

## Politics and Resentment

# Jewish Identities in a Changing World

*General Editors*

Eliezer Ben-Rafael, Yosef Gorny,  
and Judit Bokser Liwerant

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# Politics and Resentment

*Antisemitism and Counter-Cosmopolitanism  
in the European Union*

*Edited by*

Lars Rensmann and Julius H. Schoeps



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THE LIBERAL TRADITION AND UNHOLY  
ALLIANCES OF THE PRESENT: ANTISEMITISM IN  
THE UNITED KINGDOM

Michael Whine

I. *Introduction*

Historically Britain has not been an arena for violent antisemitism, other than in early medieval times. The Crusades, the Inquisition and the Holocaust did not affect British Jews directly, and British political parties do not have the same tradition of antisemitism that those in continental Europe have. During the inter-War years Nazi and fascist ideologies never really took hold in Britain and Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists never came remotely near to gaining power, let alone having a member elected to Parliament. However, it is worth remembering that ritual murder and the blood libel originated in medieval Britain, and Jews were expelled for a period of several hundred years. After their re-admittance in 1656 Britain did not really discriminate against Jews, other than in the social sphere, until it sought to limit the influx of East European Jews fleeing the pogroms and poverty of Russia and Poland by passing the Aliens' Act in 1905, and although Jews were not admitted to Parliament until 1858, they were not denied their place in society after the political emancipation struggle of the Victorian era. This is not to say that the popular image of the Jew, particularly in literature, was not a negative one. It was, and our most enduring literary images of 'ugly' Jews come from Shakespeare, Marlowe, Dickens and T. S. Eliot. But at the same time you can also find positive images which almost counter-balance these, such as those in the works of Disraeli, Walter Scott and George Eliot (Julius 2000).

It is more that Britain tolerated its Jews, perhaps rather disdainfully, after their re-admittance. It is also interesting to note that a considerable portion of the descendants of the original Sephardim, and indeed of the German Jews that came to Britain in the early nineteenth century, intermarried to an unacknowledged and substantial extent with the British aristocracy, and even with the Royal Family.

Lord Mountbatten's wife Edwina, Princess Anne's husband, and the late Princess Margaret's husband were all descended from early Jewish immigrants. This suggests a degree of tolerance if not acceptance.

In the post War years there has been no barrier to Jews reaching the highest positions in government, the armed forces, business and the law. At one time recently, both the head of the criminal and civil jurisdictions of the law and the Attorney General were practicing Jews, as have been Army Generals. The current Foreign Secretary and his brother, the Energy Secretary, are both Jews, though from a secular background. The social and political antisemitism that characterized Britain up to the early twentieth century has increasingly dissipated. The antisemitism of the golf and tennis club, and the City, is no longer very present (Bolchover 2003).

The reasons for this lie in the reaction to the Holocaust, the birth of Israel and a more muscular and self-confident Judaism that came with the community's improving socio-economic position. The 2001 census released in February 2003 showed that 267,000 respondents identified themselves as Jews. We know that the strictly orthodox community declined to answer the question on religion, the first time such a question had been included in a national census, and adding their known size to an estimate of those who regard themselves as religiously unaffiliated gives a figure of between 300,000 and 350,000 Jews. The higher figure is the one suggested by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) who, with the Board of Deputies of British Jews' Community Research Unit, have been measuring and analyzing the community and its institutions for many years.

According to the JPR, the above average socio-economic status of British Jewry is a consequence of its highly educated membership with a high proportion of university graduates: 54% of working men and 50% of working women are in professional occupations compared with approximately 10% of men and 8% of women in the population as a whole. A further 25% of men and 16% of women in the age group 15–64 who are economically active are in managerial posts (Institute for Jewish Policy Research 2003). One unofficial estimate put the average income of a Jewish family as three times that of other British families. Despite this there are growing pockets of poverty, primarily within the strictly orthodox community.

The Jewish community maintains 2000 voluntary charitable and non-profit institutions, many founded in the Victorian and Edwardian eras, which provide the complete range of welfare, housing,

educational, cultural and recreational services. Again, according to the JPR, the Jewish voluntary sector has a turnover six times the expected size according to the Jewish proportion of the national population.

As far as affiliation is concerned, 55% of the Jewish population rate themselves extremely conscious of being Jewish or quite strongly Jewish. Support for Israel is a key component of Jewish identity in Britain. The JPR survey of social and political attitudes of British Jews carried out in 1995 showed 43% of respondents reporting a strong attachment to Israel, with 38% showing a moderate attachment. Only 3% had negative feelings towards Israel. The same survey also looked at the relationship between attachment to Israel and Jewish identity, and attachment to Britain. 54% of respondents felt equally British and Jewish, with 26% feeling more Jewish than British, and only 18% responding that they felt more British than Jewish. Nearly 70% of respondents reported they had close friends or family in Israel, and this attachment is manifest in visits to the country, with 78% stating that they had visited Israel at least once, with many making multiple visits. Even during the last eight difficult years British Jewry retained its close identification with Israel maintaining a high level of visits.

The British government has taken seriously its responsibilities for commemoration of the Holocaust. Teaching the Holocaust has been part of the national history curriculum for all school pupils for many years. Holocaust Memorial Day has become a national institution with strong government backing and funding, with a commitment to televise the main five-yearly commemorative service on BBC television. The work done by the government-owned and funded Holocaust Museum, the Anne Frank Trust and the privately-owned Beth Shalom in teaching history teachers and school children about the Holocaust are beginning to have a profound effect. The Holocaust Education Trust now takes teachers, high school students and police officers from around the country regularly to Auschwitz. A recent example of this caring concern was the presence of senior government figures at the unveiling of the statue commemorating the Kindertransport, at Liverpool Street station, a few years ago and the provision by the government of an extra £1.5 million to the Holocaust Education Trust to send two high school pupils from every school to Auschwitz, annually.

Important milestones in the beneficial processes which have removed anti-Jewish discrimination were the Race Relations Acts 1964 and 1976, and the legislation which has followed since. These not only forbade discrimination, but positively encouraged equal treatment

and opportunities for all. The legislation which followed the judicial inquiry into the killing of black teenager Steven Lawrence cemented and made more workable the previous legislation. This is not to say that there isn't racism in British society; there is, but the Jewish community has benefited, perhaps to a greater extent than any other, from these changes in legislation. And it was the Jewish community that, above all, fought for this legislation, and indeed in part, it owes its genesis to the research and lobbying done by the Board of Deputies of British Jews (BDBJ 2000).

Latterly the British government has formally and officially recognized the deterioration in the situation and the growth of a new anti-semitism, and its One year on Progress Report to the All-Party Inquiry into Antisemitism, conducted by the Parliamentary Committee Against Antisemitism, was a thorough response with practical outcomes. The government has now established an inter-departmental taskforce to progress the recommendations of the Inquiry, which will affect education in schools and universities, policing and prosecution policy (All-Party Inquiry into Antisemitism 2006). It also sponsored the inaugural London Conference on Combating Antisemitism attended by 120 parliamentarians from around the world, and the parallel Experts Forum attended by Jewish and other experts in February 2009. If all of this is the case what then has changed and why do we now talk about anti-semitism in Britain? Why are the newspapers and television screens full of pieces about antisemitism?

Perhaps the ICM poll published in the Jewish Chronicle in January 2004 provides some answers. In response to the question "do Jews make a positive contribution to political, social and cultural life in Britain?" 23% strongly agreed, 37% agreed and 44% said they didn't know. Only 20% disagreed, of which 11% strongly disagreed. In response to the question "do Jews have too much influence?" 31% strongly disagreed, 47% disagreed, and 35% didn't know. 18% agreed, of which 8% strongly agreed. In response to the question "would a British Jew make an equally acceptable Prime Minister as a member of any other faith?" 40% strongly agreed, 53% agreed, and 28% declared themselves neutral. Only 18% disagreed, of which 11% strongly disagreed. In response to the question "has the scale of the nazi Holocaust against the Jews during the Second World War been exaggerated?" 62% strongly disagreed, 70% disagreed, and 15% declared themselves neutral. Only 15% agreed, of which 10% strongly agreed. In other words, 81% believe that Jews make a positive contribution to Britain

or were neutral; only 18% believe Jews have too much influence; only 18% don't think that a Jew would be as acceptable as any other to be the Prime Minister; 15% believe the scale of the Holocaust has been exaggerated (JC/ICM Poll 2003).

The bias against Jews is strongest among working-class pensioners. Given that it is only the 65 year-olds and older who lived through the war this is surprising, but on the other hand it does tend to suggest that teaching the Holocaust to young people, now two and three generations removed from that era, and with a much more multi-national and diverse population, is having some beneficial effect (JC/ICM Poll 2003). Compared with other recent polls it suggests that the situation in Britain is better than in other European countries (PEW 2008), but that there is still a significant problem.

## II. *The New Antisemitism*

The problems now facing the community are those which previously did not exist. Firstly, the overspill of the Israel Palestine conflict. Secondly, the growth of the Muslim community and the parallel growth of militant Islamist ideology. Thirdly, the recent resurrection of the far left, and its reactions to globalization. This matrix has recently been conceptualized as "new anti-Semitism" (Taguieff 2004). Others see rather "modernized anti-Semitism" (Rensmann 2004) at work that utilizes new issues, such as the Middle East conflict, globalization and the cosmopolitanization of society, to articulate anti-Jewish resentment.

Again, with all of these influences the effect is more muted in Britain than elsewhere in Europe. The attitude of the Church, at least until recently, has also been important. Anglicanism provided fewer barriers than Catholicism or Orthodoxy to the advancement of Jews in society, and indeed contained a strong strain of Zionism in Victorian and Edwardian times. For the sake of accuracy it's also important to record that there was a strain of antisemitism within the upper echelons of British society, and indeed it played a part behind the Balfour Declaration. But the influence of the Church in Britain now is rapidly diminishing. At grassroots, and on the margins, particularly in Scotland and Wales where it still retains some measure of influence its attitudes to Israel have been swayed by the Palestinian Church, and by the Sabeel Palestinian liberation theology organization, although the Church of England rejects replacement theology.

One tangible result of this was the 2004 debate within the Church of England on divestment of commercial holdings in Israel or in companies trading with Israel, in particular Caterpillar, the American-owned manufacturers of bulldozers and heavy moving equipment. The Church General Synod voted in the end not to sell its holdings, but the Church of Scotland is currently considering its position, although in fact it holds no investments in Israel, other than in land and property.

How can we measure the current scale of antisemitism? In addition to the aforementioned attitudes and values, we can measure the physical manifestations of antisemitism, as incidents, and this the Community Security Trust (CST) has been doing since 1984. Finally, we can at least analyze and explain social, intellectual and political antisemitism, even if we cannot accurately quantify it.

### III. *Antisemitic Incidents*

The CST recorded a total of 541 incidents during 2008, a 4% fall from 2007 (561 incidents). Antisemitic incidents have risen steadily since the outbreak of the second Palestinian Intifada in October 2000, and the long term trend is of rising incident levels since 1997 (Community Security Trust 2008). The 88 violent incidents recorded in 2008 marked a 25% fall from the 2007 level (117 incidents), and in a fourth successive year violent incidents against Jews outnumbered incidents against property, of which there were 74 in 2008, 65 in 2007 and 70 in 2006. The one incident of extreme violence in 2008 occurred when a Jewish man in Manchester was stabbed to death. His assailant had delusions that Jewish people were persecuting him, and he has since been detailed indefinitely in a psychiatric hospital. Synagogue and cemetery desecrations rose in 2008 from 65 incidents in 2007 to 74 incidents, an increase of 14%.

The category of abusive behavior includes all types of antisemitic abuse including verbal and written, and the 314 reported to the CST in 2008 was a fall on the previous year's figure of 336. However, the figures for the two years together were the highest total recorded in this category since the CST began recording antisemitic incidents, and encompasses the full range of low level, often spontaneous abuse, that is an indicator of antisemitism in society.



Antisemitic threats and the mass distribution of antisemitic literature both declined in 2007. Threats include only clear, verbal or written threats. The CST recorded 28 incidents in 2008, a small increase on the 2007 total of 24 incidents. In 2008 there were 37 literature incidents, compared with 19 in 2007. This category, however, gives no indication of the extent of distribution, as mass mailings are counted as a single incident. Antisemitic incidents levels usually follow a baseline which rises and falls in response to trigger events. In 2006, Israel's incursion into Lebanon saw the largest such 'spike' recorded when 134 incidents were recorded in the UK during the 34 days of fighting. There were none in 2006, but in 2005 two events acted as triggers. Media pictures in January of Prince Harry, third in succession to the Throne, dressed in Nazi uniform at a fancy dress party; accusations by then London Mayor Ken Livingstone that a Jewish journalist was acting "like a concentration camp guard" (cf. Hirsh 2007). Media reporting of both cases led to a spike of 60 incidents in January, which suggests that negative press coverage of Jews provides a reminder for antisemites to engage in anti-Jewish activity. At the beginning of 2009, the often violent reactions to Israel's campaign to put a stop to rocket attacks from Gaza led to 260 incidents being recorded in the four weeks of January, the highest monthly total ever recorded.

#### IV. *The Measurement of Antisemitic Incidents*

Over the years the CST has encouraged members of the community to report incidents. The CST also has universal press coverage, which means they see every article and every letter about antisemitism. They liaise with the police in London and around the country and by being appointed 'third party reporters' they are able to report antisemitic incidents on behalf of victims to the police, and investigate either on their own or with police investigators.

Indeed the CST has become the model which the police like to promote to other communities. At the end of 2003, the Metropolitan Police Service launched a CST-designed leaflet on how to report antisemitic incidents. It was distributed via synagogues, Jewish schools and given to all Jewish students and it was launched at a Chanukah party held at Scotland Yard, where the Police Commissioner lit the first candle of the Chanukiah. In 2007, the police sponsored the Police Officers Guide to Judaism and in 2008 the Aegis Trust sponsored The

Holocaust: A Guide for Police Personnel, both published by the CST. CST statistics are accepted by police and government as accurate and have been quoted by government ministers in response to questions in parliament. Since April 2008 all police forces have been required to record racist incidents and crimes in a manner that will allow them to be disaggregated by major faith group, and it will therefore be possible for them to publish official national statistics. To avoid potential divergences, the CST has been invited to compare its figures with theirs on a regular basis.

The CST began recording antisemitic incidents in 1984, but in 1990 it changed its classifications to bring them into line with the then current discussions among some Jewish organizations on how to record incidents, and also in line with the way in which police define crimes. In other words, CST categories fit more or less within judicial definitions. This was important if the community wishes to promote its concerns, and educate and influence law enforcement and government.

Three broad trends emerge from analysis of these statistics. Over the twelve-year period from 1990 to 2001 the CST recorded an average of 282 antisemitic incidents per year. The monthly averages showed little substantial variability. Prior to this period, the six-year period from 1984–1989, showed an average of 173 incidents per year. More tellingly, if we divide that twelve-year period, roughly the decade of the 1990s, into quarters and compare it with the previous period, roughly the 1980s, we find that the average number of incidents rose from 173, to 269 in the 1990 to 1992 period, to 301 incidents between 1993 and 1995, falling to 228 incidents from 1996 to 1998. However, during the final quarter, from 1999 to 2001 the average rose to 328 (Community Security Trust 2008).

Something happened in the year 2000 which led to this jump, and if we remove the influence of this year the average rose only to 290 incidents per year. The broad trend therefore is clear. Incidents rose during the early 1990s, and fell back during the mid 1990s, and rose again. Also, the implication is that there is a constant background of low-level, antisemitic activity against which we live our lives (Whine 2003).

V. *What Caused the Increase in the Early 1990s?*

The 1990 desecration of the Jewish cemetery in Carpentras in southern France led to a spate of cemetery desecrations throughout Europe. Parallel to this was the rise of a more neo-Nazi-like far right political extreme in Britain, with the British National Party and Combat 18 replacing the National Front, which by then had embarked on an organizational decline. At the same time Islamist organizations, initially encouraged by the campaign against Salman Rushdie, began their activity in the early 1990s, and rapidly adopted the antisemitic core of their ideological influences.

The fall in the number of incidents during the mid-1990s came about after the police began to prosecute far right activists who had been involved in publishing and distributing antisemitic literature. The calming influences of the Madrid and Oslo peace conferences also played a part in reducing the activities of Islamist and pro-Palestine groups.

A second broad trend that emerges from analysis of the statistics is the decline in targeted antisemitic literature, which was a feature of far right activity during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Prosecution or threat of prosecution, made easier by the amendments to the criminal code after 1994 have continued to lead to a reduction in far right anti-Jewish activity. Again the Jewish community, and in particular the Board of Deputies of British Jews, played a prominent part in campaigning for the introduction of new and more effective legislation. This campaign involved some acrimonious meetings with government ministers, and even led to public criticism of the Attorney General by the then Commissioner of Police who believed that the failure to prosecute incitement gave encouragement to antisemitic and other extreme propagandists.

A third broad trend suggests that antisemitic violence rises and falls following tension in the Middle East. When the media report on Israel and the Palestinians, for example, during the Iraq war, we know that incidents will rise. Fortunately, the police now recognize this 'spillover effect' and regard Middle East tension as a trigger point, which means that they can take, and have taken, pre-emptive action such as throwing a security umbrella over the community.

This is not to say that all violence comes from Arabs and Muslims; it doesn't, although an increasing amount does. What it does show is that media reporting of tension in the Middle East acts as an 'igniter.'

Such evidence as exists suggests that the violence is perpetrated by a range, which includes Islamists, sympathizers of the Palestinian cause, neo-Nazis and just thugs on the street—a proportion of whom appear to be Muslim.

The implications are important. Abusive behavior constitutes the largest proportion of antisemitic activity. This more than any other category mirrors the general feelings of those who hate Jews, coming as it does from face-to-face encounters and spontaneous acts. More than any other trend it reflects the cumulative effects of biased and/or inaccurate media reporting on the Middle East, or the promotion of hatred against the Jews that comes from Iran and the Arab world and from radical Islamist groups.

These findings were also confirmed by research carried out between 2001 and 2004 by a group of researchers led by Paul Iganski, a criminology lecturer at the University of Lancaster, but then a Fellow at the JPR. With the assistance of two senior criminologists at the Metropolitan Police Service, he analyzed crime records in London, and this was the first time that outsiders had been allowed to do so. Their findings were published jointly by the Police and JPR in early 2005 (Iganski, Kielinger and Paterson 2005).

In April 2004, the House of Commons had debated the rise in antisemitic incidents, and the growth of antisemitism in Britain. At the same time the European Union Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia published its report which noted that antisemitic incidents in Britain were among the highest in Europe. Responding to the debate on behalf of the government, the then Home Office Minister, Fiona Mactaggart reported that “together with the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, the Metropolitan Police is conducting research into such findings to get a more accurate feel for their nature, and to develop a more effective response to them.” The aim of the project was to better understand the nature and social context of incidents in terms of the characteristics and the possible motivations of offenders, the circumstances in which antisemitic incidents occur, the events that precipitate incidents, and the consequences and the management of incidents by victims, offenders, and the police.

The project researchers found also that antisemitic incidents rise following international political tension, and especially conflict in the Middle East and flare-ups in the Israel/Palestine conflict. In important respects the researchers agreed with the findings of the CST but their research went further than the CST was able to conduct at that point.

They found that most antisemitic incidents occur either at identifiable Jewish locations (such as synagogues and schools) or in public locations where the victims are identifiably Jewish. They found that incidents taking place at Jewish locations are directed more frequently at individuals rather than at property, synagogues or Jewish organizations. Incidents involving threats and harassment, criminal damage, malicious communications, and violence accounted for most of the incidents reported to them. However, they found that many incidents appear to be opportunistic and indirect in nature. Just under one in ten of a sub-sample of incidents involved direct contact with and explicit targeting of an individual by the perpetrator where there was some evidence of a political or antisemitic belief or 'mission' that appears to have driven the incident. However while a number of the incidents were clearly politically motivated, the majority of incidents reported to the police (in one particular period, between April and May 2002) did not appear to be carried out by perpetrators who were active in organized or extremist groups. Additionally they found that male victims experienced proportionally more incidents involving violence and fewer incidents involving malicious communications and female victims. They found the age range of victims to be fairly evenly distributed across the age groups, whereas the age range of suspects or perpetrators was skewed towards younger age groups, and that almost two thirds of incidents were carried out by male suspects against male victims.

Disappointingly, in over one third of incidents no suspect was identified or recorded on the police crime report. Less than one in ten incidents resulted in a suspect being charged, cautioned or having other proceedings taken against them. Of the persons accused of committing antisemitic incidents (suspects who were charged, cautioned, or had other proceedings taken against them), the largest proportion fell within the 41–60 age range. This suggested failings on the part of the police, which they subsequently accepted. Surprisingly in just over three fifths of the incidents in which there was an 'accused,' the offender was a neighbor or business associate. This problem will be addressed in due course by planned improvements in training for police and prosecutors. Also surprisingly the evidence of anti-Israel sentiment in the discourse of perpetrators accounted for approximately only one in five incidents in a sub-sample of the peak months (April and May 2002) selected for an in-depth analysis (Iganski, Kielinger and Paterson 2005).

A second consequence of the report by the All Party Parliamentary Inquiry was the year-long investigation carried out by the Crown Prosecution Service which reported in 2008. This too found that identification of suspects in antisemitic attacks was a problem and that 69% of recorded crimes did not progress for this reason. However, 81% of those cases which did go forward resulted in a conviction (The Crown Prosecution Service 2006).

#### VI. *Contemporary Antisemitism*

Measuring antisemitic incidents and prosecuting antisemitic criminality requires an integrated infrastructure which brings together trained prosecutors and responsible criminal justice agencies. Combating 'intellectual' antisemitism, on the other hand, is an entirely different matter. Contemporary antisemitism is coming from new directions. It is not primarily the religious, racial or economic antisemitism of the past. Now we face a more insidious problem, and as the evidence suggests, a part of it is the consequence of the spill-over of the Israel Palestinian conflict, part of it is the growth in Islamism, and a part is the influence of the far left.

The Israel Palestine conflict is reshaping Britain's attitudes to anti-Zionism and antisemitism, and our concern is not so much about any valid criticism of Israel's actions but the form that criticism of Israel takes (on the controversy about the distinction cf. Klug 2004; Hirsh 2007). The demonization of Israel and the increasing use of antisemitic imagery in anti-Zionist discourse have grown as a consequence of its promotion by Arab states, Palestinian bodies, and Islamists. The identification of Israel with the United States also provides a new vehicle for antisemitism. In a perceptive article Ian Buruma noted that European political discourse accepts not only anti-Zionism but also a belief in the power of Jewish influence in the USA (Buruma 2003). The outburst by Tam Dalyell MP, the longest serving Member of Parliament of the House of Commons three years ago that British foreign policy-making was influenced by a "Jewish cabal" surrounding President Bush drew widespread public criticism. But he was not forced to resign as commentators suggested he would have done in the United States (Brown & Hastings 2003).

Media criticism of Israel at times descends into outright antisemitism. Comments by a few noted journalists, such as Richard Ingrams,

founding editor of the satirical weekly *Private Eye* and a regular writer in the *Observer Sunday* newspaper, Brian Sewell and A N Wilson, the *Evening Standard's* correspondents, and the late leftist Paul Foot, have given rise to anger in the Jewish community. But mainstream media criticism of Israel rarely descends into outright antisemitism. Overall, media tends to be pro-Jewish and whilst its Israel coverage, particularly in the electronic media, has been objectionable on occasion, and the Iraq war allowed some commentators to suggest it was a Zionist/U.S. conspiracy, the situation overall is reasonably balanced. This is measurable by analysis of editorial comment, rather than the writings of regular or occasional correspondents.

The BBC and three mainstream journals, *The Independent*, the *Guardian* and the *New Statesman* however stand out in this respect. The antisemitic allusion in the *New Statesman's* front cover in 2003 were, I suggest, an aberration, just as were *The Independent's* use of Dave Brown's series of cartoons with antisemitic overtones. Brown's cartoons are generally sarcastic and hard-hitting on all the issues he covers, but particularly when he dealt with Sharon.

The *Guardian's* views reflect those of the left in Britain generally. Its anti-Zionism does occasionally lapse into antisemitic conspiracy motifs and it is blatant in its opposition to Israeli governments. This is especially evident in its web-based discussion forum (Shindler 2001). But it even goes beyond this political one-sidedness when, for example, it continues to give space to an Islamist journalist who not only wrote that Israel has no right to exist but whose involvement in anti-Jewish organizations was neither noted nor explained, even when it was pointed out to them.

Jewish readers of these journals cannot but help but feel that there is a double standard operating with regard to Israel. What poses as anti-Israel comment can be seen by the Jewish community as antisemitism. Dave Brown may have denied that his *Independent* cartoon of Sharon devouring a Palestinian baby was a pastiche of Goya's Saturn devouring his own child, but Jews saw it as a blood libel. The *New Statesman's* front cover of a Magen David piercing the Union Jack beneath the headline "A Kosher Conspiracy?" was a virtual crash-course in antisemitic iconography, as Jonathan Freedland observes. (Freedland 2003) The obvious similarity between Nazi era cartoons and those of the contemporary Arab and radical Left media are graphically shown in Joel Kotek's book on *Cartoons and Extremism*, which was updated, translated from its original French and republished in English in December 2008 (Kotek 2009).

The BBC has certainly been guilty of blaming Israel to an unreasonable extent for the Middle East impasse and in giving airtime to commentators who are so anti-Israel that they either do not recognize Israel's right to exist or distort the truth. They thereby lay themselves open to accusations of failing in their duty as a public broadcaster. Only severe criticism, and Israel's temporary withdrawal of co-operation with the BBC, led them to re-examine the criticism and begin to redress their failings by appointing Malcolm Balen, a senior editor, to review the Israel/Palestine coverage, the appointment of Jeremy Bowen as Middle East editor, and finally the appointment of an outside commission to review overall BBC policy towards Israel and Palestine.

These issues and the symbiotic relationship between antisemitic incidents and deteriorating discourse were discussed in the first CST annual report on discourse. The analysis showed that anti Zionism and anti Israel propaganda increasingly draws on traditional antisemitic tropes and iconography (Community Security Trust 2007).

## VII. *Islamist Extremism*

The British Muslim community is primarily of Indian sub-continent origin, rather than Arab. It is less directly involved in the Middle East perhaps than might be the case if it were of Arab or North African origin. But Britain has become a focus and safe haven for Islamists. Islamist religious influences and reaction to society racism have pushed growing numbers of young Muslim men towards Islamist ideologies. The Muslim Brotherhood and its ideological Asian parallel, the Jamaat e Islami, exert increasing influences on the British Muslim community, most especially among the young. Smaller groups are equally active such as Tablighi Jamaat, a worldwide revivalist group, and the Salafi sub terrorist groups such as Hizb ut Tahrir and the Al Muhajiroun successor groups. Saudi Wahabi influence is perhaps not as important in the UK as elsewhere, and one even finds some echoes of Saudi antipathy in the Muslim community, but Britain has become a center for Islamist activity which has had its overspill elsewhere.

A poll of Muslim community views conducted by Populus in December 2005, but only published in *The Times* and *Jewish Chronicle* newspapers in February 2006, showed that 37% of the 500 Muslim adults surveyed, viewed Anglo-Jewry as a "legitimate target as part of the



struggle for justice in the Middle East.” 53% believe that British Jews exerted too much influence over foreign policy; 46% believed Jews are in league with the Freemasons to control the media and politics. In contrast, 52% backed Israel’s right to exist. Overall the poll indicated that the Muslim community is less extreme in its consideration of Jews than are the most well known Muslim community groups and leaders (Riddell 2006). Significantly, small numbers of Muslim leaders and community groups began to approach the Jewish community during 2005 with requests to visit Israel, Auschwitz and to campaign against antisemitism within their own communities. These are initiatives that the Jewish community is keen to encourage, and it therefore has responded appropriately. The far left has always been anti-Zionist, most within it are now increasingly influenced by Islamist anti-Israel positions. It is their anti-Zionism with its occasional portrayal of a worldwide ‘Zionist’ conspiracy that is a direct denial of Jewish self-definition, and indeed of Jewish history and aspirations. Inevitably this spills over into outright antisemitism.

Anti-globalism and the rallies and meetings against the Iraq war have prompted the alliance between the far left and Islamists, particularly the Muslim Association of Britain, Cordoba Foundation and other groups which promote the Muslim Brotherhood in Britain. The Respect Party, founded by George Galloway MP, which split into two antagonistic factions in 2007, was one outcome of such alliances. A second were the demonstrations jointly organized by far left and Islamist groups in January 2009. The apparent contradictions of socialists and Islamists forming political coalitions are brushed aside or at least overcome in their desire to create a broad front against Israel, the Iraq war and globalization. It is at their events and in their literature that one sees this confluence most starkly. The danger of using banners that equate Zionism with nazism is that you end up for example with elements of the far left Socialist Labour Party hailing Asif Mohammed Hanif, the British Muslim who carried out the suicide bombing in Tel Aviv, as a hero of the revolutionary youth who carried out his bombing in the spirit of internationalism. It also led British delegates and the Che Leila Youth Brigade, a tiny radical left wing student group, named after Che Guevara and Leila Khaled, to hold a meeting with Palestinian Islamic Jihad. It allows far left politicians to sit down with antisemitic fascists like Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and the Frenchman Serge Thion, or officials of the Front Nationale of France and the Vlaams Blok—just as George Galloway and other British delegates did

at international meetings against the war in Iraq, or as Galloway has since done with Hezbollah.

I have referred to the attitude of the Church above and there are two additional points to be made here. Firstly that Britain does not suffer the guilt that continental European countries do over the Holocaust. One can criticize Britain for not allowing more Jews into Britain, or indeed to Mandate Palestine, for interning them during the early War years when it was obvious that they had talents that could, and should, have been used quicker in the anti-Nazi struggle; that Britain could have bombed the railway lines to Auschwitz, but generally Britain does not regard itself as requiring rehabilitation like other European countries. The Church in Britain never compromised itself with Nazism or fascism, and took an early lead in opposing both, and their home-grown British variants.

The second is that the Church now is subject to different pressures, particularly from Palestinian Anglicans who have made a particular point of lecturing in Britain. This has led to growing grassroots support for the Palestinian cause within the Anglican Communion, and which is reflected in the Church press, which is universally condemnatory about Israel. Even antisemitism and the Holocaust are nearly always seen through the perspective of Palestinian suffering. Conversely, some Anglicans, and Catholics with an interest in the church in Africa and Asia, and particularly the evangelicals, are moving against this trend as they see the effects that militant Islam is having on their religious brethren in those continents. The Christian aid agencies and those agencies which draw their support from Christians however do provide a focus for increasing and unsupportable criticism of Israel and Zionism. Again the reaction to globalization in Britain has been less violent and less antisemitic than elsewhere. Marches by anti-globalization protestors, and the literature they have publicized have not openly blamed the spread of global capitalism on Jews or Zionists, as one sees elsewhere. But in the academic world although the early promoters of the boycott of Israel were British, and indeed Jewish, the boycott of Israeli goods and of Israeli academia has not caught on and has been widely criticized.

In April 2005, members of the Association of University Teachers (AUT) voted to boycott Bar Ilan and Haifa Universities but the decisions were subsequently reversed at an emergency meeting in May when the union voted to give practical support to Palestinian and Israeli trade unionists, and committed itself to a full review of its international

policy. However in May 2006, the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) passed a conference resolution which called for the boycott of Israeli academics who did not publicly declare the opposition to Israeli government policy. In June, NATFHE merged with the AUT to form the University and Colleges Union (UCU), and members of the executive subsequently voted to institute the boycott yet again, in defiance of government criticism. This was challenged by lawyers acting for a group of members who threatened legal action if it was carried out, on the grounds that their decision was *ultra vires* the constitution, and the union backed down. Doubtless proponents of an academic boycott of Israel will continue to seek ways of influencing opinion within the universities but they will do so in the face of strong government, academic, and Jewish community opposition. Demonstrations by boycotters outside what are perceived to be Jewish-owned retail stores, although continuing, have been small and organized completely by far left groups and pro-Palestinian activists. Reaction to the campaign to boycott Israeli academics was strong and fairly rapid. Oxford University suspended a don (Andrew Wilkie), who had rejected a student because of his Israeli citizenship and because of his country's "gross human rights violations against Palestinians" for two months (Ward 2003). Yet, some media have shown clear bias against Israel: For instance, the BBC failed to act on what were perceived to be Tom Paulin's antisemitic and anti-Israel comments.

Attempts by Islamist extremists to attack Jewish students have generally been dealt with by university authorities, and indeed the umbrella body for British universities issued guidance to all university and college heads some years ago on how to combat this problem. Likewise, the National Union of Teachers and the National Union of Students have both, during the past four years, issued strong condemnation of antisemitism and anti-Zionism, and guidelines on the suppression of it. That is not to say that there have not been some moves to demonize Israel, to isolate Israeli academics and to ban pro-Israel activity on universities, particularly at under-graduate student level, but generally they have not been successful. The places where they have been is where there is no Jewish student presence or where Arab and Islamist students constitute an active majority, such as at the School of Oriental and African Studies.

So, in summary, there is a continuing threat. Tension in the Middle East, most particularly between Israel and the Palestinians, provides a

trigger for dramatic increases in anti-Jewish violence. Islamist antisemitic influences have had a malign effect on some within the Muslim community and have provided a pool for Islamist recruitment and violent jihadi activity. The far left is once again on the ascendant and elements within it seek alliances with Islamist radicals.

Various media, however, are supportive of, and even in some cases enthusiastic about, Jews, particularly in 2006 which marked the 350th anniversary of the re-establishment of the Jewish community in Britain. This was commemorated by a series of communal and public events which started with a religious service at the 300-year old Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Bevis Marks Synagogue in the City of London, and the only synagogue in Europe which has had uninterrupted Jewish worship for 300 years (for a critical account of British media see Hirsh 2007).

### VIII. *Conclusion*

Jews are now jostling for government's attention along with other and more assertive religious and ethnic minorities such as the Muslim, Hindu and Sikh communities. The government recognizes the potential power of the Muslim community and it is obvious that it will go a long way to meet its concerns and demands. If the Muslim community's agenda is unduly influenced by anti-Israel and anti-Western interests, then a difficult scenario will present itself in due course. This is not to suggest that the government, any government, will accede to unreasonable demands, but it could act, possibly even unwittingly, against what are perceived to be the Jewish community's interests. Electoral strength will inevitably encourage government to consider these demands. That is part of the democratic process. Nevertheless, there is a growing apprehension within the Jewish community.

Together, the Jews, the Hindus and Sikhs almost equal the Muslims in numbers, and although it would be an exaggeration to say that the situation is a competitive one, there are significant common concerns that we share. As a consequence, we have reached out to each other over the years and now co-operate in a limited way on strategic and security issues. We have also established cultural and social groups. This is not to say that we ignore the Muslims; we don't. Again, we have encouraged local joint initiatives and, at a national level, we meet the Muslim groups. We did, however, break contact with the Muslim

Council of Britain, with whom we met regularly if infrequently, as it became increasingly influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood's anti Israel and antisemitic ideologies. There are issues on which the Jewish and Muslim communities could and should jointly campaign and where there is a measure of accord. At the same time, we have reached out to other emerging Muslim groups who represent more moderate views. Among them are the growing numbers of Safis who seek political representation and who resent Islamist and Arab influences.

A second long-term threat is that of terrorism. Threats by al-Qaeda to attack Jewish communities have been carried out. Djerba, Casablanca and Istanbul all followed the strategy of attacking Jewish communities because they support Israel. The British authorities imprisoned a terrorist group which planned attacks against shopping centers but had also begun to target Jewish institutions. These are indirect attacks on Israel because they cannot reach Israel itself, and because antisemitism is a vital component in the Global Jihad Movement's ideology. Britain has provided a base for Islamist terrorism, and a safe haven for command and control, and banking, although the authorities are now working to stop this. The arrests from the end of 2002 to the present of North African Salafist and Asian network members revealed that they were planning terrorist attacks in Britain. As a consequence, the Jewish community now incorporates security as part of its everyday existence and the CST operates throughout the community from the secular to the strictly orthodox providing advice and training to members of synagogues, to schools and to other Jewish institutions. In this we are encouraged and assisted by the police and government who recognize that the Jewish community faces a threat, and that it is in our own joint best interests to have a high level of security.

Aside from Islamist terrorism, we also face the threat of Islamist antisemitism. In a sense it is immaterial how deeply engrained it is in Islam. We confront it now and the criminal justice agencies until recently treated it rather diffidently, seeing it initially as an expression of Muslim views against Israel rather than as criminal incitement. Now the climate is changing and four prosecutions in the past two years have served a warning to others. Despite referrals we have not yet had criminal prosecutions of Arab antisemitism published in mainstream Arab journals as in, for example, the Arab press which may be published in the Middle East but which is on sale in Britain. But we have overcome the reluctance to prosecute incitement on the Internet, as in the Sheppard and Whittle case in 2008, when two active anti-Jewish

and racist agitators were convicted of incitement, and the heretical.com website closed down. However, it is still possible to buy the Protocols in Muslim bookshops and there is evidence to suggest that anti-semitism is preached in some mosques and madrassas. But notice has been served to those who think they can get away in Britain with what may be permissible in the Arab world.

The third problem is ignorance. While changes in the law provide a high measure of protection against antisemitism and the education system teaches children about the evils of racism and its ultimate manifestation in the Holocaust, we, nevertheless, face a new generation that perceives Israel to be an oppressive and militaristic state. To some it is the new South Africa.

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