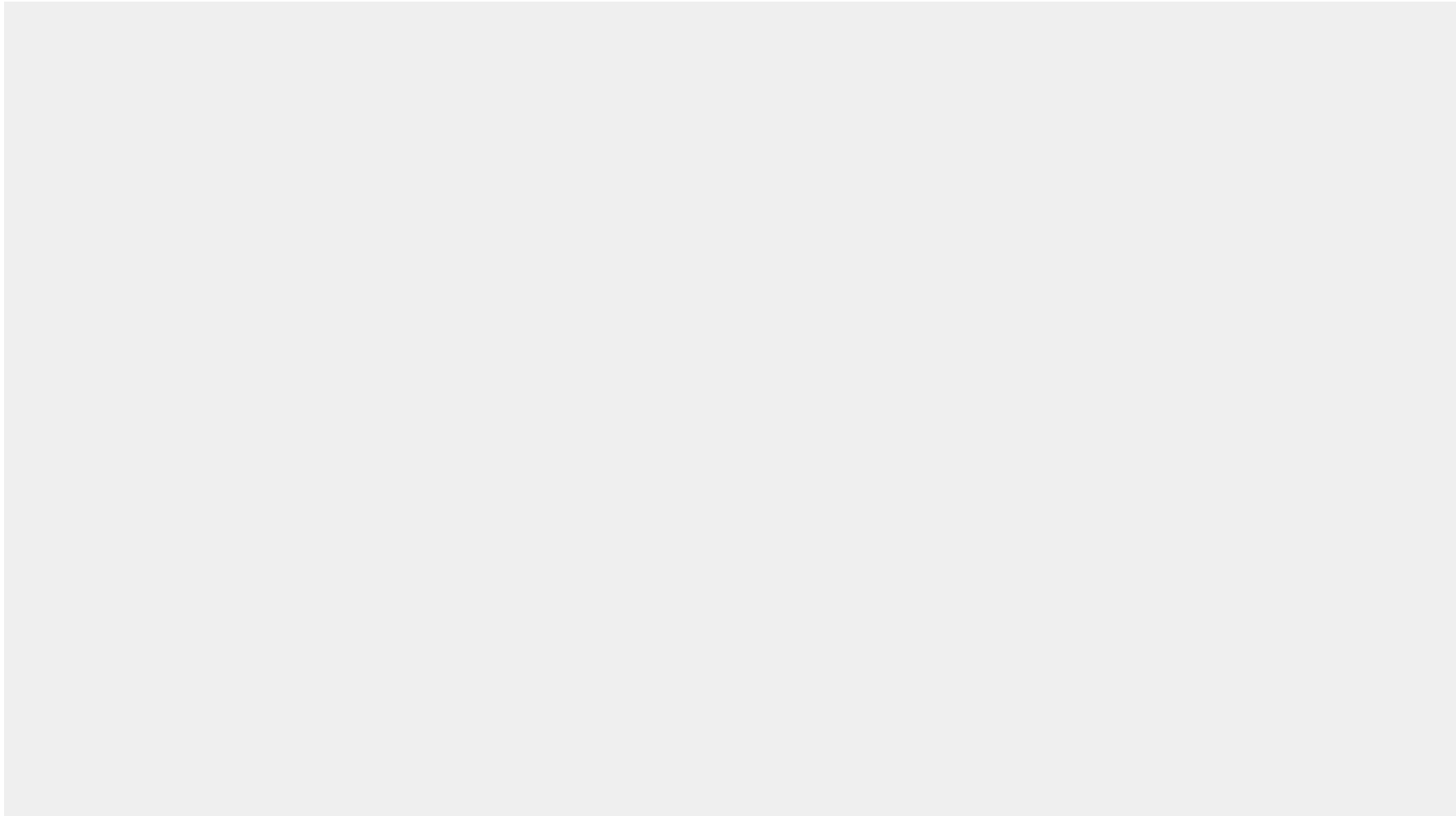


George Galloway to sue Momentum founder Jon Lansman in Israel spat

Lucy Fisher, Senior Political Correspondent

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George Galloway also accused David Baddiel, the comedian, of being a “vile Israel-fanatic”

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George Galloway announced yesterday that he would sue the founder of Momentum after he was accused of antisemitism.

The former leader of the Respect Party, 63, said that he had instructed solicitors to launch a defamation case against Jon Lansman, a newly elected member of Labour’s governing body.

Mr Lansman, 60, who is Jewish, waded into a row between Mr Galloway and the comedian and author David Baddiel, 53, who is also Jewish. On Twitter Mr Galloway called Baddiel a “vile Israel-fanatic”. He later wrote: “I was wrong to tweet that David Baddiel was an ‘Israel fanatic’, he is not and I have deleted it. I should have said that David Baddiel routinely slanders Israel critics like me as ‘antisemites’.”



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Mr Lansman tweeted his “solidarity” with Baddiel, adding on social media: “Since he’s a Jew who’s talked about being non-Zionist, there’s no possible reason to call him a “vile Israel-fanatic” other than antisemitism. There clearly should be no place for @georgegalloway in @UKLabour or in the employment of @talkRADIO.”

Mr Galloway said yesterday on Twitter: “I have never said an antisemitic word in my life. I have to the contrary fought fascism and antisemitism as adjudged by Justice Eady in the High Court. I will prove this again in my legal action against Jon Lansman, owner of Momentum, and will call @jeremycorbyn as my witness.”

In 2015 Mr Galloway declared that he had begun a legal action against Hadley Freeman, a journalist at *The Guardian*, after she said he had crossed “the line from anti-Israel to antisemitic”. She subsequently deleted the tweet.

The row erupted after the film director Ken Loach criticised Emily Thornberry, the shadow foreign secretary, for praising Israel. He was appearing on a panel alongside Labour Party members suspended over alleged antisemitism.

At the meeting of Labour Against the Witch-hunt, which defends the left wing of the party, on Monday in London, Loach, 81, said that “sadly, Emily Thornberry didn’t

distinguish herself” when she praised Israel last autumn as a beacon of freedom.

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