How can we start a conversation with other Jews who have become convinced of the dangers they face from Jews like us – the “wrong sort” of Jews?

So in thinking about this question I am aware that every Jewish person in this meeting has at least a few stories to tell about relatives, friends or comrades they have fallen out with because of our stance on Israel/Palestine. And those who aren’t Jewish will have plenty of examples of being ousted too.

I always feel there’s a faultline in this debate and it’s 1967. It seems acceptable to take issue with Israel’s human rights abuses and aggressive takeover of occupied territory. We can even speak relatively unscathed about the apartheid judgement. But if we then talk about the racism endemic in the creation of Israel then we’re beyond the pale, and we – or I at any rate – meet shocked faces and ‘what about the holocaust’?

Maybe we can never have a dialogue with other Jews until 1948 is understood, acknowledged, talked about - attoned for even. And until ‘right of return’, and each people’s understanding of it, is grappled with. In my own development, it wasn’t until I was taught about 1948 that I started to think in a different way about my history.

Tony I like your concept of the ‘hot mess’ we are in – I know this isn’t your own term but it’s a good one.

Jews who have lived in this country for generations, as well as those who came in as refugees from Nazi Europe just hear ‘antisemitism’ and are understandably terrified. We know they have been manipulated, but perhaps we need to engage with their fears by placing the emphasis on the threat of faschism. We need to be clear and proud that we are a diasporic people and cannot fight racism alone. So for example we can show solidarity with refugees and remind anti-immigration Jews that we too have had to up sticks and leave our homes and countries and have not immediately known how to fit in.

I know that JVL works very hard to make alliances with other groups, both Jewish and non-Jewish. We work for a world in which Jews are not exceptionalised. We work to demonstrate that antisemitism is just one kind of racism, and point out that it is not the most prevalent. But other Jewish groups are suspicious of us. Some of them think we don’t take antisemitism seriously enough. I have never seen evidence of this among my colleagues and it’s a disappointment that working with others seems hard to make a reality.

So we can be clear that we value our Jewish identity, joining with other Jews in marking traditions whenever we can. Eli Machover echoes your message in saying our task is to nurture ways of being Jewish beyond Zionism. The way I understand this is that celebrating our traditions brings us into contact with the ‘right sort of Jew’ and can be an important ground for opening up conversations and changing hearts and minds – even if we have to start in small ways.

It's important that we show that there have always been different communities within ‘the Jewish community’. When I was a teenager in South London, from a family of emigres, and mixed with young Jews from North West London in my Zionist youth movement, I looked upon them as a race apart. When we had gatherings with young people from Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow, they too were very different again. There are many ways we can open up dialogue about our differences as well as our similarities beyond what we think of Israel and Zionism.

Above all, as you say, we can show or persuade other Jews that Zionism is not a necessary part of their Jewish identity.