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ANTISEMITISM AND POLITICAL PARTIES: A COMPARATIVE APPROACH ON ANTI-SEMITIC NARRATIVES IN EUROPE

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ABSTRACT

Based on the political evolutions in the Middle East after the failure of the Oslo Accords and the actions taken by the Sharon and Netanyahu governments with regard to Palestine, a new type of antisemitism entered the European political scene. Often named in different researches as the 'New Antisemitism', its main ideological novelty is the fact that it is connected to the European far-Left. In many aspects, this type of antisemitism is strongly based on ideas that characterize the existence of the State of Israel as strongly unjustified from the perspective of human rights. Additionally, the New Antisemitism has a strong anti-Zionist orientation based on rejecting the right of the Jewish people to self-determination. Based on this context, our research aims to scrutinize the main narratives of both the far-Right and far-Left parties in the chosen case studies in relation to antisemitism, and to identify what are the elements determining the tendencies of the researched political cultures for certain types of antisemitism. Thus, the research will try to examine the threat that this 'new' antisemitism poses not only to European democracy, but also to the evolution of political narratives in the researched countries. A crucial element of this research will be represented by the discourse analysis of different political parties in Europe expressing anti-Semitic or anti-Zionist opinions after the fall of the Iron Curtain, in the context created by the 2008 economic crisis and the 2015 migrants' crisis. While the research will focus mainly on EU member states, the examples of the United Kingdom and Ukraine will also be examined, given the strong relevance of certain political parties expressing antisemitism in these countries.

KEYWORDS

- *Antisemitism*
- *Anti-Zionism*
- *European Union*
- *Human Rights*
- *Political parties*

1. Introduction

The academic debate around European antisemitism manifests a large set of approaches, given the European political dynamic after World War II, as well as the evolution of politics in the Middle East after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, and Europe's approach towards the latter. In general, the mainstream approaches towards this topic use a starting point the for the analysis as (1) either the Holocaust and the subsequent consequences for Europe, or (2) the presence of the State of Israel as a political actor. Although the political regimes that existed in Europe before the fall of the USSR often approached Jewish life in Europe based on ideological considerations, ideology was not the main founding element directing European

antisemitism. The ideological approach was often accompanied by political, economic and/or religious rationales. From a methodological point of view, the evolution of European antisemitism was often analysed via historical instruments. In his research on the evolution of European antisemitism after the World War II (Wistrich, 1993) supports the idea that "as Europe enters a new phase of its development, the time seems ripe to re-examine the course of European anti-Semitism in the period between 1945-1990, to trace the threads leading from the genocidal savagery of the war years to the recent revival of a more populist form of anti-Semitism". In respect to the so-called "New Antisemitism", (Judaken, 2008) goes against the "homogenizing, hyperbolic, sometimes paranoid construction of what discussants of the new antisemitism have described as a new set of *coalitions* that are said to be emerging", based on the idea that a "political alignment is coalescing made up of leftists, greens and jihadists all working in tandem".

The approach of (Judaken, 2008) although it uses history for a clearer understanding of the evolution of anti-Semitism, uses as main instrument of analysis the agendas of specific actors manifesting any anti-Semitic attitudes. A specific context that is compatible with this approach is the usage of the idea of human rights by certain actors (most often NGOs or other groups of interest) in order to push their agenda. A relevant observation to be made here is that, although some of the actors seem to coalesce in order to promote a certain anti-Semitic narrative, this seems to be the case only because the agendas of those actors manifest several particular common objectives that create a sequential moment of coming together of those actors. For instance, in the case of the BDS Movement (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) one can easily identify a very diverse group of actors supporting it. This group includes mainly "pro-Palestine" NGOs, but also politicians (usually, members of political parties who promote a populist narratives), academics, businessmen, economists etc. These actors didn't necessarily coalesce as part of certain groups opposing Israel, but rather are motivated by common objectives, either for the short or long-term periods.

An analysis of the European antisemitism from the perspective given by its relations with religion seems to indicate a lower intensity of antisemitism's relation with medieval Christian antisemitism. However, especially after the Second Intifada, the centre of gravity of religious antisemitism moved in the field of Islamic antisemitism. According to Smith (2008), "during the period of the second intifada, Europe became the setting for renewed violence against Jews that also continues today […] this violence has ebbed and flowed in part with the levels of violence in the occupied territories and in Israel; with globalization, this mid-East conflict has contributed to anti-Jewish violence throughout the world".

Given the context in which this type of antisemitism developed, it can be said that this type of antisemitism is not exclusively religious as it combines a complex mix of religious and political narratives. Moreover, this type of antisemitism does not come only from Islamic religious Islamic groups but also from external actors. Based on Small (2013), "at present, some argue for religious reasons that the self-determination of the Jew – the non-Muslim "Other" – on so-called Islamic land is a sin and should not be tolerated. Others, in the West, see Jewish stubbornness as the cause of radical Islam, Jihadism, and the instability in the region. When it comes to Israel's policies and

existence, they believe that if only the Jews would change the problems in the region and in international relations as a whole could be resolved".

With the very important role that the narratives and the agendas play, there is one type of analysis European post-World War II that was often paid too little attention: the analysis based on the dynamic of political parties. Nevertheless, while the anti-Semitic behaviour of the European political parties can and should be understood distinctively, it remains a cog in the mechanism of European anti-Semitism. Narratives play the role of a transmission belt, often connecting at this level parties from both far-left and far-right. For instance, "the concept of the 'locust' is especially prevalent, not only in political parties from the far left to the extreme right but also in labour unions and groups from the anti-globalization spectrum, such as the NGO 'Attack'." (Milbradt, 2013).

Additionally, the geographical part of Europe influences, up to a certain extent, the way in which antisemitism manifests itself. Thus, when it comes to antisemitism in Eastern Europe – as we will also so later in the research – antisemitism takes on local social and political characteristics. For instance, in post-Communist Slovakia "antisemitism was also inextricably linked to an inward-looking chauvinism and a return to the wartime fascist past as a source of inspiration" (Wistrich, 1993), while in Poland "pre-war slogans like "Judeo-Communism" once again came to the fore, along with attempts to revive the National Democrat tradition of Poland as a purely Catholic and Polish nation" (Wistrich, 1993). However, it is not a rule that a certain region should manifest a singular type of antisemitism. In France, for instance, "de Gaulle's utterances undoubtedly gave a new respectability to both right and left-wing traditions of antisemitism in France, especially when expressed under the mask of anti-Zionism. If the Gaullist Right tended to focus on alleged Jewish "dual loyalties", the anti-Zionist Left denounced Jews for acting as accomplices of the so-called Israeli racism, colonialism and repression of the Palestinians" (Wistrich, 1993), Moreover, "the newer and more eclectic offshoots of Marxism have turned not only Zionism but also Judaism into prototypes of 'racism' thereby reviving in contemporary language the old radical stereotype of the bloodthirsty, tribal, Moloch-like character of the religion of Jehovah and his people" (Wistrich, 1990)

The importance of understanding the role of European political parties in disseminating such narratives is given by the position they have in the political life of a country. Although political parties, in most cases, manifest a higher transparency than any other actor promoting anti-Semitic narratives, they still get involved with this type of rhetoric. The aim of this research is to identify the rationale behind the involvement of European political parties in supporting anti-Semitic narratives. The main instrument in doing this analysis is represented by discourse analysis. More specifically, the research will make a review of the anti-Semitic remarks made by different EU political parties (plus the parties in the UK and Ukraine), remarks that indicate a strong connection to an anti-Semitic narrative. Based on this, the research questions are: (1) what are the contexts that determine political parties in Europe to engage with anti-Semitic narratives (even though not in a permanent manner); and (2) why do these parties decide to proceed with these narratives in spite of seeming costs in relation to their political capital? By succeeding in answering these research questions, this research will

be able to provide a clear description of the way in which the discussed political parties approach the voting population and what are the methodological tools to counteract the effects of such an engagement.

The relevance of this research is based on the fact that while "traditional providers of information, such as churches and trade unions, have ceased to serve as important points of reference for the contemporary voter who is able to rely on his/her own cognitive skills, developed by education […] short term issue—positions, the popularity of party leaders and the retrospective evaluation of government performance have grown in importance in determining electoral behaviour" (Enyedi, 2008). The position of political parties in society is relevant not only in respect to their (potential) influence, but also in respect to the way in which they succeed to access into a position of power, as well as to how much they follow through with their campaign message. Another reason confirming the necessity of understanding the role played by the political parties in propagating anti-Semitic narratives lies in the ability of anti-Semitism to mutate. According to (Wetzel, 2004; Wodak, 2018) "anti-Semitic prejudices, resentments and stereotypes have proved to be very flexible, accommodating new socio-political developments over the course of two thousand years". Related to this (Zick and Küpper, 2005) support the "labelling of all new variants of antisemitism as transformed"'. They argue that the concept of transformation can encompass all the different realizations of an inherently antisemitism according to the respective zeitgeists". Starting from these premises, it will be argued that in spite of the fact that the ideology seems to be relevant in describing a certain type of anti-Semitism (either form the Left or form the Right), the key element is actually the agenda of the respective party. By doing so, this research sets the basic framework of analysis of the political parties' involvement with anti-Semitic approaches.

2. Theoretical framework

The discussion around antisemitism is a very extensive one since the elements that shaped its evolution manifest a complex multitude of historical, ideological and political factors. Although, in essence, antisemitism targets the same ethnical group, identifying the arguments it uses to reach its objectives is very important for this research. In respect to antisemitism, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) defines it (2006) as "a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred towards Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed towards Jews and non-Jewish individuals and/or their property towards Jewish community institutions and religious facilities". Later, (Zick *et al.*, 2011) defined antisemitism as "social prejudice directed against Jews simply because they are Jewish. Its particular power seems to be that it can be very flexibly argued and instrumentalized to justify discrimination. Antisemitism takes many different forms: political ("Jewish world conspiracy"), secular (usury), religious, ("responsible for the death of Jesus") and racist ("Jewish character")".

The 2016 "Working Definition of Antisemitism" adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) basically has the same text with the one adopted by the EUMC in 2006, however, adding that in relation to Israel, it is considered

an anti-Semitic expression to "accuse the Jews as a People, or Israel as a State, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust […], drawing comparisons of contemporary Israel policy to that of the Nazis […], and holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel" (IHRA, 2016). These added specifications come in contrast to the mentioning of 2006 EUMC definition that rejects any potential antisemitism of any criticism of Israel. In her research, (Wodak, 2018) supports the idea that the antisemitism coming from the far-right parties in the post-war Europe is a *syncretic* type of antisemitism in which "Jews are viewed as evil (finance) capitalists and as representing Bolshevism – and these motives do not so much compete against each other as combine". On the other side of the spectrum, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict gave birth to a new avatar of the global antisemitism. The so called "new antisemitism", mostly present among the (Far)-Left movements and parties, has a very large taxonomy as, in the words of (Wieselter, 2005):

> "There are religious varieties and secular varieties; theological varieties; political varieties and cultural varieties; old varieties and new varieties. There is the anti-Semitism of Christians, which comes in many forms, and the anti-Semitism of Muslims, which comes in many forms. There is the anti-Semitism of the Right, in Europe and in the United States, still stubbornly blaming the Jews for modernity […] and there is the anti-Semitism of the Left, most recently seeking shelter (and finding it) in the anti-globalization movement, which has presided over a revival of the New Left's dogmas about capitalism and liberalism and Americanism. And there is the anti-Semitism that manifests itself as anti-Zionism"

While taking into consideration the major relevance of political parties for the dynamics of society, as well as the main objective of this research – to identify the main motivations of political parties engaging with anti-Semitic narratives, the theoretical framework will have, as a starting point, the gap in the research of the topic of anti-Semitism in exclusive relation to political parties. Based on (Wodak, 2018) "research to date seems to have neglected the different histories of Eastern, Central, and Western Europe as well as the various anti-Semitic stereotypes and tropes that are functionalized time and again for political ends […] It has also become obvious that a gap in the literature exists: much more quantitative and qualitative research is needed to investigate in detail the relationship between party affiliation and anti-Semitic beliefs as part of the authoritarian syndrome". In relation to the evolution of political parties as actors in the national politics, as well as to the way in which decisions are made within the partiers, Enyedi (2008) supports the idea that:

> "Next to these 'negative' arguments, political sociologists identify a number of social structural positions that are able to inform attitudes, political behaviour and party choice. In particular, religion continues to shape political behaviour across large part of Europe, although the conflict between clericalism and anticlericalism is almost nowhere at the top of the political agenda. Perhaps even more importantly, the progressive blurring of national sovereignty has

> been paralleled by the strengthening of regional structures and the mobilization of regional identities. Region and ethnicity define the identity of more parties today than in the classical era of cleavage politics. Other social factors, like education, gender, and sectoral employment, have become important building blocks of political identities and political behaviour relatively recently, typically after the 1970s."

In describing the post-Communist antisemitism in the Central Easter Europe in his article "Varieties of Antisemitism in Post-Communist East Central Europe", Michael Shafir distinguishes between four types of antisemitism: "self-exculpatory nostalgic antisemitism (nostalgic), self-propelling antisemitism, utilitarian antisemitism, and reactive antisemitism" (Shafir, 2003). However, the most relevant for our research is the reactive antisemitism as it is present in the discourse of many Eastern European parties).

Given the bi-dimensional characteristic of this research, since it analyses the anti-Semitism coming from both Left and Right, an essential theoretical element to be discussed is represented by the ability of anti-Semitism to mutate. In many regards, but not exclusively, anti-Semitism is able to transform its ideological charge due to the fact that in many situations it is only a part of what can be called 'othering' in European national politics. In respect to the European political parties it can be said that "the new coded rhetoric has paradoxically led to an increase in racist and anti-Semitic discourse, not to its decline, since racism now often take more pervasive, diffuse forms, event to the point of being expressed as the denial of racism" (Wodak, 2010). In this way, the political parties participate, with other social actors like media, and institutions to everyday life, in the "normalization of othering" (Wodak, 2010). There is no doubt that this 'othering' developed also on the background of increasing immigration from Arab countries which peaked with the Syrian refugee crisis in 2015. Moreover, on this background, antisemitism and islamophobia became expressions of often the same political motivations of different political parties. However, the relation between the two is a discontinuous one, in terms of the adherence of different political parties to them. Additionally, it can be said that "it is now time to change victims. In the contest for the world title of best outcast, the Muslim must replace the Jew, all the more so because the latter not only failed to live up to his status but because he has himself become, with the creation of the state of Israel, an oppressor. In short, the idealization of the Jew has paved the way for his later vilification, or to put it differently, the Judaisation of the Muslims necessarily leads to the Nazification of the Israelis" (Bruckner, 2015)

While Islamophobic attitudes are more present on the far-Right political spectrum, the protection of Muslims becomes often instrumental in supporting the antisemitism promoted by the radical Left. Moreover, politically speaking antisemitism knows no frontiers, as Harrison (2015) writes that "both wings (far-Right and radical Left) of politics deal in the promise of a radical transformation of collective life; both base that promise on one or another persuasive theoretical representation of its workings. On the right, the entity envisaged as ripe for saving transformation has

traditionally been the nation. Hence right-wing antisemitism equally envisages "the Jew" and Judaism as disruptive of an ideal national unity and homogeneity, however the latter may be conceived. The messianic promises of the left, on the other hand, tend to be internationalist and to envisage humanity at large, or the world order, to be the objects ripe to undergo kinds of transformation that can only be plausibly introduced to possible converts, just as on the right, in terms of some complex explanatory theory."

As this paper regards narratives and, consequently, the identities they shape as instrumental for the research of the connection between the European political parties and anti-Semitic narratives, it is important to make a distinction between the two types of populism. Beginning from the distinction made by (Havlik and Pinkova, 2012), Stojarova (2018) separates the *exclusively populist political parties* – with an identity built upon their populist appeal, their program tends toward the vague, and it is subject to frequent changes as it is difficult or impossible to be placed in one of the traditional party families – from the *non-exclusive populist political parties* which, by contrast, make a combination between a populist appeal with another, clearly outlined program. This paper will approach both types of populism, as the characteristics of each of them will support a more compartmented research.

3. European Far-Right Parties

During the past years, and especially in the context of the massive 2015 refugee crisis, and on the background of the 2008 economic crisis, Europe faced a strong resurgence of the far-Right populist parties. While in some countries these parties came on some older structures, as it was the case in France with the National Front (today, National Rally); in Austria with the Freedom Party, in countries like Hungary (Jobbik) or Poland (Law and Justice, or Confederation Liberty and Independence) these are mostly new actors on the national political scenes, appearing after 1990. Besides their extreme nationalism, conservatism and Euroscepticism (in some cases a soft version, while in some a hard one), European Far-Right parties also express strong xenophobic attitudes. These xenophobic and racist attitudes often are targeting refugees, Muslims (in connection to the refugees, but not necessarily connected to all Muslims), and the Jewish community in Europe. In respect to the antisemitism expressed by these parties, it has to be said that is conceptually different than the traditional Nazi far-right antisemitism. While some scholars defined it as "secondary antisemitism" (term that is controversial in the antisemitism literature due to the countries where it can be applied), Skenderovic (2009) supports the idea that:

> "after the Second World War, overt statements of modern antisemitism, making use of blunt categorisations, have largely vanished from the public sphere and have become confined to marginal extreme right groups. [. . .] However, what some have termed "post-Holocaust" or "post-fascist" antisemitism has remained a potent force of anti-Jewish hostility in contemporary societies and is most commonly found among political and intellectual actors associated with the radical right."

Based on this idea, one can easily identify the environments in which the far-right antisemitism is propagated. Additionally, certain social and political conditions can contribute to this. In his article, Shafir (2003) describes the concept of 'reactive antisemitism', according to which has a discourse that "can be merely allusive but on occasion it can also become abusive and in all cases it involves a definite attempt at 'back finger-pointing'". In this context, the author describes as reactive anti-Semites those "whose family socialisation – and therefore most influential factor in collective memory – recalls the years of early Stalinism and of the Gulag through which their grandparents and parents had to submit". Thus, the reactive anti-Semites submit to the narrative based on the harmful perception of "Jews having brought communism", although not exclusively to this narrative. The relevance of mentioning this dimension of antisemitism is connected to post-communist political and social context of the East-Central European countries. In connection to this, Shafir (2003) claims that "reactive antisemitism may also come into being as an outcome of post-communist political realities" while giving Viktor Orban's FIDESZ party as an example:

> "Soon upon taking over as premier in 1998 Orbán visited the Hungarian pavilion at the Auschwitz exhibit and immediately decided to reconstruct the exhibit, originally built by the communist regime. The plans for redesigning the exhibit, as Randolph L. Braham described them, were little else than "a pro-Horthy apologia designed to sanitise the Nazi era in general and the Hungarian involvement in the Final Solution in particular." […] Attention was obviously focused on "the positive aspects of Jewish life in the country, emphasising the flourishing of the Jewish community between 1867 and 1944, the rescue activities of those identified as Righteous, and Horthy's saving of the Jews of Budapest," and, more importantly, the same plans "blamed almost exclusively the Germans for the destruction of the Jews."

However, the public sphere is also a scene for the far-right antisemitism to move freely, together with Islamophobia, as part of a deeper xenophobic ideology. According to Wodak (2018):

> "Antisemitism occurs in various contexts—for example, in the public sphere and anonymously in online postings and other Internet genres. And antisemitism and Islamophobia can appear together, as recent public debates about banning halal and the practice of circumcision in Austria, Germany, and France illustrate. Moreover, it is important to emphasize that there are several antisemitisms—racist, capitalist, cultural, religious, or syncretic; Muslim or Christian; left- or right-wing; "old" or "new"; traditional, structural, or secondary; hard-core or latent; explicit or coded; and soft or violent, the latter resemiotized in physical acts of hatred."

However, the newest trends among the radical right parties in Europe is to focus more on the Muslims population (either already settled here or immigrants), and

on more subtle forms of antisemitism: "the Progress Party, the Danish People's Party, the Flemish Interest (Belgium) – now centrally agitate against Muslims" (Bangstad et al, 2010). On the other side, older parties like the National Front in France or the Flemish nationalists of the early twentieth century - "all of the agitated against Jews first and foremost […] if you look at this parties today […] not a single party on the right wing has anything bad to say about Jews" (Bangstad et al, 2010).

This comes in a strong contrast with the visible antisemitism expressed, for instance, by Jean-Marie Le Pen in the 1960's and 1970's who was claiming that "of the gas chambers that they were a minute detail of Second World War history" (Judaken, 2008). Due to this discrete approach towards anti-Semitic forms of expression a misleading image of an 'absent' antisemitism was created. This image led to public and scholarly debates that "often *a priori* presuppose that antisemitism is an ideology that is past its expiration date and thus also without significance in the radical right's political and ideological mobilization" (Rensman, 2013). On the other hand, the subtlety of the anti-Semitic expression of most of the far-right parties in Europe often uses semantic subterfuges in order to avoid a clear expression of their narratives or ideology. For instance, Le Pen "when challenged on his virulent hostility to minorities of North African descent in France, he replies that he has nothing but admiration for 'Arab' civilization, but Muslim can best enjoy their own culture in an unspoilt form at 'home', just as white Christian Europeans should be allowed to protect their cultural heritage" (MacMaster J., 2001).

the approach of the far-right parties to islamophobia can be described in the same manner since the current political context in Europe is able to provide more political capital from Islamophobia. While this situation does not relate to anti-Semitism as less important, from a political point of view Islamophobia plays a more relevant role for the far-right parties. And this is the case not only for newer far-right parties, but also for older such parties that traditionally held strong anti-Semitic views.

Some of the German nationalist parties in Austria that engaged with anti-Semitic rhetoric from the late nineteenth century to the present are "kind of pro-Jewish and Islamophobic" (Bangstad et al, 2010). However, in spite of their efforts to somehow present a certain indifference to the Jews, the red string of radical right antisemitism is present among them. Thus, anti-Semitic narratives and stereotypes like the untrustworthiness of the Jews (strongly related to the myth of the eternally wandering Jew), Jews as overstated intellectuals or Bolsheviks (in contrast with the myth of the Jew as a capitalist monopolizing the global financial power, paradoxically employed by the far-right parties), or the Jew as beneficiary of the Holocaust (in the larger context of Holocaust denial) attach themselves to the extreme nationalism and xenophobia of the far-right parties. Moreover, in each European country the antisemitism expressed by far-right parties manifests a set of regional/cultural particularities. The Jobbik Party in Hungary, for instance, besides its focus on topics like the rebuilding of the pre-1919 Greater Hungary and the redrawing of Hungary's borders, reached out to different segments of disenfranchised Hungarian electorate through a platform combining:

"anti-globalization views and coded popular antisemitism, along-

> side its previous support of Christian values, Hungarian nationalism, and attacks on Roma and other ethnic minorities. Serving both radical nationalists and disillusioned voters, its economic policies are primarily directed against "the neoliberal ideology dominated policies during these years under the name of privatization, liberalization and deregulation," while it also rejects the Lisbon Treaty and European integration. Jobbik thus capitalizes on increasing joblessness, corruption crises, and social unrest caused by the global economic crisis. In light of widespread economic and cultural fears, the party mobilizes political and cultural resentments against pro-European and pro-cosmopolitan elites and minorities, as well as against multinational corporations, America, and Israel" (Rensman, 2013).

However, in an interesting twist of fate, in 2015, Gábor Vóna announced significant changes in the policy of Jobbik, aiming to attract a new electorate and becoming more acceptable for more moderate voter. This led to an absence of antisemitism, racism and revisionism in his speeches and a stronger focus on promoting the cultural and territorial rights of Hungarians abroad (Stojarová, 2018).

In many aspects, the far-right antisemitism in Hungary has many similarities with the one in Poland. One such aspect is the strong Catholic influence which, besides the old religious anti-Semitic myths like the accusations of ritual murder, plays a major role in boosting the radical nationalism. One way in which some clerics of the Catholic Church in Poland combine religion, politics and antisemitism is by disseminating speculations regarding the alleged Jewish descent of disfavoured politicians or public figures. This kind of manifestations "reflect the sympathies of the Catholic clergy toward right-wing beliefs of conservative and nationalistic parties formed after 1989. This political outlook has been more vocal than the expression of religious views against Jews. At the same time, however, political antisemitism is often assisted by religious anti-Jewish expression" (Bilewicz et al, 2012). During an appearance at an ultra-Catholic broadcaster, Jarosław Kaczyński, the leader of the ruling Law and Justice party accused liberal Warsaw Mayor Rafał Trzaskowki of favoring the payment of restitution to Jews for the properties lost during World War II (Cienski, 2020). Referring to Trzaskowki's initiative, Kaczyński said: "Only someone without a Polish soul, a Polish heart and a Polish mind could say something like that. Mr. Trzaskowki clearly doesn't have any of them, seeing as he says that this is open to discussion." (Cienski, 2020). This sort of rhetoric circulates also around other countries in Central Europe, like Slovakia or Czechia. Far-right parties like Dawn, SPD, SPR-RSČ. SNS, Kukiz'15, RN, LPR from the Visegrad countries often circulate similar narratives founded on strong nationalist rhetoric:

> "In all four countries, the society has been polarized over the issues of migration, relation towards the EU and Russia having one liberal-left-wing pole standing against the illiberal tendencies of the Polish and Hungarian government, in the case of Slovakia, against the mainstreaming of radicalism (SNS in the government, SNS a strong regional player, Fico ´s mainstreaming of nationalism) and

> in the case of Czech Republic against the coalition of polarizer Czech president Zeman and his ally populist oligarch and ex-minister of finance Babi. In all four countries civil society groups organize demonstrations against illiberal tendencies but also in all of the countries opposition against the nationalist prime ministers Orbán, Fico, Kaczy.ski and president Zeman, remains fragmented and not able to topple down the current establishment and gain the majority votes of the people in the parliamentary or as in the case of Czech Republic, presidential elections." (Stojarova, 2018).

Another significant element influencing the decision of the far-right parties to propagate an anti-Semitic rhetoric is given by their country's status as an EU member. The set of European liberal values, as well as the strong impact of the Holocaust on the European society and culture force the parties to use semantic subterfuges in order to send their anti-Semitic messages to their electorate. Also, the role played by Islamophobia is much stronger in the EU countries for various reasons. The first one is that the Muslim immigrants, either as a result of migration from the former European colonies, or of Syrian crisis, are part of a phenomenon that has its roots in EU countries. The second reason is that often Islamophobia, due to its potential in respect to gaining political capital, makes it easier for the far-right parties putting the anti-Semitic behaviours in the background. Thirdly, Islamophobia is instrumental for the far-right parties' efforts to promote an image of friendship towards Jews. Wherever in Europe these characteristics don not apply, antisemitism can manifest itself at a totally different level.

Such is the case of antisemitism in Ukraine and the rhetoric promoted by the far-right party Svoboda. Founded in 1991 under the name of Social-National Party of Ukraine, Svoboda propagates a strong anti-Semitic rhetoric using old, over-used myths surrounding Jews, like the pseudo-historical interpretation of *Khazaria*. One such example is represented by a *March of Honour* that took place in the honour of the Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera. This March was organized by 'Svoboda' All-Ukrainian Union together with other ultra-nationalist political groups. During this March "certain antisemitic slogans, both direct and veiled, were recorded […], as part of the procession chanted "Juden - out!" during the event. One of the banners presented had a *Wolfsangel* (the ƵƵ or double-hook symbol, a well-known Nazi heraldic element) and a picture of what was most likely the Kyiv Grand Prince Sviatoslav I Igorevich, as well as the slogan "Let us win against the second Khazarian Kaganate!" (Congress of National Communities of Ukraine, 2018). Based on Rudling (2006), "aggressive anti-Semites constitute a well-organised and influential lobby with connections and influences that reaches the very top of society". Starting from this, one can easily understand that the very existence of Svoboda Party, is based on a previous heritage of nationalist and extremist movements that occurred either in the past, either in the current Ukrainian political life. For instance, in 2015 "the Ukrainian Rada passed legislation making two WW2 paramilitaries—the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA)— Heroes of Ukraine, and made it a criminal offense to deny their heroism. The OUN had collaborated with the Nazis and participated in the Holocaust, while the UPA slaughtered thousands of

Jews and 70,000-100,000 Poles of their own volition" (Golinkin, 2019). The case of antisemitism in Ukraine is a strong proof that the EU countries feel a certain restrain expressing antisemitism for the reasons mentioned above. Moreover, while for the UE countries the memory of the Holocaust is still impacting certain narratives, in Ukraine, the antisemitism is not only the expression of a populist party, but also the expression of Svoboda and similar Ukrainian movements of unwillingness to take responsibility for Ukraine's Nazi past with all that it involved.

4. Far-Left Antisemitism

On the other side of the political spectrum, the European political scene also hosts a consistent set of anti-Semitic expressions and behaviours. Due to its very nature, the antisemitism coming from the far left tends to use the civil society as a channel of dissemination. However, there is a significant number of leftist (including here radical wings of the party) or far-left parties involved with anti-Semitic narratives. The evolution of far-left antisemitism in Europe is strongly tied to the European efforts to leave behind its colonial past, as well as to liberation movements in the United States. One very important aspect is that in respect to certain aspects, the far-left antisemitism shares common narratives with the far-right antisemitism. Such is the case of the far-left antisemitism in Austria and Germany while aiming at delegitimizing Israel:

> „Because of Germany's and Austria's Nazi past, relatively soft accusations—such as the charge of "using dis-proportionate force" instead of calling for boycott, divestment, and sanctions, or criticism of Israel's consistent self-defense in-stead of denial of the country's right to exist—are more common there than in other European countries" (Grigat, 2015).

Nevertheless, although delegitimizing Israel is mostly the common objectives for the far-left parties and NGO's, the narratives don't always coincide. One such instance is that of involvement with the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement (BDS). While in Austria the BDS movement almost doesn't exist, in Germany "BDS is criticized even within the left-wing party Die Linke, which is known to have members of the Bundestag who openly oppose Israel (Grigat, 2015). However, the Die Linke can be regarded as a standard for the German leftist antisemitism. Founded in 2007 through the fusion of the Eastern German Communist Party (SED) and the Election Alternative for Social Justice (WASG), Die Linke is a strong example of far-left antisemitism. Its core ideology is described as "anti-imperialist, adamantly opposed to the existence of Israel, and both overtly and covertly anti-Semitic" (Voigt, 2013). The main ideological foot on which Die Linke stays is their world view that:

> "the world and society are split into two opposing groups: one group wants peace and the other group wants to pursue imperialism. In other words, there is an exploiting First World and an exploited Third World. This is as simplistic a concept of the complexity of modern societies as one could possibly imagine. It inevitably

> leads to the personification of social relations, which makes it easy to pinpoint the persons responsible for exploitation and oppression." (Voigt, 2013)

One very interesting observation regarding the way in which the far-left antisemitism connects with the far-right one is represented by the activity of the Austrian newspaper Die Aula. Although strongly connected to the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) and with authors from among the FPÖ, Die Aula often praises anti-Semitic actions by the far-left. For instance, it acknowledged "the "courage" of two MPs of the German leftist party Die Linke who refused to applaud Israel's President Shimon Peres after he delivered a speech in the German parliament" (Bechter, 2013). For the far-left parties fighting Zionism is seen as an avatar of imperialism, and from that to Nazi stereotypes about Jews as ruling the world there is just one step. The commonalities manifested by the antisemitism expressed by the two sides of the political spectrum confirm the idea that the ideology that these parties propose is just instrumental for reaching their objectives, rather than belonging to a set of guidelines.

Another relevant case of leftist antisemitism is the case of the Labour Party in the United Kingdom. Founded in 1900, the British Labour Party started facing the beginning of rampant antisemitism at the same time with the beginning of James Corbyn's leadership of the party. Of course, antisemitism was not a novelty in the Labour Party at the moment of Corbyn's taking over, but rather an almost definitory characteristic of the British Left:

> „In the British case, it should be borne in mind that contemporary manifestations of leftist anti-Semitism are loosely related, if at all, to the hostility rooted in a conflict between indigenous and immigrant workers rather than opposition to Zionism that Jews encountered from sections of the British labor movement at the turn of the 20th century. In addition, among some British social democrats there is a parallel tradition of solidarity with the Jews and Israel. As in other countries, the adversarial position toward Zionism was the effect of an encroaching New Left agenda during the 1960s and 1970s, so that by 1982 WD. Rubinstein could state: "Fringe neo-Nazi groups notwithstanding, significant anti-Semitism is now almost exclusively a left-wing rather than a right-wing phenomenon." (Cohen, 2004)

One of the major issues regarding the Labour Party's antisemitism is represented by the connection of its leader with the organisations considered to be terrorist. Through a very symbolic action, Corbyn, as the image of his party, was involved with a very strong expression of antisemitism. Thus, several photos taken in Tunisia 2014 show Corbyn laying a wreath of flowers at the grave of the Palestinians involved with the terrorist attack at the 1972 Munich Summer Olympics (Nirenstein, 2018). Moreover, he, openly and on numerous occasions, expressed his sympathy for organisations like Hamas and Hezbollah:

> "Tomorrow evening it will be my pleasure and my honour to host an event in parliament where our friends from Hezbollah will be

> speaking. I'd also invited friends from Hamas to come and speak as well. Unfortunately, the Israelis would not allow them to travel here as well so it's only going to be friends from Hezbollah." (Hirsh, 2018)

The explanation of (Cohen, 2004) on why the British Left (including here, besides the Labour Party, the Red-Green alliance) continues to stick with its anti-Semitic rhetoric is, among other explanations, related to the population in the UK. Starting from the example of Respect party, he claims that:

> „Demography partially explains this shift. There are approximately 1.5 million Muslims in the United Kingdom, and the population is growing. Many British Muslims originate from Pakistan and Bangladesh, and their ranks have been swelled by arrivals from other Muslim countries, notably in the Arab world […] Although Respect failed to win any seats in the 2004 local and European parliamentary elections, it enjoyed a strong showing in those areas of the country, such as East London and the Midlands, with large Muslim populations."

Another example of intersection between the anti-Semitic stereotypes used by the far-right and those used by the far-left is that of the former leader of the Communist-allied Parti de Gauche (Left Party) Jean-Luc Melénchon, who, during a press conference, said about the French Finance Minister at that time, Pierre Moscovici that he "behaves like someone who has stopped thinking like a French, like someone who thinks in the language of international finance" (France 24, 2013). Of course, this is not the only time when Jean-Luc Melénchon engaged with elements of anti-Semitic narratives. In the past he made various declarations saying that he would never let himself "be influenced by lobbies of any sort – be they financial or from sectarian community" or describing CRIF's (France's Jewish umbrella group) opinions as "arrogant and sectarian dictates" (Samuel, 2019).

These sorts of declarations coming from leaders of far-left parties in Europe are a clear indicator not only of the stereotypes that these parties choose in order to push their agenda, but also of how historical elements determine parties to choose these stereotypes and narratives. The case of the UK Labour party is even more interesting since "Britain was the former Mandate power in Palestine and a Labour government was in office when the State of Israel was created in 1948" (Cohen, 2004). This sort of example makes clear the fact that, in spite of their political tradition, some far-left parties switch their narratives based on the perceived immediate needs in the national or European politics, thus adhering to populist values. A major problem with the far-left antisemitism is that it uses the European Muslim population as a tool in its fight against the alleged oppressors of the Palestinians. However, as it is obvious in the case of Jeremy Corbyn, this fight often brings into equation genocidal and terrorist actors like Hamas or Hezbollah.

5. Conclusions

Based on this research of the European antisemitism (including here two non-EU states) attached to political parties holding extreme views, one can have at least a glimpse into the complexity of antisemitism as a form of political expression. The first relevant aspect that this research identified is that the European far-right or far-left parties holding anti-Semitic views rarely engage with them for other reasons than pushing an agenda or obtaining certain benefits like votes, for instance. A good example in this respect is the difference in approaches between most of the EU far-right parties and the Ukrainian party Svoboda. One can easily understand that Svoboda's antisemitism is permanently cultivated in strong relation to the Nazi past of the country. At the same time, most of the EU far-right parties engage with anti-Semitic narratives just in case. This can be easily understood also from the fact that not all the EU far-right parties use the same narratives, but segments of the whole set of stereotypes, based on their immediate needs. Of course, this does not make them less dangerous, but in certain political conditions it can be a sign of the alleviation of their antisemitism. The best example in this situation is the example of the Hungarian Jobbik which moved even closer to the centre and gave up extreme nationalist and anti-Semitic narratives (although not totally) in order to reach more voters.

The second relevant aspect pointed out by the current research is that in many situations bot far-left and far-right parties use semantic subterfuges that actually help them use the very same anti-Semitic stereotypes: the stereotype of cosmopolitan (trans-national Jew), the Jew as dominating the global finances, the Jew as an oppressor etc.

The third element (strongly connected to the second one) is that the situations in which these extreme parties choose to use anti-Semitic narratives in order to reach their political goals lead to a dissolution of the difference between the Right and the Left. In many regards, these situations (determined generally by a certain type of crisis: economic, social, religious) manifest a positive characteristic, since they allow the voters to easily identify the populist dimension of a political party.

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