

Opinion

Hatred of Israel and Jews can't be separated

The left is institutionally anti-Israel, while the media has conspired to ignore Palestinian racism

Melanie Phillips



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The current uproar over antisemitism is truly a wonder to behold. For the past three decades and more, antisemitism was the prejudice that dared not speak its name. It was deemed to have been stamped out, other than among cranks on the far right.

Anyone rash enough to protest that the anti-Israel animus in progressive circles was a mutation of ancient Jew-hatred was told they were "waving the shroud of the Holocaust" to sanitise the crimes of Israel. There could be no connection. The left was institutionally anti-racist, wasn't it?

On the contrary, the left is institutionally anti-Israel and the connection is irrefutable. For sure, many who loathe Israel may not be hostile to Jews as people. Nevertheless the narrative of Israel to which they subscribe is inescapably anti-Jew.

This is because antisemitism is a unique phenomenon. No other people has ever been demonised in this way by lies and libels. The animus against Israel is unique in the same way. It is not the legitimate "criticism" that should accrue to Israel like any other nation. It treats Israel quite unlike any other country.

As with classic Jew-hatred, it is

obsessional. No other country, however despotic or tyrannical, consumes and convulses the progressive mind as does democratic, human rights-driven Israel.

The hostility is irrational, based on demonstrable untruths and distortions. It holds Jews/Israel to standards expected of no other country; it denies the victimisation of Jews/Israelis; it claims Jews/Israel exercise malign and conspiratorial global influence.

Among the educated classes, Israel, the target of decades of Arab exterminatory aggression, is almost universally presented as the villain and the Palestinians as its victims. Israel is held to be responsible for the absence of a Palestine state and thus the obstacle to solving the Middle East conflict.

The fact that the Arabs turned down proposals or offers of a

On campuses, Jewish students run a gauntlet of hatred and bigotry

Palestine state alongside Israel in 1937, 1947, 2000 and 2008, responding instead with terrorism or war, is ignored. The repeated statements of the Palestinian leadership that its real aim is to capture all of Israel are also ignored. It is never reported how the Palestinian Authority-controlled media and educational materials routinely incite Palestinian children to hate Jews, murder Israelis and capture every Israeli city.

Instead, Britain is told that the

Israelis are child-killers. During the 2014 war in Gaza, when Israel finally responded to years of rocket attacks by launching airstrikes against Hamas, broadcast and print media claimed Israel was recklessly or deliberately killing hundreds of Palestinian children and other civilians.

In fact, as the High Level Military Group of western top brass told the UN last year, the lengths to which Israel went to try to protect Gaza's civilians far exceeded the requirements of the Geneva Conventions, even at the cost of its own soldiers' and civilians' lives, and going further than any other nation's army would ever do.

Yet the British public had been told, virtually without contradiction, that Israel had wantonly killed hundreds of children. Among those on the left now vowing to root out antisemitism, I didn't notice any of them rushing to condemn that particular blood libel.

Last year, the Islamic adviser to Mahmoud Abbas taught on Palestinian Authority TV that Jews throughout history have represented "falsehood... evil... the devils and their supporters... the satans and their supporters". The Palestinian Authority daily published an opinion article claiming that Jews "are thirsty for blood to please their god (against the gentiles), and crave pockets full of money". Children were shown on TV reciting poems portraying Jews as "most evil among creations", "barbaric monkeys" and "Satan with a tail".

Progressive Britain never reports any of this. Instead, it amplifies the

hate in its own intellectual, cultural and media echo-chamber.

Denying the legal and historical rights of the Israeli "settlers" to the land, it demonises and dehumanises them. When they are murdered by Palestinians, this is rarely reported on the grounds that they had it coming to them. Dehumanisation of the "settlers" leads inexorably to the dehumanisation of all Jews.

The result of all this and much more like it has been that, for many British Jews like me, the past three decades turned into a surreal nightmare. After every war waged by Israel to prevent more of its people being murdered, the number of physical attacks on Jews in Britain has risen.

On campuses, Jewish students run a gauntlet of hatred, bigotry and intimidation. Many British Jews fear for their children and grandchildren; an increasing number are viewing Israel as a refuge from Britain.

Jeremy Corbyn has been pilloried for supporting people who want to kill Jews. But virtually the whole of the left (including Jewish leftists) supports Palestinians who teach their children to hate and kill Jews. In demanding "settlers out", such progressive anti-racists support the ethnic cleansing of Jews from a future state of Palestine.

Ken Livingstone and Naz Shah may be particularly baroque examples, but this Jew-hatred goes far wider than either Corbyn or the Labour party. How did it come to this? people ask, while continuing to vilify Israel. This poison won't be purged until and unless they finally acknowledge the source of the contagion.



Britain won't get better trade deals if it leaves Europe

Pascal Lamy

The history of trade and of Britain are inextricably linked. From the inventions of James Watt, the ideas of Adam Smith, and the designs of John Maynard Keynes, Britain has done more to invent the way the world trades than almost any other nation. As a Frenchman, that's not an easy thing to admit.

So it is natural that Britain's future trade relationships have taken centre stage in the EU referendum. Sadly, the intensity of the debate hasn't been complemented by clarity of thinking. Trade negotiations are a world of hard-bitten talks, where even close allies set aside diplomatic courtesies for national advantage. It is for Britons to decide how to vote, but as a friend I want to give voters the benefit of my experience as a former WTO director-general and EU trade commissioner.

Brexiters argue that EU countries will want to strike a deal because Britain has a large trade deficit with the rest of the EU. That is simply not true. The UK is more reliant on

France will be among the hardest countries to negotiate with

trade with the EU than vice versa.

EU leaders will fear that anti-Europe parties in their own backyard will get momentum from Brexit, so will want to drive a hard bargain to avoid contagion. In a competitive global marketplace, they will seek any advantage they can get. My own country will probably be among the hardest to negotiate with. Imagine how eager French farmers will be not to have your beef or lamb on our supermarket shelves. And no one will show any love for the City of London.

If it fails to get a deal, there is a real risk that the UK would have to fall back on WTO rules. Some in the Leave campaign have said this would not be a bad option. As the former head of the WTO, let me be clear: this would be a terrible replacement for access to the EU single market. Though tariffs have fallen, they are still high enough to hurt businesses and therefore jobs: 10 per cent for cars, 12 per cent on clothes, 70 per cent on some beef products.

Some claim the UK could strike better trade deals on its own. Let's be honest, there has not been a major WTO deal in 23 years and the most significant agreements are being negotiated between regional blocs.

Any ambitious UK-EU deal will need to be ratified in 27 legislatures as well as the European parliament. How much time will all of this take? My best guess is five to 15 years. In the meantime, British firms will face an uncertain future, and it is very unlikely that the UK would be a more prosperous place at the end of it.

Pascal Lamy was director-general of the WTO 2005-13

Ann Treneman Notebook

The great car park conspiracy starts here

There is nothing better I like to do on a bank holiday Monday than sit on my grassy knoll, talk to Elvis (I have him on speed dial) and ponder a new conspiracy theory. I have to say that Ken Livingstone and all that Hitler stuff is so old it's covered in mould. Ken, you need to re-boot.

My latest thoughts revolve around car parks. Seriously, think about it. The most beguiling conspiracy theory of the moment is that of the king and Leicester City. No, I don't mean Elvis but Richard III, aka Mr Plantagenet, found under a car park in Leicester. Only weeks after his remains were reinterred last spring, the Foxes started winning, with one of the first goals scored by a player named King (Andy not Elvis). They've never looked back.

The exact opposite has happened to the Labour party. So here's what

I'm thinking. Do you know that it has been a year since Ed Miliband stood in a Hastings car park and unveiled the limestone hunk that became known as the Ed Stone? It was 8ft 6in high, cost almost £8,000 and had been approved over a series of ten meetings.

Moses wasn't happy about it, I think we can see that now. It was a monumental mistake in more ways than one but, as ever in politics, it's not the mistake that gets you, it's what happens next. Instead of having a laugh, and auctioning off hunks of it for charity, Labour had a complete sense of humour failure. The Stone was destroyed in secret (at least that's what they've told Elvis).

Ever since, Labour seems to be in the grip of some sort of freak weather pattern. But can we really be surprised? A Labour party that approved the Ed Stone (ten meetings!) has a seriously warped decision-making process. So don't blame Moses. Well, OK, maybe a little, but remember, stay away from car parks.

King's evil

I recently went to Leicester to visit the king because his is the only one of my hundred best graves in Britain that has moved in the past few years. The one-way system flummoxed me and I ended up driving around in circles, looking for somewhere to park. Just when I was about to explode, I

saw a space. I knew that Richard must be looking out for me. His tomb is surprisingly tasteful and the cathedral has done a sterling job of putting forward the case that he wasn't really such a bad guy. But when I got back to my car, it had a ticket. As I said, beware of car parks. Spooky or what?

War on slugs

There is no lack of advice for us gardeners facing the so-called plague of supersized sleepless slugs. The winter was so mild that they never hibernated properly and just carried on eating, getting up to 40 times bigger. "Go out at dusk, wearing gloves" we are told, "and collect and squash

them." But if we do not fancy "slugicide", others have suggested that we take the slugs for a long walk.

Are they mad? Life's too short to walk a slug. The war against slugs is never-ending. It is 'Nam out there and there is no room for even one moment of sentimentality. If you ever feel remotely sorry for them, remember they can lay 100 eggs at a time and one cubic yard can be home to 200. You know what you have to do.

Positive negative

Final proof that SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon now speaks what can only be called, even north of the border, Professional Politician English. Yesterday she said of the Scottish education system: "There are a record number of young people going to what I would call 'positive destinations'." How positively irritating.

Cook's tour

As you can see my bank holiday weekend was packed. But it wasn't enough. I wanted to do something more traditional and totally British. And so I went to Currys to buy a cooker. I wasn't alone, I can tell you. Sometimes you have to bow to the wisdom of crowds.

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