



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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See the House of Lords Debate on “Anti-Semitism” in the “Foreign Affairs” section below, which also includes discussion about antisemitism in the UK.

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Holocaust

House of Commons Written Answer

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Edward Leigh (Conservative) [263701] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, on what date the UK Holocaust Foundation commissioned the CBRE to search for a suitable site for the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.

Heather Wheeler: CBRE commenced work the week commencing 16 November 2015.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-12/263701/>

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

Gaza: Children

Catherine West (Labour) [264457] To ask the Secretary of State for International

Development, what recent assessment he has made of the welfare of children living in Gaza.

Andrew Murrison: The UK continually monitors the humanitarian situation in Gaza. We are concerned by the high levels of poverty, unemployment, food insecurity, and the impacts of the humanitarian situation on children. The World Health Organisation (WHO) in a report on 31 May titled 'The Gaza trauma response', noted that from 30th March 2018 to 30th March 2019, during the 'Great March of Return' demonstrations, 172 people became permanently disabled because of their injuries, of whom 36 were children.

The UK is committed to help the growing needs of approximately 1.5 million registered refugees in Gaza through support to the UN Refugees and Works Agency (UNRWA). Between 2019-2020, the UK will provide up to £80m to UNRWA. UNRWA runs over 274 schools and educates over 278,000 children in Gaza. We are providing £2 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to help support several of the most urgent health needs in Gaza, including drugs, surgical equipment and physical rehabilitation for people with disabilities. We have recently announced £1.6m aid to the World Health Organisation Appeal, which will support trauma medical treatment in the Gaza Strip, including establishment of a new limb reconstruction centre.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-13/264457/>

The report referred to above can be read at

http://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/palestine/documents/who_emergency_trauma_response_to_gaza_demonstrations_2018_2019.pdf?ua=1&ua=1

Palestinian Authority: Pay

Joan Ryan (Change UK) [265408] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 11 June 2019 to Question 261075, whether the wages of any UK-funded Palestinian Authority public servants have been reduced as a result of Palestinian Authority spending cuts.

Andrew Murrison: DFID officials are aware that the Palestinian Authority (PA) has begun to make partial salary payments to public sector officials earning 2,000 NIS (£425) or above a month and can confirm that this includes health and education sector public servants whose salaries are funded through UK aid. The UK continues to support a stable PA which can act as an effective partner for peace with Israel. UK aid to the PA's health and education sectors is used exclusively to pay the salaries of vetted health and education public servants, including teachers, doctors and nurses, in the West Bank. The EU vets the list of PA health and education sector employees before every disbursement of financial aid to ensure only eligible beneficiaries receive UK aid, at a range of grades based on the PA payroll system. These payments are then independently audited. The PA's decision to make partial salary payments to public sector officials does not affect the robust financial safeguards that ensure UK financial aid reaches its intended beneficiaries.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-17/265408/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-06/261075/>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Middle East Peace Process: Call to reduce the risk of violence: Statement by Ambassador Karen Pierce, UK Permanent Representative to the UN, at the UN Security briefing on the situation in the Middle East Peace Process

... we share the Secretary-General's views on the expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem. It was disappointing that on 30 May the Israeli authorities published tenders for the construction of over 500 settlement units in East Jerusalem. And that's a decision that we condemn Mr President.

As others have pointed out the continued escalation of settlement activity in the West Bank and East Jerusalem is contrary to international law as reaffirmed by Resolution 2334. An annexation of any part of the West Bank would also be contrary to international law - not to mention destructive to peace efforts. ...

Turning to Gaza, the United Kingdom condemns the rocket attack by Palestinian militants against southern Israel on 13 June. We strongly condemn all acts of terrorism and we call upon Hamas and other terrorist groups to put a permanent end to their incitement and rocket fire against Israel. ...

I want to turn if I may to the altercations on Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount on 2 June. Given the religious importance and the political sensitivity of the holy sites, we look to all parties to maintain the status quo and engage in dialogue to assume a calm, especially during religious observances such as the holy month of Ramadan. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/middle-east-peace-processcall-to-reduce-the-risk-of-violence>

United Nations

Special Coordinator Reports Largest Expansion of West Bank Settlements in 2 Years, as He Briefs Security Council on Middle East Peace Process

... **Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General**, said: "Developments during this reporting period cannot be divorced from the broader context of Israel's continued military occupation of Palestinian territory and settlement activity; Hamas' hold over Gaza and military activity; the threat of war; unilateral actions that undermine peace efforts, and severe challenges to the fiscal viability of the Palestinian Authority." ...

Presenting the tenth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016), covering 25 March to 10 June, he said Israel advanced, approved or tendered nearly 6,000 housing units in the occupied West Bank ...

Meanwhile, demolitions and seizures of Palestinian-owned structures continued across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, he reported ... including during Ramadan. Turning to the Gaza Strip, he said the Israel Defense Forces hit 300 militant targets in the enclave, striking 21 residential buildings. Incendiary kites and other devices continued to be launched from Gaza, starting fires in southern Israel. In the West Bank, meanwhile, four Palestinians were killed by Israel's security forces ... Several other incidents of violence occurred during the reporting period, alongside settler-related violence in which 1 Palestinian was killed and 32 others were injured.

He went on to provide updates relating to cases before the Israeli authorities pertaining to perpetrators of violent acts, and on provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric, which persisted during the reporting period. On 15 May, a senior Hamas official in Gaza warned Israelis that "the day of your slaughter, extermination and annihilation is near", he noted, recalling that Israeli officials also made highly provocative statements, with an outgoing member of the Knesset threatening to eliminate the families of Palestinian

prisoners and “bury [them] with pigs”. ...

Reiterating that the expansion of Israeli settlements has no legal effect and constitutes a flagrant violation of international law, he said the threat of demolitions and displacement of Palestinians in Area C, East Jerusalem and Hebron’s H2 area are also of concern. “The situation in Gaza continues to be perilous,” he added, unequivocally condemning all attacks on Palestinian and Israeli civilians. ...

Anne Guegen (France), expressing concern over the deteriorating situation in Gaza, emphasized: “We must do all we can to prevent an escalation that could lead to a new conflict.” The humanitarian situation remains disastrous and France has pledged to double its contribution to UNRWA in 2019. ... she stressed that Gaza’s future cannot be separated from the notion of a two-State solution. Israel’s continued settlement-expansion policy continues to undermine the latter ... underlining that France does not recognize that country’s sovereignty over any of the occupied territories. ...

Jerry Matthews Matjila (South Africa) declared: “We are fiddling while the reality of an independent, safe, secure and self-sufficient Palestinian State is slowly dwindling.” ...

Joanna Wronecka (Poland) said the firing of rockets into Israel must be condemned in the strongest possible terms, reiterating his country’s recognition of Israel’s legitimate right to self-defence. Hamas and others in Gaza must refrain from provocations against Israel, including incendiary kites and balloons launched with the aim of damaging Israeli property and assets. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/sc13853.doc.htm>

See above for the United Kingdom contribution to the debate.

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Foreign Affairs

House of Lords Debate

Anti-Semitism

col 845 **Baroness Berridge (Conservative)**: ... When first preparing for this debate, I was struck by the origins of the word “anti-Semitism”. To use “ism” makes it sound to ordinary people like an ideology or a religion such as Hinduism, pluralism or capitalism. Of course, “Semitism” relates to the Semite people, who, according to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, include, “Arabs, Akkadians, Canaanites, Hebrews, some Ethiopians and Aramaean tribes”.

Modern usage does not include all those people, but it does definitely tell us that what we are talking about is hating people, not a religion or an ideology. That is a vital distinction that enables us to maintain freedom of speech. But the use of “ism” was deliberate, as the term was first used in 1879 by the German agitator Wilhelm Marr to make the anti-Jewish campaign seem more reasonable, rational and perhaps more like the European Enlightenment. It is a great shame that the term has stuck as it is anything but rational. ...

col 846 My initial instinct is supported by the recent survey by the *Jewish Chronicle* that fewer than half the people in Britain know what anti-Semitism means, so using the substance of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition—“hatred of Jews”—makes things simple and clearer, and I commend it.

Globally, we are seeing in Europe, America and even Argentina a resurgence of hatred, threats of violence, harassment, vandalism and even murder and kidnap of Jews because of who they are. The hatred that led to the Holocaust and 6 million dead Jews in Europe is a lesson from history that is not being taught in enough history lessons. From Berlin to

Buenos Aires, incidents of Jew hatred have increased drastically in recent years. ...

The nature of Jew hatred includes imposing false stereotypes and conspiracy theories. In Poland and Hungary, about four out of 10 people said that Jews had, “too much influence in business and finance”, around the world, and 20% of British respondents thought that the global Jewish population was 20%. Those figures are deeply concerning and it is not a surprise that when 16,500 Jews from 12 European countries were interviewed by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights last year, 85% said that the community’s main concern was anti-Semitism. Less reported was that 72% of those Jews surveyed also expressed concern about the increasing intolerance towards Muslims. Hatred of the other does not usually stay with one category of “the other”. ...

In 2017 there was a muted celebration of 500 years since the Reformation. With the state of Europe’s attitude towards to Jews, celebrating a man for his undoubted doctrinal brilliance but whose views on Jews moved from warmth to hatred and wrath was difficult. Martin Luther’s 1542 treatise *On the Jews and their Lies* is staggering. He refers to “whoring and murderous people” and “a rabble of snakes” ...

Did this pave the way for Hitler and the views posted today? ...

col 847 Jews are not asking for special treatment. The atrocities of the Second World War led not to a UN declaration on just Jewish religious freedom but on freedom of religion or belief for all. Jews are not saying we cannot criticise the Israeli state and its policies. ...

col 848 I want Jews to know that I am convinced—and distressed—that without these awful teachings at the time of the advent of the printing press it is hard to think that Jew hatred would have taken root in Europe in the way it did. Aggressive nationalism and assertions of Christian Europe, particularly in eastern Europe, are feeding on this history and putting at risk anyone considered other—Jew, Muslim and, potentially, Roma, alike. ...

Generally, our law makes an important distinction between the hatred of ideas, philosophy or opinions, and words or actions expressing hatred of people. Our law applies to everyone and should be so enforced. I have a quote: “I have some Jewish friends, very good friends. They are not like the other Jews, that’s why they are my friends”—these are the words of the Prime Minister of Malaysia at the Cambridge Union a few days ago, and the audience laughed. ...

col 849 **Lord Harris of Haringey (Labour):** ... The re-emergence of hatred of Jews—to use the phrase she prefers—in continental Europe less than 75 years after the Shoah ended is a stark warning of the fragility of our post-war norms. Surveys show that, in many parts of Europe, Jews feel unsafe and insecure while far-right parties that unashamedly parade anti-Semitic tropes gain significant numbers of votes. ...

... with a deep sense of shame, I want to talk about the party I have been a member of for almost 50 years. Labour has a proud history of combating racism and discrimination, and of opposing fascism and anti-Semitism. It is therefore profoundly shocking for those of us brought up in that tradition to find our party now the subject of a formal investigation by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. ...

It undermines the Labour Party’s whole ethos, the values of equality, decency and solidarity ... Over three months ago, I wrote as chair of the Labour Peers’ group to Jeremy Corbyn, the leader of the party. That letter expressed our dismay—no, worse than that, our alarm—at the continuing failure to remove anti-Semites from our party. I have not had the courtesy of a reply. Last week, I met two women who had been verbally and physically harassed at a meeting of their local Labour Party because they were Jewish. I wish I could say that this was an isolated instance but, alas, it was not. ...

col 850 Too often those who have complained about anti-Semitism have been dismissed as being apologists for, or even in the pay of, the Israeli Government or Mossad, or we are told that the cases are few and far between. Any anti-Semite in the Labour Party is one too many. The party’s abject failure to deal effectively with anti-Semitism over the last three years cannot be ascribed to inadequate resourcing of the complaints and compliance function in the Labour Party head office, or blamed on inadequate or outdated processes.

The failure is a political one; it is a failure of leadership. ...

Baroness Ludford (Liberal Democrat): ... The fact that this debate is more necessary than ever in my lifetime shows how anti-Semitism is becoming pervasive, as was brought out in the report last year by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights ... The report found that negative stereotypes are being reproduced and ingrained and that this pervasive anti-Semitism is undermining Jews' feelings of safety and security throughout Europe, such that they and their family and friends cannot live lives free of worry. I am deeply ashamed that this is happening to my fellow citizens. I do not want to live in a society in which they are afraid and subject to prejudice, discrimination and hate.

The same survey found that anti-Semitism is not only pervasive but has also become normalised. The report states, "people face so much antisemitic abuse that some of the incidents they experience appear trivial to them". That is totally shocking. ...

col 851 A poll by the news organisation CNN last September showed that three in 10 adults said that Jewish people have too much influence in finance and business; one in five said they have too much influence on the media; and three in 10 said that Jewish people use the Holocaust to advance their own position. ...

Anti-Semitism originated as traditional religious prejudice, but it transformed into what a historian called "modern anti-Semitism": visions of Jews conspiring to take over all the main institutions of the state, encapsulated in the fake news *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. ...

Lord Pickles (Conservative): ... this debate ... coincides with the first joint meeting on Monday of special envoys on anti-Semitism, organised in Bucharest by the Romanian President of the Council of the EU and the World Jewish Congress. ...

The meeting concluded with a four-point action plan. The first is on the security of Jewish communities, and states that public authorities—central and local—have a responsibility to ensure the security of the members of the Jewish community and the institutions, and to support and protect the victims of anti-Semitic and hate crimes. ...

col 852 I have seen this with my own eyes at the Conservative conference in Manchester a couple of years ago, when a young man wearing a kippah was abused by a very well-dressed, middle-class, left-wing crowd. The Y-word, the C-word and the F-word were used. There were references to the smoking chimneys of Auschwitz. He was spat upon and, to their eternal shame, the police stood by and did nothing. ...

The second action point was the endorsement of the non-legally binding working definition of anti-Semitism adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. ...

The third action point was financing Holocaust research, education and remembrance in an efficient way to combat existing threats to the remembrance of the Holocaust, such as Holocaust denial and distortion, together with encouraging academic research and protecting academic freedom from undue influence. The Holocaust Educational Trust, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and the memorial planned for outside this building are a good example. I met with a prominent objector to the memorial yesterday. At first we talked about views, trees and open spaces. He said that it was a good idea but in the wrong place, going on to say, "I don't see why we should have a monument outside Parliament to the so-called Holocaust". I queried the qualification "so-called". He said, "Holocaust means 'burnt offering', and most of them were gassed". Leaving aside the victims of the Nazis who were starved, worked to death, hanged or shot, pedantic semantics is no real defence of casual anti-Semitism.

Fourthly, the recording and collecting of hate crime data should be improved, including that on combating anti-Semitism. ...

The Lord Bishop of Chester: ... I view anti-Semitism as perhaps the greatest tragedy and disgrace in the history of the Christian Church. ...

Christian complicity arose after the break between the Church and the Synagogue in the late first century of our era, and with the emergence of the view that the Christian Church

had replaced the Jews as God's chosen people. The properly New Testament view that Christians had been graciously grafted into Israel to share its promises and inheritance reasserted itself only in the 20th century, after nearly two millennia. ...

col 853 I have been shocked and deeply disappointed by the contemporary re-emergence of anti-Semitism. What are the underlying causes? Further research into this question is still needed, but clearly today there is a connection with opposition to the current policies of the State of Israel—which so easily becomes falsely associated with the belief that Israel itself has no right to exist. ...

col 854 **Lord Leigh of Hurley (Conservative):** ... The Anti-Defamation League's survey in 2014 ... found anti-Semitic attitudes in around a quarter to a third of all global citizens, even though 27% of people had never met a Jewish person. ... Perhaps not surprisingly, 70% of people in the Middle East had heard about the Holocaust but chose to dismiss it as a myth, or as having been greatly exaggerated. ...

col 856 **Lord Parekh (Labour):** ... Israel's treatment of Palestinians ... should not go unmentioned. The relationship between the two is basically that between the lion and the mouse. What are Palestinians? If Israel wanted, it could snuff them out in a few seconds. Here is a country with enormous soft power and enormous strength. It should have the sense of security and self-confidence to say to helpless people, "You send out rockets and do silly things, but we are prepared to be magnanimous and forgiving. Let us open a new chapter in a peaceful relationship". Such an act of generosity and self-confidence would do a great deal. A community that has suffered so much could easily turn its suffering into a signal of sympathy with suffering elsewhere. ...

Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench): ... The rise in anti-Semitism, sometimes incubated within the walls of this Palace, is completely unacceptable. I have watched with incredulity and dismay as Luciana Berger, who inherited some of my former Liverpool constituency, has been hounded and vilified. It is truly shocking to read reports of Jewish homes being daubed with offensive graffiti and of the desecration of Jewish cemeteries, along with the promotion of hatred on university campuses and through social media. In 2018, the Community Security Trust logged 1,652 anti-Semitic incidents, a 16% increase. ...

col 858 **Lord Finkelstein (Conservative):** ... Lenin argued that capitalism is economically sustainable only because companies seek profits abroad. They then need Governments to protect their foreign investments through military adventure. So imperialism protects capitalism, and to bring down capitalism you have to bring down imperialism. So anti-colonial resistance movements—Iran, Chávez, Hezbollah—are the core of the anti-capitalist movement. Why does this lend itself to anti-Semitism? First, because anti-imperialists such as JA Hobson have always seen Jews as the owners of finance houses on whose behalf racist imperialism is conducted. In other words, these particular anti-imperialists are anti-racists who blame Jews for racism. This is an explanation of the mystery of how people who claim that they are anti-racist can in fact be anti-Semitic. It is the Jews' fault.

Secondly, anti-imperialists now see the great world empire as the United States, see the Middle East as the centre of this empire and see Israel and Zionism—the Jews, in other words—as the great creators and symbol of this imperialism. In other words, left anti-Semitism is not a few stray tweets and a gaffe or two. Nor does it belong to all members of the Labour Party. It is a system of thought that belongs to a strand of progressive thinking which can only be eradicated by challenging the central tenets of that thinking. ...

col 860 **Baroness Warsi (Conservative):** ... Racism, as we have heard, is not found just in the kind of circles we would have found it in in the past. It is in very respectable circles; it is rooted in liberalism. There is also faith-based racism: it is not true that people of faith are welcoming of other people of faith. Therefore, I felt it was important, as a Muslim, to lend my voice to this fight against anti-Semitism. ... it should not be left to Christians to

... speak for Christians, for Muslims to speak for Muslims and for Jews to speak for Jews. ...

Lord Campbell-Savours (Labour): My Lords, my concern is the dilution of the term “anti-Semitism” and the resultant public response. The line between legitimate criticism of Israel’s actions in the West Bank and Gaza as against real anti-Jewish prejudice has become blurred. The danger in blurring is that the public will set a high bar for the treatment of accusations of anti-Semitism. ...

col 861 I reject accusations that my party is institutionally racist. I accept that there is a problem in my party—as, indeed, in all parties—but what is happening is that many in my party are deeply concerned and confused by Netanyahu’s attitude to the settlements and calls for annexation. There is a particular problem in Labour-supporting ethnic minority communities, who join with Palestinians in feeling targeted as fellow Muslims, and a small minority of whom are clearly anti-Semitic. The treatment of the Palestinians is being used by racists across Europe to foster prejudice against Jews. It is all very frightening, and Israel needs to reflect. ...

Finally, I will comment on anti-Semitism on the internet. As the Janner case unravels, we and IICSA will have to face up to the truth: we will find a strong link between anti-Semitism and the accusations. Equally, we will find that the lead accuser, repeatedly named in the media in November 1991 as Paul Winston, who has not been linked in any way to anti-Semitism but who has a substantial criminal record arising from problems in his childhood, is now being used by anti-Semites to foster hatred of the Jews. ...

col 862 **Lord Harries of Pentregarth (Crossbench):** ... My starting point is some words of an American scholar, Paul Van Buren, who surveyed all the Protestant church documents on the subject of Israel since World War II and concluded:

“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”.

That, I stress, is the bare minimum: disregard for the safety and welfare of Israel is incompatible with concern for the Jewish people. ...

The word Zionist should not be used as a term of abuse. When it is, we have to ask why. ...

col 864 **Lord Mitchell (Crossbench):** ... The ADL and Jewish policy review surveys both report that Jews are well regarded in the UK. However, these sentiments are not reflected or shared in the opinions of British Jews themselves, who feel that anti-Semitism is a major and growing threat. In the UK, attitudes towards Jews have also been analysed by political leaning. Hostility from the far right is centred around ancient anti-Semitism: Jews have too much power, they have different loyalties from the rest of the population and they get rich at the expense of others. From the far left, the vitriol is centred more on Israel. Israel is an apartheid state, it is committing mass murder in Palestine and it has too much control over global affairs. ...

col 866 **Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated):** ... I have seen the statistics and accept that there has been a rise in anti-Semitic incidents over the last three years, but I also note—from reports by Tell MAMA and the recent report from the all-party group led by the noble Baroness, Lady Warsi—that there has been a much greater rise in Islamophobic incidents over the same period and that they are more frequent and severe. ...

I suggest that some if not many people who commit anti-Semitic acts do not distinguish between ordinary Jewish people—I know that noble Lords hate that phrase—and the Zionist Israeli Government of what is now called the Jewish State of Israel. It is too difficult a distinction for many people to make. ...

col 867 I have said harsh things about the Government of Israel and their cheerleaders in this country over the years—I know that. But I am sick of the filthy abuse that I get online, sick of the accusations of anti-Semitism being levelled against me and appalled that I never get any apology, even when the accusations are found to be fabricated, as they were two years ago.

Finally, I wish noble Lords to know that I am not anti-Semitic. I have never been anti-Semitic, and I never will be anti-Semitic. I have Jewish and gentile friends who will vouch for me. But I am anti-injustice, and I think that the people of Palestine have suffered a terrible injustice over the last 100 years at the hands of the Zionist movement—I apologise if noble Lords do not like that phrase—and presently by the Israeli Government. On that I shall not be silenced.

Lord Sacks (Crossbench): ... I have just returned from a conference in Warsaw. It is a city that I do not know well, and I was shaken to discover that the Warsaw ghetto, which existed between November 1940 and May 1943, was pretty much in the centre of town. With its nine-foot-high walls topped by barbed wire, holding 400,000 Jews, its existence must have been known by everyone in Warsaw.

It was there that Jews were systematically starved and enslaved. In the summer of 1942, 254,000 of them were sent by train to their deaths by gas in the extermination camp called Treblinka. In April and May 1943, the Germans set about the destruction of the ghetto and the extermination of its population—300,000 were killed by bullet or gas, and 92,000 died through typhoid and starvation. That happened in open view in the centre of one of the great cities of Europe and no one protested. Try to imagine 400,000 Hindus or Sikhs imprisoned within ghetto walls in the middle of London. Imagine people passing those walls every day, knowing that behind them thousands were dying or being sent to their deaths, and no one saying a word. How did it happen?

It happened because in the 19th century, in the heart of emancipated Europe, anti-Semitism, once dismissed as a primitive prejudice of the Middle Ages, was reborn, mutated, promoted and tolerated throughout Europe. ...

That is where we are today. Within living memory of the Holocaust, anti-Semitism has returned, exactly as it did in the 19th century, just when people had begun to feel that they had finally vanquished the hatreds of the past. Today, there is hardly a country in the world, certainly not a single one in Europe, where Jews feel safe. It is hard to emphasise how serious that is, not just for Jews but for our shared humanity, and not just for what it represents now, but for the danger that it signals for the future. A society, or for that matter a political party, that tolerates anti-Semitism—that tolerates any hate—has forfeited all moral credibility. You cannot build a future on the malign myths of the past. You cannot sustain freedom on the basis of hostility and hate. ...

col 869 Lord Singh of Wimbledon (Crossbench): ... I believe that talk of a worldwide anti-Jewish conspiracy is misleading and, importantly, takes us away from the real problem which is the way in which unprincipled politicians play on ignorance and majority bigotry, regardless of the consequences suffered by others, to achieve their ends. In Germany, Hitler blamed the Jews. In the India of 1984, it was the tiny Sikh minority. The killing of innocents in gas chambers is evil, but is it any more evil than dousing men, women and children with kerosene and burning them alive? ...

col 871 Lord Gold (Conservative): ... More Jews were killed in anti-Semitic violence around the world in 2018 than during any other year in decades. The number of anti-Semitic incidents recorded in the UK alone in 2018 was the highest ever. As we have heard, anti-Semitism is no longer confined to the activities of the far left or the far right but has become mainstream; it is seen in public forums, debates and discussions and manifested in all media channels, including most notably the social networks. ...

col 872 Lord Palmer of Childs Hill (Liberal Democrat): ... A strange feature of anti-Semitism is that it occurs even in areas where there are no Jews. Anti-Semitism is possibly the original source of fake news. This can cover many areas. The most popular appears to be blaming Jewish bankers, the favourite being the house of Rothschild due to the difficulty in finding other so-called Jewish banks. ...

Then there is the preposterous fake news blaming the Jews, the Zionists and the Israelis for the disaster of 9/11 and the Twin Towers. ...

col 873 I am pleased to say that, as an Orthodox Jew born and living in the UK, I had not until recently seen a growth of anti-Semitism. I will, however, relate how I experience anti-Semitism, which some may not recognise as such. My noble friend Lady Ludford said that many of these things are often thought of as trivial, but they are not.

In 1997 I was a candidate in the general election, having fought four previous general elections. The Labour Party canvassers had a doorstep patter along the lines that they were calling on behalf of the Christian gentleman. The clear implication was that I qualified as neither a Christian nor a gentleman. At all public meetings one of the first questions from the audience was whether the candidates, including me, subscribed to Christian values. ... It was the election in which I was stopped and told—believe it—“Jew, go home”. ...

col 874 What happens to students on campus is sometimes quite horrific. At a prominent UK university, a Jewish student went out for the evening without locking the door to his room. When he returned, he found that a swastika had been etched into the pinboard on his wall. ... A lecturer at a Midlands university recently hosted and spoke at an event titled “Palestinian Rights, Prevent and the Misuse of Antisemitism”. Three Jewish students attended the event and afterwards went up to talk to the lecturer who had hosted the meeting to disagree with some of the points made. The net result was that the lecturer made an official complaint against these Jewish students, accusing them of intimidation for approaching her at the end of the meeting and of having recorded the meeting, which they had not. ...

The modern manifestation of anti-Semitism is the way in which Zionism is portrayed. ...

I stress that in Israel all religions are accepted; apostates, those who change their religion, are not harmed. LGBT people are accepted, and the country has one of the largest Gay Pride marches in the world. ... The interesting thing is that in the most recent general election in Israel, the third-largest group in the Knesset was made up of the Arab parties. In the previous Knesset, when they stood as one group, they formed the second-largest group. This hardly sounds like an apartheid state. ...

col 875 **Lord Collins of Highbury (Labour):** ... My parents—not my school, sadly—taught me never to forget the evil crimes of the Nazis, as passionately described by the noble Lord, Lord Sacks. Yet as we have heard in the debate, more than 70 years after the Shoah we see the repeated use—in the US by senior politicians and elsewhere—of anti-Semitic tropes reminiscent of the words of Goebbels. ...

In his speech at the end of last year, the noble Lord, Lord Ahmad, argued that the rising tide of anti-Semitism and, “the issues of rising religious hate crime against minority communities”, posed a real challenge in the UK and abroad. He said that “divisive voices and actions” could be defeated, “only through collective and collaborative action”. That is what today’s debate is about—what we, not others, do together. ...

col 877 **The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon):** ... The noble Lord, Lord Palmer of Childs Hill, and all noble Lords made the point that in the same month that we commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Normandy landings, which marked the beginning of the end of the Holocaust, we still have to hold this debate on anti-Semitism. As the noble Lord, Lord Harris, reminded us in his powerful remarks, it shows the need to continue to act on this important issue. It is also clear to me that this old evil continues to blight the lives of Jewish communities throughout the world.

col 878 As we have heard ... in 2018, the Community Security Trust logged a record high of more than 1,600 anti-Semitic attacks. The USA has suffered appalling fatal shootings in synagogues. People have been attacked simply for practising their faith. ...

col 879 If we ignore this issue, it will not go away. The theme of next January’s Holocaust Memorial Day is “stand together”. That is what we all must do and the Government are determined to do: stand with people of all faiths and none. As we heard from the noble Lord, Lord Sacks, the worst humanitarian crimes of history have occurred when groups

were singled out, marginalised and scapegoated ...

I was interviewed after [my speech at the UN General Assembly last year] and the journalist said, "Minister, despite being a Muslim, you're very strong on anti-Semitism". I corrected him, saying that it is because I am a Muslim that I am strong on anti-Semitism because of the common humanity that unites people of every faith. ...

Israel is a country that brings together communities of all faiths, as I saw when we visited Jerusalem. As I saw when I visited Haifa, it is a country that protects those minorities who are often persecuted elsewhere. I say to the noble Baroness, Lady Tonge, that because of the strength of that relationship, when it comes to those challenges—when it comes to some of those questions she has raised with me—we are able to raise them bilaterally. ...
col 880 ... the UK was among the first to adopt the working definition of anti-Semitism in 2016. We value the definition because it illustrates specific examples of behaviour that may be anti-Semitic. This means that while it is not legally binding, it is a useful tool for criminal justice agencies and other public bodies in understanding how anti-Semitism manifests itself in the world today. It also helps combat Holocaust denial, in an age of indifference to objective truth. For these reasons, we are lobbying others to adopt the definition. ...

col 881 In the words of the revered and respected Rabbi Hillel, who said in the Babylonian Talmud 2,000 years ago: "That which is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour. That is the whole Torah; the rest is commentary". ...

col 882 I have never felt that faith is to blame. In all faiths and beliefs, collectively, lies the answer; that is what brings us together today. Perhaps I may end with the wise words of my mother, which define my own ideology thus. One day when I returned, as a Muslim attending a Christian school, from learning about Judaism, she said very sweetly to me: "Tariq, there is no confusion. When we build, we build with the foundations and the foundations of our faith are Judaism. After those foundations, the walls of Christianity were erected and after that, the roof of Islam completed the house of Abraham. The other windows and doors represent other faiths and beliefs, which together constitute the house of God". ...

Baroness Berridge: ... if our citizens, or European citizens, are listening to this debate and have problems, their problems may be the fault of their Government or of the EU; their problems, perish the thought, may even be their own fault. But what they are not is the fault of the Jews.

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-06-20/debates/D9310F3B-861B-4070-8F29-0750104A5149/Anti-Semitism>

House of Commons Oral Answer

Business of the House

Jim Shannon (DUP): On Sunday 16 June, the Quebec Government passed Bill 21, which prevents judges, police officers, teachers and other public servants from wearing religious symbols such as the kippah, the turban and the hijab while at work. The Bill clearly contravenes article 18 of the international covenant on civil and political rights, which says that the right to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, or the rights and freedoms of others. To say that a teacher who wears a cross or a hijab is somehow a threat to public safety and health is an assertion that is both offensive and groundless. It is important that the UK raises this issue with our Canadian friends. Will the Leader of the House agree to a statement on the matter or, better still, refer it to a Minister from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and request that the FCO contacts the Quebec Government immediately?

Mel Stride: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his important question. Ultimately, it would not be appropriate for me to comment directly from the Dispatch Box on the position taken by the Canadian Government and their legislation—not least because I am not entirely familiar with the precise detail—other than to restate our position, which is that in this Parliament we are entirely committed to freedom of religious belief and the promotion of respect between people.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-06-20/debates/A1FBA88F-E26A-4D35-931A-BBF0A92CD105/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-D00FB033-BC79-4138-B7BA-F036A19898BB>

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Other Relevant Information

United Nations

We Must Extinguish Faith-Based Violence, Xenophobia by Tackling Hate Speech, Protecting Religious Sites, Secretary-General Tells Interfaith Summit

... Around the world, we are seeing a menacing wave of intolerance and hate-based violence targeting worshippers of many faiths. Sadly – and disturbingly – such vicious incidents are becoming all too familiar. In recent months alone, we have seen Jews murdered in synagogues, their gravestones defaced with swastikas; Muslims gunned down in mosques, their religious sites vandalized; Christians killed at prayer, their churches torched. Houses of worship must always be safe havens.

Beyond the violent attacks, there is an increasingly loathsome rhetoric directed at anyone considered the “other”: xenophobia aimed not only at religious groups, but also at minorities, migrants and refugees. Social media is being exploited for bigotry. Hate speech is spreading like wildfire and we must extinguish it.

I have announced two United Nations initiatives in response: one, in support of the protection of religious sites; the other, launched earlier this week, to tackle hate speech.

There are those who insist on using fear to divide communities. To them, we say: diversity is a richness, never a threat. As part of one humanity, it is our duty to look after each other. Hatred is a menace to everyone – and so fighting it is a job for everyone.

The world must step up to stamp out anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim hatred, persecution of Christians and all other forms of racism, xenophobia, discrimination and incitement. Political and religious leaders have a special responsibility to promote peaceful coexistence. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/sgsm19633.doc.htm>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill

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

Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) (Amendment) Bill

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

International Development Assistance (Palestinian National Authority Schools) Bill

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

Palestinian Statehood (Recognition) Bill

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

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Consultations

** new or updated today

****closes in 7 days**

Scottish Human Rights Commission Draft Strategic Plan (closing date 28 June 2019)

<http://www.scottishhumanrights.com/media/1860/strategic-plan-consultation-vfinal-eh.docx>

****closes in 10 days**

Online Harms White Paper (closing date 1 July 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/online-harms-white-paper>

Opt-out organ donation: organs and tissues excluded from the new system (closing date 22 July 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/opt-out-organ-donation-organs-and-tissues-excluded-from-the-new-system>

Regulation of pre-paid funeral plans (closing date 25 August 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/regulation-of-pre-paid-funeral-plans-consultation-on-a-policy-proposal>

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