

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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House of Lords Debate

Anti-Semitism

col 2408 **Lord Popat (Conservative):** To ask Her Majesty's Government what actions they are taking to reassure the Jewish community over the impact of anti-Semitism in the United Kingdom.

Baroness Goldie (Conservative): ... The Government are of course aware of the importance of the issues that this debate will raise. My noble friend the Chief Whip, with the full support of the Opposition Chief Whip, the noble Lord, Lord McAvoy, has agreed to find time for a further debate to be held in government time later this year. ...

Lord Popat: My Lords, I start with a question: why me? Why have I taken it upon myself to bring this debate to your Lordships' House? After all, I am not Jewish: why should anti-Semitism concern me? To that I answer: anti-Semitism concerns us all. The notion that it is solely a Jewish problem is as dangerous as it is wrong. ...

col 2409 What we must understand here is that hate knows no bounds. We saw that in the horrors of the Holocaust, and we see it now with extremist terrorism and the rise of both the far right and the ultra-left. Anti-Semitism is a threat that goes beyond Jewish communities and party politics.

For me, this is personal. As a member of the British Hindu community, I understand the pain that prejudice brings. My family and I came to this country from Uganda more than 45 years ago to escape the brutal dictator Idi Amin. We were welcomed by this country, and the Jewish community was at the forefront in helping us to settle in the part of north London where I live today. For us, the Jews were a positive example of what immigrants can achieve by integrating fully into society. In them, we saw people who not only survived horrific persecution but thrived despite it. ...

Jews have long felt safe in this country. Regardless of what was happening elsewhere in the world, here in the UK—like us—they felt at home. During the Second World War it was this country that took in Jewish refugees and offered them a safe haven. In the last couple of years, with anti-Semitism on the rise in France, Hungary and other parts of Europe, many Jews expressed relief that they were living here and not elsewhere. Even a growth in recorded anti-Semitic incidents in the UK did not dampen the Jewish community's feeling that they were fundamentally protected by UK values, laws and institutions.

So when my Jewish friends say that they fear for their children's safety in schools,

synagogues and universities; when they are afraid of openly identifying as Jewish, and when they start to question their future in this country, the rest of us have a duty first to listen and then to ask: “How has it come to this? Why has it come to this?” And, most importantly, “What are we going to do about it?” ...

col 2410 Unlike the anti-Semitism of the past, which was rooted in religious and racial hatred of Jews, modern anti-Semitism is expressed through the anti-Israel and anti-Zionist movements. How many times have we heard that the problem today is not with Jews but with Zionists? Yet the connection between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism is not always understood.

Zionism is the proposition that the Jews have a right to their own state in their ancient homeland. Anti-Zionism advocates the opposite. Present-day anti-Zionists also believe that the Jewish state is not only illegitimate but should be dismantled. They argue that they are simply standing up to colonial oppression and for human rights and that it has nothing to do with anti-Semitism. But would they also, on anti-colonial and humanitarian grounds, question the legitimacy of the USA, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Australia and most modern states in the Middle East—countries created through colonial intervention? Would they question the legality of practically the whole of Europe, the borders of which were shaped, destroyed and redrawn through centuries of war? There are many Hindu, Christian and Muslim countries across the world, but just one Jewish state. Why is Israel—this tiny strip of land the size of Wales—singled out for criticism with so much intensity and loathing?

It is important to emphasise that criticism of the Israeli Government is not anti-Semitic. This is healthy democracy. ...

Look up Israel on social media and you will be shocked to see the level of hate directed against Jews. There are phrases such as, “Zionists controlling the media, financial institutions and foreign policy”, It is not long before you find yourself in Holocaust-denial or blood-libel territory. ...

col 2411 ... the Government must not allow the passage of time to soften our resolve against anti-Semitism. There is a generation of young people who did not grow up with the same awareness that many of us have of the Holocaust, but they are politicised in other ways. They must understand that hatred of Jews—hatred of any community—is a danger to us all. ...

Lord Mendelsohn (Labour): ... How did things get so far that recent polls have shown that nearly 40% of Jews in Britain feel so uncomfortable that they are thinking of leaving the country? Close to 90% are convinced that the leader of a main political party is an anti-Semite, as does a staggering 39% of the general public. ...

col 2412 In 1984, an anti-Zionist Jew, Steve Cohen, wrote a book calling out the far left for its anti-Semitism, called *That's Funny, You Don't Look Anti-Semitic*. ... It is as relevant today as it was then. ... it illustrates a direct line, the politics of which have entered the Labour Party en masse and are now causing this current crisis. That crisis has never been gripped since the start of Jeremy Corbyn's leadership and it has, over the summer, placed his position—his record, his views and his conduct—at the heart of it. It astounds me that it is a revelation no longer worthy of questioning that I too believe that the leader of my party, Jeremy Corbyn, has been a perpetrator of anti-Semitism. ...

The deniers, those who seek to try and throw Israel and the Palestinians up as a smokescreen, who whip up unrelenting hostility and target those who show the noblest instincts of fighting for their legitimate rights or for acts of solidarity—may they be shamed by their indifference and understand that they are no more than perpetrators themselves. ...

Lord Palmer of Childs Hill (Liberal Democrat): ... On Monday and Tuesday I attended my synagogue to celebrate Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah. There was a strong security regime in place, consisting of trained members of the community plus professionals from CST—the Community Security Trust. ... The synagogue has a gated security fence. Security is not paranoia but is part of providing security for Jewish

communal life, be it at synagogue or school, in old age homes or in other buildings. There is a great fear of anti-Semitic attacks. ...

Can the Minister confirm that the Government will continue to contribute to funding this vital CST service, not just on an annual basis, and that banners at marches and demonstrations must be controlled to prohibit words of hate, such as the dreadful banner saying "Hitler was Right"? Can he confirm that the Government must prosecute with the full force of the law hate crimes against the Jewish community wherever it occurs, be it in the UK or indeed abroad: the desecration of cemeteries, graffiti on synagogues or other buildings, verbal abuse and denial of the Holocaust? ...

col 2413 To allow expressions of anti-Semitism on social media, on our streets or in any other public place must be made legally unacceptable. ...

Lord Sacks (Crossbench): ... It pains me to speak about anti-Semitism, the world's oldest hatred, but I cannot keep silent. One of the enduring facts of history is that most anti-Semites do not think of themselves as anti-Semites. "We don't hate Jews", they said in the Middle Ages, "just their religion". "We don't hate Jews", they said in the 19th century, "just their race". "We don't hate Jews", they say now, "just their nation state". ... Anti-Semitism, or any hate, becomes dangerous when three things happen. First, when it moves from the fringes of politics to a mainstream party and its leadership. Secondly, when the party sees that its popularity with the general public is not harmed thereby. Thirdly, when those who stand up and protest are vilified and abused for doing so. All three factors exist in Britain now. I never thought I would see this in my lifetime. That is why I cannot stay silent. For it is not only Jews who are at risk—so too is our humanity. ...

Lord Hunt of Wirral (Conservative): ... As a founder, supporter, trustee and now vice-president of the Holocaust Educational Trust I am always eager to raise awareness of our vital work here in the UK, including our celebrated outreach programme, which sends Holocaust survivors to schools, colleges, universities and organisations throughout the year. It is often a life-changing experience to hear first hand about where hatred can lead, and about the dangers of allowing incendiary language to go unchallenged ...

col 2414 We have also, so far, taken more than 40,000 students and teachers to the former concentration camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau. We also boast of an impressive network of over 27,000 ambassadors, who help to take our message to their own generation and the next, and we educate over 1,500 teachers every year on their teacher-training programmes. ...

Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench): ... There is an urgent need to confront anti-Semitism and to ensure that vibrant and inspiring educational learning hubs are created that challenge the rising generation to see the link between the Holocaust and contemporary forms of genocide, and to see the links between anti-Semitism and racism. As recent events have underlined, we must urgently redouble our efforts in combating this hateful virus that, yes, invariably begins with the Jews, but never ends with them. ...

The Lord Bishop of Birmingham: ... there is a need for constant vigilance to ensure that anti-Semitism plays no part in the life of our country. ... anyone involved in political, spiritual or national life should reject all language and activity that leads to prejudice, stigma or hatred towards people on the grounds of their religion, culture, origins, identity or beliefs. ...

col 2415 **Lord Sugar (Crossbench):** ... Mr Corbyn allowed matters to ramble on because, frankly, he does not give two hoots about what Jews in the UK think. He simply does not care. Of some 250,000 Jews in the UK, let us say 220,000 may be eligible to vote. If it comes to an election, 220,000 votes are a drop in the ocean. We mean nothing to him. ...

Lord Pickles (Conservative): ... I am the UK delegation leader for the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. I was part of the team that persuaded the IHRA to accept this definition. It was necessary because anti-Semitism in all its forms is growing right across Europe; it has been accelerated by the growth of ultra-nationalism and its

marriage to social media. It is also necessary because of the way that anti-Semitism has changed and adapted. In particular, it now hides behind, for example, criticism of Israel or support for Palestinian rights. It is less obviously hidden by attacks on Zionism. The repackaging of these old anti-Semitic tropes is perhaps the most horrible aspect of this.

col 2416 Even the blood libel has been repackaged and reworked for a modern audience. It is all designed to make Jewish citizens feel uncomfortable. We might suggest that they lack irony; that they are not capable of understanding the culture of their own country; that they somehow have an alliance to another country outside the United Kingdom. ...

I certainly believe that the Jewish identity is a fundamental part of the British identity. Without a vibrant Jewish community, this country would be a lesser place. ...

Baroness Deech (Crossbench): ... My Lords, in admitting that anti-Semitism today is characterised largely by hatred of Israel, the calls for a one-state solution are straightforwardly calls for the persecution, if not the destruction, of six million Jews living in Israel. History shows that when Jews are in a minority and do not have their own state—especially when they are in a minority in a Muslim state—they are subjected to persecution, expropriation and, ultimately, expulsion and killing, as happened across the Middle East in the 1940s and earlier. The disproportionate number of Israel questions in this House is not healthy, nor is it effective in any way in the pursuit of peace. ...

The Government should be commended for setting aside £50 million for a Holocaust Memorial and Education Centre but I am concerned that this might go wrong. There are already a number of Holocaust exhibitions and memorials ... Sadly, the proposed siting in Victoria Tower Gardens is arousing opposition, in part, but not wholly, justified by the small location. Controversy is exactly what one does not want to surround a venture such as this, which needs to start with acceptance and reverence. The winning design must be obviously Jewish ... The exhibition that will go with it must include the origins of and the need for Israel. Only by studying anti-Semitism over the centuries, and its continuation today, can one understand the need to support and celebrate the establishment of Israel. Children need to learn that at school in Holocaust education. Had Israel existed in time, there would have been no genocide. ...

col 2417 **Lord Haskel (Labour):** ... the law is pretty robust. So where does all this anti-Semitism come from? It comes from long-established prejudices and the modern polarisation of identity. ...

The identity prejudice is due to mixed loyalties, because some people look upon Israel as a sanctuary from persecution. ...

In these circumstances, the Government's responsibility is not to pass laws but to create a positive atmosphere in which citizens will feel confident enough not to need to pick on minorities, to go to extremes or to feel that their prejudices have been confirmed. ...

Lord Harries of Pentregarth (Crossbench): ... For nine years, I chaired the Council of Christians and Jews, which encourages Jews and Christians to work together against anti-Semitism. We found of course that the subject that we had to discuss with sensitivity and care was always the state of Israel. I have always found some words of an American scholar helpful. He studied all the statements of Christian churches since World War II and summarised the minimum consensus as follows:

“Because the state of Israel is in part the product of the ancient and living hope of the Jewish people and is of deep concern to almost all Jews, disregard for its safety and welfare is incompatible with concern for the Jewish people”.

col 2418 I repeat: disregard for the safety and welfare of Israel is incompatible with concern for the Jewish people. But of course that concern for its safety may very well go with a critique of the policies of a particular Israeli Government ...

Baroness Altmann (Conservative): ... Of course there will always be anti-Semitism and hatred on the fringes of society—minorities filled with hate towards some “other” or someone “different”, perhaps because of their skin colour, their sexual orientation or whatever—but western society seemed to have made huge strides since World War II in

eradicating and outlawing such discrimination. For the entire post-war period, Britain has been increasingly an accepting society—until now. All Governments in power in my living memory have been tolerant and welcoming of Jews. I have never felt any threat to my chosen religious beliefs, until now. ...

col 2419 Baroness Hayman (Crossbench): My Lords, nearly 50 years ago, I was sitting as the most junior member around the board table of a children's charity. Discussing a problem that had arisen, a more senior member remarked that we should have known better than to employ "a scheming little Jewess". Pretty shocked, I said that as a Jewish woman I found that remark unacceptable. There was an embarrassed silence and eventually the meeting continued. However, the point of this story is what happened next. At the end of the meeting, the chairman came up to me not to express support but to ask me to apologise to the woman who had spoken. She was an important donor to the charity. He said that I had offended her and that my remarks could harm the organisation. It was my comment, not hers, that was seen as the problem.

I fear that there are parallels half a century later. Those who call out anti-Semitism are themselves accused at best of hypersensitivity, at worst of disloyalty. ...

Returning to my story, I would argue that the blame lay not simply with the chairman, pusillanimous though he was, but with every other member of the committee, who said or did nothing. That is why I want to salute the noble Lord, Lord Popat, and every other non-Jewish member of this House who has stood out against anti-Semitism today. ...

col 2420 Lord Parekh (Labour): My Lords, during the past few weeks members of the Jewish community, including MPs and Peers, have been subjected on social media to the most abhorrent and abominable abuse. ... That community's contribution to all areas of British life has been greater than that of any other and its members have been at the forefront of the struggle against racism. I cannot think of any piece of race legislation passed during the past 40 years that has not been the creation of a member of the Jewish community. ...

I would like to provide some balance, given that the Labour Party Benches are a little under-populated—partly as if there is a sense of guilt. But there is none and I suggest that the Labour leadership's handling of the whole controversy could have been much more expeditious, much more public and much fairer. There is no reason why the leader could not have written an article or given a major speech, in which he could have explained why he found the definition unacceptable. ... Nobody is going to say that that definition, or any definition, is perfect—no definition is. In this particular case, in fact, the Home Affairs Committee report on anti-Semitism says that the definition needs to be changed and has made two amendments to it. The Labour leader was right to suggest that the definition should be changed, although not necessarily the amendment that he was proposing. However, not to have explained why was certainly unacceptable.

... in the course of this controversy there has been an unfortunate polarisation between the Jewish community on the one hand and the Labour Party, or the left, on the other. That is most unfortunate. It is unfortunate, first, for the Jewish community, because one day Labour will come to power, as I am sure it will; and, secondly, for those in the Labour Party who have close friends in the Jewish community and would not dream of anything happening to that community. ...

col 2421 Lord Sterling of Plaistow (Conservative): ... I am humbled by and proud of the contribution to mankind of the Jewish people, from their very early history through the dispersion to the present day. Of the 892 individuals who have been Nobel Prize winners since its inception, 201—22%—have been Jews or of Jewish descent.

On Sunday 18 November, the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women—AJEX—of which I have the honour to be president, will be marching in its annual Cenotaph parade, as it has done since 1934. In the First World War, more than 50,000 British Jews served, out of a community of 350,000. Likewise, in the Second World War, 60,000 served. A further 30,000 Jews who lived in the British Mandate for Palestine—now partly Israel—volunteered to serve this country. ...

I, and unquestionably those in AJEX and their families, as well as those serving today—and, indeed, the vast majority of the Jewish community—would totally disagree with the view that many would leave this country if Corbyn got to power. We are proud British Jews. We will fight with all the weapons that a great democracy such as ours will allow us to use. ...

col 2422 Lord Pannick (Crossbench): ... There have always been anti-Semites and I am afraid there always will be. But what is so alarming is that, in this great country—a country that gave refuge to my great-grandparents when they were fleeing pogroms at the end of the 19th century—the leadership of one of our major political parties is incubating anti-Semitism.

When the leader of the Labour Party calls representatives of Hamas his friends, despite the fact that their policy is to kill as many Jews—I emphasise Jews—as possible, when he applauds graffiti that show the working man oppressed by Jewish bankers, when he expresses support for a vicar who suggests that Mossad was responsible for the 9/11 outrage, and when he contends that British citizens who are Zionists do not really understand this country, it is not surprising that his shameful conduct encourages the release into the political atmosphere of a poison that is polluting our civil society. No politician who tolerates, far less encourages, such a virus is fit for public office.

Lord Beecham (Labour): ... Let us be clear that this is not just a matter for the Labour Party. All three major parties have encountered the problem to some degree. But there has for some time been a rise in the number of anti-Semitic incidents, including violence and vandalism, and latterly a tidal wave of vile abuse and threats through social media ... to which Jewish Labour MPs, particularly women, have been subjected. ...

col 2423 The Community Security Trust has for 24 years worked to promote the safety of the Jewish community and is now also assisting the Muslim community, which has also been subjected to racism. The trust deserves our gratitude and continued support. ...

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Wales Office (Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth): ... I agree very much with the importance of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition. I am very proud that this country and this Government were the first in the world to adopt the definition in 2016. ...

In preparing for this debate, part of me said that the issue was so important that I should not be party political. Another part of me said that it was so important that I did need to be party political. That part won out. But it is not an unqualified criticism of the Labour Party—far from it. It is not really the Labour Party but the leadership of the Labour Party. It is impossible to think that the Labour Party of Harold Wilson, Jim Callaghan, Michael Foot, Neil Kinnock—now the noble Lord, Lord Kinnock—Tony Blair, John Smith, Gordon Brown and Ed Miliband would be where the Labour Party is today. We know that that is not where the bulk of the Labour Party is. It is certainly not where its leadership in this House is, or where this House is at all. But it is a problem that needs addressing and needs addressing quickly. ...

... there is the issue of online cyberactivity. We have acted, and let us be clear that there is much more to be done, not just in relation to anti-Semitism ... There are issues, too, with Islamophobia. I hope and believe ... that the party will move to a definition of Islamophobia. We will be doing that in considered time with others because it is important that we demonstrate that this is broader than anti-Semitism. ...

col 2424 It is difficult to think that we are where we are now. Not long ago and not far away, we witnessed the most dreadful tyranny that the world has ever seen—the most odious ideology driven against the Jewish community and others. This country then was a beacon of light, and so it must remain. But these things are very fragile ...

My noble friend Lord Finkelstein, who alas is not in his place, wrote of his unswerving commitment to this country and his feeling of safety and security here. Yet he said that he found himself understanding how those who used to fear the knock on the door were fearing that knock on the door now. ...

col 2425 So let us be clear about the united message that is going out from this House today. ... The message is that in this country we remain totally committed to tackling anti-Semitism alongside other religious hatreds and doing whatever is needed to remain a united country of all faiths and no faith. That is the message that must go out powerfully to all politicians and to all people throughout this country.

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-09-13/debates/51BBA437-4683-4341-9469-1978445FB343/Anti-Semitism>

House of Commons Oral Answers

Islamophobia

12. **Sandy Martin (Labour):** What steps the Government are taking to tackle Islamophobia. [906880]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (Nigel Adams): Let me be clear; the Government deplore hate crime, and we are determined to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to get on in life free from harassment and fear. We are strengthening the cross-Government working group on anti-Muslim hatred. My Department and the Home Office fund Tell MAMA, which is the leading service for recording anti-Muslim incidents and supporting victims.

Sandy Martin: What discussions has the Minister had with social media companies about improving the way in which they take down anti-Muslim and Islamophobic hate crime messages from their platforms?

Nigel Adams: The hon. Gentleman is absolutely right: it is important that we continue dialogue with social media companies. Across Government, colleagues are already having such discussions with social media companies, and it is important that anything that incites hatred is taken down immediately. I hope that the social media companies are listening.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-09-13/debates/FDB62218-5FE8-4175-A99B-8C4EF5F33E0B/Islamophobia>

House of Commons Written Answers

Religion: Education

William Wragg (Conservative) [172514] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent steps his Department has taken to ensure that all state-funded schools are meeting their statutory obligation to teach religious education as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

Nick Gibb: Good quality religious education can develop children's knowledge of the values and traditions of Britain and other countries, and foster understanding among different faiths and cultures. That is why religious education remains compulsory for all state funded schools, including academies and free schools, at all key stages.

The Department does not routinely monitor schools to ensure that they meet their statutory duties, but when made aware that schools are not fulfilling their legal duties, it will investigate.

All schools are expected to publish their curriculum by subject for each academic year on their websites. Guidance on this makes specific reference to religious education.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-09-10/172514/>

Religion: Teachers

William Wragg (Conservative) [172515] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the quality of initial and continuing teacher training in religious education for primary school teachers.

Nick Gibb: It is for Initial Teacher Training (ITT) providers to determine the content and structure of courses, but they must be designed so that trainees can demonstrate that they meet all Teachers' Standards to an appropriate level. To be awarded Qualified Teacher Status trainees must "have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas" and "demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the subject and curriculum areas." This includes Religious Education for primary school teachers.

Ofsted inspects ITT programmes for compliance against the ITT Criteria, and for the quality of ITT teaching and trainee outcomes. At the end of June 2017 99% of all ITT partnerships inspected by Ofsted were judged either good or outstanding. In the 2017 Newly Qualified Teacher Survey, more than 80% of newly-qualified teachers surveyed rated the overall quality of their training as 7-10 out of 10, with 32% rating it as 9-10 out of 10. The full ITT Criteria can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/initial-teacher-training-criteria>.

Once qualified, decisions relating to teachers' professional development rest with schools, head teachers, and teachers themselves, as they are in the best position to judge their own requirements.

The Government has a number of initiatives to ensure that all teachers have access to high-quality professional development.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-09-10/172515/>

Scottish Parliament Written Answer

Hate crime reporting

S5W-18356 Annie Wells (Conservative): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on whether the Police Scotland online hate crime reporting form should contain an option to allow "online" to be recorded as a location for incidents.

Humza Yousaf: Police Scotland is currently looking to streamline and improve the online reporting form which may, in future, consider 'online' as an option for recording the location for incidents. We will continue to work closely with Police Scotland as we work to tackle hate crime and prejudice which includes developing our approach to gathering evidence around hate crime.

We will publish a new report later this year which will include information on hate related incidents with a race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and transgender identity element.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-18356>

TOP

Holocaust

House of Lords Debate

Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity

col 2450 **Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench):** To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to change the way formal international declarations of

genocide or crimes against humanity are made and to further the expeditious prosecution of those responsible. ...

col 2451 ... over the 12 years since I first raised the plight of the Rohingya Muslims in this House on 17 July 2006—and in 58 interventions of one kind or another since then—I have watched as the classic contours of genocide have unfolded. First, there is discrimination, scapegoating and targeting of a group because of its ethnicity, religion or some form of difference; then there is ostracism; then there is persecution; then come crimes against humanity; and then comes outright genocide. We have seen it again and again, from Armenia to the Holocaust, from Bosnia to Cambodia, from Burma to Darfur, with “never again” happening endlessly, all over again. ...

col 2452 Other states have been less shy to make the determination of genocide, whether in relation to historical mass atrocities or to current and ongoing atrocities. For example, the recent Daesh genocide against religious minorities in Syria and Iraq has been formally recognised by a few Governments and several parliaments, including our own House of Commons, and major international institutions. None the less, the Government refuse to make this recognition, relying on their long-standing policy. Canada and the Netherlands previously took the same position as us, using the same argument that it was not for politicians to make such a determination. ...

col 2454 **Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne (Conservative):** ... the Yazidi faith is blameless of calls for extermination or harassment of the supporters of any other faith. Their daily prayers are mirrored, or we mirror them—I speak as an Anglican—in our nine offices of the day. Like the Jews—our UK laws and customs are Judeo-Christian-based—Yazidis are hard workers and decent people who produce high-level professionals and follow the rule of law ... In our multifaith world, we must take them in. ...

After the genocide of the Holocaust, the generation of my grandparents and parents declared, “Never again”—but that has not been the case at all. As the co-author with Dr Neil Quilliam of a paper coming out next week, we feel that genocide—and its ugly sister, massacres on religious grounds—has a horrible similarity in consistent occurrence and sameness of methods. We have carefully pulled apart religious persecutions carried out over 500 years by most major faiths. This is the key: we have to accept that religious persecution is at the heart of most of these genocides. ...

col 2462 **Lord Singh of Wimbledon (Crossbench):** ... Every year we commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day and remember the systematic killing of and brutal atrocities against the Jewish community. Every year we remember and say “Never again”, but since the end of the Second World War we have seen many more systematic attempts to eliminate whole communities simply because of a difference of religion or culture. ...

col 2472 **Baroness Goldie (Conservative):** ... This Government are committed to the principle that there should be no impunity for those who commit the most serious crimes of international concern. We have demonstrated this time and again through our unwavering support to international justice and investigatory mechanisms. We have provided support—political, financial and logistical—and been instrumental in the establishment of evidence-gathering mechanisms. I have made clear what the Government’s policy is: we believe that whether genocide has been committed or whether crimes against humanity or war crimes have occurred is a matter for judicial decision after consideration of all the available evidence, rather than for Governments or non-judicial bodies. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-09-13/debates/CB30CF91-D412-4C1C-84A0-88A2E9D951CA/GenocideAndCrimesAgainstHumanity>

TOP

House of Commons Oral Answers

Trade Co-operation: UK and Israel

1. **Philip Hollobone (Conservative):** What steps he is taking to encourage trade co-operation between the UK and Israel in the (a) information and (b) agricultural technology sectors. [906889]

The Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade (Liam Fox): The UK and Israel have an important trading relationship in information and agricultural technology, which we are strengthening through our dedicated trade promotion team at our embassy in Tel Aviv. We have established a UK-Israel tech hub, which helps to create partnerships between British companies and innovative Israeli technology businesses. This is part of our confident, outward-looking approach to Britain's trading future.

Philip Hollobone: From online banking security to prescription drugs to cherry tomatoes, Israel has become an international technological and trade powerhouse. Every day, millions of Britons are benefiting from Israeli inventions and produce, even if they do not realise it. What progress is being made in the UK-Israel trade working group to ensure that this vital trade relationship continues to prosper after Brexit?

Liam Fox: My hon. Friend is right. Our trade with Israel currently stands at £3.9 billion in goods and services, with our exports up 7% in the past year. The Prime Minister met the Israeli Prime Minister in February 2017 to set up the joint trade working group, and I would like to thank the Israeli Government for their close liaison. We are dedicated to the continuity of trade and, once we leave the European Union, to having an ambitious new trade agreement that will provide even greater benefits than those we currently have.

Barry Sheerman (Labour Co-op): I do not know whether the Secretary of State listens to my favourite programme in the morning, "Farming Today", but is he aware that, following the publication yesterday of the Agriculture Bill, there is a great deal of concern in the farming community about the Bill and about the possibility of having a decent trading relationship, with high-technology components, after Brexit?

Mr Speaker: Particularly in relation to Israel.

Liam Fox: Thank you, Mr Speaker; I was wondering whether there was going to be even a tentative link to the question. The tech hub is there to help British businesses to get access to the innovations that come out of Israel across a range of sectors. It is worth pointing out that Israel is an extraordinarily innovative country and has more start-ups per capita than any other country on the planet. Where we can get UK businesses across a range of sectors to get access to such innovation, it is always a positive outcome.

Michael Fabricant (Conservative): The latest computers used in the House of Commons use Intel 7 and Intel 8 cores and above, and Shazam, Skype and FaceTime all use technology developed in Israel. What more are we doing to encourage that sort of co-operation, particularly in relation to computer technology?

Liam Fox: As I have already said, the key to that is the UK-Israel tech hub. This relates not only to the area of computers, which my hon. Friend has mentioned, but to FinTech, cyber-security, biomed, retail technology and the creative industries. These are all prime areas for co-operation between the United Kingdom and Israel, and we should celebrate that relationship and the benefits that it brings to both our populations.

Alan Brown (SNP): In the context of the agriculture sector, what representations have been made about trading with illegal Israeli settlements, which in the long run further jeopardises the two-state solution that the UK is supposed to aspire to?

Liam Fox: Our trade relationship with Israel is clearly set out in the agreement

that the European Union has with Israel, and that is the agreement that we will roll over as we leave the EU. We will want to have a further ambitious trading agreement. We believe that the extension of trade in Israel and in the wider region contributes to not only the prosperity but the political stability and security of the region.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-09-13/debates/10B117C4-AB36-4DE3-8BAB-765838C89EA6/TradeCo-OperationUKAndIsrael>

House of Commons Written Answers

Overseas Trade: Israel

Victoria Prentis (Conservative) [906898] What recent assessment he has made of the potential effect on trade with Israel of the UK leaving the EU-Israel Association Agreement.

Graham Stuart: As we leave the European Union, we are seeking continuity for our existing EU free trade agreements and other EU preferential arrangements. The UK-Israel Trade Working Group is making positive progress towards transitioning the EU – Israel Association Agreement, to maintain our strong trade and investment relationship with Israel.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-09-13/906898/>

Palestinians: Refugees

Kate Osamor (Labour Co-op) [171379] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to the press release, New UK aid package to meet immediate needs of Palestinians through UN Relief and Works Agency, published on 4 September 2018, whether she plans to allocate additional funding for Palestinian refugees as a result of the US administration's decision to cut its funding to the UNRWA.

Penny Mordaunt: The UK has announced £17 million of funding over the past four months, in addition to our original budget of £28.5 million, to protect UNRWA's vital services. We continue to work with international partners to help unlock further funding for UNRWA and are considering the UK's plans to help continue meeting the needs of Palestinian refugees across the region.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-09-06/171379/>

House of Lords Written Answers

USA: UNRWA

Baroness Helic (Conservative) [HL9961] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of the United States following the announcement that the US government will no longer fund the United Nations Relief and Works Agency; and whether they intend to continue to provide funding to that Agency.

Lord Bates: The UK remains unequivocally committed to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). The US has consistently been UNRWA's single largest donor. When the US announced their intention to withhold a planned disbursement to UNRWA in January, we were sympathetic to their concerns over the need for a broader donor base for UNRWA, but made clear to them that we did not consider a sudden cut in planned funding was the right way to address this. My officials and I continue to raise this with our US counterparts.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-09-04/HL9961/>

Palestinians: Schools

Lord Judd (Labour) [HL9978] To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to ensure that the schools for Palestinian children operated by United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees can continue their work throughout the coming academic year.

Lord Bates: The UK is committed to ensuring that the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) continues to deliver a high-quality education to over 500,000 children across the region. The UK has announced £17 million of funding over the past four months, in addition to our original budget of £28.5 million, to protect UNRWA's vital services, including education. We continue to work with international partners to help unlock further funding for UNRWA.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-09-04/HL9978/>

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Other Relevant Information

Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

Addressing anti-Semitism through education focus of event co-organized in Warsaw by OSCE Italian Chairmanship, ODIHR and group of OSCE delegations

... Participants first highlighted the importance of well-designed and supportive policies for ensuring that good educational practices are taken up across the sector. Cristina Finch, Head of ODIHR's Tolerance and Non-Discrimination department, highlighted the dual role governments have to play in this process.

"Policymakers need to ensure that anti-Semitism and other forms of prejudice are addressed through education that builds students' resilience to it," she said. "At the same time, governments need to ensure effective responses when anti-Semitism occurs in educational settings."

Counsellor Silvia Santangelo, Deputy Head of Mission for the Human Dimension of the Italian Chairmanship, added: "Combating anti-Semitism, along with other forms of intolerance and discrimination, is a priority for the Italian Chairmanship. Education is the most potent tool we have to build more inclusive and open societies, as well as for protecting the memory of the Holocaust from being distorted or erased."

Attendees also discussed how education that promotes human rights and critical thinking and deconstructs conspiracy theories can play a crucial role in empowering young people to reject intolerance. ...

Participants also discussed the recent joint OSCE/ODIHR and UNESCO publication [Addressing Anti-Semitism through Education - Guidelines for Policymakers](#), which assists government officials and educators in understanding, recognizing and challenging anti-Semitism. The guidelines were published as part of ODIHR's [Turning Words into Action to Address Anti-Semitism](#) project, which is funded by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.osce.org/odihr/394919>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) (Amendment) Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/holocaustreturnofculturalobjectsamendment.html>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/marriageact1949amendment.html>

Online Forums Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/onlineforums.html>

Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/organdonationdeemedconsent.html>

Scottish Parliament

Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Bill

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/108681.aspx>

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Consultations ** new or updated today

**** closes today**

20 years of the Human Rights Act (closing date 14 September 2018)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/human-rights-committee/news-parliament-2017/20-years-human-rights-act-launch-17-19/>

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The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438