



Monday 28 July 2025

Letter to the Church Times

Dear Sirs,

We were glad to see last week's letters calling out the flaws in Dr Angela Tilby's column on the recent government-backed report *"on the rise of anti-Semitism"* [sic.]. We note that she is disturbed that *"many of [her] Christian friends have chosen to adopt an uncritical pro-Palestinian stance, seemingly heedless of the fact that Palestine Action has recently been proscribed as a terrorist group."* However, Dr Tilby would do well to reflect on her own uncritical acceptance of the government's move to proscribe Palestine Action. As that group's lawyers (Bindmans) have recently written, the move *"is not in defence of national security. It is a grave descent into authoritarianism... it is about criminalising a non-violent protest movement that dares to challenge British complicity in war crimes. This is how democracies die. Not in a single moment, but in incremental authoritarian steps justified by security rhetoric."*

Furthermore, to charge, as Dr Tilby does, that *"Palestine Action and its supporters are infected by a hatred of Jews"* is not only baseless, but deeply patronising, suggesting as it does that those standing up to our own government's toothless response to genocide are too stupid to differentiate between – on the one hand – the far-right lunatics who currently govern Israel, and – on the other hand – wider Jewish life and identity. That muddle has never been the territory of the Palestine solidarity movement. But it is – ironically and dangerously – precisely the territory of those who seek to discredit and silence that movement as *"anti-Semitic"* [sic.]. Indeed, Dr Tilby should be careful when recounting that *"what united all of [the Jews]"* that she worked with at the BBC was *"their loyalty to Israel."* This is a flagrant voicing of the antisemitic dual-loyalty trope which exacerbates the very problem that she is concerned about.

Confess is a new initiative for Christians to demand, precisely in partnership with other Jewish and Muslim human rights groups, an end to all violations of international law in the lands that saw the birth of the Abrahamic faiths. We invite Dr Tilby – and indeed the entire Church of England at every level – to condemn the current genocide taking place in Gaza, and the violence (including against Christians) in the occupied West Bank. We also invite her to take a less naïve approach to the actions of the British government in its current erosion of civil liberties, not to mention its shameful support for – and limp statements against – the genocidal Israeli regime.

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