

Golders Green attack used to launch ferocious right-wing campaign against democratic rights and anti-genocide protests

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The Labour government and the media have used the stabbing of two Jewish men in Golders Green, London, to redouble their assault on protest in defence of the Palestinian people facing genocide, and democratic rights generally.

Essa Suleiman, a British national who came to the UK from Somalia as a child, stabbed Shloime Rand and Moshe Shine on Wednesday—both are in a stable condition.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer responded by holding those who have protested the Gaza genocide responsible, and promising draconian attacks on demonstrations.

He threatened, “If you stand alongside people who say ‘globalise the intifada’ (the word means rebellion, or uprising), you are calling for terrorism against Jews and people who use that phrase should be prosecuted.” He would “speed up sentences on antisemitic attacks so there is a stronger deterrence factor as we do with riots.”

Later he said that the government was “looking at further measures we can take on protests, particularly in relation to chants, to banners and the repeated nature of protests.” His office told the *Guardian* a “review of laws on public order and hate crime is set to be handed to ministers within weeks”.

Government counter-terrorism adviser Jonathan Hall, referring to protests of hundreds of thousands, called for a blanket “moratorium on the sorts of marches that have been happening.”

The London Metropolitan police’s head of counter-terrorism policing Laurence Taylor said the force was reviewing whether to ban a march marking the Nakba—the forcible expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians by Israel—on May 16. Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood confirmed, “These are conversations I will be having with the police over the coming days.”

Banning the march, which has already been rerouted by police to make way for a demonstration led by the fascist Tommy Robinson, would leave the capital in the hands of the far-right in the name of Jewish safety.

The conflation of antisemitic violence with political protest against Israel

Justifying these police-state measures, Labour officials and right-wing journalists immediately drew a connection between the deranged individual attack in Golders Green and popular protests against the Israeli state’s crimes against humanity.

Starmer gave a statement from Downing Street declaring, “Antisemitism is an old, old hatred. History shows that the roots are deep

and if you turn away it grows back. Yet far too many people in this country diminish it. They either don’t see it or they don’t want to see it. Take the marches that happen regularly across Britain...”

Former Conservative cabinet minister David Frost wrote in the *Telegraph*, “We have seen criticism of Israel metastasise into clearly racist attacks on ‘Zionists’ (now seemingly the accepted code for Jewish people), and into direct threats against Jewish people and open support for terrorist groups. We have allowed mass marches to scare Jewish people out of city centres week after week”.

Dave Rich of the Zionist Community Security Trust wrote in the *Guardian*, “You might be thinking that hating Israel is not the same as hating Jews, and in theory, you are right. In practice, it often does not divide that neatly. When incitement against ‘Zionists’ reaches a certain point, attacks on Jews follow.” He adds that “incitement seems to be present on every protest”.

Jonathan Hall stated bluntly, “It’s clearly impossible at the moment for any of these pro-Palestine marches not to incubate within them some sort of anti-Semitic or demonising language.”

This a slander: against protesters—whose anti-Zionism and support for the Palestinians against apartheid occupation and genocide has nothing to do with racial hatred—and against Jews, who bear no responsibility for the actions of the Israeli state. It grotesquely distorts the facts of the Golders Green attacks.

From what is already known of Suleiman, his assaults on Jews were part of a broad pattern of personal violence and mental illness.

According to the *Telegraph*, he was imprisoned 18 years ago for stabbing a police officer and his dog, who were responding to an incident involving a knife. The newspaper adds that Suleiman “has convictions for other violent offences as well as a long history of mental health issues.”

Police have said he had a “medical episode” while on the ground being arrested, requiring hospital treatment.

Though this has received virtually no attention in the press, Suleiman’s attacks in Golders Green were not the first he carried out that day. Police had been called to an address in Barnet earlier that morning where the occupant, Ishmail Hussein, had suffered minor knife injuries after an altercation with Suleiman, who could not be found when officers arrived.

He was referred to the counter-extremism Prevent programme in 2020, but the case was dropped later that year.

Creating the climate for a crackdown on democratic rights

None of which has stopped the blanket right-wing campaign of the last

three days pointing to Golders Green as proof of nationally rampant antisemitism and indifference to the fate of British Jews.

Hall said of antisemitic attacks, “I don’t think I can think of a bigger national security emergency happening in the UK since 2017 in terms of the attacks in Manchester and London [terror attacks which killed two-dozen people and injured nearly 900]. In fact, you might say it’s the biggest national emergency since Covid.”

The Zionist Campaign Against Antisemitism organised a demonstration claiming the same, led by a host of right-wingers including Conservative darlings Sir Jacob Rees Mogg and Lord Toby Young.

In words calculated to provoke, Starmer’s statement scolded the population “to open their eyes to Jewish pain, Jewish suffering and Jewish fear.” From a man who has led an anti-democratic crusade to close people’s eyes to the slaughter of tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians—and on whose watch the police are now considering banning the commemoration of the Nakba—this is sickening hypocrisy.

Frost goes so far as to denounce even the government’s tokenistic recognition of Palestine and the fact that “last year Parliament discussed Israel and the Gaza war more often than any other issue—not just any foreign policy issue, but any other issue at all”.

It should also be noted that nothing whatsoever has been said of the stabbing at a protest over the Iran war on April 22, allegedly carried out by pro-Shah nationalists.

The *London Evening Standard* reported a week ago that Vahid Madaffard appeared at Westminster Magistrates’ Court on Friday charged with causing grievous bodily harm with intent, and that four others are currently bailed under investigation.

The only comments about Iran are those insinuating Tehran’s responsibility for attacks on Jews, used to support Starmer’s fast-tracking laws “to tackle the malign threat posed by states like Iran”.

Given that the right-wing media routinely alleges connections between protest groups like Palestine Action and Tehran, the ultimate target of these measures is clear.

None of this is about defending anyone’s safety; it is about pushing an anti-democratic agenda aimed at outlawing opposition to Israel and imperialism under conditions of war and genocide in the Middle East.

In his *Guardian* article, Rich calls for the censorship of music group Bob Vylan, citing their shouts of “Death to the IDF”, “Fuck the Zionists! Get out there and fight them! Get out there and meet them in the street” and “We do support the right to an armed resistance.”

Frost is most explicit. His *Telegraph* article, “No mercy, let’s put an end to ingrained Jew hate in this country,” attacks politicians who “pander to Islamo-Leftist hatred of Israel and Jews”.

It demands: “Pro-Palestine marches should be prohibited”; “Open expressions of anti-Semitism in the mass media, in mosques, or on the streets need to be banned and prosecuted – and that includes the many Green and other Leftist election candidates”; “deport foreign nationals who are guilty of this and revoke British citizenship for those who have acquired it”; “exemplary prosecutions and sentences”.

Even Starmer is falling foul. Everyone from the head of the Metropolitan Police to media commentators is castigating government “inaction” and “hesitancy”. Protesters booed and heckled Starmer in Golders Green with placards depicting him as a mask behind which hides former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn—slandering him as an antisemitic terrorist supporter with the words, “Keir Starmer - Jew Harmer”.

The campaign against Zack Polanski and the Green Party

A particularly venomous campaign has been taken up against Green

Party leader Zack Polanski. Frost’s article links, on the lines “Open expressions of anti-Semitism”, to a *Telegraph* article titled “Polanski refuses to apologise over ‘anti-Semitic comment’”.

Polanski had said, last week, “There’s a conversation to be had about whether it’s a perception of unsafety or whether it’s actual unsafety” among British Jews, adding that such perceptions should not prevent “legitimate criticism” of Israel and its genocide.

Following Golders Green, Polanski has been attacked for retweeting a post opposing the police brutality of one of the officers who apprehended Suleiman. The post includes a video of the officer repeatedly kicking Suleiman hard in the head while he is lying on the ground having been tasered.

A Labour minister, Mike Tapp, declared himself “disgusted that anyone with this view is leading any political party.”

Head of the Met police Sir Mark Rowley sent Polanski a letter in defence of the “nothing short of extraordinary” officer’s actions, condemning the Greens leader in Orwellian terms for the “chilling effect” of “your decision to criticise these officers”. He added a call for “solidarity” with the police from political leaders.

The same day, two people the media claim were Green Party candidates in the upcoming elections were arrested by the Met on suspicion of stirring up racial hatred online.

Former Labour MP Tom Harris wrote in the *Telegraph*, “Polanski is a prisoner of his own rotten party,” claiming that “the party has been criticised for some time as a Trojan horse for Islamism” and concluding “there is no doubt that something rotten at the heart of the Greens, something that, left to fester, will pose a clear and present danger to the fabric of our society and to the freedoms we all take for granted.”

Some in the party’s leadership are heeding the call—the same one which ultimately saw Jeremy Corbyn thrown out of the Labour leadership, after repeated retreats and capitulations.

The Green’s Welsh leader Anthony Slaughter told LBC of Polanski’s police tweet: “from what I’ve read, [it] was inappropriate to retweet,” adding, “I know that Zack and his other colleagues in the London Assembly do work closely with the Met Police, so there will be discussions afterwards to see what went wrong and how this can be better handled in future”.

On Friday, Polanski officially apologised for “sharing a tweet in haste,” adding that “Everyone in leadership has a responsibility for lowering the temperature at a time of such tension.”



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