



JEW HATRED

Anti-Semitism in Britain Today

Anti-Semitism is, in many ways, the precursor of the racist attitudes now projected by European societies on the visible ethnic minorities within their midst. Jews remain the primary, ideological, target for hard-core racists, but the vast bulk of societal racism, prejudice and actual physical attacks are directed against visible minority groups of Afro-Caribbean, India sub-continent, or North African origin. This is confirmed by a number of recent opinion polls conducted throughout Europe and Britain by the American Jewish Committee in which Jews were consistently viewed more favourably than other minority groups. (It is worth noting that Europe's other traditional scapegoat group, Gypsies, polled especially badly in these surveys).

Today, racist attacks across Europe have reached unparalleled levels. Those who dared hope that the Holocaust of European Jewry would be a terrible end to racism, and especially anti-Semitism, were to be sadly mistaken.



Blakely Cemetery, Manchester, July '90

Board of Deputies of British Jews

Racist Attacks and Far Right Groups
Police forces in England and Wales recorded 8779 'racial incidents' in 1993, almost double the 1988 total of 4407 incidents. Home Office minister Peter Lloyd MP admitted the actual total was perhaps as high as 130,000 or 140,000 incidents per annum.

Notwithstanding Britain's relatively high levels of racist attacks, the British Far Right has conspicuously failed to

emulate the growth and influence of its European counterparts. Groups such as the British National Party are scorned by the vast majority of Britons and are relatively powerless in the mainstream political process.

The Far Right's influence, however, on racial and political tension and violence, is manifest in localised areas of power across the country. Racial attacks in Tower Hamlets increased by over 300% following the BNP's Millwall council seat election success in September '93. The Millwall victory (since overturned in the May '94 local elections) gave an unprecedented boost to the BNP's morale and public profile.

Anti-Semitic Incidents and Attacks

Anglo-Jewry's representative body, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, defines an anti-Semitic incident as a physical, written, or verbal attack against Jews, or Jewish owned property, motivated by Jew-hatred. This does not include anti-Semitic statements such as those regularly made in publications or meetings by members of anti-Jewish groups, such as the BNP, Combat 18, or Hizbut-Tahrir (Islamic Liberation Party).

Anti-Semitic incidents recorded by the Board of Deputies have risen in tandem with the recent increases in overall racist attacks. Over 300 anti-Semitic incidents were recorded in 1993, a 15% increase on the 1992 total, and an 80% increase since 1989. The 1993 statistics are categorised as follows. (1992 statistics are given in brackets):

Physical assaults - 11.8% (12.7%); damage and desecration of property - 23.5% (23.1%); threats - 10.5% (10.5%); abusive behaviour - 38.4% (37.3); anti-Semitic 'literature' mailings - 15.9% (16.4%).

Annual analysis of these statistics reveals that they are composed of a gradual rise in incidents, influenced by the level of racism in society as a whole. Monthly analysis also reveals the more sudden influence of national, and international events on incident levels. The relationship between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism has always been a vexed issue, particularly on the Radical Left. It is worth noting therefore, that the highest monthly increases in recent years have followed the terrorist bombing of Israel's Argentinian embassy (March '92); the El Al plane crash in Amsterdam



Edmonton Cemetery April 1990

Board of Deputies of British Jews

(Nov '92); and the initial Allied air strikes against Iraq (Jan '91).

The next highest increase followed the highly publicised desecration of the Jewish cemetery in Carpentras, France (May '90). This is an indicator of the influence of publicity on racist attacks, a charge more recently levelled against the media's coverage of the BNP prior to the May '94 local elections.

Jews - The Ultimate Enemy

Jews remain the primary ideological target for the Nazi inspired Far Right. These groups call for the repatriation of non-Whites to their supposed countries of origin. Their solution to 'The Jewish Question' is not so clear cut. Their ideology is fiercely anti-Israel, but does not countenance encumbering other 'White nations' with exiled Jews.

Some radical US neo-Nazis have proposed the establishment of a huge Jewish ghetto in New York. Most neo-Nazis are less imaginative than this. The ultra-violent BNP offshoot Combat 18 (1 = A For Adolf, 8 = H for Hitler) aptly summarised the prevailing view ('Redwatch' issue 3), "... our view on the Holocaust is if it didn't happen it should have, if it did happen its a pity they didn't KILL THEM ALL (sic), the subhuman Jew must die if our race is to survive".

Most European nationalist parties strongly deny that they are anti-Semitic, lest they be tainted with Hitler's legacy. Nevertheless, parties such as the French Front National, and the German Republikaner Partei, consistently belittle the Holocaust, oppose War Crimes legislation, oppose Jewish religious practises, make thinly-veiled accusations of 'Jewish power', and deliberately provoke anti-foreigner sentiment of which anti-Semitism is a near inevitable by-product.

The success of European nationalist

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parties also creates particularly fertile socio-political conditions for more radical neo-Nazi groups to thrive in. Today, this is especially evident in Germany and Russia.

Jewish communities, however, do not only suffer anti-Semitism from the Far Right, and neo-Nazis are not the only ideological extremists calling for the killing of Jews. The wave of radical Islamic extremism in the Arab and Muslim world, has an increasing influence on alienated Muslim youth in many Western countries, including Britain.

Britain's leading radical Islamic group is Hizb ut-Tahrir (Islamic Liberation Party), which has grown to dominate many Islamic student societies in recent years. (London, Birmingham, and Manchester in particular). Openly distributed Hizb ut-Tahrir leaflets regularly repeat Koranic commentaries that call for all Jews to be killed. The distributors of these leaflets have not been prosecuted, despite repeated referrals by the Board of Deputies.

Legislative Issues and Proposals

The Board of Deputies has made proposals to the Home Affairs Committee on Racial Attacks and Incidents (questions 319 to 431, 8th Dec '93), and has worked with representative and legislative bodies on issues currently being debated in the Criminal Justice Bill.

In general, the Board would like existing legislation to be strengthened but regards the present legislation as being very poorly applied. Racism should be regarded as an aggravating factor in physical attacks, and those who seek to incite race-hatred should be prosecuted. Current legislation is rarely, if ever, applied. In 1993, twenty-nine different anti-Semitic tracts were sent, unsolicited, to thousands of Jews and non-Jews - only three were prosecuted to conviction.

The Board fully supports the passing of new legislation in the hope that this increases the likelihood of conviction, and signals genuine Parliamentary support for the countless thousands of British citizens who live in daily fear of violent racist assault.

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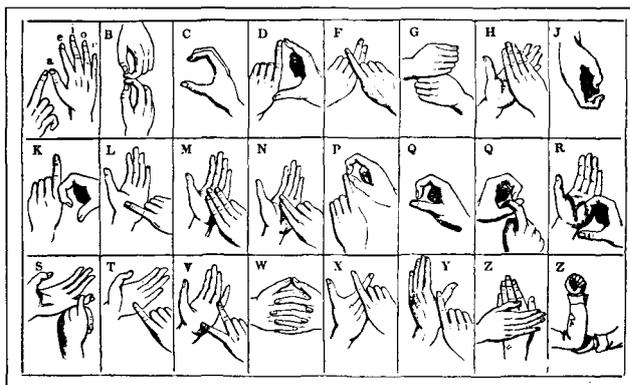
Deaf people and criminal justice

There has been a lot of concern expressed by the British Deaf Association and the Association of Sign Language Interpreters that, '... deaf people accused of serious crime, including theft, rape and fraud, may be denied a fair hearing because

same message but using a different language' (CACDP Directory, 1993).

Due to the shortage of fully-trained interpreters, it is often impossible to find an interpreter at short notice, much less one who has the skill that is necessary to interpret in court. Consequently, signers are often used who are only of Stage I or II standard, meaning that the deaf user may not receive a full and accurate translation.

Problems can occur where the signer does not understand the deaf person's signs and vice versa. Obviously, this can have severe implications for the outcome of any trial for a deaf person, as somebody can be acquitted or convicted on the sole basis of the ability of the interpreter to translate



British Sign Language - The Double-handed Alphabet

court room interpreters are not up to scratch.' (HEAR MAGAZINE, February 1993). This may also apply to deaf people who are victims or witnesses.

Deaf people are one of the few minority groups who have to rely on another group of professionals to facilitate communication in the court room. The experience of deaf people can vary greatly according to the sign language interpreter that is supplied for them.

The majority of the deaf community in Britain use British Sign Language (BSL), which is a language in its own right. It is rich in grammar, syntax and structure; and is based on a visual combination of signs, gestures, facial expressions and body language.

In order to achieve a national standard of BSL interpreters, the 'Council for the Advancement of Communication for Deaf People' (CACDP) has established three examination stages, from Beginners to Advanced, which assess the fluency and accuracy of sign language.

Both deaf and hearing people use interpreters to aid communication between them, and according to the CACDP, the role of the interpreter is to '...pass messages from people using BSL to English and vice versa. Interpreters will use their skill and knowledge of the two different languages and cultures to pass on the

precisely what is said or signed.

Although a police register of approved interpreters does exist, and a set of guidelines have been introduced by the Crown Prosecution Service, the situation of under-qualified sign language interpreters being used in police stations and court rooms continues.

According to the CACDP within the area of Surrey in South-East England, there is a population of approximately 2,500 deaf and hard of hearing people; yet there is only one registered qualified and two registered trainee interpreters to cover the whole county. (1993 figures).

These figures are similar throughout the whole of Britain, and deaf people are being deprived of their rights of access to information and of their rights to equal treatment.

Until better provision is secured for the training and qualification of sign-language interpreters, deaf people will have to endure the possibility of sub-standard interpretation in police stations and court rooms, and thus the risk of their lives and reputations being damaged forever due to information being misconstrued.

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