactly are you achieving this?” Anyway, the difference between the them and us is that they have a *Companion Guide*, they have a free DVD, they have a film, they have events happening everywhere. I think we need to be more equipped.

Baroness Tonge: Sorry, you’re talking about the Balfour Project?

Audience member 9: Yes. Why don’t they have any Palestinians speaking?

Baroness Tonge: I don’t know. Ask the Balfour Project.

Audience member 9: I did. I asked them and they said—

Majed Al-Zeer: We are in touch with them and we will ask for that—

Audience member 9: Sure, but how can they have a whole day of thoughts without having any Palestinian speaking?

Baroness Tonge: It may be that they feel that it is our British responsibility and that it should be actually British people. I don't know, but I'll talk to them about it.

Audience member 9: I spoke to them and the answer wasn't particularly convincing. I would understand if it was a purely British responsibility, but why have two Jewish speakers on the panel?

Baroness Tonge: Well maybe they're pro-Palestinian Jewish people.

Audience member 9: Still, we can speak for ourselves. [*Applause.*]

Baroness Tonge: Let's talk to them. We will do that. I hadn't appreciated that. Thanks very much indeed.

Majed Al-Zeer: Sometimes it's good for Palestinians for other people to—

Audience member 9: No, it's not. It's never good. This is the mistake that we have faced for the last 100 years. It still hasn't changed.

Baroness Tonge: Okay. The gentleman at the back. Can you put your hands right up?

Audience member 10: First, can I just say that I really agree with this young woman here? I was at an event in Lichfield Cathedral, which was shining a light on Palestine. I think that there was one Palestinian speaker from here and two Christian Palestinians from over there and everybody said they wanted to hear the voices of Palestinians, which are closed up, we know, in our media, everywhere. So Jenny I really hope you get on to the Palestine project. They must have some Palestinian speakers.

Baroness Tonge: It's a very good point and we will be in touch with them. Of course, the Palestinian Return Centre and the EuroPal Forum are organising the meetings on this side and the PSC has a Palestinian speaker within it. Palestinians are represented in all those organisations. They run the PRC. And they publish books.

Audience member 11: I'm not wanting to distract from the situation in Palestine, but surely one of the best ways to atone for the mistakes of the past is to prevent the same type of thing happening in the future. I am referring specifically to the situation now in Syria and Iraq. Just as the so-called Jewish state in Palestine was created by—it doesn't come from Judaism [*inaudible*—so this Islamic state in Syria is nothing to do with Islam. It is a perversion of Islam, just as Zionism is a perversion of Judaism which serves certain non-Semitic interests. It is just carrying on. Just as the main victims—I'm again not wishing to belittle in any way the suffering of the Palestinians, the Arab and Christian Palestinians and Muslim Palestinians at the hands of the Zionists.

I once said to a daughter of one of the Palestinian refugees who had to leave after the '48 war [*inaudible*] ending up having to leave Palestine, I said, not wishing to belittle the sufferings that they had had at the hands of the Zionists and these victims [*inaudible*] spiritually and physically at the hands of the Zionists due to the Holocaust, one of the main Zionist speakers in America, so-called Rabbi Stephen Wise, a Reform heretic so-called rabbi, is quoted in the *New York Times*, I think it was 1905, "There are 6 million"—note the number—"bleeding and suffering

reasons to justify Zionism.” Thirty years later he made the boycott on Germany, the economic boycott on Germany, which antagonised Hitler over the edge to then want to systematically kill Jews wherever he could find them, as opposed to just a Judenrein, to make Germany a Jew-free area of land, which is enough. But that isn’t noted by one of the rabbis. That’s what pushed him over the edge. His personal secretary Ribbentrop was in Nuremberg during the trials. He said to Rabbi [*inaudible*], “Well this is what, he became a madman after this boycott. Judea declares war on Germany.” In Manhattan, they had I think 100,000 or more people marching for the economic boycott in 1935. It was the same Reform heretic rabbi who holds that 30 years prior put the number 6 million in the *New York Times*. Again, it doesn’t come from Jewish interests. It’s not promoting the whole ideology—

Baroness Tonge: Thank you very much. I think it’s very important that the word “boycott” has come up, because BDS, the campaign to boycott Israeli goods and services and for divestment from Israel, a lot of us think—most of us think—that it’s very, very important indeed. [*Applause.*] In this year of apologising for Balfour, that is one really effective action we can make stronger and stronger and stronger to show the Israeli government that we do not like them, they are not a good thing and they have got to stop what they’re doing and leave the Palestinians. I mean, Karl is a non-two-state-solution man, because he feels that it’s gone, I think, too far now and it’s a bit difficult when you go out there to see that two states. But whether it’s a two-state solution or one state, the Palestinian people have to have total freedom and equal human rights and political rights and physical rights and they have to have their homes and lands back. I mean, there’s no question about it and BDS is the thing we can do to put pressure on Israel. We can put pressure on our Government to apologise for Balfour, but we can put pressure on the Israeli government by BDS. Now, more questions.

Audience member 12: Are you suggesting that Theresa May’s life is not going to be a quiet one as a politician?

Baroness Tonge: Sorry, I didn’t hear that.

Audience member 12: Are you suggesting that we shouldn’t make Theresa May’s life as a politician very convenient and quiet, because she hasn’t made any statements since coming into office with regard to Palestine, Palestinian rights et cetera?

Baroness Tonge: Do you know, every meeting I come to, I make this point and I would like to know how many people go away and actually do it. The more you write letters and send emails, whether it’s the Prime Minister, whether it’s Boris Johnson, whether it’s your own MP, whether it’s the leader of your own churches, or whatever it is, the more you do that, the more you spread out your views, the better. I’ve been a Member of Parliament. I know what it’s like to be bombarded with letters on a particular topic and it has an effect, I promise you.

Audience member 12: I’m not denying that it hasn’t and I assure you that I probably am within my constituency where I live, according to my former and current MP—actually I haven’t quite got to meet with her; she seems to be quite evasive—Victoria Borwick—but I will pin her down. I used to be told that I was very politically active in regard to bringing issues that had nothing to do with the immediate parochial issues, you know, regarding the community. So, yes, but I’m just trying to say, having seen Theresa May overtly state that without its Jews Britain wouldn’t be quite the same, having dined with the British Board of

Deputies et cetera, doing the same as every other British Prime Minister has done, I'm just trying to be ironic in saying that we're not going to make her life quiet and easy.

Betty Hunter: On this, I'm sure lots of you know, but in fact the annual lobby of Parliament on Palestine is on 15 November. Frankly, this has to be a really big one in order to make an impact on Theresa May's Government. Start asking for interviews with your MPs now.

Majed Al-Zeer: With regard to BDS, I believe that we should act before 2 November 2017, because it will be a big fuss and then this country [*inaudible*]. I'm afraid that Israel is preparing itself for two occasions in 2017. On 5 June, it will be 50 years of occupying Jerusalem and what Israel calls reuniting Jerusalem to be the capital of Israel. So we should act because we are just and we should act as well because the other side is acting without any hesitation for an unjust cause. So we have a lot to do.

Baroness Tonge: Professor, do you wanted to come back?

Audience member 13: Just for one minute. You mentioned Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions. With regard to the standard boycotting of oranges and cookies, the vast majority of export is security equipment and security know-how. When we buy cosmetics, they say, "Not tested on animals." All of the above equipment and know-how is tested on Palestinians and I think it has to be spelt out in the campaign about BDS. All of it—100%—is tested on Palestinians.

Baroness Tonge: Okay. Thank you. Remember that. One more point.

Audience member 14: Just to say thank you. It is marvellous work. Keep it up. We belong to large groups all over the world. Not necessarily one specific community but religious groups at large are totally upset with everything around Israel, whether it's being antagonistic against the Palestinians, harming them and indeed harming the Jewish religion itself. So you keep it up. You should never be impressed and fear that the Israelis will come back to you and say you're an anti-Semite, which they will. It is their best tool. Don't look at it. Ignore it. It is not true. If anybody's anti-Semitic, it's the Israelis themselves. [*Applause.*]

Baroness Tonge: Okay. Now it's a quarter to nine. I'm going to ask each of the three speakers if they want to say a very brief wind-up and then, I'm afraid, we'll have to go. Who wants to go first? Majed, you go first—briefly.

Majed Al-Zeer: Statistically, Palestinians are now almost 12 million. The vast majority of them are in Palestine and in the neighbouring countries. The reality is that the Palestinians are still there, calling for their rights, acting without any tiredness for their rights. After 100 years, they are calling for an apology. This means Balfour was wrong. He committed a crime. Since we are there, we will achieve what we are calling for—the final sentence. Since I started to campaign for justice for Palestinians and Palestine, the most remarkable thing that I have faced is a state, after 70 years of being established, with its politicians still calling for recognition of that state to be mentioned. Israel is still calling for the Palestinians to recognise the existence of the state of Israel, both in the 60th and then the 70th [anniversary] of the establishing of the state of Israel, saying, "I'll celebrate the existence of the state of Israel after 100 years." What does this mean? It means obviously that they knew that they made a mistake and they're still hesitating about everybody to call for such a state to be recognised, despite the United Nations

recognising that it's a state, despite [*inaudible*] this means that we are there and will achieve our goals. Thank you. [*Applause.*]

Baroness Tonge: Thank you.

Betty Hunter: I'm not going to say anything apart from two points. The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign is of course extremely important. We do have an active anti-arms campaign, a two-way thing, as part of our campaign here in Britain, a consumer boycott, a company boycott—all very, very important. Hewlett-Packard is our corporate focus, coming up—I've forgotten which week we're doing it, but sometime in this month, I think, is the international campaign against Hewlett-Packard and there's lots of stuff on our website, the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, about which groups are doing what.

I just want to suggest, if you haven't heard of it, that people might like to look at a film that's come out of America. I think it's Jewish Voices for Peace which have produced it, but it's Palestinians and Jewish Americans giving you the inside information, a bit like the EuroPal Forum report on the Israel lobby on Brussels, on Europe. It's called "The Occupation of the American Mind". It is a brilliant film and it tells you exactly what's going on in America in terms of the media and the politicians, but it also gives you lots of good footage of the Nakba and the history and so on. So do look at it. It is the kind of thing that will help us to explain to people in meetings and so on exactly why we have to reverse the Balfour Declaration, get the apology and also get the state of Palestine. [*Applause.*]

Karl Sabbagh: I just want to make a few short points. The issue of anti-Semitism has been raised and I think it's ironic that over the last few years the Israeli government has done its best to blur the edges between the actions of Israel and the action of Jews by demanding that everybody recognises it as the Jewish state. Well, you know, if that's not making it very difficult to criticise it, particularly in terms of its actions against the Palestinians—if every time we criticised the Russians because of what they've done in Chechnya or the Crimea we were accused of a kind of anti-Russian racism, you know, the world couldn't operate, people couldn't have views. I think it's rank hypocrisy, actually, of Israel and its supporters to use accusations of anti-Semitism to quash criticisms of its actions.

The second point is a small commercial. In addition to the Balfour Project film and website, there is another website which, I have to admit, I have been responsible for setting up and for providing material, called Britain in Palestine. It derived from an exhibition some of you may have seen at the Brunei Gallery a few years ago. We decided to preserve the themes of the exhibition in a website, which has a lot of the kind of material that I've been talking about. In terms of what people can do, I absolutely agree that supporting the BDS is a very good idea. I wonder—and I don't know whether this has been done, whether it can be or whether it's a good idea—about the idea of twinning, which often comes up in various ways. I wonder if the idea of twinning with a destroyed village—between a community and a destroyed village—would maybe be a way of people understanding actually what goes on. The people of the village are still around. They're in America, the UK, the West Bank or Gaza, but these people all have a sense of the community that they've lost—their grandparents have photographs and so on. Maybe some kind of link like that would be useful.

The fourth point is relating to protesting. I think in particular we need to keep an eye on the BBC. They need constant emails and demands, because they normally do respond—they have to respond—so we need to keep that up, otherwise we are

in danger of seeing BBC Radio 4 turning into BBC Radio Balfour and we don't want that. [*Applause.*]

Baroness Tonge: Thank you all very much for coming. The way out, if you can get out of the door, is to turn left, down to the desk and down the big staircase. Thank you all for coming.

Appendix B: Letter from Mark Regev, Ambassador of Israel to the Court of St James's, to the Commissioner for Standards, 27 October 2016

I am writing to express my alarm following an event that took place on Tuesday 25 October in the House of Lords, entitled "The Launch of the Balfour Apology Campaign".

The event involved the Palestinian Return Centre (PRC), a group which the State of Israel—along with independent research centres and numerous press investigations—has identified as an essential part of the Hamas terrorist group's European network. The PRC actively recruits and radicalises operatives throughout Europe, and encourages them to take up arms against Israel. Moreover, they have repeatedly hosted senior Hamas officials at their conferences, where they have openly called for the annihilation of the Jewish state.

During the aforementioned event, it was frighteningly claimed that the Jews themselves had caused the Holocaust, having "antagonised Hitler over the edge". Another participant stated that the "Zionist movement" holds power over Parliament. Both remarks are clearly grounded in bigotry and hatred, and have no place in any society: let alone the mother of parliaments.

I firmly believe that, by disseminating antisemitism, promoting Holocaust revisionism and encouraging support for Hamas, this event has significantly damaged both the reputation and integrity of the House of Lords. More specifically, this event is at clear conflict with Section 9 of the Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Lords regarding "personal honour", and the clarifications outlined in the Guide to the Code of Conduct.

I trust that you will look into this matter urgently.

Appendix C: Letter from Karen Elizabeth Leon to the Commissioner for Standards, 31 October 2016

I am writing with regards to the recent meeting organised by Baroness Tonge and held in the House of Lords. This meeting was supposed to be a review of the anniversary of the 1917 Balfour Declaration, but instead turned into an anti-Jewish litany and holocaust deniers' rant. Very quickly this discussion became very anti-Semitic, with this usual comments made about non-Israeli Jews. Ms Tonge claims not to have contributed to this, but the meeting was under her authority and chairpersonship; and as such her conduct fell well short of the published Standards expected of her position and the place it was held.

Ms Tonge did not rebuke her speakers or stop them at any time. She has since claimed that she was unaware of what was being said, but as chairperson she had the responsibility to ensure standards were upheld, as the meeting was held in the Palace of Westminster.

This whole event has had a profound effect on me, as its blatant racism and anti-Semitism was made so public by her meeting and her speakers. Her privileged position should be allowed to outrage public options with such impunity.

Are your Codes of Conduct not published to prevent this sort of abhorrent behaviour?

Appendix D: Letter from the Commissioner for Standards to Baroness Tonge, 8 November 2016

I am writing because I have received a complaint about you from Ms Karen Elizabeth Leon. The complaint alleged that you breached the House of Lords Code of Conduct in hosting a meeting in a House of Lords committee room to launch the “Balfour Apology Campaign” on 25 October 2016. A copy of the complaint is enclosed. Also enclosed is a letter from the Ambassador of Israel. Although that letter does not constitute a formal complaint, as it is clearly relevant I thought it appropriate to disclose it to you.

I have carried out a preliminary assessment of the complaint. As part of that preliminary assessment I requested a statement from Black Rod. His statement is enclosed.

I have decided that it would be in the interests of all concerned for me to investigate this case. On the basis of the evidence available, I propose to investigate two matters.

First, I will consider whether in hosting and chairing the meeting you may have not acted on your personal honour. Paragraph 8(b) of the Code provides:

“8. Members of the House: ...

(b) should act always on their personal honour; ...”

This is elaborated on in paragraphs 7–9 of the Guide to the Code of Conduct.

Secondly, I will consider whether you may have breached the House’s rules on filming and photography by not seeking and obtaining permission for the event to be filmed and photographed. Paragraph 10(c) of the Code provides:

“10. In order to assist in openness and accountability members shall: ...

(c) act in accordance with any rules agreed by the House in respect of ... the facilities of the House.”

This is elaborated on in paragraph 104 of the Guide to the Code. The rules on filming within the House of Lords are on pages 56–58 of the *Handbook on facilities and services for Members and their staff* (October 2015). Although the filming rules themselves have been agreed only by the relevant committee and not the House, the principle that Black Rod’s permission must be obtained for filming and photography is long-established and has been agreed by the House.

I further draw your attention to the seven general principles of conduct identified by the Committee on Standards in Public Life and incorporated into the Code of Conduct.

I invite you to respond in writing with a full and accurate account of the matter in question. A response by 29 November 2016 would greatly assist me in investigating this matter in a timely fashion.

As an investigation is under way there is a requirement for all evidence and correspondence relating to the case to remain confidential unless and until it is published by the Committee for Privileges and Conduct. In accordance with

paragraph 119 of the Guide to the Code of Conduct a page on the parliamentary website will include basic information about the case.

I enclose a copy of the Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Lords and Guide to the Code of Conduct (fifth edition: July 2016).

I have requested a transcript of the footage of the event on 25 October 2016 and will send you a copy of it when it is available.

Appendix E: Letter from Baroness Tonge to the Commissioner for Standards, 21 November 2016

Thank you for the letter concerning a complaint you have received about the meeting I hosted and chaired on 25 October 2016, to launch the Balfour Apology Campaign, in tune with many such initiatives which will take place in the coming year. I note the letter from the Israeli Ambassador. I also note that neither Mrs Leon nor the Ambassador appear to have been at the meeting and must have relied on erroneous reports in the press.

After a career as a doctor in the NHS for 32 years and 9 years as a local councillor in the London borough of Richmond upon Thames, I was elected to the House of Commons in 1997 and remained there, until I stood down to look after my grandchildren following the death by electrocution of my daughter. I subsequently accepted a seat in the House of Lords when offered to me by Charles Kennedy so that, as he said, I could carry on with my interest in health and international development.

In all of those years I have never had my “honour” questioned and I find it extremely distressing.

Since first visiting the Occupied Territories of Palestine, including Gaza in 2003, I have witnessed the deprivation and humiliation of those people and in criticising the Israeli Government for their actions I have been attacked by supporters of that government and the Israeli Embassy. Anyone who does so receives the same treatment from supporters of the Israeli government. The letters, messages and Facebook posts are often vile and extremely offensive: I did refer one to the police a few years ago, concerning a death threat.

I agreed to host the meeting in question to highlight the Balfour Declaration and, in particular, the second part of that declaration which says: “it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done to prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.”

As a campaigner against injustice and the abuse of human rights and an upholder of International Law and the Geneva Convention, I hope you will now understand that I have acted on my personal honour in this matter. I could not do otherwise.

The Palestine Return Centre organised the meeting on 25 October. They are recognised as an NGO by our government and they have a similar organisation in the USA. They are consultative members of the UN ECOSOC. I do not understand the Israeli Ambassador’s comments about them, but it applies only in Israel maybe.

The meeting was extremely orderly and the comments that are referred to came from a member of the audience, a Rabbi (?) of the Neturei Karta sect of Ultra Judaism. He was wearing a round fur hat and ringlets and was standing at the back of the room. I frankly could barely hear what he was saying and I was looking

for an opportunity to interrupt and go on to another contributor, which I did when I heard him use the word “boycott”. I used this to move the meeting on to discuss the BDS movement (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions). At that point the audience clapped in relief and we moved on.

The transcript you sent me was extremely useful and I agree that this man’s remarks could have been offensive to some. I do not think however that they were any more than the sort of conspiracy theories we hear about 9/11 which I treat with equal disdain. I ignored him and so did the audience. There was no reaction to his remarks.

A few days later, following a letter from Theresa Villiers MP, I learned that a well-known Zionist blogger had gate crashed the meeting. He was presumably the person who sent word to the press. I enclose the blog, which was sent to me by Theresa Villiers and also a letter from Sir David Amess and my reply to both.

However, on the matter of filming I suspect I am guilty as charged out of sheer ignorance.

I have hosted many meetings on this and other subjects since coming into the House in 1997 and have always been assured that radio and television companies have to obtain their own press clearance when they wish to work in the House. I have in fact casually asked a couple of colleagues about this and they are under the same impression.

Mr Beresford has since sent me the Meeting Room Rules that clearly state that permission must be sought in advance from Black Rod’s Office but does not specify who seeks the permission. On this occasion and as on others in the past, I asked the camera crew if they had permission to which they replied in the affirmative.

I have never, in my time at Westminster had any contact on these matters with the Speaker’s Office in the Commons or Black Rod’s Office in the Lords and have certainly never been asked to sign anything. (This I was told I had to do, by Black Rod when I went to see him.) I suppose in the Commons my excellent office staff would have dealt with such matters, but in the Lords I have no staff, nor is there any room for any in the office I share with two other peers.

I enclose replies to my question about access for the cameras, which I received from the Palestine Return Centre and Al Jazeera. I also enclose a list of other meetings hosted by the Palestine Return Centre over the past year with the name of the member hosting the meeting. I was not at all of them and have no idea whether film cameras were there.

Finally I would like to point out that, expecting a large attendance for this very popular topic, I warned security and they assured me they had plenty of staff should they be needed. The camera was there when I arrived at 18.45 and so presumably had been allowed access by the doorkeepers and security staff? What is the point of them seeking permission, if they can walk in unchallenged by any of the excellent staff we have in the building? I do not understand that.

I have had some letters from members of the audience that evening, offering comments on the way the meeting was chaired by me. I will send them to you if you wish to see them.

The Palestine Return Centre issued a press rebuttal to the reports on the meeting which appeared in the *Guardian*, *Telegraph*, *Times*, *Express* and *Mail*. The *Guardian* and *Telegraph* have since printed small corrections the following day.

My Facebook page is public and you and your staff can see the reactions to the meeting there.

I am sorry I am not skilled enough in the IT arts to send it all to you electronically.

I hope this letter and enclosure answers your concerns.

Letter from Theresa Villiers MP to Baroness Tonge with enclosed blog by David Collier, 14 November 2016

My constituent, Jonathan Hoffman of [redacted], Barnet, Herts, [redacted], has contacted me following the event you hosted in the House of Lords. He was deeply concerned to hear that at this meeting, the Jews were apparently blamed for the Holocaust.

While my constituent was not present at this event, he has forwarded me a link from a blogger, David Collier, who attended the meeting. I enclose a copy of his comments. Having read this report, I can understand the concerns of my constituent. I do hope you can provide some reassurance that you will not be hosting further meetings which involve such inflammatory and misleading statements.

I would welcome your comments.

“The Jew, the Zionist and antisemitism at the House of Lords”, blog by David Collier

Yesterday there was an event at the House of Lords, put together by the Palestine Return Centre (PRC). The evening was hosted by Jenny Tonge.

There were no tickets remaining, but I had to go. The PRC and I have history. It was at one of their events that Gerald Kaufman told tales of Jewish money and Israeli conspiracies. Jenny Tonge needs little introduction. I wanted in. A little back story, a tale or two spun along the way, and I had successfully gate-crashed a party at the Houses of Parliament. Soon I was sitting in the front row of committee room 2A.

As it turned out Tonge was tame, but there was still much to shake me. I go to so many of these events and I am still trying to formulate a complete picture of what it is I am seeing. For example, there is more antisemitism in the air than there was 18 months ago. Much more. I see it on campus, I saw buckets of it a recent event in Lichfield. I saw it last night at Westminster. A definite increase. But why?

There is no point being directed by anger, nor to lose yourself in the creation of an irrational inhuman enemy. These methods merely provide a lazy way out, a system of avoiding uncomfortable moments of self-reflection. There is a line that can be drawn. Drawn between the civil war in 1948 and those who sit in the House of Lords today demanding an apology from the British government. We can draw the line further back, even beyond the 1917 letter they created this event to discuss.

I look around and feel sorry for the Arabs in the room. They have tied their flag to yet another pole that will only bring additional wasted years, more bloodshed. I cast my mind back to the Arab families I knew so well. Families, friends, in

Ramallah, Nablus, Jericho and Bethlehem. In Qalqilya and Tulkarm. These are the choices of the people representing them? It is 16 years since the outbreak of the second “intifada”. Since all those bridges were burnt. Another generation wasted. How can you not have sympathy for a desperate people who depend so totally on this, the hopeless case of a thousand who lead them?

The PRC Event

Almost immediately I realised I was not the only Zionist in the room. Jenny Tonge publicly welcomed someone from “Israel radio”. I am not sure why she did this. Tonge used the opportunity to score points, by thanking the reporter for the publicity his articles had brought her in the past. Revelling in her own notoriety. But she had also passed warning to everyone present that Zionist ears were in the room. From that moment I knew Jenny Tonge would be on her best behaviour.

The event was to launch the “apology for Balfour” campaign and the central thrust was to discuss activity over the next twelve months. Within a week we can expect to see the launch of an online petition—target 100,000 signatures by late Spring. There are also plans to have a large public demonstration in Trafalgar Square at the time of the 100th anniversary.

Then came the speakers. One introducing himself as a “British Palestinian”. What a “British Palestinian” is I have no idea. They are born here. They are British passport holders, not refugees. This one Karl Sabbagh was born in Worcestershire in the early 1940’s, so whatever his family did, they did out on their own self-interest. His mother was British, of American and Irish parentage. Karl is willing the international community to create an alliance of power to remove the “invaders” and replace the Jewish state. A mirror image of the Zionist monster he imagines in his head. Karl Sabbagh is on a strange personal mission.

The first two talks were nothing special. The same fare I have heard 1,000 times. Balfour was a “mistake”. The telling of a narrative held together by sticky tape with a C.S Lewis or Enid Blyton signature. The third talk was by Betty Hunter, Honorary President of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign. Enough said. There was also a “special guest” speaker, who had not been on the programme. Yakov M. Rabkin, “a professor history at the Université de Montréal”. A rabid anti-Zionist Jew.

Then the audience gets to speak. We leave the scripted, careful talk behind, and open up the room for comment. There were four incidents that I need to describe, to expand on this issue of growing antisemitism. But first, the groundwork.

The failure of a science

The pro-Palestinian reasoning is built on falsehoods. It is why “anti-Israeli” is a more fitting description of the movement. In truth, they do nothing to help the Palestinians. Yes, they support their friend the British Palestinian. And yes, they wave the flag of an emotional cause. But to assist the future of the actual Palestinian family? To invest, build infrastructure, help carve the groundwork for a future nation? To encourage sacrificing some of the “principles” to gain future prosperity for the children? These are things **nobody** in the anti-Israel camp ever does.

The narrative itself is founded on too many myths to withstand rigorous investigation. The conclusions and assumptions built from within this “paradigm”

are therefore also false. This creates major issues for those who have become emotionally invested in the Palestinian cause.

Prior to 2000 there was room to manoeuvre. As the Oslo process presented a two state option, it was possible to be both “for the Palestinians” and in theory at least, a vocal supporter of Israel. This possibility collapsed in September 2000, in the violence of the second Intifada.

The Israelis and most of the rational world understood the causes and implications of the failure of the Oslo process. Sure, Israel hadn’t been the perfect partner, and no, they hadn’t stuck precisely to the letter of the agreement. But this didn’t cause the intifada. The violence was a strategy, a Palestinian choice. The leadership, such as it was, remained unable to provide an end game. They left the negotiating table. Today the weakness of the Palestinian leadership is amplified ten-fold.

For the opposing camp this was a dilemma. The outbreak signalled a major flaw with the underlying assumptions. Enough to cause a shift. This fundamental challenge destroyed the Israeli peace camp. Further, outside of the hard core supporters, the violence ended support for the Palestinian cause. You cannot sell bus bombs to the public. For the Arab narrative to hold true, additional adjustments needed to be made to the basic principles. So the narrative of “demonic Israel” began to enter the mainstream.

Demonic Israel

Anyone familiar with Thomas Khun’s structure of scientific revolutions understands, there is always strong resistance to change from within the “established community”. The community will continue to add ever more elaborate dimensions to their paradigm in an attempt to hold it together. The Israeli left collapsed because they were no longer able to maintain scientific cohesion. For if the Arabs had to be absolved of blame entirely, despite the evidence at hand, Israel needed to turn from a nation seeking to defend itself, into a demon state, capable of committing all evils. The Israeli left knew this was not true.

This “demonic” element is now a primary pillar on which the entire movement is built. People such as Ben White, Max Blumenthal and Ronnie Barkan have made careers out of it. So as expected, last night, at every turn, Israel was demonised. There can be nothing worthy about Israel at all. When Betty Hunter got the chance to discuss the label of democratic Israel, this is what she said:

“A crucial point that is put in the media all the time, and that is Israel is not a democracy. It is not a democracy because not all the citizens have the same rights. They can’t live in the same places, they can’t get the same jobs, they can’t go to the schools together, they don’t get the same amount back from the taxes, which are equal, that’s very equal between the Palestinian Israelis and the Jewish Israelis, but the benefits do not go to the Palestinian population, and we heard about what happened, as Karl said, to the elected representatives to the Knesset. We just have to remember the campaign that has been going on all year about the Bedouin people who are being driven from their land in their 10,000s. There has been many more already driven from their lands, but this is the current catastrophe. So it is not a democracy. And that is another issue that we have to explain to the British public.”

Of course, this is nonsense. By any reasonable measure Israel is a vibrant democracy. When placed against the majority of nations on this planet, Israel’s liberal values

simply sparkle. But it is important to note the demonic label is not restricted to Israeli policy inside the lands taken in 1967, but rather the opposite. It is vital for the “cause”, that the very nature of the Israeli state be called into question. Thus the ludicrous labels of Apartheid, Settler Colonial, Genocidal and so on. Singling out Israel to question its right to exist. It is why the BDS movement has to focus on Israeli citizens as well.

Yet although this demonising process became absolutely crucial if the anti-Israel movement was to maintain integrity, this scientific “bolt-on”, created another issue within the ranks. The accusation of antisemitism. The overwhelming majority of Jewish people are Zionists. According to recent polling, over 90% of Jewish people inside the UK believe Israel is part of their Jewish identity. Anti-Zionist Jews are but a tiny fringe, split between communists and single strange ultra-orthodox sect. As you begin to demonise Israel and Israeli supporters, you are effectively tarnishing almost every single Jew.

So we arrive at a crossroads again. How can the cause maintain integrity, whilst at the same time allow for the horrific accusation of antisemitism to be levelled towards the humanitarian groups of the left? Never underestimate the innovation of adherents desperate to maintain the inherent structural logic of their own particular paradigm. It was time to split the Jewish people.

The Zionist and the Jew

As questions were asked, another Zionist Jew, Mike Abramov, presented himself. Mike often goes to these types of events to oppose the venom. In a room full of vitriolic, there are brave individuals who will not sit idly as these lies are spread. He spoke up for Israel. The woman sitting next to me said “there is always one”. I recognised her, she was at the Lichfield event. Then the turn came of a “Palestinian writer and political analyst” who commented about Balfour being deliberate, rather than a mistake, and then suddenly he went on:

“I want to thank the professor, and what a difference, between the Jew and the Zionist [Applause.] A Jew admits ... [pause] most Jews who admit that Israel does not stand for them, should come forward and stand with us, because what we want is coexistence. We don't want to throw anyone into the sea, we want to reclaim our rights, and we want the world to stand with us for claiming our rights.”

He made that remark in reference to the difference between the acceptable (to him) Jewish anti-Zionist professor and the Zionist Jewish attendee who stuck up for the democratic Jewish state. This comment denied the Jewishness of the Zionist. It creates a good Jew, a real Jew, and on the other side, the Zionist. Because what is the message here: Real Jews are ones who hate Israel. Only if you hate Israel will we accept you as Jewish.

Putting aside the veiled threat aimed at anyone who does want to stand with Israel, this is the anti-Israel camp defining what is Jewish and what is not. Last night in the House of Lords, my Jewish identity was deliberately and specifically attacked. But there is more:

The Zionists who caused the Holocaust

At a certain point in the evening, four ultra-orthodox Jews from the Neturei Karta showed up. As relevant to Judaism as some esoteric Christian sect is to Christianity, yet these same handful are at the front of every anti-Israel action in

the UK. When one came to talk, it is difficult to overstate the bile that came from his mouth.

First, he compared Israel to ISIS. “Isis is a perversion of Islam just as Zionism is a perversion of Judaism.” Then he continued:

“One of the main Zionists in America, Rabbi Stephen Wise, a reform, a heretic, so called Rabbi, he spoke in the New York Times in 1905, there are six million, note the number, bleeding and suffering reasons to justify Zionism.”

I cannot stress strongly enough the implication of the instruction to “note the number”. This is from a Holocaust denial script. The suggestion used on neo-Nazi sites is that this quote is evidence that the Jews had already decided on the six million figure 40 years before the Holocaust. Therefore, the Holocaust is a hoax. You can read an example here (NOT SAFE FOR WORK). Why else mention it? If you Google Rabbi Stephen Wise and six million, almost every site on the page is one to avoid.

Not done with regurgitating the Holocaust hoax argument, the man then continued:

“And thirty years later, he made the boycott on Germany, the economic boycott on Germany which antagonised Hitler, over the edge, to then want to systematically kill Jews wherever he could find them. As opposed to “Judenrein”, to make Germany free of Jews, a Jew had free land. Which is enough, but that is noted by one of our Rabbis, that is what pushed him over the edge. His personal secretary Ribbentrop was in Nuremberg trials, he said to Rabbi Wise (?), this is what, he became a madman after this boycott, Judea declares war on Germany. In Manhattan they had 100,000 people marching in the economic boycott in 1935, it was the same heretic rabbi who caused that.”

This places the blame of the Holocaust squarely onto the Zionists. Unlike Livingstone, this isn’t even an accusation of a life-saving deal, this is saying that the Zionist actions caused Hitler to go mad and kill Jews. Good Jews, bad Zionists. If you want to read more of this type of thought, you can find it on neo-Nazi sites such as Rense or Stormfront. The one other place where such thought is entertained is on the Satmar website.

Jewish power

Another comment from the audience:

“Chaim Weizmann did a confidence trick back in 1917/1918. He made the British establishment think that world Jewry had power that it just didn’t have. The trouble is, 100 years on, I am not talking about world Jewry, I am talking about “that segment” which we call the “Zionist movement” has that power, and it has it over our own parliament”.

This is the transference of classic anti-Semitic tropes, from the hands of the Jew to the hands of the Zionist. This comment makes no sense outside of the existence of the antisemitism. How can the “Zionist movement” control anything? Believe me. I’ve met most of the leaders of the Zionist groups in the UK. Nice guys they may be, world controllers they are not.

Worrying times

And the evening was over. I went home. I was physically sick. This is not the first time I have witnessed such an event within the central estate of one of the greatest democracies on earth. What is important to understand is the connection is a logical one that is central to the cohesion of the argument. Antisemitism is a natural by-product of the anti-Israel position. Further, to maintain integrity, several new myths have to be propagated.

You will frequently hear the tale of the Khazars, suggesting Jews are not even Jewish. Interestingly, they apply the Jewish label freely onto anyone who will demonise Israel. Such as Jackie Walker, Naomi-Wimborne Idrissi and so on. Only Zionist Jews have a fake heritage.

I am hearing more and more mention of Christian Zionism. As if Zionism isn't actually a Jewish "thing" at all. Rather, anti-Semites and Christian Zionists created a monster through Balfour, Zionists, with their Jewish status now removed, are evildoers who must be opposed. Real Jews oppose Zionists. Through this method they define "Jewishness". They create a type of Jew it is legitimate to hate. A brilliantly created necessity to prop up a narrative full of holes. Jews must pay the price. At some point someone commented that "if anyone is anti-Semitic it is the Israelis themselves".

Zionist power. For every insult that was once thrown at Jews, is now safely directed towards any Jew who supports Israel (almost all Jews). Zionists control the banks, the media and as we heard yesterday, Zionists control the government. How is this not antisemitism?

Zionists have evil intent. Such as the Livingstone episode or the issue above with the Jewish boycott.

There are groups of people with major emotional investment in their cause. They will not simply "let go". It is getting worse because it has to. The anti-Zionist movement cannot maintain integrity without further fuelling the split between Jew and Zionist, the more they do this, the louder the accusations of antisemitism will become. The more they must create divisions. A vicious circle.

It is absolutely true that anti-Zionism is not antisemitism as we have seen it before. This is a new breed. A mixture. It is dangerous and it is scary because this anti-Zionist movement cannot survive without carrying the antisemitism along with it.

So for the Jewish Zionist, the vast majority of Jewish people in the world, we become targets. Until someone in a position of power puts a stop to this, preferably through an accepted definition of antisemitism, the vast majority of Jews remain "legitimate" targets of hate crimes. Let's face it, yesterday I witnessed a Jew hating festival at the heart of the British estate. In the meantime, Balfour is cause for celebration. The only apology needs to come from those responsible for feeding antisemitism last night.

Letter from Sir David Amess MP to Baroness Tonge with enclosed email from Eric Harris, 2 November 2016

I thought you should see an email that I have received from a constituent.

Email from Eric Harris to Sir David Amess MP, 27 October 2016

As I know that you have always been a good friend of Southend and Westcliff Hebrew Congregation consequently I am writing to you on what I consider to be a serious anti-Semitic event.

An extremely disturbing and appalling article appeared in today's edition of *The Times* which I am paraphrasing (I can scan and send the full article).

It is headed "Jews blamed for Holocaust at "shameful" House of Lords Event".

A meeting took place hosted by Baroness Tonge has provoked concern about the level of "anti-Semitic" discourse in British politics.

She was launching a campaign to apologise on the 100th anniversary of the Balfour declaration.

An audience member was applauded after suggesting that Hitler only decided to kill all the Jews after he was provoked by anti-German protests led by a Rabbi in Manhattan.

The speaker also compared Israel to Islamic State.

Another audience member suggested that the "Zionist Movement" had power over the British parliament.

Another audience member was applauded for saying "if anyone is anti-Semitic it is Israelis themselves".

Lady Tonge made no attempt to challenge the provocative comments.

Of course I do appreciate you are a member of the Commons not the Lords but I really want to know who authorised such an anti-Semitic meeting to take place in one of the chambers of Parliament, the seat of government in our country.

Letter from Baroness Tonge to Theresa Villiers MP and Sir David Amess MP

Re meeting 25 October 2016 "Balfour Apology Campaign"

Thank you for your communication and the enclosed letter from your constituent.

The confused remarks made during the meeting, which have caused offence, quite rightly, were made by a Rabbi from an Ultra-Orthodox sect of Judaism Neturei Karta.

His contribution was garbled and difficult to understand at the time and I, as Chair of the meeting, could not even hear what he was trying to say. Some people were closer to him and heard more? Certainly the transcript I have obtained subsequently is clearer although still very confused.

Towards the end of his outburst I heard the word "boycott" which I used to quickly move the audience on to another topic. The audience applauded at this point and we moved on.

I am sorry that your constituent is so upset.

The campaign over the coming year seeks to highlight the fact that the Balfour Declaration stated,

“His Majesty’s government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use its best endeavour to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country”.

The campaign seeks to highlight the injustices endured by those “existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine”. We seek an apology for what has been allowed to happen over the last 100 years and urge the government to establish a secure state of Palestine alongside Israel before it is too late, as envisaged by the League of Nations and subsequently by the UN in many Resolutions.

I hope this is helpful.

Email from Majed al Zeer, chairman of the Palestinian Return Centre, to Baroness Tonge, 12 November 2016

As you may know, we have been working in Parliament for many years. The press are always being invited to cover the meetings. However, as an organisation we don’t arrange any logistics or facilitate the entry of journalists into Parliament.

It is often media outlets arrange their own entry which we assume and certain that will be in accordance with the Parliament regulations which is shown in this link: www.parliament.uk/documents/CPA/CPC2011/Photography-Leaflet.pdf

Media outlets often get in touch with the Parliament to request a permission.

The fact that Al Jazeera did not ask for your approval or the Parliament approval, we think it is their own responsibility. In this instance I refer to the House of Lords basic filming regulations:

“Anyone who attempts to do so, or to market, publish or transmit such material will be referred to Black Rod of the Serjeant at Arms. This could prejudice their future admission to the Houses of Parliament. The same applies to any filming to camera except as part of an interview with a Peer of Member. “Voice-over” commentaries may be added to film where appropriate.”

Our invitation was public for either the audience or the press. Therefore, we think that it is Al Jazeera’s responsibility to make sure they have valid entry and permission for filming.

Thanks in advance.

Email from Islam Ali, AḡM Correspondent, Mubasher Channel, to Baroness Tonge, 14 November 2016

We regularly come to the Parliament to film side events on different topics.

We have been doing this for long time and we covered many events hosted by various MPs from different parties.

We always come with our cameras and equipment and pass by all security without any problems.

We always assume and think that our NUJ press accreditation would be enough.

I'm sorry that we didn't get in touch with you or the House of Lords as we thought it's fine.

I think the Parliament press office should make it clearer with us what's allowed and what's not.

I'm sorry for any inconvenience we caused to you. We will make sure to work with the press office and have their permission for any future events.

Email from Sameh Habeeb to Baroness Tonge, 9 November 2016

PRC's seminars in Parliament:

October 2016—Hosted by Jenny Tonge MP

October 2016—Hosted by Paul Monaghan MP

May 2016—Hosted by Tommy Sheppard MP

April 2016—Hosted by Geraint Davies MP

March 2016—Hosted by Tommy Sheppard MP

February 2016—Hosted by Graham Morris MP

January 2016—Hosted by Ben Bradshaw MP

December 2016—Reception Dinner hosted by Labour Friends of Palestine MPs

November 2015—Hosted by Tommy Sheppard MP

October 2015—Hosted by Gerald Kaufmann MP

July 2015—Hosted by Jenny Tonge

Some of the events above were in partnership with the Green Party, SNP Friends of Palestine, Lib Dems Friends of Palestine and Labour Friends of Palestine and ME.

I hope this helps.

Press statement by the Palestinian Return Centre about media coverage of the Balfour Apology Campaign launch, 28 October 2016

The Palestinian Return Centre (PRC) condemns the appalling and misinforming media articles which consistently fail to accurately and objectively report the event hosted in the House of Lords on October 25. The event hosted by Jenny Tonge was dedicated to launch "Balfour Apology Campaign", which seeks an official apology from the British government.

As stated yesterday in a press release, the Palestinian Return Centre condemns these press articles which report inaccurate information, deceive the public and result in wrongly representing the Centre.

We have decided to respond to some articles that provide blatant errors and are intentionally misleading, though this is not a comprehensive account.

In an article written by Anil Dawar and published at page 7 of the *Daily Express* on Friday October 28, it is repeatedly alluded that a speaker from the Palestinian Return Centre made anti-Semitic comments and compared the state of Israel

to Islamic State (IS). This is absolutely incorrect. Anil Dawar fails to provide a crucial detail to the story, which is that the comment came from the audience (a Jewish Rabbi member of the Neturei Karta). We condemn this distortion of reality which is at best lazy and bad journalism, or worse it is done in bad faith.

In an article written by Kate McCann, Senior Political Correspondent at *The Daily Telegraph*, at page 2 on Friday October 28, it is clear that the omission of a key fact is misleading the public on what actually happened at the event. McCann writes “Lady Tonge resigned following a decision to suspend her after she hosted an event where a speaker reportedly compared Israel to the terrorist group Isil and Jews were blamed for the Holocaust”. This “poor” and “lazy” journalism notably omits from the story that the comment came from a member of the audience. Therefore it does not represent the views of Lady Tonge or the other speakers on the panel nor the PRC which organized the event. Adding to this, McCann does not see important to mention the main purpose of the event and the discussion which centred on the launch of the Balfour Apology Campaign.

In an article by Daniel Martin, Chief Political Correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, at page 26 on Friday October 28, 2016 it is written “A Liberal Democrat peer who hosted an anti-Semitic event in Parliament was finally forced out of the party last night”. This utterly misleading sentence attempts to suggest the event organised by the Palestinian Return Centre was anti-Semitic. What Martin’s article fails to include is that the event centred on the launch of the Balfour Apology Campaign and that none of the speakers on the panel nor the chair had made any anti-Semitic accusations. Those comments were made by a member of the audience who also happens to be a Jewish Rabbi member of Neturei Karta.

In an article published on the *Guardian* online on October 27, the author Harriet Sherwood provides a plethora of erroneous information. First, she starts her article stating “Jenny Tonge, a former Liberal Democrat peer, has quit the party after she was suspended over alleged anti-Semitic comments”. This is absolutely wrong since it seems to suggest that Lady Tonge has made anti-Semitic comments, which she has not. Then she writes “The remarks were made by a speaker at the meeting, which was organised by the Palestinian Return Centre, which live-streamed the event on its Facebook page”. Sherwood misleadingly suggests that the remarks were made by a speaker of the centre while it was a member of the audience who during the Q & A session of the meeting decided to make an intervention. The *Guardian*, along with other outlets, continues to silence Palestinian voices since it did not seek a comment from the organisers while it gave a platform to the Israeli embassy, which did not even attend the event.

Jon Craig, Chief Political Correspondent for *Sky News*, authored an article published online on Friday October 28 deceitfully writes “One speaker apparently compared Israel to Islamic State, and suggested the Jews were blamed for the Holocaust.” Again, the failure to acknowledge that the person who made those comments was a member of the audience is done with the intent to suggest that the speaker was a member of the organisation that hosted the event.

In an article authored by Graeme Demianyk, published on the *Huffington Post* online on October 27 the information that is prepared is misleading and not factual. Demianyk writes that “A Liberal Democrat peer and former MP has quit the party after being suspended for hosting an event in Parliament where the audience applauded as someone blamed Jews for the Holocaust.” It is hard to believe that the video that Demianyk provides in the article as evidence actually discredits his own statement. In that video it is clear that no one in the audience clapped after

the ultra-orthodox Jew from the Neturei Karta made the alleged anti-Semitic comment. It is absolutely obvious that after that comment Lady Tonge went on to talk about a completely different topic, that is the BDS campaign, and that the applause that followed was directed to her statement. We call on the *Huffington Post* to correct this blatant error, also for the sake of their own credibility.

The Palestinian Return Centre also condemns the biased *Times* article which initiated the row providing inaccurate information as a result of “lazy” and “bad” journalism. On early Thursday 27 October, Kennedy published an article titled, “Jews blamed for Holocaust at “shameful” House of Lords event”. The article of Kennedy is based on a blog post by David Collier who is a known pro-Israel blogger. The article described the event of the Palestinian Return Centre as ““shameful” House of Lords event”. Kennedy’s choice for the title fails to accurately depict the purpose and outcome of the event, which centred on the launch of the Balfour Apology Campaign. He also gave a platform to the Israeli embassy in London where a spokesperson commented on the matter. Meanwhile, he failed to contact the centre for a comment on the issue.

In light of the above points raised, the Palestinian Return Centre demands that those media publications correct the erroneous facts presented and provide an accurate account of the events.

We also intend to seek legal action for the false accusations and defamatory allegations directed against the centre.

Appendix F: Letter from Lord Beecham, Lord Carlile of Berriew, Baroness Deech, Lord Mitchell, Lord Palmer of Childs Hill and Lord Stunell to the Commissioner for Standards, 17 November 2016

On Tuesday 25 October a meeting was held in the House of Lords in Committee Room 2A at 7pm. The event, advertised by the Palestine Return Centre (PRC), was to “discuss the launch of the Balfour Apology Campaign: Time to Say Sorry”. As had been reported in the *Times*, the *Jewish Chronicle* and elsewhere, the meeting was in fact host to appalling antisemitic comments and Holocaust denial by audience members.

Hosted and chaired by Baroness Tonge, unchallenged and in some instances applauded statements included that Hitler only decided to kill all the Jews after he was provoked by anti-German protests led by a Rabbi in Manhattan, and that “the Zionist movement has that power and it has that over our own Parliament”. The first comment is historically and factually incorrect, the second a modernised version of a classic antisemitic trope.

Given the meeting took place within Parliament, we invite you to investigate whether there has been a breach of the general principles and rules of conduct of the House of Lords Code of Conduct and, if appropriate, forward to the police any relevant details should illegal hate speech or any other contravention of the law be considered to have taken place. We are writing separately to the Senior Deputy Speaker to ask whether a wider note ought to be circulated as this is not the first time, in the Commons or the Lords that antisemitic statements have been made during such meetings. We trust you will agree that such behaviour brings the Houses of Parliament into disrepute.

Appendix G: Letter from the Commissioner for Standards to Lord Beecham, Baroness Deech, Lord Carlile of Berriew, Lord Mitchell, Lord Palmer of Childs Hill and Lord Stunell, 23 November 2016

Thank you for your letter of 17 November 2016 inviting me to investigate whether Baroness Tonge breached the House of Lords Code of Conduct in relation to her hosting of the meeting in the House of Lords on 25 October 2016 to launch the Balfour Apology Campaign.

I have already received a complaint about this matter and have begun an investigation. My investigation will cover two matters. First, I will consider whether Baroness Tonge breached the Code of Conduct by not acting in accordance with the rules on filming and photography in the House of Lords, in particular by not seeking and obtaining permission for the event to be filmed and photographed. Secondly, I will consider whether in her hosting and chairing of the meeting Baroness Tonge breached the requirement in paragraph 8(b) of the Code of Conduct for members to act always on their personal honour.

Your complaint appears to relate to the second matter, so I intend to consider it alongside the complaint already received.

Please find enclosed a transcript of the meeting on 25 October 2016. Baroness Tonge is content that it is an accurate record of proceedings. I would be grateful if you could identify the particular remarks during the event that you consider to be anti-Semitic or hate speech, or which otherwise may have breached the Code of Conduct.

As an investigation is under way there is a requirement for all evidence and correspondence relating to the case to remain confidential unless and until it is published by the Committee for Privileges and Conduct.

A copy of this letter is being sent to all six correspondents. I would, of course, be content with a single reply.

Appendix H: Email from Lord Beecham to the Commissioner for Standards, 24 November 2016

Thank you for your letter of 23 November and the accompanying transcript of the 25 October meeting. Baroness Tonge commented from the chair on a number of contributions made by platform speakers and from the floor. I refer particularly to her response to the remarks of Audience member 11 in relation to Zionism and the Holocaust. It was surely incumbent on her to do more than merely thank the audience member for his/her extraordinary pronouncements, but she chose merely to thank the speaker and proceeded to develop an argument in support of BDS. Although I entirely disagree with that concept merely advocating it would not be sufficient to ground a complaint. Failing to rebut, or even question, the deeply offensive remarks of the audience member in my submission does.

Appendix I: Email from Lord Palmer of Childs Hill to the Commissioner for Standards, 27 November 2016

Thank you for your letter of 23 November. We have not met but I am told by colleagues that they hold you in high regard.

I thought that I needed to reply to you.

I am not a lawyer so I come to this matter as a layman and a Peer (appointed 6 years ago). I was not present at the meeting but have read the transcript. The problem to my eyes is that if one hosts and chairs a meeting in the Palace one should not let that meeting be used for anti-Semitic and inflammatory purposes. I accept that the meeting could be pro-Palestinian and anti-Israeli and not fall foul of the House's Code of Conduct. But it seems clear to me that speeches were anti-Jewish and promoted hatred.

I think Baroness Tonge's fault was in not distancing herself and the meeting from very offensive remarks. There is use of the phrase "indigenous people of the area" which should include Jews but clearly did not according to the chair and speakers.

Surely a chair in our House should challenge the blaming of US Jews for driving Hitler mad, testing dangerous manufactured goods on Palestinians, and calling Israelis anti-Semites. The Balfour Declaration clearly divides opinion but the wording was misrepresented by the meeting.

I understand that the chairman says she didn't hear some of the offensive remarks. I would point out that after an innocuous remark from Audience Member 12 she said "I didn't hear that". She did not say she didn't hear very offensive remarks, but said "thank you very much".

Appendix J: Letter from the Commissioner for Standards to Baroness Tonge, 25 November 2016

Thank you for your letter of 21 November 2016 and the enclosures.

In your letter you referred to previous meetings you have hosted in the House of Lords which have been filmed. Could you please provide the dates, locations and event titles of those meetings?

In your letter you also wrote, "On this occasion ... I asked the camera crew if they had permission to which they replied in the affirmative." Did you ask them before, during or after the event? Relevant to this question is this statement in Islam Ali's email to you, which was enclosed with your letter: "I'm sorry that we didn't get in touch with you or the House of Lords as we thought it's fine."

You also referred to the comments from the audience member who is a member of the Neturei Karta sect. Before he spoke were you aware that he was a member of Neturei Karta? Were you aware of the sect's views?

Enclosed with your letter was an email containing a list of Palestine Return Centre (PRC) seminars which took place in Parliament, most of which were hosted by MPs. Could you please ask the PRC to provide the dates, locations, event titles and names of the hosts of the meetings they have held in the House of Lords which have been filmed? Could you please also ask the PRC whether they have come across the man from Neturei Karta before 25 October 2016 and, if they have, whether he has made similar remarks at events they have organised or attended?

Since I last wrote I have received a further complaint about the event on 25 October 2016, from six members of the House. The complaint is enclosed. I provided the six members with the transcript of the meeting and invited them to identify the particular remarks during the event that they consider to be anti-Semitic or hate speech, or which they consider otherwise may have breached the Code of Conduct. One of their responses is enclosed. I will inform you of any other responses when they are received, and give you the opportunity to reply to them. In the meantime,

if you wish to reply to their complaint and Lord Beecham's email at this stage you are welcome to do so.

Appendix K: Letter from Baroness Tonge to the Commissioner for Standards, 30 November 2016

Thank you for your letter of 25 November 2016 and apologies for the delay in response.

When I referred to previous meetings in the House since 1997, I was referring to both Houses of Parliament. In the Lords such occasions are very rare, but in the Commons I did a lot of media work, mostly outside the Palace of Westminster and I do not have records for this.

I am Chair of the All-Party Group on Population Development and Reproductive Health and in this capacity I host a large gathering for the International Planned Parenthood Federation in the Cholmondeley Room every year in the Lords and I vaguely remember cameras being there on one occasion but it might have been a private video recording. I enclose Matthew Lindley's response to my enquiry. Certainly no live TV!

On 25 October I arrived at Committee Room 2A at approximately 6.45 pm and it was then that I asked the cameraman about permission. I then prepared for the meeting to start. I wrongly assumed that doorkeepers and security would not have let them in if unauthorised. I was wrong to do that. I have already admitted that.

I have seen Neturei Karta at demonstrations organised by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign in Trafalgar Square in past years. They usually stand in a small group in their very distinctive dress which I am told by Baroness Deech is the dress of Polish noblemen in the 18th Century. I once asked about their beliefs and was told that they never wanted a religious Jewish State of Israel but preferred Palestine as it was in the British Protectorate up to 1947. I have never heard any of them speak or make any contribution at all at any of these events and regarded them as completely eccentric and harmless.

None of the organisations I have worked with over the years including PRC have heard any member of NK speak at a meeting before.

I enclose statements from two people who were at the meeting and contacted me when they saw the press reports. I asked them to send me a statement addressed to you, for use if necessary.

Will you be asking the other speakers at the event for their impressions? They were sitting at the table with me. I can ask them to contact you directly if you wish.

I think it is unjust in the extreme for other Peers to judge the meeting and my reactions to speakers on the basis of a transcript which I did not have access to at the time. I repeat that I could barely hear this very strange person and wanted to move on, away from him as quickly as possible because members of the audience were looking bemused. I reacted the way I did for that reason alone.

Lord Palmer suggests that because I asked Audience Member 11 to repeat their question (a simple sentence), I should have asked Audience Member 12 to repeat his strange utterances too. Would that really have helped? No decent chair would do that; they would do as I did.

Likewise Lord Beecham suggests I should have rebutted remarks coming from this contributor, which I did not hear properly, in common with others at the meeting, and certainly do not understand even after reading the transcript. They seem to want to disseminate these ridiculous stories, which I chose to ignore.

I will reply to them in due course. In the meantime I am happy for you to share this letter with them, as they did not write to me directly but only to the press and yourself.

It is what the Israeli government has done over the last 60 years and is continuing to do to the Palestinian people and their land which concerns me.

It is our government's responsibility to see that the whole of the Balfour Declaration is honoured.

Thank you for your patience.

Statement by Jonathan Coulter to the Commissioner for Standards, 15 November 2016

I am shocked by the way this meeting, which was chaired by Baroness Jenny Tonge, was so badly reported in the media.

As you are doubtless aware, the purpose of the event was to launch the Balfour Apology Campaign. There were three invited speakers including Majid Al-Zeer, Karl Sabbagh and Betty Hunter, and the Canadian Prof. Yakob Rabkin was also asked to make a short intervention.

After they had finished, Baroness Tonge invited comments from the floor. One of the speakers was an orthodox Jew with a furry round hat and tunic. He spoke rapidly and I couldn't understand what he was saying—I could only grasp words here and there. I do not remember him being applauded. Others spoke after him and I thought no more of it. As chair, Baroness Tonge seemed to conduct herself professionally throughout the event.

Two days later I read an article by Dominic Kennedy of the *Times* entitled “Jews Blamed for Holocaust at ‘shameful’ House of Lords event” (see <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/jews-blamed-for-holocaust-at-shameful-house-of-lords-event-m86q69tl0>). It claimed that an audience member was applauded after making the statement about Hitler etc., etc., and went on to say that “Lady Tonge made no attempt to challenge provocative comments”, implying that she was in some way responsible for what the abovementioned speaker had said. The article also quoted statements from the Israeli Embassy about “a shameful event”, “racist tropes” and about it being hard to believe that such an event could happen in the House of Lords. It also referred to Baroness Tonge having previously run into trouble on account of her own anti-Israel outbursts.

While saying all these things, and having built a story around a practically inaudible member of the audience (presumably with the aid of a concealed tape recorder), Kennedy signally failed to report the main news of the meeting. There were some very informative talks, particularly that of Karl Sabbagh, and nearly all those who spoke strongly endorsed the idea that Britain needed to apologise for the treatment of the indigenous Palestinians for what had happened as a result of the Balfour Declaration.

Evidently picking up on the *Times* articles, other British newspapers (I counted six) published somewhat similar stories, and the most tendentious piece of all

appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/anti-semitism-goes-to-parliament-1477940443>

While I know that your mandate is to look at parliamentary standards, I propose that you refer this case to the body concerned with press standards, and let the public know that you are doing this. As long as the press can get away with such blatant misinformation, it will have little incentive to hold its journalists accountable.

Statement by Jocelyn Hurndall to the Commissioner for Standards, 20 November 2016

I write with regard to the investigation concerning Baroness Jenny Tonge and alleged breaches of House of Lords Standards.

I attended the recent meeting of the “Launch of the Balfour Apology Campaign” on 25 October in the House of Lords. I am deeply troubled by the ensuing distorted international mainstream media reporting which has escalated out of control to the extent that this investigation is to be conducted. Media reports have exposed a gross manipulation of the truth of what took place. In my view, there is no foundation whatsoever for these allegations.

The meeting was chaired by Baroness Tonge who set a professional, receptive and inclusive tone throughout. Following the guests’ talks, she gave the opportunity for questions. To her huge credit, at the outset, she went out of her way to welcome warmly a member of Israeli Radio. He attends meetings regularly on the subject and places a recorder in front of each speaker as they speak moving it when necessary. This was completely supported by Baroness Tonge.

During the questions, one quietly spoken individual spoke up in a garbled, unintelligible, incoherent manner. I could only catch the occasional word in spite of being closer. He seemed confused. Baroness Tonge could have responded in two ways: either to ask him to repeat his point because it was impossible to follow the gist or, alternatively, to thank him graciously for his contribution and move on to the next question. She did the right and most sensitive thing in moving on. Had she asked him to repeat his point, I believe, this would have been embarrassing to this person and amounted to a “put-down” because of his inarticulacy. He seemed not fully aware. Others thought “there was something wrong with him”.

A matter that failed to be reported anywhere was the only rude, unsavoury contribution made by a member of the pro-Israeli lobby. Baroness Tonge allowed it to be stated, replied firmly but graciously at all times.

Is this not a matter for the Press Complaints Commission? In bringing about this investigation the Parliamentary Standards Commission, with all the time it will take up and public funds used, runs the risk of damaging its reputation?

Has the Commission sought first-hand statements from people present at this meeting? Is it possible that the Commission has accepted the views of agencies that were not at the meeting and that have a vested interest?

In order to avoid any misunderstandings about impartiality, I want to be clear about my association with some of the issues. I am the mother of Tom Hurndall, the photo-journalist who was shot in Gaza in 2003. Throughout my family’s campaign for justice, I have made it my business to remain impartial and independent over matters to do with Israel and Palestine. In common with Baroness Tonge, it is through the prism of human rights and international law that I endeavour to

see the situation. But even so, you lay yourself open to interpretations that bear no relation to reality. I am in touch with the unpleasant distortions to do with inappropriate accusations of anti-semitism employed by some agencies.

Finally, I am sure you are aware that Baroness Tonge has a significant global following in the human rights world. She is tremendously respected due to the way she stands up for justice and regularly speaks out against anti-semitism. This is often at great cost to herself.

Email from Matthew Lindley to Baroness Tonge, 25 November 2016

If we did, I am sure we never thought to ask for permission.

We've always seen it as a community event for those passionate about SRHR, so I doubt we would have done.

In general when I've needed it in other places permission is normally requested by the film company on the behalf of the commissioners. In that sense, IPPF sends a letter to the film company requesting it.

Following that logic, IPPF would need to ask AGGP for permission, once granted, we would ask the film company (if we pay them) and then they ask the HOL authorities.

Sorry for the long email, I wanted to puzzle it out.

Appendix L: Letter from Majed al Zeer, chairman of the Palestinian Return Centre, to the Commissioner for Standards, 5 December 2016

We have been passed some technical questions from Baroness Jenny Tonge regarding her meeting on 25 October 2016 and about past meetings at the Commons and Lords.

The Palestinian Return Centre (PRC) has been operating in the UK since 1996. The Centre held many meetings and had continued interaction with both members of the Commons and Lords. We are a mainstream organization that has huge respect worldwide. We are a member of the United Nations ECOSOC for NGOs. We would like to reiterate our position, **“We don't tolerate any form or type of anti-Semitism”**. The Centre made it clear in our press releases that we promote social cohesion rather than targeting a certain people or religion.

We work in the European Parliament, United Nations (Geneva and New York); we know very well the many laws and regulations of these venues. Therefore, we make sure that we are particularly compliant with their requirements.

Throughout our work in the British Parliament, we always informed journalists interested in covering our events that they **“should seek the appropriate permissions from the authorities”**. I'm sure you agree with us that journalists should be smart enough to enter a certain place when they have the approval otherwise it will be very **“inappropriate”**.

In your reference to the “Naturei Karta”, they attended some of our meetings. We recall that they came to our meetings at two occasions in the past. Yet, they have not said any controversial statements.

As for the event on 25th, our records don't show any names or an indication that Naturei Karta sent an email or requested to attend. Our colleagues said that on

the day three of the Naturei Karta came to the event without pre-booking and they entered the room 40 minutes after the start of the event. You may check the CCTV to confirm this. We think their attendance in this manner and saying these controversial statements could indicate that they may have intended to ruin the meeting and result in what has happened.

As for our past events in the last few months, they were held at both the Lords and the Commons. As for the list of the events and chairs:

PRC's Seminars in Parliament:

October 2016—Hosted by Jenny Tonge MP (Chair, Jenny Tonge)

October 2016—Hosted by Paul Monaghan MP (Paul Monaghan MP)

May 2016—Hosted by Tommy Sheppard MP (Tommy Sheppard MP)

April 2016—Hosted by Geraint Davies MP (Chair, Jenny Tonge)

March 2016—Hosted by Tommy Sheppard MP (Chair, Tommy Sheppard MP)

February 2016—Hosted by Graham Morris MP (Head of Media at Palestinian Return Centre)

January 2016—Hosted by Ben Bradshaw MP (Chair, Sarah Apps, Palestine Solidarity Campaign Interim Director)

December 2016—Reception Dinner hosted by Labour Friends of Palestine MPs

November 2015—Hosted by Tommy Sheppard MP (Chair, Tommy Sheppard MP)

October 2015—Hosted by Gerald Kaufmann MP (Chair, Gerald Kaufmann MP)

July 2015—Hosted by Jenny Tonge (Chair, Jenny Tonge)

As for your question about if the past events were filmed or not, we invited media outlets to cover our events in accordance with the Parliament regulations. Yet, we are not sure about the possibility of the meetings filmed or not. We did not see our events for example broadcasted in media outlets. Often the events on Palestinian issues do not get any attention in the media due to the bias of media bodies.

At this occasion, we would like to draw you attention that our Centre has been exposed to a huge smearing and propaganda campaign over the past few years from the pro-Israel lobby. Despite the very moderate position we hold, these organisations are trying to present a negative image about us. Yet, our partners at the EU Parliament, United Nations and friends at the British Parliament don't buy into these defamatory campaigns.

The Centre is due to take legal actions about all parties that tried to defame us following the event of 25 October. Baroness Tonge, has expressed many times in the past her position against racial discrimination. For example she said at one of our meetings at the House of Commons on 25 April 2016: "Baroness Jenny Tonge introduced the event by stating the difference between anti-Semitism, which should always be strongly condemned, and criticising the policies of the government of Israel, which is a legitimate right in any democratic country of the world."

We kindly invite you to scrutinise the pro-Israel lobby accusations or complaints by any parties. Sadly, there are many attempts to silence freedom of expression in this country. Our Parliament in its two Chambers should always be the beacon of free and open discussion.

I think the fact that our organisation and Jenny Tonge refused the statement of the Naturei Karta, this should be enough to indicate our good intention and that we are keen to have freedom of expression exerted rather than offending people of certain religion and ethnicity.

I hope our answers are sufficient. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Appendix M: Transcript of the Commissioner for Standards' interview with Baroness Tonge, 12 December 2016

Commissioner for Standards: Thank you for attending the interview today. The interview is being recorded and a transcript will be produced. You will be sent a copy of the transcript and given the opportunity to make corrections and to add to anything you said. The transcript will be appended to my report on your case but will not be published unless and until the Committee for Privileges and Conduct reports on the case.

Present at this interview are me, Lucy Scott-Moncrieff, House of Lords Commissioner for Standards; you, Baroness Tonge; and the clerk who assists me, Nicolas Besly.

You are aware of the scope of my investigation. It arises from a meeting you hosted in a House of Lords committee room to launch the Balfour Apology Campaign on 25 October 2016. I am investigating two matters: first, whether you breached the rules on filming and photography in the House of Lords by not seeking and obtaining permission for the event to be filmed and photographed; and, secondly, whether in hosting and chairing the meeting you complied with the requirement on members to act on their personal honour.

I am grateful for your written responses to the allegations. The purpose of this interview is to seek further clarification about some points that arise from the allegations and your responses to them.

In this interview I will ask some general questions about the event; then I will ask about the filming and photography; finally, I will ask about your hosting and chairing of it. Is there anything that you would like to say at the outset—anything you would have said to me by now—or shall we get on with questions?

Baroness Tonge: No, I do not think so. We have had some good exchanges of letters, so I think we will just get on with it.

Commissioner for Standards: Thank you. Dealing with the meeting generally, presumably you booked it, did you?

Baroness Tonge: I booked the room for them.

Commissioner for Standards: How do you do that? Did you ring somebody up?

Baroness Tonge: You just ring up the room bookings people and say, “Is there a room that will take upwards of 50, 60 people available for a specific time and

place?”, and they put your name down, and you are then the person who has booked the room and is responsible for the room.

Commissioner for Standards: Do you have to say what the booking is for?

Baroness Tonge: No.

Commissioner for Standards: You just say how long it is going to be and how many people will attend?

Baroness Tonge: You usually give them some indication. For example, I would say, “My All-Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health”—that is my main job. For this one, I would say, “Palestine”, probably. I cannot remember on this occasion.

Commissioner for Standards: Okay. So it is just a phone call?

Baroness Tonge: Yes.

Commissioner for Standards: Thank you. Why did you agree to host the meeting?

Baroness Tonge: I have known the Palestinian Return Centre people for many years. I have been involved with Palestine since I was spokesperson for international development when I was in the Commons. I first went there in 2003. I am very involved with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, the Return Centre—the various campaign groups for Palestine—and they use me quite often to host meetings inside and outside Parliament, and to chair things. I have never had any doubts about their integrity.

Commissioner for Standards: No, no, and I am not suggesting that you should have. Did they say to you, “We are launching this campaign. Can we do it in the House of Lords?”

Baroness Tonge: There has been a lot of talk in both Houses about how to commemorate the Balfour Declaration, the second half of which concerns the Palestinian diaspora. A lot of us, both in the Lords and the Commons, felt that the Government—at one point, I think David Cameron said he was going to celebrate the Balfour Declaration, which upset a lot of people. There are several groups, inside and outside Parliament—I wish there were not so many groups; I wish they would come together—who are intending to mark the Balfour Declaration next year, which is its 100th anniversary.

Commissioner for Standards: On this occasion, either you suggested it to the PRC or they suggested it to you.

Baroness Tonge: I did not suggest it. They were very keen to launch their campaign. They wanted to have a Downing Street petition to encourage people to sign, which subsequently has been rejected by the committee that does these things, so the petition is not there at the moment. There are a lot of petitions flying around the internet, nevertheless, from various people. It was to do that, but it was also to have three speakers talking about the Balfour Declaration and subsequent events, and they asked me to chair it. It was very straightforward and the speakers were people I knew well and had no doubts about. One is a very eminent publisher. Another one has been with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign for many years; she is now their patron. The other one was the head of the Palestinian Return Centre, Majed al Zeer.

Commissioner for Standards: Thank you. Because you booked the room, you had to chair the meeting. Is that how it works?

Baroness Tonge: No, no.

Commissioner for Standards: But you had to be there?

Baroness Tonge: You have to be there at the beginning and the end. They are a bit woolly, these things. If this case does anything at all, it should tighten up procedures a bit, I think.

Commissioner for Standards: Right.

Baroness Tonge: Sometimes you hand over to another peer; or, in the House of Commons, where I was for a long time, you have to hand over to another MP because you have something else to go to.

Commissioner for Standards: Okay. It was launching a campaign. I appreciate that the online petition has now gone off, but that was the purpose of the meeting. In one of your letters I think you say that the professor from Canada came at your request.

Baroness Tonge: No, he did not. Someone I knew, a fellow campaigner for Palestinian rights, arrived at the meeting and asked me before the meeting if she could stay; I consulted the organisers and said yes. She said that she had brought this Canadian—Mr Yakov Rabkin, a professor from Montreal University—and that he would like to say something, very briefly. We consulted together and we decided it would be very good to have him there.

Commissioner for Standards: Thank you. There is no issue about him being there at all. What I was trying to get at is whether everybody there was invited or at least had applied for tickets.

Baroness Tonge: They had registered, I think is the term PRC used. They had registered for tickets and some people got in who had not registered. It is quite obvious from what happened that somebody got in, including the Neturei Karta, the three rabbis. I am sorry to smile at that, but they really are—they are very quaint and lovable most of the time.

Commissioner for Standards: So people were meant to register, but presumably anyone who was interested could have registered.

Baroness Tonge: Yes, although they might not have known about it. They would have known about it only through the usual channels—Facebook and the invitations from PRC.

Commissioner for Standards: It was not a purely invited audience?

Baroness Tonge: No, obviously not.

Commissioner for Standards: Thank you. I wish that I could pronounce it in the way that you have: Neturei Karta. Was that close enough?

Baroness Tonge: It is only this event that has forced me to learn how to pronounce it. It is Neturei Karta.

Commissioner for Standards: Thanks. Neturei Karta were not a group that I knew about before now, but I see that you have come across them before now.

Baroness Tonge: I have frequently seen them. We used to have a lot of marches and rallies for Palestine in Trafalgar Square. They were always there and they always had a stall on the edge of the square. They were considered to be really quite quaint and lovable. They have the most extraordinary costume, which Baroness Deech told me was from a nobleman of the 18th century in Poland, and they have these big, wide, brown fur hats and ringlets and long frock coats. I had never heard them say anything, ever. That is what is so extraordinary—ever.

Commissioner for Standards: One thing I have picked up—and I certainly do not intend to get into politics or theology if I can possibly avoid it—is that for profound religious reasons they do not support the existence of the secular state of Israel.

Baroness Tonge: No, they do not support the existence of the Jewish state of Israel; it is not the secular state, it is the Jewish state. They did not want a political Jewish entity in that area. They liked the British protectorate—if it had not been so violent and awful. They liked it when everybody lived in Palestine together: Jews, Muslims and Christians alike. They are very old-fashioned. That was why they were so quaint and everyone loved them because they were saying, “Look, why did you have to do this? Why did Britain have to do this?” That is as much as I know about them. I suspect there are individuals, as we discovered at the meeting, who have oddball ideas about different things, but I had never heard them speak.

Commissioner for Standards: I listened to the recordings and read the transcript, and it was clear that you and the other speakers were being extremely careful not to use this event to criticise the existence of the state of Israel.

Baroness Tonge: Absolutely.

Commissioner for Standards: I could see that you were scrupulous about that. This was not a state of Israel-bashing event. But you did know that this small sect did not support the existence of the state of Israel.

Baroness Tonge: Yes, although I think they came in after the beginning of the meeting.

Commissioner for Standards: I think that is right.

Baroness Tonge: I do not think they were invited. It was a very crowded meeting. The room was packed. You could see from my remarks about sardines that it was very crowded. I did not expect them to say anything. I thought they would just stand there like they always do.

Commissioner for Standards: But you called on one of them to speak.

Baroness Tonge: One of them was waving his hand furiously and I thought, “Maybe, yes, let him say something.”

Commissioner for Standards: Did it occur to you that he might say something that people would find so offensive?

Baroness Tonge: No, it did not. The trouble was—I know you will probably find this difficult to believe, but I honestly was not picking up what he was saying. The only word I gratefully honed in on towards the end of his spiel was “boycott”, and I thought, “Ah, that is a way out for me”—you try to find something to shut somebody up—and that stopped him. I moved on to the BDS campaign, the boycott campaign. I must say that by the end of the meeting I thought it had

gone extremely smoothly. I had no worries, because I had not heard what he said. Having read the transcript, I still do not understand what he was saying.

Commissioner for Standards: It was not a very well put together argument, was it?

Baroness Tonge: No. There are all sorts of theories that fly around. It is one of those things. I liken them to the 9/11 conspiracy theorists. Everyone knows that people are trying to say, “Ah, it was not really how they said it was”. There are a lot of those things to do with the beginning of the state of Israel—a lot of stories. I have read the transcript. I have picked up Rabbi Wise, who I had never heard of before, I am afraid. I just did not know what he was talking about and I am still confused about it—and, I think, the rest of the audience likewise. I was trying to find a way to move on from this chap, who I probably should not have been called, looking back, but he was a Jewish rabbi. I might have got accused of anti-Semitism had I not. You know, “Why is she avoiding—?”

Commissioner for Standards: One of the other people—there was somebody there from the *Israel Times*?

Baroness Tonge: No, *Israel Radio*. Jerry Lewis is his name. I have known him for years. He is all over the place, all day long. He seems to be part of the press gallery.

Commissioner for Standards: Was he recording?

Baroness Tonge: Yes, he always records and I always welcome that. I do it quite openly and say, “Jerry is here. He is recording.” I think it is good for him to do that. We are not having a secret meeting.

Commissioner for Standards: What is his take? On the basis that all journalists have political views, is he near-neutral or is he pro-Israel, anti-Israel?

Baroness Tonge: I think he is pro-Israel. Of course he is. Why should he not be? He is Jewish. I am pro-Israel. But I think he has severe reservations about the Israeli government and about the Zionist political notion of Israel now, which was not really the original intention—or people felt it was not the intention—when Israel was first set up. It has become a very distinct political philosophy now—I am choosing my words very carefully—that people are very worried about. I suspect that he is, but being a commentator he tries to stay neutral.

Commissioner for Standards: Thank you. Onto filming.

Baroness Tonge: Yes, I mean, *mea culpa*.

Commissioner for Standards: I know you have put your hands up to it.

Baroness Tonge: I did not know it would be filmed until I walked into the room and thought, “Oh, that’s interesting.” But I have to say that over my political life—I was one of two women on the Lib Dem benches and I was quite prominent in the media when I was in the Commons. I am used to seeing cameras and people waiting to interview me; it has carried on to a lesser extent in the Lords. So when I came into the room I said, “Have you got permission, by the way? This is all okay, is it?”, and he said, “Oh yes, absolutely fine, don’t worry.” That was the cameraman.

Commissioner for Standards: So you did not know that it was going to be filmed until you got there?

Baroness Tonge: No. I do not know whether I should say this again—I said it in my letter—but I have subsequently discovered that I should have told them that if they wanted to film they were responsible for applying to Black Rod’s office, who would then tell me yes or no, and if it was a yes he would send me a form to sign. This I have learned since this event. I did not know that regime existed.

Commissioner for Standards: Sure.

Baroness Tonge: That is why I confess my guilt. In the Commons, I always had staff in my office, and if anything like that happened my PA and researchers would have been responsible for that. But what I fail to understand is why, if they need a signed permit to film a particular event, nobody checked that they had that permit. When you think of all the people that we have—armed police, doorkeepers—all over the place on the way up to the committee corridor, I find it extraordinary. If I had known about the permits, I would have assumed that it had already been checked. But I am not trying to make excuses.

Commissioner for Standards: I appreciate that. The guidance on filming, which is in the leaflet that I think—

Baroness Tonge: Yes, there is a leaflet. We have an enormous amount of stuff that we should consult.

Commissioner for Standards: Yes, I know. Were you familiar with this leaflet before?

Baroness Tonge: No, but Mr Beresford has sent it round subsequently. I do not think I was familiar with it. Because I have been in this place such a long time, I have made assumptions which I should not have made.

Commissioner for Standards: When I spoke to Black Rod he said that quite often members of the House want to have cameras in to film for a good cause or whatever, and by and large he says no. I wondered if you had conversations with people where they said, “Black Rod has said no.”

Baroness Tonge: No, never. I do not think the Lords do it very often. I have asked a number of peers who I know—just casually, I did not ask them about this; this was before I went to Sierra Leone, Turkey and Greece, where I have been for some of the last month. They said, “What? I don’t know. Never happens, does it? We’re peers. Nobody wants to film us.” The only time I did check was with the International Planned Parenthood Federation—I host their big bash in the Cholmondeley Room in the summer every year—whether they had ever had it. I sent the email to you. They seemed to remember once, but it was an internal film for their own use, I think. I suppose I am used to a lot of publicity and people tracking me, and I walked in and said, “Are you sure you should be here?” and he said, “Yeah, it’s absolutely fine.” He subsequently wrote the letter saying that he goes wherever he wants to on his press pass.

Commissioner for Standards: Yes, I saw that.

Baroness Tonge: Well, what is all this about? Is it a different rule for the Commons and for the Lords? That is what I was wondering.

Commissioner for Standards: The point that I wanted to bring out is that in the members’ handbook it is clear that filming for external use will be forbidden

if it is an event that is going to promote a cause, agenda, issue or commercial interest, and obviously this is a cause—a political cause.

Baroness Tonge: Yes, I suppose it is. I would call it an issue rather than a cause.

Commissioner for Standards: Okay. But I mean same difference in the sense that it is there to make a point.

Baroness Tonge: Yes.

Commissioner for Standards: I suppose what it boils down to is that you are saying that you did not know it was going to be filmed and you did not know there was any reason why it should not be filmed.

Baroness Tonge: No, sorry. I did not.

Commissioner for Standards: Do you think that the PRC always wanted it to be filmed? Was it they who arranged for it to be filmed?

Baroness Tonge: Yes, I think it was. It was they who asked the cameras—it was Al Jazeera, was it not?—to be there, yes. But I am not sure whether it was broadcast. Does anyone know?

Commissioner for Standards: It is on its website, so it is there for anyone to see.

Baroness Tonge: So it is there.

Commissioner for Standards: It was on their website when I looked at it. At the beginning of the event you said, “My name is Jenny Tonge. I am a member of the House of Lords and I have been involved—to put it mildly—with the campaign for a free Palestine for about 15 years and I am getting into trouble still. That is the fun of it.” Did you see this event as one that was likely to get you into trouble?

Baroness Tonge: No, I did not. I did not, and this has got me into the biggest trouble of all. No, I did not see it coming. It is usually comments I have made in public meetings or at universities or something. The pro-Israel lobby—the Zionist group—follow me everywhere. I have had some real lashings, I promise you, and I have had some pretty foul threats. I will not go into that. I suppose I said that out of sheer bravado. I should not have said that, maybe, but it is my style.

Commissioner for Standards: I am not criticising you for what you said, I just wondered if it was—

Baroness Tonge: “That is the fun of it” is that I have got used to the idea that if they possibly can, they will make a fuss. But I was interested, actually—did you read that blog that Theresa Villiers received?

Commissioner for Standards: I did.

Baroness Tonge: He said that I was very tame and on my best behaviour.

Commissioner for Standards: Yes, I saw that.

Baroness Tonge: That man is usually the one who goes for me.

Commissioner for Standards: It was his blog, I think, that—

Baroness Tonge:—got into the press and got so deformed, which is something I need to come on to at the end.

Commissioner for Standards: Going back to the statement by the rabbi, I agree that you sort of cut him short when he mentioned a boycott and so on. I also understand what you are saying about not being able to hear it properly. He was probably closer to the camera and therefore the camera's microphone than you would have been.

Baroness Tonge: He was just there and David Collier, the blogger, was just about there, too.

Commissioner for Standards: And the camera was where?

Baroness Tonge: I think the camera was—I mean, if I am chairing it here, the camera was down there and I think the Neturei Karta rabbi group had somehow wheedled their way towards the front but still behind the benches to the right of the camera as I was looking at them, and David Collier was about there.

Commissioner for Standards: Okay. What he said was pretty clear on the transcript and I could hear it on the footage. There were a few words missing, but it was not quiet. But you are saying that from where you were sitting it was not—

Baroness Tonge: I really could not. I have got one totally deaf ear, by the way, but it does not usually hold me up in any way. I have had that all my life and it has not prevented me chairing meetings before. I promise you I could not hear. I think I sent you—two people wrote to me when they saw the press had been at the meeting—I know them a little bit—and said, “We don't know what that man was talking about, we couldn't hear him”, so I do not think it was clear unless you were right up—

Commissioner for Standards: Okay. When you read the transcript, did you think, “Gosh, this is terrible. I wish I had heard so I could have told him to say sorry”, or anything like that, or did you still not really understand what he was saying?

Baroness Tonge: I did not understand what he was saying. I cannot be more honest than that. I just do not know what it was about. I have to say—I do not know whether it is right for me to say this, or politically correct—but I thought there was something rather mad about him. He seemed to be a slightly odd, deranged sort of person, and I was glad that I had managed to stop him and move on to something else, but I felt rather sorry, actually, because I thought, “How sad.”

Commissioner for Standards: Okay. I think that is everything that I wanted to ask. You said a little earlier that there was something you wanted to raise at the end.

Baroness Tonge: Well, I suppose this is more a way of just airing it and asking your advice.

Commissioner for Standards: Do you want to do it off the record?

Baroness Tonge: Yes, maybe it would be better off the record. Is that all you want to ask me about?

Commissioner for Standards: That is all I wanted to ask you, yes.

Baroness Tonge: Before we switch off, I would like to say that I am terribly sorry that this has happened. I am particularly sorry for those peers who wrote to you, because I feel that they did it on not being properly informed. I would have hoped that they would have written to me personally, but I have not had a word from any of them, except Baroness Deech, who has been very kind and friendly. I think it is very sad that they do not check on their sources, and I would apply that remark also to my own political party, who the very next morning, before I knew anything had happened—I do not read the *Times*, so I had not seen the piece in the *Times*—had suspended me pending an investigation, which I was very angry about. I confess to being angry, which is why I resigned from the party altogether, which is a bit sad because I joined in 1959 and it is a family thing. But these things happen.

Commissioner for Standards: Thank you.

Appendix N: Statement by Black Rod to the Commissioner for Standards, 4 November 2016

You asked me for a statement explaining Black Rod’s role in granting filming licences in the House of Lords in the context of Baroness Tonge’s meeting on 25 October.

The Members’ Handbook requires filming in the House to be “licensed” by Black Rod.

The underlying principle is that Members and the public attending an event in a meeting room (or banqueting room) should not use the House as a platform or backcloth to promote publicly on broadcast media a cause, agenda, issue, charity, commercial interest etc. This principle is to avoid the House being perceived as lending credibility to or being directly associated with private agendas or causes. It avoids potential damage to the reputation of the House. This principle is applied strictly when considering Members’ requests to film meetings or events for public broadcast.

There are, however, three circumstances in which such filming is permitted:

- when filming in support of the House’s corporate or official role such as the launch of publication of a Select Committee report or promotion of the House’s work, history, heritage etc. Political top cover is sought if there is a potentially novel or contentious element.
- when a Member books a “press conference”, which is permitted in Committee Room G or the outbuildings. Black Rod seeks the Member’s assurance that the event is to be a “press conference” and not a “filmed meeting”. Should a press conference develop into a forum for attenders on the “floor” of the room to be filmed expressing their views as in a general discussion, Black Rod may intervene to halt the meeting or request the Member to regulate its conduct. Such occurrences have lately become increasingly infrequent.
- when the Member gives a convincing assurance that the recording is for purely private, internal or domestic use, and is not to be posted or broadcast in public media.

Other than for a press conference, “official” House filming, or filming as a record for private use, Black Rod does not authorise licences to film or record a meeting.

Unsurprisingly there is frequent pressure on Black Rod from Members seeking permission for meetings to be recorded or filmed for broadcast, pleading that their “cause” is, for example, worthy, non-contentious or in the public interest. Such pressure is resisted. To do otherwise would require Black Rod to make value judgements and potentially invidious choices. It would give rise to complaints of unfair treatment between Members and set an unsustainable precedent. Members generally and gracefully concede this, and do not pursue their requests.

If Baroness Tonge or the media company who filmed her meeting had sought a licence for broadcasting the meeting on 25 October, the request would have been declined.

I have had two short conversations with Baroness Tonge since 25 October during which she acknowledged the points above and said that she was aware of the requirement for permission to film meetings. She also said that she had relied on an assurance from the TV company that they had been given that permission. However, she conceded that she had not sought filming permission herself and, without it, the meeting was therefore conducted in breach of the House’s rules.

I hope this statement helps your consideration of this case.

Appendix O: Letter from Jonathan Hoffman to the Commissioner for Standards, 16 December 2016

I learnt today that you have recently completed an investigation of the activities of Baroness Tonge (“alleged failure to act on personal honour and alleged breach of rules on House facilities”).

I wanted to add my perspective. I hope this is useful even though the inquiry is complete. I am a former Vice Chair of the Zionist Federation and a former elected member of the Defence Division of the Board of Deputies of British Jews.

I have been trying for years to ensure that MPs and Peers do not abuse their privileges by booking rooms on the Parliamentary Estate for extremist meetings—specifically, antisemitic meetings. My recent blog on this topic is here:

<http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/no-to-anti-semitic-meetings-in-parliament/>

On Wednesday 14 December Baroness Tonge offended again:

<http://satprnews.com/2016/12/14/israel-lobby-the-original-post-truthers/>

The book “State of Terror” is a vile book full of antisemitic tropes. Again I have blogged about this, see here:

<http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/the-book-which-lies-and-distorts/>

It contains antisemitic material. After Suarez presented it at a meeting at SOAS, the organisation Campaign Against Antisemitism filed a complaint with SOAS and Yiftah Curiel, the Embassy spokesman, accused SOAS of letting “**racist conspiracy theories**” go unchallenged. **I attended that meeting, my blog about it is here:**

<http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/the-protocols-of-the-elders-of-soas-pal-soc/>

I have been in touch with Owen Williams (Head of Press and Media, House of Lords) to ask about the rules for Peers booking rooms for meetings. Effectively there are no rules to stop Peers booking rooms for extremist meetings. Presumably this is

because it is thought that Peers can be trusted NOT to abuse the privilege of booking rooms. Unfortunately Baroness Tonge cannot be trusted and unless she is stopped from doing this by the institution of rules which are properly implemented, she will repeat the offence, especially now that she is not subject to party discipline anymore.

I will also send this in the post, please treat it as an additional formal complaint about Baroness Tonge.

Blog by Jonathan Hoffman, "No to anti-semitic meetings in Parliament!", 29 October 2016

I have tried for many years to stop MPs and Peers booking rooms in Parliament for anti-semitic meetings. Six years ago, for example, at one such meeting, Martin Linton said "there are long tentacles of Israel in this country who are funding election campaigns and putting money into the British political system for their own ends".

At the same meeting Gerald Kaufman said "Just as Lord Ashcroft owns one part of the Conservative Party, right-wing Jewish millionaires own the other part."

Jeremy Corbyn has hosted several of these meetings.

Last week Baroness Tonge hosted a meeting where an audience member stood up and suggested that the responsibility for the Holocaust lay with Jews themselves. They had so "antagonised" Hitler with their demands for a boycott of Nazi Germany that he had gone "over the edge" and decided to kill them all. Tonge failed to correct him and indeed he was applauded.

It is completely unacceptable that MPs and Peers can book meeting rooms in Parliament where anti-semitic discourse runs free.

On Thursday David Davies MP raised this with the Leader of the House, David Lidington:

David T.C. Davies (Monmouth) (Con): May we have a debate on the use to which these premises are put, following reports that, outrageously, a Member of the House of Lords presided over an event at which Israel was compared to the Islamic State and the Jews were even blamed for their own genocide? May we discuss that and whether we should issue an apology for these outrageous comments to the Israeli Government and the Jewish people?

Mr Lidington: I read the newspaper reports of the event in question, and I confess that I was genuinely horrified by the speech that was reported. I do not want to treat every newspaper article as gospel, but I think we should all be very concerned about what happened. Since this event appears to have been organised by a leading member of the Liberal Democrats, I hope that the leader of the party launches an immediate and thorough investigation, so that we can get to the truth and any appropriate disciplinary action can be taken.

At present there is no approval process for booking rooms in Parliament. This is clearly unsatisfactory. I hope Jewish News readers will write to their MPs to support the implementation of such a process—so that racist meetings like that hosted by Tonge will never again be held in Parliament

The free use of meeting rooms in Parliament is a privilege—not a right. Events have proved that the booking process must be subject to oversight.

If Parliamentarians must host anti-semitic meetings, let them book a venue at a commercial rate. Here is one possible venue—though whether the Bridge Café (made famous in *The Apprentice*—and appropriate for anti-semites, as it is where the losing team goes) is prepared to host racist meetings is unclear.

Blog by Monika Donimirska, “Israel lobby: ‘The original post-truthers’”, 14 December 2016

A British publisher, Karl Sabbagh, has launched a scathing attack on the way the Israeli lobby in the UK sabotages attempts to present the Palestinian case against Israel. He described organisations like the Board of Deputies, the Israeli Embassy, and Zionist bloggers as “enemies of truth, determined to ignore the facts, in case people understood the true merits of the Palestinian case.” He also criticised Theresa May’s support this week for a new definition of antisemitism which, he said, made the British government like an arm of the Israeli Embassy PR department. The irony of calling antisemitic anyone who criticises “a Jewish collectivity” is that the Israel government, with a population of Arabs, Muslims, Christians and Jews insists that it is “the Jewish state”, thus making it by definition uncriticisable, whatever it does.

Sabbagh’s speech was at a private meeting in the House of Lords on Wednesday, December 14th, hosted by Baroness Jenny Tonge, whose remarks on Israel and Palestine have been attacked by the Israel lobby in the past. At a meeting chaired by her in October, a rabbi made barely coherent anti-Zionist comments which were misreported in the media as coming from the official speakers, for which Baroness Tonge, as Chair, was accused of being responsible by the complainants.

The occasion for Wednesday’s meeting was the launch of a book, *State of Terror* by Thomas Suárez, published by Skyscraper Publications, on the role Jewish terrorism played in the transformation of Palestine into Israel.

In his introduction, Karl Sabbagh, whose father was Palestinian, pointed out that long before internet trolling, anyone who wrote in public in support of the Palestinians would face an organised barrage of hostile and abusive letters or emails, often expressed in identical terms and quoting from Israeli embassy propaganda. He quoted three specific examples of medical journals which published pieces about Israeli violence against Palestinians and were subject to abuse from the Israel lobby and pressure placed on proprietors to fire editors. In one case, *World Medicine*, the onslaught led to eventual closure of the magazine.

Sabbagh said: “This book, *State of Terror*, is a detailed account of relentless Zionist violence against Palestinians, the British, and even Jews who disagreed with using force to turn Palestine into a Zionist state. It uses official British archives, quoting reports by police, the Foreign Office, the Palestine government of the time, and other newly revealed documents. Michael Gove, one of the most vociferous supporters of Israel, poured scorn on ‘experts’, in his role as Education Minister. But it is experts like Israeli, American and British historians who are revealing the truths that Gove and others deny, about Zionism’s Hundred Year War on the Palestinians.”

Blog by Jonathan Hoffman, “The book which lies and distorts”, 14 November 2016

A new book by Thomas Suarez (‘State of Terror—How terrorism created modern Israel’) was [presented and discussed](#) at SOAS Palestine Society on 3 November.

After the meeting [Campaign Against Antisemitism](#) filed a complaint with SOAS and Yiftah Curiel, the Embassy spokesman, accused SOAS of letting [‘racist conspiracy theories’ go unchallenged](#).

I have now read the book. It is 328 pages of unremitting vilification of Israel, covering the period from early in the 20th century up to the Suez Crisis in 1956, with a final chapter covering selective subsequent events. There is a brief mention of Arab terror attacks in the Introduction (*‘Palestinians also committed terror attacks, and this book’s focus on Zionist terror must never be misinterpreted as excusing Palestinian violence against civilians’*). But that is all we get about Arab terror. No mention of the Hebron massacre of 1929 which left 67 Jews dead; no mention of Haj Amin al-Husseini’s meetings with Hitler to try to persuade him to extend his anti-Jewish campaign into Arab lands.

The book is so biased and contains so many untruths, distorted quotes and unsubstantiated allegations, that one must conclude that it would never have seen the light of day, were it not for the fact that the publisher is Karl Sabbagh’s new company. (Sabbagh thinks Israel is responsible for global anti-Semitism. [He spoke at the meeting](#) last month in Parliament hosted by Tonge (as a result of which she quit the Lib Dems (before she could be expelled))).

The publisher’s website says: “This book has been turned down by a number of publishers because of the sensitivity of its subject matter”. The innuendo being: ‘Zionists in the publishing industry tried to suppress the book’. **The truth—surely—is that no mainstream publisher wanted to risk publishing such a shoddy and biased distortion of the truth.**

Another clue to the true nature of the book is provided by the bibliography and the names mentioned in the endnotes (680 of them). The anti-Israel industry has a number of names who inevitably feature and most of them appear in this book: Amira Hass, Joseph Massad, Chris McGreal, Lenny Brenner, Norman Finkelstein, Noam Chomsky, Uri Davis, David Hirst, Ghada Karmi, Ilan Pappé, John Rose, Shlomo Sand and Avi Shlaim. (In an incestuous mockery of scholarship, these anti-Israel authors quote and feed off each other incessantly.)

What are the most egregious falsehoods and distortions in the book? I list these in the order in which they appear.

First, the description of Deir Yassin. Suarez fails to mention that residents and foreign troops opened fire on the attackers. Dr. Uri Milstein [has written](#) that Deir Yassin was hardly a peaceful village. Arab attacks against Jewish transportation in western Jerusalem emanated from Deir Yassin in 1948 and it was therefore necessary to take measures to take over the village.

Page 10: Endnote #8 suggests that Weizmann said ‘Arabs are inferior people and do not deserve a vote’. **No source is given.**

Page 13: Suarez writes ‘UN Resolution 181 can fairly be described as a scam’. **No evidence is offered for this statement**—simply an assertion that ‘no Israeli leader had any intention of honouring Partition’.

Pages 15/16: Suarez states that ‘Gazan fishermen are killed for fishing in their own waters and Gazan farmers blown up for farming their own soils.’ **No evidence is provided**—because it isn’t true.

Page 25: Suarez writes that ‘Israel wields ‘the Jewish state’ as a talisman fending off censure: critics hesitate to fire accusatory words at such a state for fear of hitting this three-word human shield, alleged to be the embodiment of Jews and Judaism, that the state holds out in front.’ **This is patently not true.** The accusation that critics of Israel are deterred by the possibility of being accused of being antisemitic is a time-worn device beloved of antisemites. None of them can ever give an example of a supporter of Israel misusing the charge of antisemitism in this way.

Page 27: Suarez suggests that the World Zionist Organisation refused to participate in the 1938 Evian conference for resettling refugees, because it was not predicated on a Zionist State in Palestine. **That is not true.** The WZO was not invited—the conference was for states only.

Page 28: Suarez says that Ben Gurion argued that rather than seeing all the Jewish children in Germany escape to England, it was better that half of them should be slaughtered by the Nazis if that meant that the other half could go to Palestine. Endnote #24 has the precise quote. It is a hugely offensive canard, as camera.org has explained—deriving from taking a single quote out of context and ignoring other comments made by Ben Gurion that directly contradict this interpretation.

Page 28: Suarez claims that ‘Jewish orphans ... became targets of a formal kidnapping campaign launched to snatch them from their adoptive European homes to ship them to Palestine as demographic facts-on-the-ground.’ **There is no evidence for this blatantly antisemitic assertion.** Similarly for the claim (same page) that ‘*When in 1944 President Roosevelt provisionally secured safe haven for a half million Displaced Persons, outraged Zionist leaders sabotaged it.*’ And for the similar claim on page 48: “*rescue for its own sake was never part of Jewish Agency policy*”.

Page 68: Suarez recounts the story of the *Patria*. The *Patria* was a ship that was ordered by the British in 1940 to take back Jews fleeing Europe. The Haganah wanted to damage the ship so that it could not sail. Unfortunately the operation went wrong and 267 people died and 172 were injured. But Suarez simply suggests that Jewish terrorists blew up the ship, without relating the context. And then he suggests that there was a ‘cover-up’ by the Israeli government which suggested that the passengers committed suicide, rather than being taken back to Europe. **Again—no evidence.**

Page 78: Suarez writes ‘The Jewish Agency maintained its opposition to Jews joining the Allied struggle against the Nazis’. **There is no evidence for this.**

Page 79: Suarez quotes Henry Hunloke, Defence Security Officer in Palestine, who reported ‘*mutilated bodies are found with labels tied to them saying ‘This is what happens to an informer’.*’ Hunloke also reportedly said that the Jewish Agency stirred up antisemitism, in order to force Jews ... to come to Palestine. Both statements are accepted without question even though there is **no evidence of either from any other source.**

Page 120: Suarez asserts that to address the (supposed) ‘problem’ of the displaced Jews not wanting to go to Palestine, ‘*a triple campaign was waged: the forceful isolation and coercion of the survivors themselves, the sabotage of international safe havens for*

them and the kidnapping of Jewish orphans.’ His assertion about the coercion of Displaced Persons relies on a book by Yosef Grodzinsky (‘In the Shadow of the Holocaust’). But many Displaced Persons have challenged the assertions in that book, see Elhanan Yakira (‘Post-Zionism, Post-Holocaust’). Grodzinsky is also the source for the lie proposed by Suarez, that Chief Rabbi Herzog ‘kidnapped’ Jewish orphans in Europe after the War.

Page 211: Suarez asserts that the State of Israel systematically stole German reparation money intended for survivors who continued to live in poverty. The source for this is Norman Finkelstein (‘The Holocaust Industry’)—**a book which has no credibility whatsoever.**

Page 257: It is stated that the Jewish Agency opposed the Marshall Plan because it would have made the lives of Jews in Europe more comfortable. **This is unsubstantiated nonsense.**

Page 276: Suarez quotes from Israel Archives, saying that the Israeli Foreign Ministry said the fleeing of Arabs would reduce the refugees to “a human heap, the scum of the earth”. But Suarez does not tell us who said it. It is perfectly possible that the Foreign Ministry kept a record of a statement made by someone not connected with government.

Page 282: Suarez suggests that Israel destroyed the Iraqi Jewish community and blocked other countries from helping Jews who wanted to leave Iraq. **Neither is true.** Iraq destroyed the Iraqi Jewish Community, in the Farhud in 1941.

Page 286: Suarez says that *‘Israel kidnapped Mizrahi newborns, giving the babies to Ashkenazi couples and telling the children’s parents that the child had died. This practice persisted at least through Israel’s first decade. The final cynical irony of Israel’s uprooting of Middle Eastern and North African Jews from their homelands is that the state now uses it as a racial ‘settling of scores’ for its own ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.’* **There was never a conspiracy to kidnap Mizrahi babies.** This trope is sourced by Suarez from Jonathan Cook—who of course [has a history of anti-Israel falsehoods and bigotry.](#)

Page 286: Suarez suggest that UN Resolution 194 gave unqualified right to Arab refugees to return home. [That is plain wrong.](#)

Page 291: Suarez cites Chris McGreal in support of a story about the rape of a Palestinian woman. Chris McGreal again has a history of false reports that traduce Israel. He achieved the rare distinction of being singled out by the CST (the British charity that protects the Jewish community) in their 2011 report on antisemitic discourse.

The back cover of the book has two endorsements.

Ilan Pappe: *‘A tour de force, based on diligent archival research that looks boldly at the impact of Zionism in Palestine and its people in the first part of the 20th century. The book is the first comprehensive and structured analysis of the violence and terror employed by the Zionist movement and later the state of Israel against the people of Palestine. Much of the suffering we witness today can be explained by, and connected to, this formative period covered thoroughly in this book.’*

Baroness Jenny Tonge: *‘I thought I knew a fair bit about the Middle East after all the years I’ve been involved in its politics but this book came as an eye-opener. I realised how ignorant I was, not of the events leading up to the establishment of Israel but of the terror*

campaign that led up to it. Everyone who has ever accepted Israel's account of its own history should read this book and hear the truth. It should change them forever.'

Such uncritical sycophancy is really a disgrace. Tonge and Pappé should be thoroughly ashamed of themselves. Of course they are not—and that is a massive part of the problem. In particular the fact that Pappé is entrusted to teach students is positively chilling.

Blog by Jonathan Hoffman, "The Protocols of the Elders of SOAS Palestine Society", 4 November 2016

On Thursday night I was at SOAS Palestine Society to hear a talk every bit as anti-Semitic as the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.

It was given by Thomas Suarez, an American musician.

Suarez has recently had a book published (which was on sale). The book is published by Karl Sabbagh's new publishing company. Sabbagh thinks Israel is responsible for global anti-Semitism. [He spoke at the meeting](#) last week in Parliament hosted by Tonge (as a result of which she quit the Lib Dems (before she could be expelled).

Suarez's book is endorsed by blurb from two people—Tonge and Pappé.

You get the picture.

The theme of the talk was that Zionists achieved their objective after the Balfour Declaration by coercion, murder and terror. UN Resolution 181 was only passed because the countries that voted for it were cowed by Zionist terror. Pretty much every antisemitic trope was there, plus several new ones.

Here are some examples.

- Lord Montagu (the sole Jew in Lloyd George's government), supported by other Jewish leaders, viewed the Zionists as antisemites because they collaborated with antisemitic leaders in Europe who wanted to expel Jews;
- The Zionists persuaded the US to enter World War One.
- Jewish terrorists bombed the *Patria* (truth is, the ship was ordered by the British to take back Jews fleeing Europe and the Haganah wanted to damage the ship so that it could not sail);
- Weizmann demanded special privileges for Jews in Palestine and spoke of inferior human beings;
- Between the Balfour Declaration and the Declaration of Independence, Zionists achieved their aims by radicalising their children and teaching them to betray their parents if they were not Zionist enough—and Zionists assassinated non-Zionist Jews;
- On 8 July 1938 a 12 year old girl in the Irgun blew up a bus [no evidence];
- Norman Bentwich said that the way that Zionists in Palestine behaved was comparable to Nazism;
- According to Suarez the history surrounding the Exodus ship—that it was turned back from Palestine by the British—is not true. It was the

Jewish Agency that turned it back because it wanted to encourage anti-Semitism;

- Zionist leaders sabotaged proposals for safe havens for Jews in the US and Europe in the 1930s (the truth of course was that the Allies at the infamous Evian Conference in 1938 agreed to take hardly any of the Jewish refugees).

It gets worse.

He said that a “Rabbi Herzog” kidnapped Jewish children in Europe and took them to Palestine. The Zionists controlled the Displaced Persons’ camps after the War and brainwashed Jews in them. The DPs first wanted to go to the US and UK but were so brainwashed by the Jewish Agency that they threatened to commit suicide if they were not sent to Israel. Ben Gurion was worried by the fall in antisemitism in Europe and tried to increase it. The Jewish Agency opposed the Marshall Plan because it would have made the lives of Jews in Europe more comfortable.

And of course his choice of words was poisonous. “Apartheid”, “Zionist terrorists”, “Zionism a racist fascist movement” and so on.

Suarez spoke about Israel now. He said that Judaism is not the national faith of Israel; that Zionists hide their crimes behind their “most powerful weapon”, the phrase “the Jewish State”; that in order to attract Jews from abroad, Israel convinces them they are under constant threat from antisemitism. Toxic. Of course he wants “one secular state.”

Finally to the UK. Suarez wants the UK government to apologise for the Balfour Declaration. And thinks that Zionists want to make any criticism of Israel a crime.

Suarez claims to have spent seven years in the British Archives at Kew and that the book contains rigorous source detail. How he can claim this when his talk was a pack of racist lies, I do not know. The publisher’s blurb says: “This book has been turned down by a number of publishers because of the sensitivity of its subject matter”. Delete “because of the sensitivity of its subject matter”, insert “because it’s racist drivel”.

Fortunately the Q+A quickly turned into pandemonium as the lies were called out. Suarez began to look like he wanted to crawl under the table. I will leave it to others to describe and post the videos of the riot.

Mendacious racism belongs in Stormfront.

That it is given a platform at a UK university—to poison young minds against Jews—is unconscionable.

Appendix P: Letter from the Commissioner for Standards to Baroness Tonge, 5 January 2017

I am writing because I have received a further complaint about you. This complaint is from Mr Jonathan Hoffman. His complaint concerns a meeting you apparently hosted at the House of Lords on 14 December 2016, at which the book *State of Terror* by Thomas Suárez was launched. The complainant alleges that you breached the House of Lords Code of Conduct in respect of the rules on the use of facilities and the requirement to act on personal honour. A copy of the complaint and the blogs it refers to are enclosed.

I have carried out a preliminary assessment of the complaint. As part of this I made enquiries of the Department of Facilities. I understand that you did host an event on 14 December 2016 and that the event title was “Palestine”. It appears that it was a catered event held in Committee Room G and it involved a book launch.

I have decided that it would be appropriate for me to investigate one aspect of the complaint. That is the question of whether you may have breached the House’s rules on the use of facilities—specifically its banqueting rules—by hosting a book launch at a catered event.

A copy of the banqueting rules, which have been agreed by the House, is enclosed (House Committee, *Banqueting rules* (1st report, 2014–15, HL Paper 8)). Paragraph 4 of the report introducing the rules states that they apply to “catered events in Committee Room G”. Paragraph J of the rules states:

“No commercial promotion or demonstration, or book or product launch, is permitted by any person or external organisation, including on publicity material for the function. The only exceptions permitted are for book launches for books written by Members or primarily about them or for publications produced by UK Registered Charities.”

The following provisions of the Code of Conduct appear relevant:

“8. Members of the House: ...

(b) should act always on their personal honour; ... ”

This is elaborated on in paragraphs 7–9 of the Guide to the Code of Conduct.

“10. In order to assist in openness and accountability members shall: ...

(c) act in accordance with any rules agreed by the House in respect of ... the facilities of the House.”

I further draw your attention to the seven general principles of conduct identified by the Committee on Standards in Public Life and incorporated into the Code of Conduct.

I would be grateful for your written response to this matter.

Once I have concluded my investigation into this matter I propose to prepare a report dealing with it and the allegations about the event on 25 October 2016.

I have previously sent you a copy of the Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Lords and Guide to the Code of Conduct (fifth edition: July 2016) but would be happy to resend one if helpful.

Appendix Q: Email from Baroness Tonge to the Commissioner for Standards, 8 January 2017

Thank you for your letter and apologies that you have been troubled again.

I note the complainant Mr Jonathan Hoffman, is the same person who wrote to Theresa Villiers MP previously with erroneous accounts of the October meeting. He is well known to me and a prolific blogger.

(Over 30 complaints were made to IPSO about the reporting of that meeting and have been accepted by IPSO for investigation.)

The meeting on 14 December was held in total accordance with the rules of the House of Lords, which I checked several times.

The book “State of Terror” is by a violinist friend of mine, who is also an historian. I first met him and his partner when they were touring Palestine with fellow musicians, giving concerts in schools all over the West Bank.

The book, which took 7 years to write, was based on documents released over that time by the National Archives in Kew. It contains a large section of references to those documents.

It was published in early October and at that time two book launches were held, one in the Mosaic Rooms in Kensington and the other in S.O.A.S.

Jonathan Hoffmann was allegedly involved in the break-up of the latter meeting and complaints were made to Baroness Amos, Director of SOAS.

Books were on sale at those launches and reviews appeared in two journals afterwards. It also featured on social media.

The publisher approached me to ask if a further launch was possible in the Lords and I replied negatively but decided, as there was interest amongst our friends to hold a strictly private party, where we could hear Tom Suárez lecture on his book and discuss the historical implications afterwards.

NO BOOKS WERE ON SALE AND I DID NOT SEE A SINGLE COPY IN THE ROOM!

I wrote to the publisher and asked him to write to me about our arrangements for the meeting as he understood them. His response is attached.

In view of the experience at 25 October meeting, guests had to show their invitation at Black Rod’s Entrance and were escorted to Room G.

No press or media of any sort were present, or were invited. Everyone there was a friend or colleague of mine or the author and publisher. About 30 people in all, some peers and one MP attended briefly. Drinks and nibbles were served, paid for by a friend of mine.

I remember a similar lecture and discussion we had some years ago in the Lords at a meeting organised by Baroness Falkner.

Professor John Walt talked about the very controversial book he had co-written With Professor Mearscheimer. They were both Harvard professors at the time and their book “The Israel Lobby” was very controversial but also based on sound research. That meeting was open to all.

I hope this answers your questions about the meeting.

I have since seen references to it on social media over which I have no control. A transcript of the lecture is also available on social media.

Letter from the Managing Director of Skyscraper Publications to Baroness Tonge, 7 January 2017

I was surprised to hear that the talk by Thomas Suárez which you hosted at the House of Lords on 14 December has been described by a complainant as a ‘book launch.’ This is a publishing term and clearly did not apply to that meeting since

the book had been out for two months, had already had two launches around its publication date, and was now in circulation. The first launch was at the Mosaic Rooms in London on 18 October, where books were for sale and anyone was free to attend. The second was at a similar event in SOAS shortly afterwards, also subject to a complaint from the ubiquitous Jonathan Hoffman, who seems to make a habit of complaining about any book which puts Israel and Zionism in a less than favourable light. On this occasion he complained to a colleague of yours, Baroness Amos, in her capacity as Director of SOAS.

We placed advertisements for the book in two issue of the *London Review of Books* in October and shortly after publication there were reviews of the book, one on the prestigious Mondoweiss website on the day of publication, and another in *Tribune* in early December. All of these show that the PR operation to launch a book takes place at the time of publication not two months afterwards.

You told me, when I first mentioned that Thomas Suárez would be in London for a brief period in December, that there were rules about authors and books at meetings in the House. I pointed out what I said above—that this would clearly not be a book launch and we would have no need to be selling or promoting the book because in fact we would send free copies to the specially invited list of guests so that they were better informed about the background to Suárez's talk.

I'm sure you are as aware as anyone else speaking or writing in this contentious area that there is an army of supporters of Israel who can be predicted to mount complaints to the media and to academic institutions which present views critical of Israel. Their complaints are usually devoid of data and rarely establish any inaccuracy or bias, but by the time the complaint is addressed and usually rejected, the harm, has been done. As a publisher and writer of occasional books on the Middle East I have become inured to this process but it can still shake people who are unaware of the organised nature of such complaints.

Appendix R: Email from Lord Warner to the Commissioner for Standards, 15 January 2017

I have been led to believe that a complaint or complaints have been made about this discussion event to the effect that it was a book launch. I attended the whole event and at no point was it a book launch and the publisher made it clear that this was the case and that it was not possible to purchase copies of the book that Mr Suárez has written. Indeed there had been a launch some months in advance and I have had my copy of his book at least two months before the event.

It was clear at the event that many of those attending had already read the book and had come to ask the author about the shocking events described in the book and his sources. As someone who had read the book, I can say with confidence that it is truly shocking but not sensationalist. It is an impeccably sourced story of horrific events during the British Mandate in Palestine and of the conduct of some of the founding fathers (and mother in one case) of the State of Israel.

This book is a serious piece of historical research and analysis that I can appreciate might upset supporters of the Israeli Government, including members of the House of Lords. However these events happened and there is no reason why we as Parliamentarians should not be able to meet and discuss difficult issues in our committee rooms, particularly when they are relevant to current affairs in the Middle East. And do this without harassment.

I have been a member of the House of Lords since 1999 and I have become rather immune to being attacked every time I draw attention to inhumane and illegal actions by the Israeli Government. It has now become the norm to regard any criticism of this particular Government as anti-semitic. However we have not yet reached a post-truth society and we need to be able to consider the factual history of how we got to some of the difficult situations faced today.

This room for this event was booked by Baroness Tonge but it could easily have been booked by me or other members. The Baroness barely spoke at the event and the discussion that took place could by no stretch of the imagination be regarded as anti-semitic. But participants were genuinely shocked by the events described by Mr Suárez in his presentation. I hope this is helpful.

**ANNEX 3: LETTER FROM BARONESS TONGE TO LORD BROWN
OF EATON-UNDER-HEYWOOD, CHAIRMAN OF THE SUB-
COMMITTEE ON LORDS' CONDUCT, 26 FEBRUARY 2017**

Re: meeting in the House of Lords on 25 October 2016

I wish to apologise most sincerely for my failure to get permission for the above meeting to be filmed.

I fully confess I had not read the regulations, especially relating to the letter from Black Rod, and should have done so. I have been in the Commons and the Lords since 1997 and have never transgressed on this issue before.

I depended on the assurances of the camera crew, detailed in the report, and the fact that they had not been challenged by security.

It was completely remiss of me and will not happen again.