Introduction

The King and the Case of the Missing Condolences

Let us start with a story about a king. Harald V, the king of Norway, briefly became an international celebrity when he gave a speech in the Royal Gardens outside the castle in Oslo on September 1, 2016 saying that "we Norwegians" include "girls who like girls, boys who like boys" as well as people who worship God, Allah, or nothing at all (Revheim, 2016). In a speech at a dinner for Norwegian MPs held at the castle in Oslo on October 27, 2022 the king reiterated that "our Jews and our gays" are minorities within our community that we have an extra responsibility to protect (Harald, 2022). Such expressions of tolerance have given the Norwegian royal family a reputation as inclusive and principled and thus many members of the tiny Jewish population in the country, probably around 2,000 persons in all, expected the king to express sympathy with the victims of the October 7 massacre. In all likelihood, the king himself thought it natural to extend condolences to Israel in the wake of the horrendous attack.

However, in the evening of October 9, the chief of staff at the Royal Castle, Mr. Olav Heian-Engdal, received a message from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) saying: "The advice of the Ministry is that condolences should not be offered by HM the King in the context of the war between Israel and Hamas" (Halvorsen, 2023). The reason, according to the ministry, was that the king should not offer condolences when loss of life is the result of political conflicts. The advice from the MFA produced a number of reactions and questions in Norwegian media. Mrs. Ine Eriksen Søreide, the current leader of the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee and the minister of foreign affairs for the Conservative Party (2017–2021), criticized the decision of the MFA. She believed the

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 15 Nov 2026 at 10:22:08, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009783316.001

ministry should have given the king the very opposite advice, that is, to send a letter of condolences to Israel. The secretary-general of the MFA insisted that the affair of the missing royal condolences to Israel was completely uncontroversial as the king does not extend condolences under such circumstances.

However, the king has indeed extended condolences to countries hit by terrorism on numerous occasions previously. For instance, after an attack in Peshawar, Pakistan, on December 16, 2014, the king extended his condolences to the president of Pakistan the day after. Not only that, two days after that attack the crown prince of Norway, Prince Haakon, lit candles for the victims in a commemoration together with the Norwegian Conservative Party foreign minister at the time and the then head of the Norwegian Red Cross. Conversely, when Norway was hit by its worst terrorist attack ever on July 22, 2011, the Norwegian king received condolences from royalty all over the world. The position of the Norwegian government on the question of royal condolences after October 7 was accompanied by a strange debate about the whether Hamas should be called "terrorists." The Norwegian Labor Party Prime Minister Mr. Jonas Gahr Støre insisted that they should not. He received criticism and questions from other political parties and from commentators in the media, but awkwardly stood his ground until changing his mind on October 11.

With the Labor government demonstrating at best a deeply ambivalent approach to Israel and Hamas, there remained hope that some public expression of sympathy could be made locally, by city councils for example. Some expected that the Oslo City Hall, a large red brick building in the center of the capital housing the city council and the city administration, would fly the Israeli flag. After all, similar buildings in cities across the world flew the flag in solidarity with the traumatized Israeli nation. Instead, the Oslo City Hall decided in an almost unanimous vote to fly the Palestinian flag, starting November 29, in solidarity with people in Gaza. A low-key commemoration for the Israeli victims in the City Hall, a suggestion that barely made it through voting in the city council, was marred by anger from certain politicians of the left at the fact that the Israeli ambassador was invited to commemorate the attack on his countrymen. The image of an enormous Palestinian flag was projected onto the façade of the ruling Labor Party headquarters in Oslo, too, and the Palestinian flag flew across a number of rallies in Norwegian cities, sometimes accompanied by well-known antisemitic shouts and speeches. As far as I know, the Israeli flag was not displayed in any public context in Norway after October 7.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 15 Nov 2026 at 10:22:08, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009783316.001

A number of other examples could be mentioned. Suffice to say that in Norway, in the days following the October 7 massacre, it was extremely difficult to publicly express sympathy and compassion with the victims of the attack. The Israeli ambassador to Norway observed, correctly in my view, that among Western nations Norway was the one least ready to support and most eager to criticize Israel in the immediate aftermath of October 7. Why did the Labor government of Norway and the city councils of Oslo and other cities go out of their way to avoid, or tone down, expressions of sympathy with the victims? Why did so many Norwegians, including important organizations in civil society, refuse to condemn the crimes perpetrated by Hamas? Why did so many Norwegians – immediately after receiving information of torture, murder, and rape perpetrated on Israelis and non-Israelis – take a position that blamed the victims and demanded emotional displays of solidarity with Palestinians?

THE QUESTIONS AND STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The political culture I explore in this book is relatively new. Immediately after 1948 all social democratic governments in western Europe were friendly towards the new state established in Palestine by Zionists. Norway was no exception. Zionism was still not a derogatory term on the left and the Jews who created the new state often had socialist leanings. The key people in the social democratic governments of postwar Norway were committed to the Israeli cause. Norway was a friend of Israel. This started to change in the late 1960s when the far left throughout the Western world embraced the Palestinian struggle for independence as one of their most important international causes. Certainly, the Vietnam War was just as important for some time, but that war ended. The Palestinian struggle continued. Today, the social democratic left in Norway, which has dominated both politics and political culture for much of the post–World War II era, touts what is probably the most radical anti-Israeli and anti-Zionist opinions and policies of any social democratic tradition in Europe with the possible exception of Ireland. The following questions emerge:

- How and why did anti-Zionism become important to the worldview of the far left in Norway after 1967?
- To what extent has anti-Zionism come to characterize and shape political culture of the social democratic mainstream in Norway?
- What has changed, if anything, after October 7?

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 15 Nov 2026 at 10:22:08, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009783316.001

The aim of this book is to answer these questions by looking in detail at the case of Norway. The chapters in Parts II and III are devoted to this case study based on a number of different types of sources and data, the most important of which are the following:

- The archives of the Labor movement in the center of Oslo.
- The online database of newspapers hosted by the National Library in Oslo.
- Interviews and informal conversations with Norwegian Jews.
- Interviews and informal conversations with politicians and diplomats.
- Analysis of social media posts from October 7, 2023 to June 1, 2024.

Norway is a small western European country with strong connections to the outside world both in economic and cultural terms. Both the antisemitism and the anti-Zionism that is our subject matter are transnational phenomena, as is the pro-Palestinian movement that will be crucial in the investigation. In order to place these worldviews and processes in their proper context the book starts with four chapters, forming Part I, which map the history of antisemitism and anti-Zionism on the political left as it emerged in Europe in the nineteenth century.

Part I relates how classical Marxism and Bolshevism looked at the so-called Jewish question and moves on to map how the Soviet Union developed Marxist ideas into a full-fledged anti-Zionism, often with clear antisemitic references, in the context of the Cold War. This mapping of Soviet anti-Zionism and antisemitism is crucial because there is still widespread ignorance about how the Soviet propaganda apparatus, purposefully and maliciously, developed some of today's negative stereotypes and *memes* about Israel and Zionism. Part I shows how ideas about Israel and Zionism as essentially racist and imperialist were developed from the 1950s and especially the 1960s as an element of the worldview that is *Third Worldism*. Finally, Chapter 4 is devoted to the gender dimension of anti-Zionism within a Third Worldist paradigm where the struggle against Israel – both in a rhetorical and in a concrete and violent sense – became attached to an emerging global discourse about women's rights.

The insights from Part I form a background to the discussions of the Norwegian case study. Part II starts with a mapping of the beginning of organized anti-Zionism in Norway. Then it turns to Chapters 6–8 about how the Norwegian anti-Zionist scene that emerged after the Six-Day War in 1967 thought about terrorism against Israel and civilian Israelis and how a strand of Soviet Holocaust revisionism entered far-left ideology in Norway. Part III looks at how radical far-left anti-Zionism was

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 15 Nov 2026 at 10:22:08, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009783316.001

gradually mainstreamed in the most important sector of Norwegian social democracy, that is, the trade unions, and how the unions in turn influence foreign policy through a peculiarly strong relationship with the Labor Party.

To simplify somewhat, the organization of the book is meant to analyze far-left ideas on a large historical and global scale in Part I, then trace similar far-left ideas in the smaller Norwegian context in Part II, and, finally, show how these radical ideas entered mainstream social democratic political culture in Norway in Part III. The aim is to have the three parts of the book stand in enough of a dialogue to show that the case study of a small and relatively insignificant country can help us understand something general about how antisemitism and anti-Zionism spread and develop under changing political and cultural conditions. In the Conclusion, I pull things together by using the theoretical concept of mainstreaming to say something about the processes analyzed in the book.

ANTI-ZIONISM AND ANTISEMITISM

Before we can try to answer the questions just formulated, however, we need to make sure that we use the fundamental words – "antisemitism" and "anti-Zionism" – in a consistent and transparent way, and for this reason a brief discussion of words and concepts belongs in the introduction. Anti-Zionism and antisemitism are very different concepts in the sense that the first denotes antipathy and criticism against something that exists in the real world while the second does not. There is something that we can meaningfully call "Zionism" but there is nothing that we can meaningfully call "Semitism." For this reason, many scholars and activists prefer to write "antisemitism" without a hyphen. I follow that approach here.

Antisemitism, as a term, is a linguistic anomaly. Unlike many words prefixed with "anti-" it does not oppose an existing ideology or practice called "Semitism." Instead, it was coined specifically to describe prejudice against Jews, despite the fact that "Semitic" originally referred to a group of languages rather than a specific people. This disconnect between the term's etymology and its accepted meaning underscores how historical usage can override literal interpretation.

In contrast, anti-Zionism follows a more conventional linguistic pattern as it denotes opposition to Zionism, a political movement advocating for a Jewish state in the historical land of Israel, that is, a specific form of nationalism. This distinction highlights a fundamental difference in how these terms function semantically. "Antisemitism" as a term requires

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 15 Nov 2026 at 10:22:08, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009783316.001

cultural and historical knowledge to be properly understood, as its meaning cannot be inferred from its constituent parts alone. "Anti-Zionism" as a term, while certainly benefiting from historical context, can be more readily comprehended.

The formation of these terms differs significantly. "Antisemitism" was coined as a specific label for an existing prejudice in the nineteenth century (we return to this in Chapter 1), and the concept developed and changed through the twentieth century (Feldman, 2018). Anti-Zionism, on the other hand, emerged as a linguistic response to a defined political ideology and movement among Jews. This difference in origin affects how each term is perceived and used in discourse. Moreover, the scope of these concepts varies considerably.

Antisemitism broadly encompasses prejudice against Jews as a people, touching on racial, religious, and cultural aspects. Anti-Zionism, however, specifically addresses opposition to a political ideology related to Jewish statehood, though its implications often extend beyond purely political realms. These linguistic and semantic distinctions remind us that words can carry meanings far beyond their literal interpretations, shaped by historical usage and cultural understanding. Despite these differences in linguistic construction and semantic scope, antisemitism and anti-Zionism as concepts are deeply intertwined in contemporary discourse. The relationship between these concepts often leads to contentious debates about their distinctions and overlaps.

Defining anti-Zionism

Zionism is a national ideology that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century in dialogue with other national movements and as a reaction against antisemitism in Europe. Zionism is a national movement and ideology similar to Polish, German, Sikh, Catalan, or Norwegian nationalisms. Such national movements and ideologies are found everywhere in the world; some are powerful enough to establish states, others are not. Nationalisms can be peaceful and inclusive or militant and exclusionary, they can be secular or religious, revisionist or liberal. Needless to say, this diversity is found in Zionism, too, as demonstrated, for instance, in a collection of primary texts by prominent Zionists edited by Sharansky and Troy (Troy and Sharansky, 2018).

"Zionist" has been a slur for many decades on both the far right and the far left. For example, the Norwegian neo-Nazi Erik Blücher, who founded a movement called National Front in 1975, claimed that he was

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 15 Nov 2026 at 10:22:08, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009783316.001

not antisemitic but thought Zionism was a racist political ideology that undermined the rights of Palestinians. He also believed that the Zionists, that is, the Israelis, are committing genocide against the Palestinians just as brutal as the annihilation of the Jews under the Nazis. Reading the Norwegian neo-Nazi Blücher is like reading Norwegian Communists talking about Israel and the Palestinians. The anti-Zionist rhetoric on the extreme right and left often echoed each other in the past, as it has done after October 7, 2023.

"Zionist" became a label that is interchangeable with "racist," "imperialist," "oppressor," and "Nazi" at a particular historical juncture, as part of the Cold War between the West and the Soviet Union. The process began in earnest in 1965 when the United Nations (UN) was to draw up the Convention against Racial Discrimination. In the work on the convention, the US and other Western countries believed that antisemitism had to be included in the text because it is a special form of racism. At the time, many people were concerned with helping the Jews of the Soviet Union escape persecution and they thought it was important to get antisemitism into the convention. Soviet representatives refused. Their strategy was to insist that if antisemitism was to be mentioned as a form of racism, Zionism had to be included as well. Thus, the Soviet Union and the Communist bloc, supported by Arab states, maintained that Zionism should stand alongside Nazism and other forms of racism in the UN Convention against Racial Discrimination. This is because, in 1965, Israel was about to become an ally of the United States, not of the Soviet Union, as Stalin had hoped when the state was founded in 1948. Behind closed doors, the Russians said they knew perfectly well that Zionism was not a form of racism. The juxtaposition with Nazism was malicious and absurd, but the strategy was useful for the Soviet Union. The US and the West felt compelled to drop the demand to include antisemitism in the convention. With this horse-trading of terms in 1965, the Soviet Union had set in motion a process in the UN in which the entire Communist bloc and the Arab world were to force the bodies of the world organization to label the Jewish national movement as fundamentally racist, culminating in the infamous 1975 resolution against Zionism in the General Assembly (Troy, 2013).

It is crucial to understand the changing meaning of anti-Zionism against the backdrop of such dramatic political processes and conflicts. Anti-Zionism has fundamentally different meanings and implications as we meet this ideology in different historical contexts. For instance, in the two decades spanning 1895–1915, many people in Europe, including many of the leading Jewish intellectuals and activists of the time, were

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 15 Nov 2026 at 10:22:08, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009783316.001

strongly opposed to Zionism. They believed that the idea of establishing a state for Jews somewhere outside Europe to escape antisemitic discrimination and violence was not only unrealistic in practical terms but also a betrayal of moral and political ideals that wanted to see the Jews live in harmony with other people. We discuss this in more detail in Chapter 1. In the same period, of course, anti-Zionism was a common position among Arabs in Palestine who felt that an increasing Jewish immigration and talks of a Jewish homeland were a threat to their livelihood.

By necessity, anti-Zionism would mean something very different after the establishment of Israel in 1948 and in 1967 Israel expanded its borders after a short and intense war against Arab neighbors. This gave a spark to an emerging global culture of pro-Palestinian activism and a worldview that saw Israel as a colonial oppressor. The anti-Zionism of the typical Jewish Bundist of 1895–1915 had nothing in common with the anti-Zionism of the average German student or a Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) representative after 1967.[1] We should treat these anti-Zionisms as two different things, and we need to be cautious when we meet arguments implying that anti-Zionism is stable ideology with a common core through modern history.

The first type – pre-1948 – protested against using Jewish national identity to construct a state. The second type was against the *continued* existence of a country and against the right to the *continued* political autonomy of an actual nation. The first type of anti-Zionism was a reasonable political position at the time, but it can logically no longer exist because its political and social conditions have disappeared. The second type of anti-Zionism – after 1948 – is something new and different. It claims that it is legitimate to be against the establishment of a country *after the fact* and it often tries to avoid discussing the *implications* of a political program that takes such an ideology at face value. A similar claim has not been made about other countries in the world, as far as I know. One of very few exceptions would be hardline Hindu nationalist who call for the dismantling of Pakistan, a political position that is rightfully regarded as fringe extremism.

Defining Antisemitism

The word "antisemitism" was first used in Germany, and there have been various views among scholars about the unity of the phenomenon across

[1] The term "Bundist" is explained in Chapter 1.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 15 Nov 2026 at 10:22:08, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009783316.001

historical periods (Feldman, 2018). The conservative and right-wing radical writer Wilhelm Marr (1819–1904) used the term to denote what he believed to be necessary opposition to the *Semitic*. Antisemitism was the fight against the Jewish and all the negative qualities attributed to the Jews, such as capitalism, materialism, and liberal values.

After the Holocaust, most Western countries attempted to deal with antisemitism, and Germany took the lead in this process. This means that, at least in western Europe, there is a fundamental sensitivity around questions of antisemitism. It is generally perceived as unacceptable to express prejudiced clichés about Jews, such as that they are particularly greedy or that they control the world's financial markets and media. After the annihilation of Europe's Jews, great interest inevitably arose among social scientists in trying to understand the incomprehensible.

The German philosopher and social scientist Theodor W. Adorno (1903–1969) was a leading figure in a community of researchers who, during and after World War II, wanted to understand why people became fascists. Adorno wrote that antisemitism is an ideology consisting of stereotypical, negative opinions that describe Jews as threatening, immoral, and fundamentally different from non-Jews, and of hostile attitudes that call for varying restrictions, exclusion, and repression to solve the "Jewish problem." The definition can be found in *The Authoritarian Personality*, which appeared in 1950. The book is a classic not only in research on fascism and antisemitism but in social research in general.

The American historian and genocide scholar Helen Fein (1934–2022) proposed a slightly different definition. She described antisemitism as an "enduring and latent structure of hostile beliefs about Jews as a group" (Fein, 1987). Fein's definition further states that these structures can manifest in *individuals* as attitudes, in *culture* as myths, ideology, folklore, and images, and in *actions* such as discrimination, political mobilization, and state violence, that is, activities that can result in Jews being ostracized, displaced, or killed because they are Jews. The *enduring and latent nature* of antisemitism in Fein's definition helps us understand that these ideas and attitudes are unlikely to disappear.

In a much-quoted attempt to capture the essence of the new antisemitism, Natan Sharansky, an Israeli politician and activist, launched the so-called "3D test." Sharansky asked us to look for three Ds in criticism of Israel to understand the difference between fair criticism and covert antisemitism: demonization, double standards, and delegitimization. If someone portrays Israelis or Jews as uniquely evil (demonization), or

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 15 Nov 2026 at 10:22:08, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009783316.001

when someone applies completely different standards in the moral and political assessment of Israel than they apply to other states (double standards), or if someone believes that Israel has no right to exist (delegitimization), there are good reasons to assume that antisemitism lies beneath the criticism. Sharansky's approach was an important starting point for a substantial discussion of definitions offered in a 2015 book by Kenneth L. Marcus, the last chapter of which was used to discuss the relationship between anti-Zionism and antisemitism (Marcus, 2015).

To capture the new forms of antisemitism, the organization the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) formulated the following definition in 2016: "Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred towards Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed towards Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, towards Jewish community institutions and religious facilities" (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, 2016).

The IHRA was founded with the so-called Stockholm Declaration in 2000 and now has thirty-five states as members. The IHRA's working definition of antisemitism was formulated in 2016 and has been the subject of several debates. Some critics believe that the IHRA has drawn up an imprecise and too broad definition. If the definition is too wide, it will embrace real-world cases that should not be classified as antisemitism. Nevertheless, the debates about the definition, especially those that have taken place in the UK, have been helpful because they have shown the need to be aware of forms of antisemitism that are not captured by older and narrow definitions.

The debates about definitions of antisemitism did not end with the work of the IHRA. On the contrary, in 2021, a group of researchers initiated yet another definition, called the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (JDA). The JDA has a preface explaining that the purpose of the new definition is to find an alternative to the IHRA's definition from 2016, which the JDA's initiators believe is unclear and harms the work against antisemitism. The JDA's definition is short: "Antisemitism is discrimination, prejudice, hostility or violence against Jews as Jews (or Jewish institutions as Jewish)." The definition is followed by a list of guidelines divided into three categories: A, B, and C. The guidelines are intended as an aid to anyone who wants to understand and combat antisemitism, and they have led to both criticism and support. The JDA's guidelines C describe examples that should *not be immediately* described as antisemitic. Here one finds, among other things, the claim

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 15 Nov 2026 at 10:22:08, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009783316.001

that boycotts, disinvestment, and sanctions are common forms of protest and do not necessarily need to be antisemitic. Some critics have interpreted this as a blanket acquittal of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, but this is not the intention of the JDA.

***

Antisemitism has been present both on the political right and the left since the origins of the left–right distinction in politics, that is, since the French Revolution. It would be naïve to expect otherwise since antisemitism is a set of ideas, attitudes, practices, and cultural products that are far older and more fundamental to Western Christian culture and history than modern political identities and programs. The Italian political scientist Norberto Bobbio made a classic contribution to the debate about the character of the political left and right by focusing on their differing attitudes towards equality. Bobbio argued that the left prioritizes reducing social inequalities, believing that such inequalities are socially constructed and can be mitigated, while the right views inequality as a natural and inevitable aspect of society, emphasizing the importance of hierarchy and order (Bobbio, 1996). This distinction remains relevant in understanding the dynamics of modern politics, despite the evolving and context-dependent nature of these terms. This insight is important, although almost banal in its simplicity, because it helps us understand why it can never be sufficient to treat antisemitism as an instance of racism. If we make the mistake of linking antisemitism exclusively to political ideas about equality and hierarchy, which would be the essence of any definition of racism, we will be blind to antisemitism on the left because the left is defined in its insistence on equality and its resistance against hierarchy. Antisemitism is a more ancient hatred than the modern concepts of left and right politics. It is a style of conspiracy thinking that can be found among people on the right, on the left, and among Islamists (Herf, 2023). The left has failed to look itself in the mirror and ask how they have talked about and treated Jews partly because public discourse about antisemitism after the Holocaust has treated antisemitism as an integral part of the extreme right, and nothing else. This is a point that we return to in Chapter 5 about the case of Norway.

This chapter started with the puzzling fact that it is extremely difficult, indeed almost impossible, to display sympathy with Israeli victims of terror in the Norwegian political system and civil society. This was the case after October 7, 2023, but it has been the case through several

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 15 Nov 2026 at 10:22:08, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009783316.001

periods of terrorism against Israelis in the past, like the Second Intifada. This tendency to silence, suppress, ignore, and marginalize Jews raises interesting questions that are the point of departure for this book. This is a book about anti-Zionism and antisemitism and their positions and roles on the political left. It addresses some large and general questions but uses a detailed case study of the left in Norway to answer its questions. Over the following chapters, which are organized in three distinct parts according to their main focus – first the global, then the far left, and finally the mainstream left in Norway – I use a variety of sources.

In terms of the main concepts, I hold antisemitism and anti-Zionism apart as logically distinct according to the earlier discussion. Whether there is a correlation between the two, that is, whether people who are anti-Zionist are more likely to be antisemitic or vice versa, is an *empirical and not a political* question that has been explored and continues to be explored (Allington et al., 2022, Kaplan and Small, 2006). A number of scholars have demonstrated that anti-Zionism is often antisemitism's new face in the contemporary world (Nelson, 2024, Herf, 2007). At the same time, it is important that we do not get caught up in the fruitless quarrel that often shapes public debate, where one side accuses somebody of being antisemitic on the grounds that they condemn Israel or Israeli policy, while the other side gets annoyed because they feel legitimate criticism of Israel is being canceled. That quarrel has taken attention away from more important debates related to antisemitism, not only after October 7 but for decades.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 15 Nov 2026 at 10:22:08, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009783316.001