What any functional Opposition party would consider an opportunity – current Conservative Party behaviour – Labour treats as another abyss to hurl themselves into. They cannot help it; all narcissists are, at heart, suicide merchants longing to be exposed.

This is, we are told throughout conference in Brighton, a new Labour: organised, united, filled with generous policies – they have found dragon gold – repentant on anti-Semitism and ready to take the fight to the external, rather than the internal, enemy. None of this is true.

I read politics by detail, not spouted fantasies. At a small fringe meeting on the freighted subject of the abuse of women in public life – about 90% of attendees were female, of course, in this party of equality — delegates complained to Diane Abbott, one of the most abused woman in public life, that they suffered misogynist abuse in their party.

How could they hope to change the world, one asked, if they could not change themselves? Abbott allowed that internal party misogyny was “wrong” but said little else on it, before turning to external enemies, and their evils – as she does on radio, attacking Tories, refusing to see cruelty it is close to her. Then she left, and the room sank with disappointment; nothing would be done about the “Brocialists”.

I have seen this before, when Luciana Berger told her testimony about the anti-Semitic abuse she has suffered in parliament. Diane Abbott could not look at her, as if the sisterly feelings do not extend as far as Berger; do not extend beyond political allies. I wonder if Abbott is inured to it, except when it happens to her. That would be excusable in any other woman but an aspiring Home Secretary.

A far better attended event was “The Media War on Labour and How to Defeat It”, which throbbed with conspiracism. The best way to defeat it, of course, is to stop providing opportunity for them — Tony Blair managed to seduce the media to three election victories - but that would require self-reflection. So, they provide opportunity like a man punching himself in the face.

There was the attempted coup against the deputy leader Tom Watson. It was aborted but “Shun Tom Watson” leaflets were still circulated, and a rally planned during his speech. Both the speech and the rally were later cancelled. Everything was thwarted.

The resignation of Andrew Fisher, Corbyn’s close aide, citing “a lack of professionalism, competence and human decency” at the top of the party was another opportunity for the media to write lies – I mean truth – about Labour.  “I no longer have faith we can succeed,” he said.  They blame the media for reporting on splits. They do not look to the cause – that they do, actually, split.

The insanity of the vote on the “Back Remain Now” motion, in which the chair appeared to change her mind about Conference’s wishes after the General Secretary muttered her wishes in her ear was more opportunity. If it was machination, it was appallingly done. Enemies would say: you cannot even manage to be effectively corrupt.

And again, and always now, anti-Semitism.  Labour is raging on the accusations, which prod its essential benevolence, the belief on which it depends; but not on the reality, about which they are completely in denial. The reality is that delegates to Labour in Brighton all passed, as they walked into Conference, a cartoon of a warplane decorated with a Star of David bombing Jeremy Corbyn on his podium. You cannot govern without attention to detail. You cannot be moral without attention to detail either, whatever you tell yourself. The police removed it, after complaints from the Jewish community, but Corbyn, who lies to himself above all on these matters, claimed it was he who had it removed. He said so on his Twitter feed.

All week internal saboteurs – real, not imagined - fizzed around the edges, their psychological imperatives disguised, and not well, as political aims. They are conspiracists; they need to believe themselves oppressed by some great enemy because it explains all their failures in life. The Labour Representation Committee (LRC) established themselves in the Rialto theatre and spouted the usual conspiracy theories about Zionism and Blairites and Momentum. John McDonnell is still their president; that aside, he says he has nothing to do with them.

Labour was my party and I struggle, as I nod at their policies, and approve of them, to understand why I trust them so little under Corbyn. I think it is their monomania, their paranoia, their loathing of internal critics – a lack of compassion for the different – and sometimes, I wonder how much they actually respect parliamentary democracy: if you are certain you are right, you do not need it. It would enrage them to hear it, but they are as responsible for brutal political language as anyone; they have been calling Tories murderers for years. If you agree with them, they are kindest people in the world. If you don’t, they hate you, and hatred does not play well on the doorsteps in Hove.

You can argue whether a Socialist project in a country which is also a constitutional monarchy where the Queen has a 72% approval rating (Corbyn’s is 21%) and Downton Abbey, a film about servants longing to serve is No.1 at the box office, will ever be tenable, or is mere dreaming. Sometimes I find it very touching dreaming. At the reinstate Clause 4 rally in a church hall where they pondered a different anomaly – why can’t we share? – I actually wept bourgeois tears.

But this remains a party in denial about itself, and how others view it. Corbyn’s speech was followed by a mass singing of the hymn Jerusalem. Considering Labour’s relationship with the Anglo-Jewish community, it did not feel like a call to arms to the desperate beyond the Labour Party who need a functioning opposition. It felt, rather, like something maiming itself.