Introduction*

The increase in the number of antisemitic incidents and the generally hostile atmosphere at the beginning of the twenty-first century led British Chief Rabbi Sir Dr. Jonathan Sacks to warn of a "tsunami of antisemitism" engulfing the world, as the result of a globalization of anti-Jewish hatred that had been ignored and that caused Jews in Britain to feel "discomfort" as well as a diminished sense of security.[1] Not all British Jews agreed with this assessment, but the prominence of Jews and Israel in the media at a time of obsessive preoccupation with terrorism and the Middle East indicates the sensitivity and ubiquity of the topic. [2]

While the advent of multiculturalism made racism to a large extent taboo, Jews have been targeted as "Other" in traditional antisemitic archetypes, not just on the right, but also on the left. In particular, the so-called "New Antisemitism" during the Second Intifada and the Iraq War targeted Israel as an ally of America and part of a Jewish or "kosher" conspiracy. Globalization may in fact have made Jews more vulnerable, because a large ethnic group such as the Jews with international political and business networks is perceived as controlling the economy or the global order and suspected of particularism and essentialism, as well as other sins in the multicultural agenda, but also scapegoated for economic crises and unpopular wars.[3] At the same time, radical Islam has demanded new political allegiances, which have posed a challenge to the West that is unparalleled since Muslims ruled the Iberian Peninsula, North Africa, and the Balkans. In the resulting fragmentation and sectarianism, antisemitism has begun to creep back, often under the guise of legitimate debate or criticism of Israel.

---

* This paper is part of a larger project on the representation of the "Jew" coauthored with Linda Weinhouse.

The study was funded by the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and the Israel Science Foundation.

[1] Interview on BBC Radio 4, 1 Jan. 2006; news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4573052.stm

[2] A straw poll carried out at a public symposium organized by the Jewish Community Centre for London on "How Serious is Antisemitism in Britain?," Hampstead, London, 17 July 2006, suggested that almost all participants believed there was no basis for the Chief Rabbi's remarks.

[3] See Robert Wistrich, *Antisemitism and Multiculturalism: The Uneasy Connection* (Jerusalem: Vidal Sassoon Center for the Study of Antisemitism, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2007).

It has been said that the growth of antisemitism in Britain should not be exaggerated. What is the true state of affairs? As Michael Goldfarb, an American radio reporter living in London sees it, Jews may encounter no threats in the workplace,[4] nor any hostility in parks and children's playgrounds, where they may mingle with families of Muslims and other ethnic groups. Thus he concludes that the perception of menace is hypermediated in the press.[5] Henry Grunwald, President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, has attested to the thriving state of the Jewish community and stresses that discriminatory boycott campaigns have been successfully fought and defeated.[6] Yet, for several related reasons (including high rates of exogamy, the diminishing of viable communities in provincial towns, a perception of lessened security, and ideological or family reasons to move to Israel), Jews increasingly feel less at home in Britain. They also tend to be more polarized into religious enclaves in North London and Manchester. A very small but significantly increased number have chosen to migrate to Israel (a record 720 Jews immigrated from the UK in 2006, the highest figure since 1984, compared to 481 in 2005, despite an overall fall in immigration to Israel in this period).[7] For them, unlike for American Jews, there is a push to leave as well as a motivation that pulls them to Israel. On the other hand, there are large numbers of unaffiliated Jews, as well as a growing secular diasporic Jewish culture in North London and elsewhere that has developed alternative styles of community.

Part of the discomfort felt by Jews in Britain is explained by the assumption in the public mind that all Jews feel the same way about Israel. This, as *Guardian* columnist and novelist Linda Grant is at pains to point out, is far from being the case, whether we are talking about typically suburban middle-class Jews who send their sons or daughters to Israel to strengthen their Jewish identity or ultra-Orthodox rabbis in Stamford Hill;

---

[4] See Richard Bolchover, "The absence of antisemitism in the marketplace," in *A New Antisemitism?,* edited by Paul Iganski and Barry Alexander Kosmin (London: Profile Books, in association with the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, 2003), 267–74.
[5] Michael Goldfarb, "A Walk in a London Park (Or what your mother doesn't know about antisemitism in Britain)," *Moment Magazine* (Feb. 2007), accessed online.
[6] Henry Grunwald, "Jewish life in Britain is thriving," *Jerusalem Post*, 24 Feb. 2008, accessed online.
[7] According to official Jewish Agency figures, http://www.jafi.org.uk/JewishAgency/English/delegations/UK ; accessed 30 Apr. 2008. See Daphna Berman, "Number of olim from U.K., N. America hits 20-year high," *Haaretz*, 28 Dec. 2006.

certainly, the Board of Deputies does not speak in unison when it comes to Israeli government polices.[8] Something of the hopes British Jews had invested in the idealism of Israel's founding fathers and the disillusionment they experienced, Linda Grant tells us, is conveyed in Mike Leigh's play *Two Thousand Years* (2005),[9] but then neither the fix Josh seeks in religion, nor his sister's waving of a Venezuelan flag lead them out of their syndrome of being unable to change the world or themselves. It is probably fair to say that some of the splits in Israeli society over religion, politics, and ideology are reflected in the Diaspora, and that it is difficult to make generalizations about the attitude of British Jews toward Israel beyond a general feeling of solidarity when Israel is threatened.

Multiculturalism—Was it Good for the Jews?

There is no doubt that multiculturalism has changed much in British society, even if some problems have resurfaced in new forms, such as hostility to immigrants, tensions between ethnic minorities, and constitutional issues arising over religion. Multiculturalism has reopened the debate over national identity, as well as viable forms of polity,[10] and in such debate the perception and socioeconomic function of the Other is always a formative factor. Yet, unlike the United States or Canada, which built their economies and societies on mass immigration, the importation of cheap labor into Britain after the Second World War and the arrival of newcomers from the Commonwealth required a readjustment of the concept of citizenship and its relation to national identity.[11] Significantly, the redefinition of the nation and a search for national identity that would bring diverse ethnic and racial groups together took place when the Jews were no longer recognized as victims of racism and had largely assimilated. However, stereotyping persisted and the latent narrative of the "Jew" (in

---

[8] Linda Grant, "What British Jews think of Israel," *Independent*, 13 May 2007. See also Natan Aridan, "Anglo-Jewry and the State of Israel: Defining the relationship, 1948–1956," *Israel Studies* 10, no. 1 (2005): 124–56; Danny Ben-Moshe and Zohar Segev, eds., *Israel, the Diaspora, and Jewish Identity* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2007).

[9] Grant, "What British Jews think of Israel."

[10] See Bhikhu Parekh, *Rethinking multiculturalism: Cultural diversity and political theory* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000).

[11] Tariq Modood, *Multiculturalism* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 2-7.

quotation marks to distinguish it from real Jews) as a figure in English culture is transformed according to new local conditions and the global assault on Israel and the Jews. At the same time, antisemitism must be understood in a complex race discourse and contextualized in identity politics.

Animosity could be personal and expressed in racial terms, but hostility was never free of stereotype. The hiring of Avram Grant as coach of the Chelsea Football team in 2007 to replace José Mourinho is just one small instance of how this works in media reporting. A controversy over antisemitic rhetoric among a minority of fans unleashed media reactions that seemed to invite the hostile and racist responses that they warned about. Press coverage had the Community Security Trust (a Jewish vigilante body) sufficiently worried to consult with Scotland Yard.[12] Indeed, in February–March 2008, Grant received death threats in envelopes containing a suspicious white powder, as well as antisemitic emails.[13] In an interview with the Israeli daily *Ma'ariv*, Grant's agent Pini Zahavi alleged that Grant would not have had such a bad press and encountered so much hostility when he replaced the popular Mourinho if he had not been a Jew.[14] And Grant was doing nothing to downplay his identity: as a son of Holocaust survivors, he wore a black armband when Chelsea beat Liverpool on May 7, and immediately after the game he left to join a memorial ceremony for Holocaust Day in Auschwitz.[15] The win entitled Chelsea to play against Manchester United in the European Champions final in Moscow on May 21, and losing the match in Moscow brought Grant's prospects at Chelsea to an immediate end.

It all started when David Mellor, writing in London's *Evening Standard* on 20 September 2007, accused team owner Roman Abramovich of acting like a Caligula running a "rackety regime." Writing online in the *Guardian*, Alex

---

[12] Barry Toberman, "Grant Critics Spark Racism Warnings," *Jewish Chronicle* 5 Oct. 2007, 5.

[13] "Chelsea boss gets death threats," BBC News, 20 Feb. 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7254547.stm; accessed 21 Feb. 2008. Nick Parker, "Blues Boss in new death threat," *The Sun*, 18 Mar. 2008; accesed online.

[14] Interview with Eliana Shefer, "Sir Pinkhas," *Ma'ariv*, Independence Day supplement, 7 May 2008, accessed online [in Hebrew]. The British press and Chelsea Football Club reacted with angry denials, and Zahavi retracted any accusation of antisemitism.

[15] Danny Caro, "Avram Grant's Roman h[a]s Moscow wish," *Jewish Chronicle*, 1 May 2008 (accessed online).

Stein, whose name might be enough to indicate his ethnic allegiance without his declaring his "tribe" in the first lines of his article, wondered if it was "good for the Jews," since the story was ripe for Jewish conspiracy theories.[16] Martin Samuel, the *Times* Chief Football Correspondent, questioned Grant's qualifications and claimed that only a shady operation by the Jewish tycoon Roman Abramovich could explain the appointment.

> To understand Abramovich, it is important to acknowledge that the strongest cultural influence on his life is not his nationality but his faith. In the early days of the "Roman invasion," when the owner was a figure of some mystery, it was pointed out to those seeking a handle on the new man that his Jewish heritage was felt more strongly than his Russian roots. It is this that he shares with his inner circle. Abramovich plays along with the Chelski schtick, but it is not who he is. [17]

Samuel mimics American-Jewish slang (the Jewish code) and asserts that Abramovich was aided by an Israeli agent (the fixer) and Russian money (a corrupt mafia), which also paid for lavish parties attended by pop stars who were flown in from Russia. In other words, the whole affair stinks of a "Jewish" business: "Chelsea are not so much Russian these days as kosher."[18] This might be witty and mischievous and the *Times* soccer expert might not arouse suspicion of antisemitism; what is striking here, however, is how an apparently unrelated reference to a Jewish conspiracy chimes in with a long history of stereotyping of the "jew" as sly and conspiratorial, an international and cosmopolitan conniver at underhand and exploitative business deals in cohort with fellow co-religionists around the world.

> The rats are underneath the piles.
> The Jew is underneath the lot.
> Money in furs. […]
> (T. S. Eliot, "Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar")

---

[16] "Yes, but is it kosher?" guardian.co.uk/commentisfree 21 Sept. 2007; accessed online.
[17] "Avram Grant appointment makes Chelsea no more than rich man's plaything," *The Times*, 21 Sept. 2007.
[18] Ibid.

The example of football, in fact, serves as an indicator of a national feeling and pride which can still rally identification and waving the English flag (not the Union Jack but the cross of St. George). Racial politics cannot be disentangled from England's spectator sports, least of all football. Football chants such as "Two world wars and one world cup" facetiously shore up a national pride in a bygone hierarchy of power expressed in the political discourse of a class-based imperialism and a phony nationalism, but somewhere in the self-deprecating sense of the nation's diminished role in the world we can spot an attempt to resist the new globalized multiculturalism which brings foreign players and coaches from around the world to boost England's national sport and revive the local and national team spirit.[19]

A number of footballers are regularly imported from abroad, including the manager of England's national team, Fabio Capello, appointed in November 2007, who could speak little other than his native Italian. Israelis on the football pitch included Tottenham Hotspur's Ronnie Rosenthal. "Spurs" are considered a "Yido" team,[20] and Arsenal fans regularly chant antisemitic insults at their bitter rivals.[21] However, as the historian John Efron has explained, the term "Yido" is actually an honorific title taken on by largely non-Jewish Spurs fans and expresses an orientalized musculism in a performance of outsider identity which structures and gives meaning to supporter culture, shaping an internalized sense of carnivalesque kinship that has little to do with the nearby Jewish community in North London or antisemitism as such. So the rival clubs should not necessarily be considered racist in their outlook, despite the obscene singing and gestures which target

[19] Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004), 116–25. Gilroy reads this as a more ritualistic attempt to resuscitate patriotism and mourn a former social order, while waging a racial/ethnic war through sport on the terraces and on the streets.

[20] On actual Jewish support for Spurs see Tony Collins, "Jews, antisemitism, and sports in Britain, 1900–1939," in *Emancipation through Muscles: Jews and Sports in Europe*, ed. Michael Brenner and Gideon Reuveni (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 142–55.

[21] Barry Toberman, "Arsenal warned over 'Yid' chants," *Jewish Chronicle*, 15 Nov. 2007(accessed online).

the supposedly circumcised "Jewish" body of the Spurs players as an outgroup.[22]

The "Kick It Out" campaign did combat racism in English sports and it has become a sensitive issue, but Israeli players, such as Eyal Berkovich, can be counted along with players of color or Asian origin who are subject to banter and slurs on the field from fellow players whose group identity is white masculine and who expect ethnic outsiders to assimilate to their values, which often center on socializing through drinking after a match (something that excludes practicing Muslims).[23] Indeed, some sociologists have claimed that, notwithstanding important legislation and policy reforms, New Labour has actually left in place assimilationist positions that colonize a normative whiteness in public institutions.[24]

It is in this highly charged politicized race discourse that multiculturalism might not be "good for the Jews," who are, moreover, too often perceived as over-successful, unscrupulous foreigners undermining the British way of life or controlling the economy and the press. The "cash for honors" scandal which led to the investigation of Lord Levy (a case that was closed in July 2007),[25] the "Donorgate" row in November 2007 over secret funding

---

[22] John Efron, "When is a Yid not a Jew? The strange case of supporter identity at Tottenham Hotspur," in *Emancipation through Muscles*, 235–56. Ivan Cohen, a Spurs supporter, reports his own experience of antisemitic insults at away matches with Chelsea, West Ham, and Manchester United, which were dismissed by police on duty as to be expected from football crowds (email communication, 8 Jan. 2008). See also on the racialization of football club rivalry, Simon Kuper, *Football against the Enemy* (London: Phoenix, 1998). A similar case of a "Yido" team is the Amsterdam team Ajax, and like Spurs, they are greeted by fans of opposing teams with the hissing of gas chambers (interview 15 Jan. 2008, with Aviya HaCohen, an Israeli semi-professional footballer, who witnessed this at a match between Ajax and Utrecht).

[23] Les Back, Tim Crabbe, and John Solomos, *The Changing Face of Football: Racism, Identity and Multiculture in the English Game* (Oxford: Berg, 2001).

[24] Les Back, Michael Keith, Azra Khan, Kalbir Shukra, and John Solomos, "The Return of Assimilationism: Race, Multiculturalism and New Labour," *Social Research Online* 7, 2; http://www.socresonline.org.uk/7/2/back.html. On the hypocrisy of "anti-racism" in football see David Hirsh's blog, "Who are the real racists?" *Guardian Comment is Free*, posted 18 Apr. 2006, http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/david_hirsh/2006/04/football_racism_and_antizionis.html

[25] For his side of the story, see Michael Levy, *A Question of Honour: Inside New Labour and the True Story of the Cash for Peerages Scandal* (New York: Scribner, 2008).

of the Labour Party by wealthy property-dealer David Abrahams,[26] as well as a number of allegations of bribery and corruption involving wealthy and powerful Jews over the previous few decades, reinforces the stereotype in the public mind, but also implicates Jewish connections with Israel and the pro-Israel lobby.

Peter Mandelson, a cabinet minister who was Tony Blair's "spin doctor" and the mastermind behind Labour's 1987 election victory, was widely described in the media as a Svengali-like manipulator when he was forced to resign in 2001 amid allegations of wrongdoing.[27] Like many words and phrases that have become part of the English language,[28] Svengali is a common cultural referent that is inextricable from the "Jew's" sinister influence, aided by mesmeric evil powers and accompanied by strong erotic associations. Svengali is often caricatured as a spider weaving a web, from Du Maurier's original drawing of Svengali to Steve Bell's 1997 cartoon of Mandelson.[29] The scandal was compared to the 1963 Profumo affair, which

---

[26] Andrew Norfolk and Greg Hurst, "Profile: David Abrahams, Labour's mysterious donor," *Times Online,* 27 Nov. 2007. See Abrahams' statement in Leon Symons and the *Jewish Chronicle* Reporting Team, "David Abrahams gave in secret 'to quell conspiracy fears'," *Jewish Chronicle*, 6 Dec. 2007. Jon Mendelson, Gordon Brown's chief fundraiser, denied Abrahams' allegation that he knew of the identity of the donor some time before the disclosure; the two apparently fell out over policy decisions in Labour Friends of Israel. Gordon Brown immediately fired the Labour Party general secretary. In an interview with an Israeli newspaper, David Abrahams alleged press coverage was responsible for vilification and suspicions of shady deals (Ruthie Blum, "'It's pure sensationalism,'" *Jerusalem Post*, Up Front Magazine, 22 Feb. 2008, 24–29).

[27] "Sultan v. Svengali: How the storm blew up (Special report: Mandelson)," *Guardian*, 10 Mar. 2001, accessed online. Mandelson was brought back as a minister for business affairs in Gordon Brown's cabinet reshuffle of October 2008 amid a global fiscal crisis and a new recession; on his elevation to the House of Lords there were snipes at his being gay and a "quintessential Jew." He was soon at the center of a new scandal involving allegations of corruption and attempts by the wealthy Nathaniel Rothschild to implicate the Conservative Shadow Chancellor George Osborne in illegally soliciting donations on a yacht in Corfu. Mandelson was painted as the satanic arch-villain of the affair, with Svengali imagery of spider-webs (Alice Miles, "Peter Mandelson is too naive to be a Machiavelli," *The Times* 15 Oct. 2008; Peter Wilby, "All plots lead to Mandelson," *Guardian,* 27 Oct. 2008; David Aaronovitch, "Corfu, and the nature of hate," *Jewish Chronicle*, 30 Oct. 2008, accessed online).

[28] See Jonathon Green, *Words Apart: The Language of Prejudice* (London: Kyle Cathie, 1996).

[29] Daniel Pick, *Svengali's Web: The Alien Enchanter in Modern Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 7–8.

exposed sleaze in high places, but this time it did not have similar political repercussions.[30] It became a touchstone, however, for the general resentment against Blair's brand of New Labour and his support for American foreign policy. In an interview in *Vanity Fair*, Scottish MP Tam Dalyell, for example, spoke up against a "cabal of Jewish advisors," including Mandelson and Lord Levy, but denied these remarks were in any way antisemitic.[31]

Shylock, Fagin, and Svengali are frequently invoked whenever a public figure is suspected of wrong-doing or it is suggested that he is not to be trusted. Fagin was "an established part of Britain's cultural heritage," TV adjudicators decided, when clearing the Channel 4 satire show *Bremner, Bird and Fortune* of causing offense in depicting Lord Levy as the hook-nosed Fagin of the musical *Oliver!,* singing, "you've got to pick a pocket or two."[32] A similar row broke out when Michael Howard, a Jew, then leader of the Conservative Party, was apparently depicted in Labour Party posters in the run up to the May 2005 general elections as a Fagin (because of his fiscal policies) and alongside Shadow Chancellor Oliver Letwin, also a Jew, as flying pigs (an idiomatic dig at Tory spending plans). Though the pig is a creature long associated with both Satan and his consort the *Juden-Sau*, there is actually no explicit reference in the posters to the candidates' Jewish identity, and the resemblance of Howard to Fagin is more imagined than real (his hypnotizing watch fob suggests, if anything, Svengali). Labour denied any racial slur but withdrew the posters. Nevertheless, it was suggested that Howard's Jewish origins might be a factor in Labour's campaign when the Muslim vote was so important.[33] The fact that Disraeli

---

[30] Peter Stanford, "Another time, another Mandy," *New Statesman*, 5 Feb. 2001; accessed online.

[31] BBC News, 4 May 2003, http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/uk_politics/2999219.stm. See on the political context, Bernard Harrison, *The Resurgence of Anti-Semitism: Jews, Israel, and Liberal Opinion* (Boston: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), 187.

[32] Simon Rocker, "Spot the difference between these men (Channel 4 can't)," *Jewish Chronicle*, 16 June 2006.

[33] William Rees-Mogg, "Fagin, Shylock and Blair," *The Times*, 31 Jan. 2005; Peter Hirschberg, "Of polls and prejudice," *Haaretz,* 4 Mar. 2005, accessed online. For evidence that Howard's Jewish origins were used by Labour to swing the vote among Muslims see Melanie Phillips, *Londonistan: How Britain is creating a terror state within* (London: Gibson Square, 2006), 249.

in his time was caricatured stereotypically as a Jew[34] says something about the ubiquity of racial typing in politics. When complaint is made, this is seen as proof of Jewish ownership of the press. As Princess Michael of Kent famously observed in an interview with a German newspaper when Prince Harry was criticized in early 2005 for wearing Nazi uniform at a party, "The press has a different sensibility because of its ownership structure."[35] Each incidence is surely not sufficient to warrant hysteria over a "tsunami" of antisemitism, but it certainly points to the recurrence of stereotyped language that may no longer be regarded as offensive in a postmodern spirit of free speech.

On the face of it, multiculturalism does not seem to be about respect for difference, but more about integration in a host culture that has largely lost its sense of national identity. As in the medieval period, when "Englishness" was emerging and the nation was being formed out of the tensions between Norman French nobility and native traditions or interests, so too in the early twenty-first-century legislation, social practice, and cultural texts determined criteria for membership and acceptance in the multicultural nation. The position of the Jews in the nation cannot be considered as simply equivalent to other ethnic minorities. Something in particular was wrong with the sacred cow of "multiculturalism," and the assumptions underlying the ensuing debate revealed that no easy equivalences could be made between Jews and Muslims. Following the realization that the July bombers had used the freedoms offered to minority groups to pose a threat to the nation, Prime Minister Tony Blair made a significant retreat in an eight-year-old policy of "multiculturalism" when he declared,

> If you come here lawfully, we welcome you. If you are permitted to stay here permanently, you become an equal member of our community and become one of us. Then you, and all of us, who want to, can worship God in our own way, take pride in our different cultures after our own fashion, respect our distinctive histories according to our own traditions; but do so within a shared

[34] In his book *The Victorians* (New York: Norton, 2004), A.N. Wilson comments on the antisemitic reactions to Disraeli that these were a "flaw" that was more characteristic of the left than the right and that such remarks were muted after the Holocaust (402-03). For A. N. Wilson's own remarks on Israel see below.

[35] Luke Harding, "Princess Michael defends breeding, Botox—and Harry," *Guardian*, 17 Feb. 2005, accessed online.

> space of shared values in which we take no less pride and show no less respect. The right to be different. The duty to integrate. That is what being British means. And neither racists nor extremists should be allowed to destroy it.[36]

The "duty to integrate" did not cancel the welcoming of diversity, but it now required a commitment to shared values of the nation and a common language, it ruled out separation, and put an end to money being given freely to religious groups if the funds were not being used to promote "cohesion" and understanding of other faiths. Moreover, education was now to be broadly Christian in community schools, and faith schools were required to twin with schools of other faiths. No religious way of life could supersede the rule of law—for example, *medressas* would henceforth be regulated and foreign preachers would be vetted; religious courts could have jurisdiction by consent of the parties, but there would be recourse to English law courts.

This last provision, by the way, underlines a distinction between Judaism's ruling of *dina demalkhuta dina*, the yielding of *halakha* to the law of the land, and Muslim calls for *sharia* to be the law of the land.[37] It was nevertheless to the Jewish *beth din*, which acts as an entirely voluntary court of third-party arbitration in civil disputes, that the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, pointed as a model when he said that adopting parts of *sharia* law seemed "unavoidable" if a standoff was to be avoided in a fragmented British society, where there should not be "no-go areas," as the Bishop of Rochester, Michael Nazir-Ali, the first Pakistani to hold this office, had earlier called some Muslim communities, in a phrase that recalled the worst sectarian violence of Northern Ireland.[38] The

---

[36] "Future—multiculturalism and integration," Runnymede Trust lecture on "Our Nation's Future," Downing Street, 8 Dec. 2006, www.number10.gov.uk/output/Page10563.asp

[37] Since 2005 *sharia*-compliant banking services have been available in Britain, and an Islamic bank has been opened, offering an attractive ethical alternative to Western financial practice, but also advancing Jihadist ambitions to defeat the capitalist system; see Helena Christofi, "Islamic banking in Britain," *Britain-Brussels Journal*, 8 Dec. 2007, www.brusselsjournal.com/node/1898 By contrast, in the UK *halakhic* (according to Jewish religious law) alternatives such as the *gamakh* (interest-free loans) are administered on a strictly private or communal basis. See Phillips, *Londonistan*, 159–60.

[38] Interview with the Rt. Rev. Rowan Williams, "The World at One," BBC Radio 4, 7 Feb. 2008. The proposals in Dr. Williams' speech, "Islam in English Law: Civil and

Archbishop of Canterbury's rather vague vision clearly did not encompass the return of the caliphate (advocated by some radical Islamists), and it was unclear what, practically speaking, he meant by partial acceptance of s*haria* law, which is not interpreted uniformly by Muslim scholars. It could be that Williams was drumming up support for a greater role for religion in society, following a fall in numbers of worshippers in the Anglican Church. However, the issue at stake here was whether the principle of one law for all must yield to ethnic loyalties and religious conscience, something which could reopen a long-standing confrontation in England between Church and State and, instead of benefits which would spill over (as the Archbishop put it) into the Jewish community, spark off competing legal claims in marital and civil rights. It is a controversy, however, that should be seen in the context of the split in the Synod of the Church of England over homosexuality, the ordination of women bishops, and the bounds of religious debate. At the same time, a call from the evangelical wing of the Anglican Church to declare Christianity the sole path to salvation and to convert Muslims threatened to backtrack on recognition of Judaism and Islam as equal religions and to revert to an older model of Christianity as a fulfillment of the biblical covenant which required conversion of the Jews in order to achieve its messianic mission.[39]

Religious Law in England," were swiftly rejected by Prime Minister Gordon Brown and the Conservative spokesperson on multiculturalism, the Shadow Secretary for Communal Cohesion, Baroness Warsi, herself the first Muslim woman in the House of Lords. See responses from Muslim, Jewish, and Christian leaders at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7234422.stm ; retrieved 8 Feb. 2008. The Rt. Rev. Michael Nazir-Ali reiterated his warning about the spiritual vacuum in a largely secular Britain being filled by Islam in an interview by Jonathan Wynne-Jones, "Bishop of Rochester reasserts 'no-go' claim," *Sunday Telegraph*, 24 Feb. 2008, accessed online. Opinion among Jewish commentators was divided: historian Geoffrey Alderman said Williams had been misrepresented, while the columnist Melanie Phillips claimed Williams had misrepresented how Jewish religious rulings worked within, and not outside, English law ("Is our beth din the model for sharia courts?," *Jewish Chronicle*, 14 Feb. 2008). The government minister for cohesion, Sadiq Khan, appointed in October 2008, also spoke out against the proposal, on the grounds that sharia law was not as sophisticated as Jewish law and would exacerbate unfair treatment of women (Jonathan Oliver, "Muslims rebuffed over sharia courts," *Sunday Times*, 12 Oct. 2008; accessed online).

[39] Daniel Blake, "Church of England Considers Evangelism of Other Faith Groups," *Christian Today*, 11 Oct. 2006, accessed online. On Christian monism, see Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, 23–33.

Certainly, British Jews had integrated into British society in an exemplary fashion, had, as a matter of fact, embraced the new multiculturalism and multi-faith credo as part of their own identity. Yet Islamist ideology taught that Muslims were part of a global, transnational *umma*, subject to Islamic law and values, which ruled out integration in the sense Blair was advocating. Forced marriages and the refusal to remove the veil in the work place were for Blair unacceptable, though he recognized the right of religions to have different roles for men and women. As one commentator pointed out, he seemed confused about the distinction between the ideological claims of jihad, the extremists who justified violence, and their opponents whom he appeared to accuse of religious intolerance.[40]

Moreover, Blair's rather naive ideal of the coexistence and equal value of religions, particularly his faith in the ability to overcome differences in theological doctrine and to celebrate what was held in common, for example, in the "Abrahamic" heritage, ignored contradictions in outlook which excluded such benign comparisons. Christian supersessionist theology denies the Jews are any longer the Chosen People, and more recent Protestant replacement theology identifies Palestinians as the "true Israel," since Jesus was a Palestinian (although there was no Palestine at the time of Jesus). Judaism is not always seen as a religion of equal spiritual value (Toynbee had long ago written off Judaism as a fossil of history).[41] Last but not least, while not necessarily typical of more moderate interpretations of Islamic theology, fundamentalist attitudes toward Jews and Christians as *kufr*, who could legitimately be killed, do not seem to quite fit in with Mr. Blair's idealism. What the nation's "shared values" were was quite unclear, beyond Blair's call for debate as a way of coming to mutual understanding. Muslim leaders responded to Blair's declaration angrily, accusing Blair of

---

[40] Philip Johnston "Blair: Paying religious groups is a mistake," *Daily Telegraph*, 9 Dec. 2006 (accessed online). Robert Spencer, "Tony Blair Renounces Multiculturalism—Sort Of," *Front Page Magazine,* 13 Dec. 2006, accessed online.

[41] Margaret Brearley, "The Anglican Church, Jews and British multiculturalism," lecture at the international conference on Antisemitism, Multiculturalism and Cultural Identity, Vidal Sassoon Center for the Study of Antisemitism, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 14 June 2006; PDF version downloadable at sicsa.huji.ac.il/ppbrearley.pdf ; see also Melanie Phillips, "Christian theology and the new antisemitism," in Iganski and Kosmin, *A New Antisemitism?*, 192–212. A more hopeful view of Christian-Jewish relations is given in Edward Kessler, "Jews, Christians, and the New Antisemitism," in ibid., 212–22..

putting money into "occupied territories" (presumably Iraq and Israel) instead of investing in deprived social groups (which were presumably in their view the real cause of extremism).[42]

The government's active sponsorship of multiculturalism and cultural exchange stressed the equality of the three great monotheistic faiths, but the exhibition entitled "Sacred" held at London's British Library in summer 2007 devoted to the three major monotheisms seemed to suggest that all three religions believed something similar and none of them could agree amongst themselves or even present a unified form of belief or worship. The knowledgeable visitor could not pass by artifacts on display that did not always speak for a tolerant attitude, such as an exquisitely made miniature portable altar decorated with the engraved images of Ecclesia et Synagoga, which represented the notion that the Jews were blind to the coming of the Christian messiah and perversely followed an unacceptable and satanic belief.

Then again, there is the difficulty of separating radical Islamism that promotes racist violence from an "innocent" Islamic activism that could be used to promote understanding and divert youth from extremism. The Islam Expo held in London in July 2008 featured idyllic pictures of life in Sudan and Iran. While MPs and government ministers shied away or were pressured into not attending, one speaker at Islam Expo, Osama Saeed, a Scottish National Party parliamentary candidate, supports the reestablishment of the caliphate and has described Hamas terrorism against Israel as "martyrdom operations." Saeed heads the Scottish Islamic Foundation, which had recently received a grant of 215,000 pounds from Alex Salmond, Scotland's First Minister, for whom Mr Saeed happens to work as an advisor. Indeed, naiveté among government ministers and sensitivity to fears of racial stereotypes tend to make any distinction between support of terrorism and religious freedom perilous.[43]

Chief Rabbi Sacks also doubted the desirability of unquestioned politically correct multiculturalism. If in his previous book, *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations* (2003), he had argued for the benefits of multiculturalism, he now doubted whether multiculturalism was still desirable: "Multiculturalism has run its course, and it is time to move

[42] Philip Johnston, "Blair: Paying religious groups."
[43] Dean Godson, "The hidden face of political Islamism," *The Times*, 15 July 2008, 22.

on."[44] Multiculturalism was supposed to give dignity to difference, to promote integration and not separation. British society had become more open, diverse, and cosmopolitan, but the price was abrasive fracturing that came instead of tolerance. The murder by an animal-rights activist on 6 May 2002 of controversial gay Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn (just one day after he declared that multiculturalism didn't work) was for Sacks symptomatic of the lack of shared social values and the absence of a cohesive national identity.[45] Society was breaking down, there was nothing into which minorities could integrate, least of all any dignity of difference.[46] Sacks wrote from a Lockean tradition of liberal democracy that distinguished between tolerance and toleration and he looked to a vision based on the Jewish concept of *hesed*, altruistic love, to rebuild society as a home on the ruins of the privileged country-house, where Jews were unwanted guests, a home which would replace the bankrupt international hotel, where everyone was a guest.[47] Yet Sacks failed to address the contradiction within integration posed by Islamists who also believed in a religious foundation to a moral vision of society but who vowed to destroy Western civilization as corrupt and promiscuous. Nevertheless, Modood has argued that multiculturalism, narrowly defined as a redefinition of the relation of ethnic and religious pluralism to the polity, could rise to this challenge to secular liberal democracies through educational reform and the rethinking of citizenship.[48]

It is not necessarily multiculturalism which has resulted in an unimpeded onslaught against Jews and Israel or brought about an upsurge of antisemitism to the levels of the 1930s, but rather British Jews are unfortunately placed between two hostile forces. On the one hand, a militant Islamism condemns Western civilization and attacks Jews as well as Christians, while a left-Arab coalition seeks to isolate and delegitimize Israel as the central problem of social unrest and racial tensions. On the other hand, there is a resurfacing of resentment of "foreigners" in defensive

---

[44] Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, *The Home We Build Together: Recreating Society* (London: Continuum, 2007), 3.

[45] Ibid, 4. A more relevant example of the post-9/11 turn against multiculturalism was the murder in 2004 of filmmaker Theo van Gogh by a Muslim assassin (Modood, *Multiculturalism*, 13).

[46] Sacks, *Home We Build Together,* 4–5, 25–36.

[47] Ibid, 193–203.

[48] Modood, *Multiculturalism*, 14–20.

reactions to mass immigration and terrorism, though, curiously enough, resentment against "foreigners" did not always include Jews or Israelis who were considered "white," predominantly middle-class professionals, and culturally assimilated to the same peer group.[49] It seems "religion," "race," or "color" is perceived differently from place to place and from one context to another, but, more significantly, social and economic difference of class is perceived along racial lines.[50]

In contemporary Britain, it should be noted, perceptions of the Jews may differ between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. Indian communities, for example, tend not to socialize with immigrant groups of Pakistani origin and may see in the Jews a kindred ally against a perceived religious threat from Islam, while the Jews' experience of upward social mobility and their renowned business acumen make them a model for acceptance into British society. Radical Islamic groups, by contrast, construct the Jews as instigators of capitalist exploitation aligned with Western cultural values that threaten their traditions. "Antisemitism," Rabbi Sacks has said, "exists and is dangerous whenever two contradictory factors appear in combination: the belief that Jews are so powerful that they are responsible for the evils of the world, and the knowledge that they are so powerless that they can be attacked with impunity."[51] As always, the "Jew" is feared as having phenomenal power and influence, to the extent of controlling politics, the media, and the economy, and therefore is defamed as threatening the nation. Somewhat contradictorily, at the same time, the "Jew" is condemned for being particularistic, exclusivist, and *not* joining the multicultural nation. The multicultural agenda thus conceals conditions and restrictions which must be considered in any attempt at understanding the figure of the "Jew" in contemporary Britain.

---

[49] For example, a Jewish visiting professor from the United States staying in North Oxford was told a Polish neighbor was "foreign" (Paul Lawrence Rose, opening session, conference on Antisemitism and English Culture, Birkbeck College, London, 9 July 2007); an Israeli family in Leicester was asked not to sell their house to "foreigners" (conversation with Yair Zivan, 27 Feb. 2008).

[50] This is the case in the United States, where increased social inequality is falsely perceived along black-white polarity; see Walter Benn Michaels, *The Trouble with Diversity: How We Learned to Love Identity and Ignore Inequality* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006).

[51] Sacks, "A new antisemitism?" in Iganski and Kosmin, *A New Antisemitism?*, 40.

The New "new antisemitism"

The most visible threat in the 1930s and again, briefly, after the Second World War came from Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists. Nationalists turned their attention increasingly to the Asians and blacks as representing everything alien to a British way of life, but, with the trend of growing nationalism in Europe, Robert Wistrich warned at the beginning of the 1990s,

> it is in the logic of exclusivist nationalism and of those who advocate a monolithic conception of British culture to regard all minorities with suspicion.... In the eyes of militant British nationalists, Jews are indeed responsible for the racial tensions in English society and represent the occult, international power that governs world affairs."[52]

In the 1990s and the early twenty-first century, the rhetoric emanating from the British National Party seemed to echo slogans of the 1930s coupled with Holocaust denial. Nick Griffin, the Party leader, authored an openly antisemitic book—*Who Are the Mind-Benders?*—though he denied the Party was antisemitic. In the May 2008 local elections the BNP attempted to win Jewish votes with an anti-Islamist anti-immigration platform,[53] and in general played the "Labour isn't working" theme to gain support from disgruntled working-class voters on the left who were concerned about their jobs and security. Moreover, loss of empire has resulted in renewed xenophobia, partly arising from what Paul Gilroy has termed a "culture of melancholia," an obsession with cultural memory of a rare homogeneity in Britain's "finest hour" during the Blitz.[54] Xenophobia was actually a factor in the campaigns against integration in Europe and against admission of asylum seekers, though it proved marginal in European elections.[55] It could

---

[52] Wistrich, *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred* (London: Thames Methuen, 1991), 112–13.
[53] Leon Symons and Dana Gloger, "New bid to target BNP vote on May 1," *Jewish Chronicle*, 19 Mar. 2008.
[54] Gilroy, *After Empire*.
[55] See *The use of racist, antisemitic and xenophobic elements in political discourse*, European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, November 2005, www.coe.int/.../1-programme_of_action/14-public_presentation_paris_2005/ actes%2021%20March% 202005_en.pdf . See also Kate Taylor, "Hatred repackaged: The rise of the British National Party and antisemitism," in Iganski and Kosmin, *A New Antisemitism?*, 231–48.

be that the threat sensed in both diversity and European unification spurs antisemitism and racism because of the sense of losing a national or regional identity. We see this in Poland, where antisemitism has accompanied a revival of right-wing Catholic political activism; Italy is perhaps the exception that proves the rule, where historically integration of Jews coincided with the formation of the nation-state following the Risorgimento and where antisemitism, despite the 1938 Racial Laws, has not proven a major political factor in recent years (though there is hostility against Romany and foreign workers).[56]

We should not forget that Jews who have been successful in the host society may nevertheless be outsiders in that society. A 1994 report by the Runnymede Trust on antisemitism in Britain concluded that the definition of the Outsider changes over time. Prejudice against Jews was latent in English culture, originating in theological anti-Judaism and in the religious fervor of the Crusaders, but after the Enlightenment prejudice against Jews as a distinct social group was mostly couched in the language of political ideology.[57]

The difference now was that Israel was branded as a colonizing aggressor state. From its inception in the radicalization and student revolts of the 1960s, the New Left voiced global solidarity for Third World causes, following Fanon, and deftly moved from the class struggle of Marxism to the identity politics of the struggle against colonialism. Israel was condemned not just for what it did but for what it was, a sovereign Jewish state born, according to a politically correct left-liberal worldview, along with South Africa's apartheid and the partition of India, as a heritage of imperialism:

> First, the opposition not to Israel's security policies alone but to its very legitimacy means that, as in Islamist and Arab nationalist discourse, the terms "Jew," "Israel," and "Zionist" are increasingly interchangeable in contemporary Left-wing discourse. In addition,

---

[56] Information based on a lecture by Ephraim Nissan, "What is Global, and what is Local? Attitudes in Italy in the First Decade of the New Millennium," international conference on Jewish Culture in an Age of Globalisation, Manchester University, July 2008, as well as on conversations in June 2008 with Polish educational psychologist Aleksandra Boron and historian of Italian Jewry Michal C. Bettin.

[57] Runnymede Commission on Antisemitism, *A Very Light Sleeper: The Persistence and Dangers of Antisemitism* (London: Runnymede Trust, 1994).

> this discourse of delegitimization has been standardized and globalised. Finally, the themes and motifs associated with delegitimization are increasingly gaining recognition outside the activist margins, for example, among politicians broadly described as "progressive," among prominent academics, and in liberal media outlets. [58]

That this is a premise of postcolonial discourse is clear from the comparison on the same level, without any historical or sociological explanation, of South Africa's apartheid state with "the establishment of Israel in Palestine as a novel historical experiment in both nation-building and colonization as reparation."[59] It was irrelevant that the Zionists were fighting the imperialists: Israel had committed the sin of being a nation-state. According to this ideologically constructed worldview, the Blair government's participation in the alliance to bring democracy and freedom to Iraq is comparable with the avowed aims of white settlers in Africa to bring "civilization" to the darkest corners of the world, and Israel is seen as complicit with this venture as the bastion of democracy and Western values that safeguards American interests in the Middle East.[60] In a backwards look at history, European racism is linked in much postcolonial discourse with Zionism through a *chronological* analogy that is not based on causality but compares the Holocaust in Europe and "ethnic cleansing" in the former British Mandate of Palestine. This is how one textbook on race discourse puts it:

> The history of Zionism illustrates graphically the fraught relationship between race, nation, and colonialism. Racial conceptions of national identity in Europe…provided a crucial stimulus for the development of the Jewish national idea, or Zionism.[61]

---

[58] Ben Cohen, "A Discourse of Delegitimisation: The British Left and the Jews," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 16, nos. 3–4 (Fall 2004), www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-cohen-f04.htm p. 3; see also Robert Wistrich, "Left-Wing Anti-Zionism in Western Societies," in *Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism in the Contemporary World*, ed. Robert Wistrich (London: Macmillan, 1990), 46–52.

[59] Gilroy, *After Empire*, 16.

[60] See Gilroy, *After Empire*, 47–69.

[61] Clive J. Christie, *Race and Nation: A Reader* (London: Tauris, 1998), 175.

Not only did Zionism reinforce the European treatment of Jews as outsiders, intensifying antisemitism, but paradoxically it used the classic language of European nationalism and, moreover, in its search for a "national home," Zionism transformed itself into a typical European colonial project of the nineteenth century.[62]

In his book *Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture* (2007), Aamir Mufti discerns, albeit more critically, a *contemporaneity* in the establishment of the Jewish state and Muslim separatism in India which inherited the European nation-state and its "solution" of the Jewish question through population transfer and genocide.[63] The "Jew," then, is in this view a necessary figure in postcolonial discourse, even if the Jewish nation is eliminated in a revision of history. John Hutnyk, Professor of Cultural Studies at Goldsmiths College, University of London, has decided that there is no Jewish nation but rather diverse Jewish peoples (in the plural) who were dispersed prior to the destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem by the Babylonians—so that there could conceivably not be any common political or ethnic entity such as "the Jews" who (falsely) claim their forced exile justifies a return to Zion..[64]

This redefinition of diaspora, naturally, has implications for the discourse of race and Otherness which are elaborated by Hutnyk in his assertion that "the dialectic between whiteness and Otherness [*sic!*] is succinctly expressed in the formation of the Israeli nation-state (created as a compensation for the Holocaust of the Second World War*),* but it has effectively become a representative of white supremacy with strong backing from the US government and a sanctioned systematic oppression of displaced Palestinians."[65] In other words, the "Zionist" deceit that conceals their racism—American backed white supremacy! —is the primal sin against the real Others, the Jews' "Jews," the Palestinian Arabs, for, as in America, the

---

[62] Ibid.

[63] Aamir Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 175.

[64] Hutnyk, "Home and away: Social configurations of diaspora," in *Diaspora and Hybridity*, ed. John Hutnyk, Virinder S. Kalra, and Raminder Kaur (London: SAGE, 2005), 9-10.

[65] Hutnyk, "Journeys of Whiteness," in *Diaspora and Hybridity*, ed. John Hutnyk, Virinder S. Kalra, and Raminder Kaur (London: SAGE, 2005), 119.

"whites" have driven out "natives" from their land. Significantly, and this is standard in Arab propaganda constructions of "Zionism," it is the Holocaust which is the moral standard of the injustice done to Others as "compensation" for the suffering of the Jews. Stuart Hall, a leading British cultural theorist, has gone further and redefined diaspora as a metaphorical figure for heterogeneity, ruling out the Jewish historical experience as a false "backward-looking" diaspora bound to a sacred homeland which was regained by forcing out the Palestinians.[66] As Jonathan and Daniel Boyarin have noted, the disqualification here of the Jewish experience as a paradigm of diaspora requires a bogus and bogey "Zionist" diaspora that must be removed. Anti-Zionism here overlaps with anti-Judaism, for in order for hybridity to emerge from a diasporic model it has to be purified of the "Jew."[67]

In such postcolonialist discourse, "Palestine" became the central issue of anti-racist campaigns, and anti-racist anti-Zionism logically equated Zionism with Nazism. The linking of Zionism and Nazism goes back to Soviet allegations of Zionist collaboration with the Nazis during the Holocaust that compared Israelis with Nazis; it was popular on the left as an explanation of what the Zionists had done to the Arabs in 1948. Under pressure of an oil embargo, European nations largely bought into this propaganda, and, besides, the Palestinian cause was useful to bolster alliance with the Arabs as a counter to American influence.[68] Though later rescinded, the 1975 United Nations resolution equating Zionism and racism did give a boost to the unthinking parroting of Soviet slogans originating in the anti-Zionist campaign of the mid-1970s. The first Durban conference on racism in 2002 showed that the equation of Zionism with racism was still very much acceptable in political discourse, and the distribution at this United Nations sponsored conference of anti-Jewish libels such as the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* passed almost without comment.

It is often said, quite misleadingly, that Zionism uses the Holocaust to justify the displacement of Arab refugees and that such displacement

---

[66] Stuart Hall, "Cultural identity and diaspora," in: *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 235.
[67] Jonathan and Daniel Boyarin, *Powers of Diaspora: Two Essays on the Relevance of Jewish Culture* (University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 11-13.
[68] Bat Ye'or, *Eurabia*: *The Euro-Arab Axis* (Madison, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005).

amounts to another Holocaust (a charge also made by Holocaust deniers such as Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad who accuse Jews of manipulating the "myth" of Auschwitz). Denial of the Holocaust that manipulates the Holocaust may sound like double-think, yet it should not be forgotten that, from an Arab point of view, the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 was a traumatic catastrophe *(naqba)* which can never be forgiven; the Jews had no right to settle in the land of Israel ("Palestine"), and their return to their historical homeland is presented in terms of an expulsion of the "indigenous" population. The declared intention of some Arab leaders to drive the Jews out, or the active support of Hitler by the Jerusalem Mufti Haj Amin al-Husseini, are rarely mentioned when the "Zionists" are accused of perpetuating a holocaust worse than Auschwitz and being responsible for two world wars.[69]

Moreover, the globalization or "Americanization" of Holocaust memory has detached it from a historical "event" or any connection with extermination exclusively of Jews, so that it becomes pliable for any political purpose.[70] After the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, the Lebanese were compared to victims of the Nazis such as Anne Frank, or deportation [*sic*!] of Palestinians was likened to that of Jews by the Nazis.[71] The Trotskyite Workers' Revolutionary Party went so far as to accuse Israel of using gas in a genocide of the Arabs, and Ken Livingstone's now defunct *Labour Herald* ran cartoons depicting the Israeli Prime Minister as an SS officer directing a "Final Solution."[72] In this context, Jim Allen's play *Perdition* (1987), a crude and inaccurate reworking of the Kasztner affair, brought the Zionist-Nazi link into the public consciousness, receiving much publicity when the play was cancelled at the West End's Royal Court Theatre amid accusations of a Jewish conspiracy.[73]

The left's anti-Zionist platform has not gone unchallenged. Steve Cohen's pamphlet, *That's funny, you don't look antisemitic*, came as an eye-

---

[69] See Matthias Küntzel, *Jihad and Jew-hatred: Islamism, Nazism, and the roots of 9/11* (New York: Telos Press, 2007).

[70] See Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006).

[71] Pat Oliphant, "Deportation—Then and Now," in his *Nothing Basically Wrong* (Kansas City: Andrews and McMeel, 1988), 72; see David Bar-Ilan, "No fun intended," *Jerusalem Post,* 19 July 1991, 10.

[72] Ben Cohen, "Discourse of Delegitimisation," 8–9.

[73] Ben Cohen, "Discourse of Delegitimisation," 10.

opener to Jewish intellectuals and students on the left in 1984 because it showed antisemitic attitudes and Jewish conspiracy theories in the trade union and socialist movements in Britain going back to the Boer War and the1905 Aliens Act, as well as an adoption of Soviet anti-Zionism which coalesced into an ideological antisemitism. But the topic still remained taboo. In the fall 2007 issue of *Dissent*, the magazine's co-editor Mitchell Cohen voiced strong criticism for the espousal by the liberal intelligentsia and the left of the anti-Zionist cause, writing that the assault on Zionism was "shaped largely by political attitudes and arguments that recall the worst of the twentieth-century left."[74] Mitchell Cohen is referring to the Left's refusal to acknowledge the evils of Stalinism, in particular the "anti-cosmopolitan" campaign of 1948 and the "anti-Zionist" witch hunt in Czechoslovakia in the 1950s. This is, in fact, his response to attacks by Adam Shatz (senior editor at the *London Review of Books*) on alleged supporters of the Iraq War. What Cohen's remarks reveal is a growing awareness by intellectuals who are far from supporting Israeli government policies that the campaign had a distinctly antisemitic flavor:

> anti-Zionism is not in principle antisemitism but it is time for thoughtful minds—especially on the left—to be disturbed by how much antisemitism and anti-Zionism share, how much the dominant species of anti-Zionism encourages antisemitism.

Not every critic of Israel is an antisemite, Mitchell Cohen agrees, but the slurs, defamation, insults, and libel that have been heard on the left about Israel are characteristic of a basic definition of antisemitic language.

How is it that the British left has adopted anti-Zionism as part of its belief system? Firstly, we should not forget that however sympathetic the British Labour Party has been in the past to Jewish causes and Israel, the Jewish bourgeoisie remains a "class enemy." Marx (in "On the Jewish Question") wrote that money was the religion of the Jews:

> What is the secular basis of Judaism? Practical need, selfishness.
>
> What is the secular cult of the Jew? Haggling. What is his secular god? Money.

---

[74] Mitchell Cohen, "Antisemitism and the Left that Doesn't Learn," *Dissent* (Fall 2007), accessed online.

> Well then; emancipation from haggling and money, from practical, real Judaism would be the self-emancipation of our age.[75]

Marx added that since money has become a world power and the practical Jewish spirit has become the practical spirit of the Christian nations, the Jews have emancipated themselves insofar as the Christians have become Jews. Marx was, in fact, in favor of the Jews' political emancipation, but this argument was used by his opponents and detractors to identify Capital with Jewish America, or just Jewry. In a curious twist in this reasoning, the new "Jewish religion," Zionism, has replaced money as the world's class enemy. The belief that it held hegemony in western society justified calls from the European left for its destruction after 1968. The displacement of Capitalism by Zionism in left wing thinking became commonplace: in a June 2007 issue of *Respect*, Leon Kuhn's 1930s poster showing world capitalism getting the chop was revised to show the world's enemy, Zionism, poised over the Middle East, getting the chop.

Despite an initial welcome for the establishment of the Jewish state after the Holocaust, the left often pursued an anti-Zionist rhetoric, and, partly out of guilt felt for a recent colonial past and identification with the Arab refugees displaced in 1948, saw Israel as conceived in the original sin of imperialism.[76] There may also have been residual guilt for the West's failure to rescue German Jewry at the Evian conference, a moral omission that could be placed now at the door of the Israelis for their treatment of the Palestinians, as if they had not "learned the lessons" of the Holocaust. Left-wing hostility to Israel can be traced to the Suez campaign which split British public opinion, and to critics on the left there seemed to be parallels in Blair's commitment to the war in Iraq. Although Israel was not directly involved, unlike the Suez crisis which preceded the founding of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), somehow the "imperialist aggression" of America and Britain was seen to be serving Israeli interests.

Secondly, and concomitant with this transformation, there is the alliance of the left with radical Islam. Israel has become the one issue of consensus to bring together the anti-war movement, the pro-Palestinian lobby, and

---

[75] Karl Marx, *Selected Writings,* trans. David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 58.

[76] Geoffrey Alderman, "The tradition of left-wing anti-Jewish prejudice in Britain," in Iganski and Kosmin, *A New Antisemitism?*, 223–30.

militant Marxists. The global Jihad movement did not originate in Britain, but it is there more than in any other European country that it proliferated and has been able to infiltrate political and educational institutions.

When a new phase of the holy war against the West was launched on 9/11, the attack on the Towers and the Pentagon struck a double symbol of American financial power and might, perceived by Islamists as the multicultural Babel of the Jewish-capitalist empire. The horrifying mass murder was greeted with jubilation around the Muslim world and many saw it as a victory of the oppressed and poor against an enemy superpower.[77] 9/11 was a watershed also because the media and the left almost immediately sensed that a war against terrorism would overshadow the second Intifada. Yet instead of being dampened, defamation of Israel intensified as America prepared to respond to terrorist attacks.[78] And Israel's declarations of support for an unpopular war on terror put itself in the dock of liberal judgment. America was supposed to be the enemy, not the militants resisting imperialism. It was even claimed that Muslims were not sophisticated enough to stage the attack; only Israelis could have done it.[79] Thus, in a perverse view of the world based on a mythical belief in the Zionist conspiracy as an explanation for global evil and suffering, 9/11 had to have been perpetrated by the Israelis.[80]

---

[77] Wistrich, *Antisemitism and Multiculturalism*, 5–6.

[78] Alvin H. Rosenfeld, *Anti-Zionism in Great Britain and Beyond: A "Respectable" Antisemitism?* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2004), http://www.ajc.org/atf/cf/%7B42D75369-D582-4380-8395-D25925B85EAF%7D/AntiZionism.pdf.

[79] Ed Husain, *The Islamist: Why I joined radical Islam in Britain, what I saw inside and why I left* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 206; Robert Wistrich, "Muslims, Jews, and September 11: The British case," in Iganski and Kosmin, *A New Antisemitism?,* 169–91. Another example of such conspiracy thinking was the rumor that Jews working in the World Trade Center had been forewarned and came to work late that day (as some did, providentially, because of the penitentiary prayers before the Jewish New Year); see examples of such reports in Robert Wistrich, *Muslim Antisemitism: A Clear and Present Danger* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2002), http://www.ajc.org/atf/cf/%7B42D75369-D582-4380-8395-D25925B85EAF%7D/WistrichAntisemitism.pdf, pp. 19–20; downloaded 19 Feb. 2008.

[80] The *Interparliamentary Report on Antisemitism* contained evidence that prominent Muslims in the Yorkshire area believed that 9/11 was a Mossad operation to discredit Islam; *Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism, September 2006* (London: Stationery Office, 2006), 27. On the response of British Muslims to 9/11 see Robert Wistrich, "Muslims, Jews, and September 11: The British case," 187.

The resurgence of antisemitic imagery cannot be understood outside the context of the Jihad against the West, in which the former colonial powers of Europe and America were slated to be defeated by global Islamism. The anti-imperialist platform of the Jihad aroused sympathy on the left, which did not necessarily endorse or even properly understand the aims of a radical Islamist revolution that would offer "justice" only in terms of *sharia* (Islamic law). The cause of Muslims against colonialism made an obvious alliance, for example in the "Stop the War" campaign, which could be expedient for Islamists, who generally had only loathing for communism and all secular ideologies. The oppression of "defenseless" victims of colonialism seemed such an obvious, clear-cut case of a grievance to be fought, as perhaps one of the last great struggles after Vietnam, along with global corporations and Venezuela, which could rouse to action on behalf of "injustice" and "oppression" those intellectuals on the left who still identified with Che Guevara and Fidel Castro. As Colin Shindler has concluded in his study of media coverage of Zionism in the UK, there was a generational shift away from Old Labour, especially among the generation of 1968, who supported the IRA and embraced Third World causes, foremost the Palestinians who represented a neo-Maoist struggle against "colonialism." Such identification was quite detached from any former sympathy among British intellectuals for Jews as Holocaust victims now that, in a multicultural society, Jews were no longer "oppressed" but themselves perpetrators of "injustice."[81] Sympathy for suicide bombers who killed Israeli civilians, voiced by a number of leading public figures, including the Prime Minister's wife, Cherie Blair, was for some reason felt to be distinct from abhorrence of the carnage of 9/11 and 7/7.[82]

The conscription of leftist platforms by pro-Palestinian groups, including some Islamist radicals, paved the way for infiltration and takeover. The first years of the twenty-first century saw a concerted and evidently coordinated

---

[81] Colin.Shindler, "Reading *The Guardian*: Jews, Israel-Palestine and the Origins of Irritation," in: *Jews, Muslims and Mass Media,* ed. Tudor Parfitt and Y. Egorova (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 157-177.

[82] Speaking to reporters after appearing with Queen Rania of Jordan at a charity event for Palestinian Arab medical care, and shortly after another suicide bombing in Jerusalem, Mrs. Blair said: "As long as young people feel they have got no hope but to blow themselves up you are never going to make progress" (George Jones and Anton La Guardia, "Anger at Cherie 'sympathy' for suicide bombers," *Daily Telegraph* 19 June 2002, accessed online).

campaign to pass anti-Israel resolutions in the university teachers' unions, the National Union of Journalists, UNISON, and even the medical profession. The systematic attempt to delegitimize and isolate the State of Israel through boycotts, divestment, and sanctions did not meet significant resistance from a largely indifferent rank and file and the general public who were largely ignorant of the facts of the Middle East conflict. There was little awareness that anti-Jewish boycotts had a history (as in Nazi Germany) or that before the establishment of the State of Israel, in 1945, the Arab League had instituted an anti-Jewish boycott.[83] Moreover, such moves have often served local purposes not connected with the Middle East, as when an anti-"Zionist" purge forced Jewish intellectuals out of Poland in 1968, after the communist regime repressed a play by nationalist poet Adam Mickiewicz and needed a familiar enemy to unite the nation against dissent.

Jewish activists and Israel supporters, as well as the left-wing Engage group, objected that the boycotts set double standards, since Israel was being singled out when greater evils were being perpetrated in Chechnya, China, Tibet, Sudan, and elsewhere. In 2006, the council of the Association of University Teachers (AUT) approved recommendations that would regulate and restrict boycotting or graylisting shortly before it merged with NATFHE, the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education, whose annual convention had voted for a boycott three days before the merger. In September 2007 the new University and College Union put an end to implementation of a resolution to boycott Israeli lecturers after receiving legal advice that such measures would constitute unlawful racial discrimination.[84] Despite this setback, attempts to mount new boycotts continued, and a further motion was passed at the UCU annual conference in May 2008 recommending a veiled boycott of Bar-Ilan and Haifa universities and finding Israeli academics institutionally and collectively guilty of "apparent complicity" with the "occupation"; no time was allowed for opponents of the motion to speak. One delegate at the

---

[83] See Manfred Gerstenfeld, "The Academic Boycott Against Israel," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 15, nos. 3–4 (Fall 2003), http://www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-gersten-f03.htm

[84] See David Hirsh, David Hirsh, *Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism: Cosmopolitan Reflections* (Yale Initiative for the Interdisciplinary Study of Antisemitism Working Paper Series #1, [2007]) http://www.yale.edu/yiisa/workingpaper/hirsh/David%20Hirsh%20YIISA%20Working%20Paper.pdf , pp. 54–61. Downloaded 28 Nov. 2007.

conference, Robert Fine, a professor of sociology at Warwick University, found that this sinister Stalinist experience made him feel differently about his Jewish identity,[85] and the Conservative Shadow Education Secretary Michael Gove noted,

> The singling out of Israel for a boycott of this kind when there is no boycott of other countries, which are not democracies and which practice repression, curb free speech and limit academic inquiry, must raise questions about the nature of the prejudice animating this campaign.[86]

Resignations from the UCU flowed in from Jews and non-Jews, and there were calls to de-recognize the UCU as the representative union at Nottingham Trent University and elsewhere. Baroness Deech supported such calls in a House of Lords debate on June 26, and later told the *Times Higher Education Supplement*,

> These efforts to boycott, or to come as close as possible to a boycott, are contrary to race relations legislation and *ultra vires* the powers of the union. The UCU has created an atmosphere hostile to Jewish academics and to quality academic research and freedom in this country.[87]

The atmosphere became further inflamed when a link was posted on the UCU email list to David Duke's white supremacist site, after David Hirsh, a leading campaigner against the boycott, had been excluded from the list.[88] There had been attempts to ban Jewish student societies in the 1980s, and the boycott seemed to exacerbate unabated and persistent hostility toward Jews on British campuses; a number of Jewish students resigned from the National Union of Students after resolutions against Israel were passed at some colleges and after the union failed to move against manifestations of

---

[85] Robert Fine, "Esprit d'escalier: Reminiscences of a silent observer of the UCU conference," http://www.engageonline.org.uk/blog/article.php?id=1929; accessed online 31 May 2008.
[86] Marc Shoffman, "Politicians slam Israel boycott," 29 May 2008, http://www.totallyjewish.com/news/national/?content_id=9264; accessed 30 May 2008.
[87] Melanie Newman, "Derecognise UCU over Israel motion, says Deech," *The Times Higher Educational Supplement*, 10 July 2008, accessed online.
[88]Melanie Newman, "Israel debate inflamed by web link to racist site," *Times Higher Education Supplement,* 4 Sept. 2008, accessed online.

antisemitism such as the distribution on campuses of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.[89]

Nevertheless, collaboration with Israeli scholars went on unimpeded and was in fact strengthened, not least by the visit to Israel of Gordon Brown and other government officials to foster academic ties, while Jewish and Israeli students continued to study on British campuses, despite sporadic cases of harassment (69 attacks on students were recorded in 2007).[90] Ben-Gurion University Professor of Politics, David Newman, who was closely involved in the anti-boycott campaign, concluded that, while the effect of the boycott might be minimal, it nevertheless succeeded in high-profiling the Palestinian cause and effectively delegitimized the existence of a Jewish state in public discourse.[91] The British government officially opposed the boycott and defended academic freedom, yet it could also act in the apparently opposite direction as when, in March 2008, Home Secretary Jacqui Smith took the initiative of sending a letter to the center-right Israeli Likud party activist, Moshe Feiglin, informing him he was banned under the Anti-Terrorist laws from entering Britain (if he ever thought of any such thing) on the grounds of his outspoken views on Arab terrorism and the peace process. Freedom of expression, it seems, is relative, and Israelis could be susceptible to banning as well as Islamists.

Since "Zionist" and "Jew" were interchangeable and those affected by boycotts would invariably happen to be Jews, an effort was made by campaigners to convey the message that the boycott was "political" and not racist. In the case of the academic boycott, a test was proposed (and in a few individual cases applied) that excluded from the boycott any Israeli academics who declared their condemnation of their own government. This McCarthy test of political allegiance applied to no other national or ethnic group and, moreover, it begs questions about the boycotters' attitudes toward the bourgeois privilege of academic freedom.[92] Indeed, the All Party

---

[89] Donald MacLeod and Polly Curtis, "Waiting for the boycott to bite," *Guardian*, 26 April 2005, accessed online.

[90] Lord Janner, speaking in the House of Lords, 26 June 2008, quoted in Newman, "Derecognise UCU over Israel motion, says Deech."

[91] David Newman, "Britain and the Academic Boycott of Israel," *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 2, no. 2 (2008): 45–55.

[92] For a discussion of opposition in the United States to boycotting on the grounds of academic freedom see Judith Butler, "Israel/Palestine and the paradoxes of academic freedom," *Radical Philosophy* 135 (Jan.–Feb. 2006); accessed online. For a response that

Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into Antisemitism called action advocated by campaigners for a boycott of Israel in British universities "anti-Jewish in practice."[93]

In a number of cases, the passing of anti-Israel resolutions was not intended to foster genuine debate on the Middle East but to rally support for political positions and consolidate power (for example, as part of the move towards "redder" Greens at the Green Party conference in February 2008) or to mobilize radical militancy (as at a number of student unions, including the LSE in early 2008). A platform for anti-Zionist views is set up even if no resolutions are passed, and these resolutions must also be seen in the context of the attempt by Iran and terrorist organizations to exclude Israel from the club of nations and to justify its destruction. Thus in effect they make acceptable the embracing of anti-liberal and murderous ideologies.[94]

This is the only way one can make sense of the sight of thousands of demonstrators marching in the streets of London in summer 2006 with banners declaring "We Are All Hizbollah" at a time when four thousand Hizbollah-launched rockets were raining down on Israeli towns and villages. It was impossible that one of America's closest allies could be the victim; facts could not be allowed to muddle division of the world into the revolt of the "weak" and the hypocrisy of "fascist" oppressors.[95] It was, in fact, common to see in anti-Israel demonstrations in Britain's capital a strange

---

reflects on changes in academic practice in the West see Russell A. Berman, "From 'Left-Fascism' to Campus Anti-Semitism: Radicalism as Reaction," *Democratiya* (Summer 2008); accessed online.

[93] *Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism, September 2006*, 48. For example, the dismissal by Mona Baker of an Israeli professor from the editorial board of a Manchester University journal; or the refusal of Oxford University Professor Andrew Wilkie to take on an Israeli doctoral student Amit Duvshani. In another case, Ephraim Nissan, an Israeli national, was dismissed from his post at Greenwich University in 2002 after an anti-Israel campaign, but failed in his suit against his employers under the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000); in such cases of temporary appointments it is almost impossible to prove unfair dismissal on racial grounds. See MacLeod and Curtis, "Waiting for the boycott to bite."

[94] See Anthony Julius and Alan Dershowitz, "The contemporary fight against antisemitism," *Times Online*, 13 June 2007, accessed online.

[95] See for example, a comparison of Hizbullah with the popular vengeance against Nazi collaborators in liberated Europe in Charles Glass, "On Hizbullah: Learning from its mistakes," *London Review of Books*, 17 Aug. 2006, 8–9.

coalition of Muslim groups, including Hizb ut-Tahrir, George Galloway's Respect Party, and the Jewish ultra-Orthodox anti-Zionist Neturai Karta, and to hear sporadic calls of "Kill the Jews."[96] Indeed, the strategic alliance of the Socialist Workers Party with the Muslim Association of Britain in the Stop the War Coalition broadened the protest against British involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq into support for Hamas and Hizbullah, despite the latter movements' opposition to communism as a Jewish conspiracy. Nor were left-wing Jews or leftists with Jewish sounding names such as the journalist Nick Cohen spared attack: Cohen received antisemitic hate mail after writing a piece on the anti-war demonstrations, something that opened his eyes to visceral prejudice and left-wing racism.[97]

The Community Security Trust report for 2006, which recorded an unprecedented number of over one hundred cases of physical assault against Jews, brought statistical evidence to show the correlation of antisemitic incidents with the Second Lebanon War, when anti-Israel rhetoric was at its height.[98] The 2007 report, which covered a period without significant political triggers, while recording a slight decrease in the overall number of incidents, nevertheless showed the second highest level of antisemitism in Britain since records were first kept in 1984. The number of reported antisemitic assaults was actually up, from 108 to 113, and only roughly half the assailants were identified as white.[99] Increasingly, the attacks and abuse were coming from Muslims.[100] According to 2006 police reports, Jews stood four times as much chance being attacked for their religion as Muslims, although the total number of attacks against Muslims may be higher; the Federation of Islamic Students (FOSIS), however, claimed that "while a Jew is three times more likely to be attacked, an Asian

---

[96] See for example Simon Rocker, "Shouts of 'Kill the Jews' heard at Pro-Palestine Rally," *Jewish Chronicle*, 12 Oct. 2007, 4.

[97] Nick Cohen, "'Antisemitism isn't a local side effect of a dirty war over a patch of land smaller than Wales. It's everywhere from Malaysia to Morocco, and it has arrived here,'" *New Statesman*, 10 Oct. 2005, accessed online; television interview with Nick Cohen, in Richard Littlejohn, *Britain's War on the Jews?*, Channel Four, July 2007.

[98] *Community Security Trust Antisemitic Incidents Report 2006*, http://www.thecst.org.uk/docs/ Incidents%5FReport%5F06.pdf p.4; downloaded 15 Nov. 2007.

[99] *Antisemitic Incidents Report 2007* (pdf), downloaded 17 Feb. 2008.

[100] Michael Whine, "Antisemitism on the streets," in Iganski and Kosmin, *A New Antisemitism?*, 23–37.

or a black person is 10 times more likely to be attacked, and an Arab or Muslim is 11 times more likely."[101]

Richard Littlejohn's TV documentary, *Britain's War on the Jews?* (aired on Channel Four in July 2007) drew a glum picture of Jewish-Muslim relations. Muslims interviewed on the program were concerned that the Anglo-Jewish community did not speak out and voice criticism of Israel, as if British Jews spoke with one voice or were all affiliated with the Board of Deputies of British Jews. One member of the British Council of Muslims told Littlejohn that the Jews should join in criticism of Israel because this was the "British way." This insinuates that the Jews were collectively acting in an unpatriotic way by not supporting British Muslims in opposing Israel's policies; not far away is the implication of double loyalty. The position of "moderate" Muslim representatives on extremism and antisemitism is, to say the least, not outspoken. Melanie Phillips found little evidence in the Muslim community that the mainstream was not in favor of extremism and terror.[102] It is true that most Muslims are not Islamists and Islamists themselves are divided by ideologies, ethnic rivalries, and in-fighting, but nevertheless the factions that came together in 1997 in the British Council of Muslims are affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, and Jamat-e-Islami.[103] The former British Islamist Ed Husain writes that he had not heard "one single Muslim scholar of any repute speak out against either suicide bombings in Palestine or the hijacking of aeroplanes. In Muslim political discussions, dominated by Islamists across the globe, killing Jews in Israel was considered to be a means to an end: the annihilation of Israel."[104] From the Muslim standpoint, it is understandable that there might be solidarity with their Islamic brothers and an unwillingness to "shop" suspects to the police. But this does not explain why prominent Muslims would want to identify with extreme antisemitic positions. In February 2005, Lord Ahmed, the first Muslim life-peer, hosted the book launch of an exposed racist anti-Zionist, "Israel Shamir," a.k.a. the Swedish Jöran Jermas, in the House of Lords, and in 2007 he complained that, among other groups, the extremist and racist Mawdudist fringe political party, Jamaat-e-Islami, was not represented at a

[101] MacLeod and Curtis, "Waiting for the boycott to bite."
[102] Phillips, *Londonistan*, 132–41.
[103] Husain, *The Islamist*, 166, 167.
[104] Ibid, 202.

Cambridge conference on Islam.[105] And let there be no mistake: the British Jewish community was clearly targeted in attacks against Israel, as can be seen in the wave of graffiti calling for *jihad* against "Tel Aviv" sprayed on forty synagogues and Jewish-owned shops in northeast London on 15 May 2008—the sixtieth anniversary of Israel's independence, marked by Muslims as the day of *naqba* ("catastrophe").[106]

Further attacks were carried out in London's Jewish community during Operation Cast Lead in January 2009. Hizbullah and al-Qaeda warnings also made it clear that Jews around the world were being targeted as part of the Middle East conflict and the global jihad; this is a threat already carried out, for example by an Iranian-backed group who blew up the Jewish community building in Buenos Aires in the 1990s or the bombing of synagogues in Istanbul, not to mention the massacre at Bet Chabad in Mumbai during the terror attack of 2008. Synagogues in the UK were apparently under hostile surveillance and recent incidents of assault of Jews in France (including the kidnapping and torture to death of Ilan Hilimi) suggested little reason why British Jews would be any safer than elsewhere in the Diaspora.

Antisemitic attitudes are not, however, limited to the jihad or the Middle East conflict, but have entered political debate and public life. While former Mayor of London Ken Livingstone was a fervent promoter of multiculturalism in Britain's capital, he was severely criticized for calling a Jewish reporter from the *Evening Standard*, Oliver Finegold, a "concentration camp guard." Finegold had solicited Livingstone for a comment after a late night party at City Hall in February 2005, and Livingstone had vented his annoyance with the press by asserting that Finegold's excuse he was only doing his job amounted to working for the Nazis. When Feingold told Livingstone that he was Jewish and found the remark offensive, Livingstone refused to apologize and the story broke in the following day's papers. Strangely, the publicity and the consequent sanctions against the Mayor of London seemed at the time to do nothing to damage Livingstone's

---

[105] Stephen Pollard, "Lord Ahmed and racists," *Spectator* Blog, 5 June 2007, accessed online.

[106] Benedict Moore-Bridger and Robert Mendick, "Synagogue walls daubed with anti-Jewish graffiti," *Evening Standard*, 15 May 2008; accessed online. On Islamic antisemitism see Andrew G. Bostom, *The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism:: From Sacred Texts to Solemn History* (New York: Prometheus, 2008).

reputation and popularity, perhaps because he always portrayed himself as the people's champion, unfairly tripped up by bullies like Thatcher (when she abolished the GLC in 1986) and Blair (when he prevented Livingstone from running as mayor for Labour in 2000).[107] Indeed, Livingstone successfully appealed his sentence of suspension from office and won, arguing that the Jewish Board of Deputies had used underhand, undemocratic methods to unseat him, and, given his record of fighting racism, he could not possibly be called an antisemite.[108]

After the July bombings in 2005, Livingstone declared he represented all faiths in the capital at a time when there was a concerted effort to separate in the public mind the terrorists from the religion they claimed to be fighting for as holy martyrs. However, when it came to suicide bombings in Israel, Livingstone found extenuating political and moral reasons to understand the bombers who had no other way of fighting Israel, a country which had jet planes.[109] Then Livingstone hosted the Muslim cleric, Yusef al-Qaradawi, an extremist who advocated the killing of Israeli citizens and apostates, whom Livingstone promoted as a progressive religious figure and leading Islamic moderate. In an interview, the Mayor of London defended his courting of Islamist extremists such as al-Qaradawi and dismissed the allegations about him which, he said, were invented by the Mossad (the Israeli secret service); he claimed to have been demonized like the leading Islamist ideologue, Tariq Ramadan.[110] Al-Qaradawi, he explained, could not be expected to condemn suicide bombings in Israel, because this was a war

---

[107] Jonathan Freedland, "Stop playing with fire," *Evening Standard*, 2 Mar. 2006. See for example, Daniel Knowles, "Poll good news for Ken," *Local Guardian*, 27 Jan. 2008, http://www.yourlocalguardian.co.uk/mostpopular.var.1997337.mostcommented.poll_good_news_for_ken.php ; accessed 1 Mar. 2008. Reform Rabbi Tony Bayfield invited the mayor to a reconciliation meeting but seemed unimpressed by Livingstone's avowal that the establishment of Israel had been a mistake: "Politics of despair," *Guardian Comment is Free*, 25 July 2007, http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/tony_bayfield/2007/07/the_politics_of_despair.html ; accessed 1 Mar. 2008.

[108] "An attack on voters' rights," *Guardian*, 1 Mar. 2006; accessed online..

[109] Hirsh, *Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism*, 57.

[110] Tariq Ramadan, from 2005 a fellow of St. Antony's College, Oxford, has been claimed as a liberal moderate; for an account of his intellectual and ideological sympathies see Paul Berman, "The Islamist, the journalist, and the defense of liberalism: Who's afraid of Tariq Ramadan?," *New Republic* (4 June 2007); accessed online.

situation, but he had condemned 9/11 and 7/7—clearly for Livingstone not in the same category of terrorism. "Red Ken" evaded the reactionary position of Islamists on homosexuality and women's rights by declaring the average Muslim Londoner was only interested in paying his mortgage and not in these issues; he compared al-Qaradawi to Pope John XXIII as a progressive force in these matters, even if he wouldn't join a gay rights march, but then neither would the "chief rabbi of Jerusalem" (it is not clear if he meant one of the two Israeli chief rabbis or British Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks).[111] Another intolerant remark was aimed at the Reuben brothers, wealthy Jewish property dealers from an Iraqi Jewish family that had come to Britain from India forty years previously. Livingstone had lost patience with them over the Stratford redevelopment in East London for the 2012 Olympics, and told them they should "go back to Iran" [*sic*]. In the run-up to the May 2008 local elections, which he lost to the Conservative candidate Boris Johnson, Livingstone assuaged Jewish voters and particularly Jewish businessmen by saying that in all these incidents he had been the victim of a slur campaign by the Tories in the GLA and the Board of Deputies.[112] There may be little evidence of antisemitism as such here, though to say that someone should go back where they came from is a common racist slur in British English, but such gaffs or slips of the tongue reveal a worrying tendency to think in bigoted terms and to subscribe to conspiracy theories.[113]

In campaigning for reversal of his temporary suspension from office as Mayor of London Ken Livingstone said that "For far too long the accusation of antisemitism has been used against anyone who is critical of the policies of the Israeli government, as I have been."[114] He went on to identify with Antony Lerman, the director of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, who vigorously defends criticism of Israel as not being

---

[111] Simon Parker, "Interview: Ken Livingstone," *Prospect Magazine* 133 (Dec. 2007), http://www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/article_details.php?id=8636 , p. 6.
[112] Simon Rocker, "Ken Livingstone interview," *Jewish Chronicle*, 24 Apr. 2008; accessed online.
[113] The row erupted as Livingstone's suspension from office was about to come up for judicial review. See "Ken Livingstone: Some silence would be welcome," *Guardian*, 24 Mar. 2006; Robert S. Wistrich "Cruel Britannia: Antisemitism among the Ruling Elites," *Azure*, no. 21 (Summer 2005): 100–27.
[114] "An attack on voters' rights," *The Guardian*, 1 March 2006, accessed online.

antisemitic,[115] and cited the example of Daniel Barenboim, the Israeli conductor who has voiced criticism of his government's policies. But criticism of Israel had nothing to do with the charge against Livingstone of antisemitism, and sociologist David Hirsh has labeled this defense the "*Livingstone formulation*."[116] The "Livingstone formulation" has a history going back to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* when Jews have been accused of themselves inventing or being the cause of "antisemitism." The "Livingstone formulation" is a "straw man" against a projected charge of anti-Semitism, an *ad hominem* argument that conveniently deflects criticism by claiming such criticism is made in bad faith.[117] Moreover, there is no rational answer to such an argument, and, indeed, it makes the Jewish community's attempts to defend itself against antisemitism seem almost illegitimate. The British journalist Deborah Orr went so far as to exclaim that she was fed up with being called an antisemite when she attacks Israel—for her, antisemitism is "disliking all Jews, anywhere, and anti-Zionism is just disliking the existence of Israel and opposing those who support it."[118]

The "Livingstone formulation" has been used in various wordings to deflect suspicion of antisemitism, for example by Jenny Tonge, Liberal Democrat MP for Richmond Park from 1997 to 2005 (from 2005, Baroness Tonge), who vigorously defended Palestinian Arab suicide bombers and later decried the pro-Israel lobby's "grip" on politics and finances in terms that recall Jewish conspiracy theories. This last example in particular points to a broad spectrum of the political arena in which such remarks are made and indicates a trend for such views to enter mainstream opinion among the British intelligentsia or "chattering classes." Through slippage, anti-Israel statements end up endorsing antisemitic conspiracy theories which have been around a long time and Holocaust denial or Jew-Nazi analogies.[119]

---

[115] See for example Lerman, "Sense on antisemitism," in Iganski and Kosmin, eds., *A New Anti-Semitism?,* 54-67.

[116] Hirsh, *Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism*, 11, 54. Emphasis in the original.

[117] On the *ad hominem* argument and the charge that saying this is itself an *ad hominem* argument, see Hirsh, 13-14.

[118] Deborah Orr, "I'm Fed Up Being Called an Anti-Semite," *Independent* 21 Dec., 2001; accessed online.

[119] Chris Davies, Liberal Democrat leader in the European Parliament, was, like Tonge, also forced to resign after an unfortunate comparison of Israeli policy in Gaza with Auschwitz.

It is often said that criticism of Israel can never be antisemitic if prominent Jewish intellectuals are making similar arguments. The "Livingstone formulation" is in fact also employed by self-styled "independent Jewish voices" or "antiracist" Jews, such as Brian Klug. Klug has cordoned off anti-Zionism from antisemitism on the grounds that there is no Jewish collective which wishes to be represented by Israel or the Zionist movement and therefore the charge of antisemitism leveled against critics of Israel is itself a defamation of Jews! Moreover, Klug argues, in Theodor Herzl's vision, the Jewish state was meant to put an end to antisemitism, which arose only because the Jews had no state of their own, so antisemitism can only be an invention of the opponents of any criticism of Israel.[120] Such circular logic, however, can be challenged by the fact that antisemitism still exists around the world and is directed against both Israel's existence and Jews of other countries, regardless of whether they hold any loyalty to Israel or agree with its policies. Those who see a continuity of antisemitism through the ages and a contiguity of terror attacks on the West and Israel see nothing new in the "New Anti-Semitism," except that the Jewish scapegoat has been replaced by the State of Israel and antisemitism has become politically correct in this ideological guise in North America and Europe, even among Jews and Israelis who have internalized the lies told about them.[121]

On university campuses Jewish students found themselves unable to counter anti-Zionist propaganda. Anti-Zionist activities were widespread around the country and not confined to those campuses where there was a significant Jewish student body.[122] The Interparty Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into Antisemitism found that universities did not do enough to

---

[120] Bruce Klug, "The Myth of the New Anti-Semitism," *The Nation* (February 2004), www.thenation.com/doc/20040202/klug; accessed January 18, 2008; "The collective Jew: Israel and the new anti-Semitism," *Patterns of Prejudice* 37. 2 (June 2003): 1-19. See also Klug's statement on behalf of Independent Jewish Voices, "No one has the right to speak for British Jews on Israel and Zionism," *Guardian*, February 5, 2007, accessed online.

[121] See Phyllis Chesler, *The new anti-Semitism: The current crisis and what we must do about it* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003); Abraham H. Foxman, *Never again?: The threat of the new anti-Semitism* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2003).

[122] Conversation with Yair Zivan, campaigns director of the Union of Jewish Students of the UK, 26 Feb. 2008.

prevent incitement to hatred.[123] Professor Anthony Glees, director of Brunel University's Centre for Intelligence and Security Studies, concluded from his own investigation that some forty-eight university campuses had been infiltrated by extreme Islamist groups, including Omar Bakri's al-Muhajiroun (officially disbanded in 2005) and Hizb ut-Tahrir (which promotes reestablishment of the caliphate).[124] On more than one occasion speakers who were invited to lecture on antisemitism were banned. In March 2007, for example, Matthias Küntzel, former advisor to the German Green Party and a research associate at the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, arrived at Leeds University at the invitation of the German department to give a three-day lecture series on "Hitler's Legacy: Islamic antisemitism in the Middle East." He was told that his talks were cancelled "for security reasons" after complaints had been received from Muslim students.[125]

The attempts to silence critics of antisemitism cited the no-platform campaign which attempted to deny the opportunity to air their views to the likes of revisionist historian David Irving or BNP leader Nick Griffin (both invited to speak at a free speech debate at the Oxford Union in November 2007). It has been argued that prohibiting hate speech gives publicity to its spokesmen and boosts their popularity, yet, at the same time, the claim of fair debate obscures the way in which public discourse and mass media have been dominated by critics of Israel who present themselves as defenders of free speech, but attempt to limit freedom of pro-Israel speakers to have their say on university campuses. The taboo on discussion of Islamist anti-Jewish hatred effectively censors the widespread influence of Nazi ideology in the Middle East; *Mein Kampf* remains one of the bestselling books, alongside the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, in several Muslim countries,

---

123 *Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism, September 2006*, 45–49.
124 Roya Nikkhah, "Islamic extremists 'infiltrate Oxbridge'," *Sunday Telegraph*, 12 Mar. 2007; Colin Brown, "Warning over Islamic extremists operating in universities," *Independent,* 28 Mar. 2007; Philip Johnston, "Universities 'targeted' by Islamic extremists," *Daily Telegraph*, 17 Apr. 2007 (accessed online); see Ed Husain, *The Islamist*, 54–66; Phillips, *Londonistan*, 150–52.
125 Sean O'Neill, "University is accused of censoring antisemitic Islam lecture," *The Times*, 15 Mar. 2007; accessed online. A further example is the cancellation of an address by the Israeli ambassador at Edinburgh University in March 2008 after protests by the Scottish Campaign for Palestinian Solidarity.

including Turkey, as well as in Arabic bookstores in the Edgware Road in West London. But then free speech is a valued British tradition, and there is no law in the UK against Holocaust denial.[126] Yet the freedoms afforded by liberal democracy can breed hatred instead of celebrating multiculturalism.

The Demonization of Israel and the "Kosher" Conspiracy

One could be forgiven for the impression that the British intelligentsia is obsessed with Israel's struggle with the Arabs. No rational analysis will succeed in pointing to countless other conflicts in the world as more or equally important, and it seems fruitless to point out that surely not all wrong can be apportioned to one side. One reason is the widely held assumption that all Jews support Israel and unfairly influence their governments around the world in order to affect foreign policy decisions in favor of Israel, out of all proportion to their small numbers and against national interests. The collective stereotyping here is coupled with the belief in a world Jewish conspiracy which controls the nation's economy and the country's public opinion. The conviction that the Israel lobby has had undue influence in the United States was canonized in a report, later published as a book, by two Harvard professors, John J. Mearsheimer, and Stephen M. Walt.[127] In his response to the book, the *Independent* columnist Richard Ingrams accused the "Jewish lobby" of pushing Bush into the Iraq War in order to assist Israel in getting rid of Saddam and that only fear of being called antisemitic stopped journalists speaking out about Israel's role in the war. Ingrams was concerned that the American Jewish Congress was propagating "lies" about Britain's vulnerability to Iranian weapons similar to the "falsehoods" about Iraqi rockets which had started the Iraq war.[128] It may be true that getting rid of Saddam Hussein was an Israeli interest and this might be understandable after rockets fell on Israeli cities in the first

---

[126] This was one of the arguments employed by Liberal Democrats against deporting a Holocaust denier to Germany for whom a European arrest warrant had been issued ("Man accused of being Holocaust denier should be released, says MP," *Guardian*, 4 Oct. 2008; accessed online).

[127] John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2006). The report was previously published in the *London Review of Books*, well known for its anti-Israel stance.

[128] Richard Ingrams, "Iran's missiles, the Jewish lobby and US policy," *Independent*, 8 Apr. 2006; accessed online.

Iraq war, but it is entirely another matter to characterize neo-cons as "Jewish" and shift the blame on them for Blair's unpopular decision to join the US in the invasion of Iraq.[129]

In Britain, the question of whether the pro-Israel lobby had undue influence was the subject of a lead article in the *New Statesman* in January 2002. The magazine's front cover, depicting a gold Star of David piercing the center of a prone Union Jack with the caption "A Kosher Conspiracy?," drew protests from Jewish readers because it resonated with memories of Goebbels. The article in this issue entitled "A kosher conspiracy?" by Denis Sewell portrays the "Zionist lobby" as a tool of wealthy Jewish businessmen ("Big Jewry" as he calls it), while innuendo and nuance suggest that Jewish support of Israel is somehow not quite legitimate.[130] In the other article that relates to the "kosher conspiracy," John Pilger's report of Blair's meeting with Yassar Arafat insinuates that arms deals are another "Jewish" business undermining peace in the Middle East and serving the evil machinations of former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. Pilger also cast aspersions on the appointment of Lord Levy as envoy to the Middle East, since he was a wealthy Jewish businessman with strong personal and business ties to Israel.[131]

Peter Wilby, the magazine's editor, denied any antisemitic intent in the magazine's cover illustration and did not think readers would be provoked into racist hatred of Jews, which is perhaps indicative of the failure to distinguish between political comment and ethnic stereotyping.[132] Wilby did distinguish, however, between Jews, who, he thought, did not need to be defended against discrimination, and Muslims, who were, in his view, defenseless, thus unconsciously reinforcing another myth of the all-powerful Jews who falsely present themselves as victims of persecution. The philosopher Bernard Harrison devotes much space to the incident in his study of liberal antisemitism, concluding that textual incoherence

---

[129] Ingrams spoke of "mostly Jewish" neo-cons who had forced Bush into the war and complained that it was "disgraceful" that Britain, which, he said, was not under such pressure, followed suit ("It's about time someone spoke out," *Independent*, 8 Sept. 2007; accessed online).

[130] Denis Sewell, "A kosher conspiracy?," *New Statesman*, 14 Jan. 2002, 15.

[131] John Pilger, "Blair meets with Arafat, but supports Sharon," *New Statesman* 14 Jan. 2002, 17.

[132] "The *New Statesman* and Antisemitism," *New Statesman*, 11 Feb. 2002, 9–10.

demonstrates the axiom without which the argument could not stand, that there is a unified Jewish body which constitutes a conspiracy.[133] And even if the articles do not try to prove there really is a conspiracy, they cast aspersions on the dual loyalties of British Jews.[134] These dual loyalties were portrayed graphically on the cover illustration of the issue of the *New Statesman* of 18 March 2002, which showed four directional signs somewhere in Israel, referring to a cover story by John Kampfner, who sought to replace the image of Israel as a liberal Hampstead with a politicized picture of the influx of ex-Soviet criminals and "white trash."[135] In one direction lie Jerusalem and the Prime Minister's Office, in the other Hampstead and Highgate, two London suburbs populated by wealthy Jews. Jews, it is implied in this image, are cosmopolitans who nevertheless owe their primary allegiance to Israel: "They are perennial outsiders. For them the 'promised land' is *there*, not here."[136]

The perception of dual loyalties is an ancient lynchpin of antisemitic sentiment and anti-Zionist argument. In his response to the *New Statesman* affair, Geoffrey Wheatcroft examined political antisemitism in the British press and claimed that Western Jews were actually anguished between their solidarity with Israel and their loyalty to their native land, but that no respectable newspaper would repeat the accusations of divided loyalties:

> Whatever view is taken of Zionism, it is unarguable that the existence of a Jewish state has affected the position, if not prejudiced the rights, of Western Jews. The conflict has indeed sometimes seemed to undermine the hard-won position of Western Jews as citizens of their countries. It's not just a matter of "divided loyalties" in a reductive sense, although that charge never quite went away. It was, in fact, more likely to be discussed in these pages once

---

[133] Bernard Harrison, "Political Antisemitism and the *New Statesman*," in his *The Resurgence of Antisemitism: Jews, Israel, and Liberal Opinion* (Boston: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), 27–51.

[134] Winston Pickett, "Nasty or Nazi?: The use of anti-Semitic topoi by the left-liberal media," in Iganski and Kosmin, eds., *A New Anti-Semitism?,* 152. Pickett's title refers to Winston Churchill's famous mispronunciation of the enemy during Second World War Two in a fusion of nomenclature and vilification.

[135] John Kampfner, "Far from the Promised Land," *New Statesman*, 18 Mar. 2002, accessed online 19 Feb. 2008. Kampfner's piece chimes in with a familiar criticism of Israel for having lost its idealism or its soul.

[136] Pickett, "Nasty or Nazi?," 154.

> than now. More than 50 years ago, when Harold Laski demanded more sympathetic treatment for newborn Israel, *The Spectator* wondered editorially whether he spoke as "a Jew or an Englishman." If, as it appeared, "Mr Laski is a Jew first and an Englishman second," he was perfectly entitled to feel that identity. "But, if that is the case, his right place would seem to be Palestine, not England." Despite the mounting accusations of antisemitism against media critics of Israel, and although Will Self not long ago baited Melanie Phillips on television by asking her what she would do if England went to war with Israel, it's hard to imagine this or any other respectable British paper putting it like that nowadays.[137]

And this is precisely the point—it would not be put like this, but the perception remains that Jewish support of Israel does not sit well with the status of West European Jews in their "own" countries (it will be remembered that the Balfour Declaration stipulated that, among other safeguards, nothing should be done to prejudice the status of Jews in their present countries of residence).

However much the *New Statesmen* cover was a *cause célèbre*, and even if the language of the reporting and of the images is not always unambiguous or intentionally antisemitic, the image recurs of the Israel lobby as a leviathan in the sea of nations, a quite unrepresentative body wielding its global influence on national politics and closing down debate.[138] In a further graphic depiction of the Jewish "control" of the nation, an American flag with Stars of David and Stripes appeared on the front cover of the *Independent* newspaper's weekly *Extra Magazine* supplement on 27 April 2006, with the heading "United States of Israel," linked to an article about the pro-Israel lobby by Robert Fisk, a fierce critic of Israel, which contended that Walt and Mearsheimer were unfairly accused of antisemitism and that their allegations of an Israel lobby exerting undue pressure on the United States were substantially true. The notion of an all powerful and over-influential Israel lobby, and the conviction that it has too much power is so

[137] Geoffrey Wheatcroft, "The Jewish answer?," *Spectator*, 14–21 Dec. 2002, 48.
[138] See for example Lexington, "Taming Leviathans," *Economist*, 15 Mar. 2007.

strong that it has made it almost impossible to rationally discuss anti-Israel prejudice in the British media.[139]

A more insidious and silent example of anti-Zionist treatment of Israel is the premise that, in view of the suffering of Palestinian Arabs, the establishment of the State of Israel was a historical mistake, from which the logical inference is drawn that the State of Israel should be dismantled, something that is sometimes presented as a benign regime change.[140] This broaches the assumption that the existence of the State of Israel no longer can be justified, and further, that it need not be recognized at all. Such denial of the Jews' right to territorial sovereignty, according to the 2005 definition of antisemitism by the European Union Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), is a form of discrimination that is antisemitic.[141]

The world's largest paperback publishers, Penguin Books, celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of Penguin Classics by acknowledging this state of affairs. In their anniversary catalog there is no entry for Israel in the index of authors by country. There is a Palestinian literature consisting of Eusebius, the fourth-century bishop commonly regarded as the father of church history, the sixth-century Byzantine historian Procopius, and of course Edward Said.[142] But there is no Israeli literature. As for Israeli Holocaust novelist Aharon Appelfeld, he simply does not appear in this particular index as he no longer has a country, not even Hungary, the land of his birth! The omission or elimination of Israel is no longer remarkable—on some

---

[139] See Douglas Davis, "Hatred in the air: The BBC, Israel, and antisemitism," in Iganski and Kosmin, *A New Antisemitism?,* 130–47.

[140] A.N. Wilson is among mainstream British intellectuals who have called for elimination of the Jewish state ("Tragic Reality of Israel," *Evening Standard* October 22, 2001). See also his "Israel's record speaks for itself," *Evening Standard* February 2, 2003; the use in this article of White Supremacist views and Holocaust denial is traced in Pickett, "Nasty or Nazi?," pp. 160-2. A.N. Wilson is the author of a fantasy novel which humanizes Hitler and shows the good side of Nazism (*Winnie and Wolf*, 2007).

[141] http://fra.europa.eu/fra/material/pub/AS/AS-WorkingDefinition-draft.pdf ; accessed 24 Feb. 2008. This is also the view of lawyer Anthony Julius in his essay, "Is there anything 'new' in the 'New antisemitism'?," in Iganski and Kosmin, *A New Antisemitism*?, 72.

[142] *Penguin Classics* [no editor given] (London: Penguin Books, 2006), 71. Appelfeld is also omitted from the Author by Era index, although his novel *Badenheim 1939* is listed in the title index. Since Penguin's interests in Arab countries are evidently not massive, it is hard to think of this as compliance with an economic boycott of Israel.

maps Israel is replaced by Palestine or simply left blank—and the effect is a "replacement geography" that is the political equivalent of Christian supersessionist theology.[143]

Conclusion

British Jews have largely benefited from multiculturalism. Although diversity has won new respect for Jewish traditions, divisiveness has resulted in new conflicts between Jews and Muslims, despite some common causes (for example, regarding ritual slaughter and autopsies). There are also tensions between Jews and sectors of the host society seeking the consolidation of national identity. The danger of antisemitism, however, is not coming from the workplace, the streets, or the brick through the window, but from public discourse, and in particular from a hate campaign against Israel in the media. A "pretty strong degree of antisemitism in Europe is at the root of the hostile coverage Israel receives in parts of the European media," Rupert Murdoch, the News Corporation global media chief, charged in an interview with the *Jerusalem Post* in May 2008.[144]

The resurgence of an older racial discourse is the by-product also of the open society. Columnist Petronella Wyatt was shocked to discover that since 9/11 antisemitism and its open expression had become respectable once more: "Not in Germany or Catholic Central Europe—but at London dinner tables. Too frequently to discount now, I hear remarks that the Jews are to blame for everything."[145]As journalist Barbara Amiel noted, people now say openly what they always felt about the Jews, it's even *chic* to do so.[146] The lampooning of Sharon may not have been intentionally

---

[143] For example, in school textbooks issued in Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, or by the Palestinian Authority, reproduced in the paid advertisement by the American Jewish Committee, "Why is Israel not on the map?" *New York Times*, 21 Sept. 2004. In August 2006, during the Second Lebanon War, a map on the website of the Respect Party showing Israeli air strikes against Lebanon labeled the territory usually shown on the map as Israel within its 1948 international borders "Occupied Palestine" (http://www.respectcoalition.org/?ite=1127). Google Earth, incidentally, allows users to superimpose Palestinian Arab villages on their map of Israel.

[144] David Horovitz, "Antisemitism is at root of European media hostility to Israel, Murdoch tells Post," *Jerusalem Post*, 16 May 2008, 1, 23.

[145] Wyatt, "Poisonous prejudice," *Spectator* ,8 Dec. 2001.

[146] Amiel, "Islamists overplay their hand but London salons don't see it," *Daily Telegraph*, 17 Dec. 2001, 13. Amiel wrote the article after the French ambassador Daniel

antisemitic, despite his being stereotyped wearing a *yarmulke* to stress the affiliation to a collective "religion" as in Steven Bell's cartoon in the *Guardian* on 7 February 2001—which depicted Ariel Sharon at the Western Wall with blood-stained hands. But it recalled archetypal images of Cain and Jewish "guilt" for the crucifixion of Jesus. Moreover, David Brown's prize-winning cartoon in the *Independent*, in 2003, of a naked Ariel Sharon devouring children had a political effect afterwards, being seen at pro-Islamist demonstrations. Such misuse of images make it impossible to separate political rhetoric from the kind of cultural antisemitism that can be seen around the world in the early twenty-first century.

The medieval slander of poisoning wells has been a staple of the anti-Israel campaign in the British press since it was popularized by Suha Arafat during Hilary Clinton's visit to Ramallah in November 1999. For example, in his *Evening Standard* column the biographer and critic A.N. Wilson accused Israel of poisoning wells at the time of the purported Jenin "massacre" and claimed there was a cover-up of "genocide".[147] In another example, an op-ed for Israel's approaching sixtieth anniversary in the *Independent* alleged that sewage was deliberately being pumped into Palestinian Arab drinking water sources. The author, Johann Hari, recipient of the 2008 George Orwell prize, drew on the revisionist historian Ilan Pappé for allegations of ethnic cleansing in the establishment of the Jewish state in 1948.[148]

Among liberal circles, no harm is seen in such criticism of Jews or Israel, and it is usually said that the Jews are ultra-sensitive or that they deflect criticism of Israel or Jews by abusing the charge of antisemitism. This climate of opinion, argues philosopher Bernard Harrison, is far from innocuous, but there is little that is new, apart from its resurgence, in the "New Antisemitism."[149] Moral indignation and sympathy with the oppressed are generally regarded as praiseworthy, but, when inscribed in a politically correct discourse that assigns sole and total blame to one group

---

Bernard made his remark about "that shitty little country Israel" at a party given by he husband Lord Black, attended by top figures in the world of journalism. Lord Black's ownership of the *Daily Telegraph* and his right-wing views made it easy for liberal-minded commentators to dismiss these charges.

147 *Evening Standard*, 15 Apr. 2002; accessed online.

148 Hari, "Israel is suppressing a secret it must face," *Independent* 28 Apr. 2008; accessed online.

149 Harrison, *Resurgence of Antisemitism*, 3–4.

or nation, we approach a familiar form of antisemitism that reworks established paradigms and plots. It becomes dangerous when there is wide belief in Jewish conspiracy theories (according to an Anti-Defamation League poll in summer 2007, half of UK respondents said it is "probably true" that "Jews are more loyal to Israel than their own country"; one third agreed that "American Jews control US Middle Eastern policy"; and one-fifth associated Jews with global business and finance).[150] A poll taken in spring 2008 found that negative attitudes towards Jews were on the increase in Europe and they correlated with dislike of Muslims, which was found on the left as well as the right. Britain, however, still enjoyed relatively lower rates of anti-Jewish feeling (9% of respondents, compared with 25% in Germany and 20% in France), while hostility towards Muslims had risen higher and over a longer period.[151] Bigotry and racism are sufficiently pervasive for Jewish comedian Sacha Baron Cohen, who, like his American counterpart Sarah Silverman, elicits underlying prejudiced responses in performance of fictional selves, which often revolve around perception of the "Jew."

Instead of looking for a linear passage of antisemitic narratives, therefore, we should see the circulation of the figure of the "Jew" as a complex development within cultural production that has a fascinating and complex history, both as a natural growth of an archetypal Other and as appropriation in a politicized context, that includes the discourse on race as well as global jihad.

---

150 *Antisemitic discourse in Britain in 2007,* 6, 16.

151 "Unfavorable views of Jews and Muslims on the increase in Europe," *Pew Global Attitudes Project*, 17 Sept. 2008, published by the Pew Center, Washington D.C.; pdf downloaded from http://pewglobal.org/ reports/display.php?ReportID=262 . See also *Community Security Trust Anti-Semitic Discourse Report 2007* [no editors given] (London: The Community Security Trust, 2008).