



The Report of the All Party Parliamentary Committee into Anti-Semitism

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This note sets out the background to the All Party Parliament Committee Against Anti-Semitism and the main findings outlined in their report, published in September 2006. The main features of the Government response to the Inquiry, and the issues raised in a Westminster Hall debate on the matter are considered. The Government published a 'One year on' report in May 2008 and the main achievements included in that report are set out here. The note also contains some background material and sources of further information.

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A. The All Party Parliamentary Committee Against Anti-Semitism

The All Party Parliamentary Committee Against Anti-Semitism's (the PCAA) website explains that they are:

Centred on the principle that Jews in the UK should not be left to fight anti-Semitism alone. It harnesses the goodwill of parliamentarians from all sides, and both Houses, in the struggle against prejudice and discrimination.¹

The Committee is chaired by John Mann, and its officers are: James Clappison (Con), Ian Austin (Lab), Andrew Dismore (Lab), Barbara Keeley (Lab), Tim Boswell (Con), Lady Sylvia Hermon (UUP), and Lord Hunt of Wirral (Con), Lord Janner of Braunstone (Lab) and Lord Clinton-Davis (Lab).²

1. The All Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Anti-Semitism

The All Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Anti-Semitism was launched by the PCAA in November 2005. Chaired by former Europe Minister Denis MacShane MP, the inquiry had a cross-party membership:

Chair: Rt Hon Dr Denis MacShane (Lab)
Rt Hon Kevin Barron MP (Lab)
Tim Boswell MP (Con)
Rt Hon David Curry MP (Con)
Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP (Con)
Nigel Evans MP (Con)
Rt Hon Bruce George MP (Lab)
Lady Sylvia Hermon MP (UUP)
Chris Huhne MP (Lib Dem)
Daniel Kawczynski MP (Con)
Barbara Keeley MP (Lab)
Khalid Mahmood MP (Lab)
Rt Hon John Spellar MP (Lab)
Theresa Villiers MP (Con)

The Committee's website states that:

The aims of the Inquiry were:

1. To consider evidence on the nature of contemporary anti-Semitism
2. To evaluate current efforts to confront it;
3. To consider further measures that might usefully be introduced.

The Committee gathered both oral and written evidence, and published a report of their findings on 7 September 2006.³

¹ The Parliamentary Committee Against Anti-Semitism, www.thepcaa.org/about.html (last viewed 13 May 2008)

² As of October 2007

2. The Report of the All Party Parliamentary Committee into Anti-Semitism

The Report stated that, “The inquiry was established to investigate the belief, widely held within the Jewish community, that levels of anti-Semitism in Britain are rising. Following an investigation, we have reached the troubling conclusion that the belief is justified”.⁴

The Report defined anti-Semitism, taking into account the view expressed in the Macpherson report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry that a racist act was defined by its victim. The Report stated that:

Broadly, it is our view that any remark, insult or act the purpose or effect of which is to violate a Jewish person’s dignity or create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for him is anti-Semitic. This reflects the definition of harassment under the Race Relations Act 1976. This definition can be applied to individuals and to the Jewish community as a whole.⁵

The report made conclusions about the nature of contemporary anti-Semitism. It stated that:

Ironically, the latest form of anti-Semitism appears to be based on anti-racism. Jews are no longer accused of killing Christ, or possessing sinister racial traits. Modern anti-Semitism has, out of necessity, become more nuanced and subtle. Many witnesses told us that the latest mutation of anti-Jewish prejudice is now infused with a ‘social conscience’, focused on the role of Israel in the Middle East conflict. Jews are seen as natural supporters of Israel, regardless of whether or not they actually are, and some of those who are hostile to Israel make no distinction between Israelis and Jews. Jews throughout the world are seen by some extremists as legitimate targets in the struggle to establish a Palestinian state or to eliminate the State of Israel.⁶

The Report quoted evidence from the Chief Rabbi, Sir Jonathan Sacks, who told the Committee that, “If you were to ask me is Britain an anti-Semitic society, the answer is manifestly and obviously no. It is one of the least anti-Semitic societies in the world”.⁷ The Report also quoted the president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews who said, “There is probably a greater feeling of discomfort, greater concerns, greater fears now about anti-Semitism that there have been for many decades”.⁸

The Committee made a total of 35 conclusions and recommendations.⁹ Their main recommendations were:

- Only a minority of police forces in the UK have the capability to record anti-Semitic incidents. The panel recommended that the Home Office requires police forces nationwide to record such incidents using the current Metropolitan Police model of categorising them as both racist and anti-Semitic.

³ *Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Anti-Semitism*, 2006, <http://thepcaa.org/Report.pdf> (last viewed 13 May 2008)

⁴ *Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Anti-Semitism*, 2006, p1

⁵ *Ibid*

⁶ *Ibid*, para 19

⁷ *Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Anti-Semitism*, 2006, para 5

⁸ *Ibid*

⁹ *Ibid*, pp52-56

- The panel recommended that the Crown Prosecution Service investigates the low number of prosecutions and takes steps to address this problem.
- The panel called on the Department for Local Government and Communities to facilitate relations between faith communities and conduct an annual survey of community relations in Britain.
- The panel called on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Home Office to report jointly to Parliament annually on the extent of anti-Semitism in the UK and the actions taken to tackle the problem both domestically and in the context of international obligations.
- The panel recommended that the Department for Education and Skills places a statutory duty on all schools to foster engagement through joint activity and curricula.
- In response to evidence that, whilst there are examples of good practice there is a growing problem of anti-Semitism on university campuses, the panel called for all Vice-Chancellors to take an active interest in combating racist incidents of this nature, and recommended the establishment of a national working group to address the issue.
- The panel recommended that Government departments work together and with their counterparts in other countries to limit traditional broadcast and internet access to racist, including anti-Semitic, material.¹⁰

3. The Government response – March 2007

The Government responded to the report on 29 March 2007.¹¹ The response stated that:

We are committed to tackling all forms of hate crime and racial intolerance, including anti-Semitism, wherever it exists. We believe that the best way to do this is through the effective implementation of strong legislation against racial and religious discrimination and racially and religiously motivated crime, underpinned by policies and strategies to increase racial equality and build community cohesion, particularly through education.¹²

The response explained that the Government have pledged £1.5 million to the Holocaust Educational Trust to educate young people from every ethnic background about the Holocaust. The Government also supports the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, with an annual grant of £500,000 to meet the costs of the yearly commemoration.¹³ The Government responded to each of the Inquiry's recommendations. The Crown Prosecution Service

¹⁰ <http://www.thepcaa.org/report.html> (last viewed 13 May 2008)

¹¹ Department for Communities and Local Government, *Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism: Government Response*, 29 March 2007, Cm 7059, <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm70/7059/7059.pdf> (last viewed 13 May 2008)

¹² *Ibid*, p1

¹³ *Ibid*, p2

accepted the Inquiry's recommendation to look at the reasons for anti-Semitic incidents not resulting in prosecution, and to examine incitement to racial hatred prosecutions.¹⁴

In a press notice announcing the publication of the Government response the Department for Communities and Local Government announced:

The response to the all-party enquiry into antisemitism outlines new work to:

- improve recording and reporting of antisemitic incidents;
- review and strengthen the prosecution process;
- accelerate work to confront extremist groups who spread hate;
- promote community cohesion through education about different faiths;
- prevent any manifestation of racial or religious intolerance on university campuses.

Ministers recognise and share the Jewish community's concerns about a rise in antisemitism in the UK and across Europe, and are using this report to underline the importance of society coming together to adopt a zero-tolerance approach to antisemitism. Measures outlined in the response are on top of legislation introduced since 1997 to protect people from discrimination on the basis of faith at work and in their day to day lives.¹⁵

The then Communities Minister, Phil Woolas, gave a speech in March 2007 to launch the Government response to the Inquiry. On the issue of rising anti-Semitism on campuses he stated that:

...apart from what may be criminal acts, there is also concern about the tone of the general discourse. Open and public debate is one thing, but rhetoric with an undercurrent of hate and racism is quite another.

Perhaps this is most worrying on university campuses. These should be centres for constructive dialogue and exchanges of views that lead to better understanding of issues, of people and of their backgrounds. Differences and diversity should be particularly welcomed and valued for adding new dimensions to the dialogue.

But there is increasing evidence of activities well beyond what could be labelled freedom of speech or normal youthful behaviour. These cross the line into anti-Semitism. It is not acceptable for Jewish students to be attacked in this way, either verbally or physically. And it is not acceptable for people to incite this kind of behaviour among students.

I have asked the cross-Government Hate Crime Task Force, jointly run by the Home Office and my Department, to take up this issue as a matter of urgency. They will look at possible ways forward...¹⁶

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p6

¹⁵ Department for Communities and Local Government Press Notice, *Government outlines action to stamp out anti-Semitism*, 29 March 2007, <http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/governmentoutlinesaction> (last viewed 13 May 2008)

¹⁶ Speech by Phil Woolas, *All Party Parliamentary Inquiry in to anti-semitism: Government response*, 28 March 2007, <http://www.communities.gov.uk/speeches/corporate/anti-semitism> (last viewed 13 May 2008)

4. Westminster Hall Debate – July 2007

On 19 July 2007 there was a Westminster Hall debate, opened by John Mann, on the Government response to the All Party Parliamentary Committee's report. Speaking for the Government, Iain Wright, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, gave more information on the cross-government Hate Crime Task Force:

The task group, which consists of Jewish stakeholders and representatives of various Departments meets four times a year. The first meeting was on 20 June. I undertake that the Government will give a progress report one year after the publication of the Government's response, which will be in March 2008, regarding how we are moving forward. He [John Mann] also asked about the £20,000 budget for promoting the group's work. That money is still available and will continue to be.¹⁷

On the security of Jewish buildings, Chris Huhne said:

...the King David school, which has 1,000 Jewish pupils. Under the advice of the local police and the Community and Security Trust, it now has CCTV, anti-shatter glass and reinforced walls. There are just two access points to the school, and they are controlled by security guards. It all comes at a cost of £130,000 annually – with, I have to say, very little, if any, support from the British state as yet. A similar school in France suffering similar problems gets a major contribution towards costs.¹⁸

Mr Wright explained:

The Government are happy to provide advice to organisations and to industry about protective security – that is usually arranged through the National Security Advice Centre – but we have a policy whereby we do not fund the provision of protective security for organisations or industry. That is true not only in respect of Jewish groups, but across the board in respect of different racial and social groups.¹⁹

Mr Wright also said that the Home Office and the Association of Chief Police Officers had given an undertaking that all forces would record anti-Semitic crimes by 2008-09.

He answered concerns raised during the debate about where responsibility within government for matters relating to anti-Semitism lies. He stated that:

... [John Mann] asked which Minister will have responsibility for matters of anti-Semitism and co-ordinating the Government's role on that issue. It was made clear to me before the debate, and abundantly clear in the debate, how important hon. Members feel it is to have a clear, single point of reference – a single Minister – to coordinate activity on this issue across Government. I understand that no decision has been made on that yet, but the Under-Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, my hon. Friend the Member for Gloucester (Mr. Dhanda), is in charge of faith and cohesion, and it is likely that he will be in charge of taking forward the elimination of anti-Semitism. I pledge to take a personal interest in the matter... and I

¹⁷ HC Deb 19 July 2007 c172WH

¹⁸ HC Deb 19 July 2007 c153WH

¹⁹ HC Deb 19 July 2007 c172WH

shall tell the Department that there is an urgent need for a single point of contact, and ensure the matter is resolved as quickly as possible.²⁰

The debate also covered issues around anti-Semitism on university campuses, and the University and Colleges Union Motion at their annual conference to boycott Israeli academic institutions. More information is available on the UCU and Universities UK websites.²¹

5. The Government's 'One year on' response to the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into anti-Semitism – May 2008

On 12 May 2008 the Department for Communities and Local Government published a 'one year on' response to the All Party Inquiry into Anti-Semitism. When he announced the publication in a Written Ministerial Statement, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Parmjit Dhanda, stated:

We believe the best way to tackle antisemitism is through effective implementation of strong legislation against racial and religious discrimination and racially and religiously motivated crime. This must be underpinned by policies and strategies to increase racial equality and build community cohesion, particularly through education.

We have made significant progress against the 35 recommendations made by the all-party parliamentary inquiry's constructive and comprehensive report. We have ensured that by April 2009 all police forces will collect data on all hate crime, including antisemitism; agreed that schools and authorities can use their devolved capital funding for investment in security at schools where this is a priority; committed to funding research on the impact of antisemitic discourse; and launched the race for justice declaration—a cross-Government strategy which aims to combat all forms of hate crime.

Despite this progress, there is no room for complacency, and we will continue to take practical, effective action to stamp out antisemitism whenever and wherever it occurs. We are committed to increasing the number of hate crimes brought to prosecution, tackling antisemitism on university campuses, and challenging hate crime and extremism on the internet. We have agreed to continue our support of the cross-departmental and Jewish stakeholder working group and will report back to parliament on further progress in 2010.²²

The Report includes a summary of achievements:

- Government established the Inter-Departmental Working Group on Antisemitism consisting of representatives from across Whitehall, the Parliamentary Committee Against Antisemitism and representatives from the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Community Security Trust and the Jewish Leadership Council.

²⁰ HC Deb 19 July 2007 c171 WH

²¹ Universities UK, *Parliamentary Briefing*, <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/parliament/showBriefing.asp?id=59> (last viewed 13 May 2008); UCU, *Circulation and debate of call to boycott Israeli academic institutions*, <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2622> (last viewed 13 May 2008)

²² HC Deb 12 May 2008 c46WS

- Government has worked closely with the All Party Committee Against Antisemitism to take its model of inquiry across Europe, the United States and Canada.
- Antisemitic discourse continues to be a concern and to this end we have funded the European Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism (EISCA) to research the impact antisemitic discourse has on the atmosphere of 'acceptance' of antisemitism.
- Government acknowledges the importance of school linking and is providing £2m of funding over the next three years, supported by a £1m donation from the Pears Foundation, to roll out the work of the Schools Linking Network. This funding will provide a national website and resources to help support schools in forming effective links.
- The importance of interfaith dialogue has been recognised by Government. We published a consultation document on 17th December 2007 to help inform the development of the framework and will publish the framework in the summer.
- A further positive development has been the recently launched Race For Justice Declaration – a cross-governmental strategy which aims to combat all forms of hate crime.
- Steady progress has been made on the collection of data and by April 2009 all police forces will collect data on all hate crime including antisemitism.
- Significant progress has also been made on the issue of security relating to Jewish communal buildings and schools. The Metropolitan Police have worked very closely with the Community Security Trust on a Premises Security Matrix and Government has agreed that schools and authorities can use their devolved capital funding for investment in security equipment at school sites and premises where this is a priority.
- The Crown Prosecution Service have published their review of cases where prosecutions for incitement to racial hatred have been brought, in order to see what lessons can be learned.
- The Government announced in February 2008 that it is extending its current level of financial support to the Holocaust Educational Trust's 'Lessons from Auschwitz' course, which takes sixth form students to Auschwitz-Birkenau, for a further three years. We will also be significantly increasing the level of annual core funding provided to the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust for each of the next three years.
- The UK will this year assume the Presidency of the International Commission of the International Tracing Service, home to the world's largest archive of Holocaust era personal documents, based in Bad Arolsen.
- The Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) has published updated guidance to higher education institutions on promoting good campus relations, fostering shared values and preventing violent extremism. The Equality Challenge Unit has also published an update to the sector's own guidance on promoting good campus relations. The sector has continued to share good

practice in this area through existing networks and also through two national conferences held in the last year.

- DIUS, higher education representative organisations and many individual academics have made clear their opposition to any academic boycott of Israeli academics and institutions.
- DIUS has engaged the sector in a debate on academic freedom and how it can be used to challenge and undermine extremism.²³

The progress report also includes a list of Key Commitments from a number of Government departments.²⁴

B. Anti-Semitism: background material

1. The Commission for Racial Equality

The Commission for Racial Equality has produced a briefing on anti-Semitism. It provided figures for the number of Jewish people living in the UK:

According to the 2001 census, 267,000 people in England and Wales described themselves as Jewish. The actual figure is probably over 300,000, as some strictly orthodox Jews, descendants of German Jews and others, declined to answer the voluntary question. It has been estimated that up to one million people in the UK could be of Jewish descent.

The entire Jewish population of England was expelled from the country in 1290 and Jews were only readmitted in 1656. Since then, British Jews have contributed extensively in the areas of the arts, politics, science and business and have included a number of Nobel Prize winners, such as Ernst Chain (Medicine, 1945), Joseph Rotblat (Peace, 1995) and, most recently, Harold Pinter (Literature, 2005).²⁵

Writing about the nature of contemporary anti-Semitism for 'Catalyst', a Commission for Racial Equality publication, Dr Brian Klug of St Bennet's Hall, Oxford, stated that:

There are widely differing assessments of the scale of anti-Semitism in the UK today. Findings differ, depending on whether you are looking at attitudes or incidence; whether you include anecdotal evidence or not; and whose statistics you use. Figures published by the Metropolitan Police Service show a downward trend in incidence since 2001, which runs counter to the trend recorded by the Community and Security Trust, a private monitoring body. Both sets of data, however, indicate that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict affects the level of attacks on British Jews. This confuses the picture. We need to ask: what do we mean by 'anti-Semitism'?...

²³ Department for Communities and Local Government, *All-Party Inquiry into Antisemitism: Government Response – One year on Progress Report*, 12 May 2008, Cm 7381, pp2-3, <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm73/7381/7381.pdf> (last viewed 13 May 2008)

²⁴ *Ibid*, pp33-35

²⁵ Commission for Racial Equality, *Briefing on Anti-Semitism*, http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/Documents/CRE/PDF/sci_07_antisem.pdf (last viewed 13 May 2008)

[...]

A strong current of anti-Semitism runs through European culture, and Britain is not immune from such currents. But, in the words attributed to the eighteenth-century English theologian Joseph Butler: 'Everything is what it is, and not another thing.' We cannot tell different things apart when they are lumped together. And the problem today is that the term 'anti-Semitism' is used loosely as a cover-all.

As a result, the word has been devalued, and the credibility of those of us who seek to confront anti-Semitism is being eroded. There is widespread cynicism, even among the liberal-minded, about the subject. Moreover, people of goodwill who sympathise with the Palestinians resent being falsely accused. This includes some British Jews, whose political opinions about the Middle East expose them to the taunt of 'anti-Semitic' (or 'self-hating'). Some community leaders and media commentators are ratcheting up the angst with their rhetoric. The language is high. The waters are muddied. And none of this (to borrow an old phrase from Yiddish humour) is 'good for the Jews'.

Nor is it good for British society as a whole. We must look to the all-party inquiry to hold the line against hype, to uphold rigorous standards of social scientific analysis, and to affirm the basic principles – the ABCs – of a society that is both plural and open.²⁶

2. The Board of Deputies of British Jews

The Board of Deputies of British Jews is the main representative body of Jews in Britain.²⁷ They have a Defence Division whose role is described on their website as:

- Liaises with other religious and minority groups, public authorities and the media on matters affecting the Jewish Community.
- Examines proposed legislation which might affect Jews and prepares responses to government and Parliament.
- Helps to ensure the protection of the religious rights of the Community (as to certain of which the Board enjoys statutory responsibilities) and works towards the removal of disadvantages.
- Monitors and exposes anti-Semitic and racist activities primarily in the media and draws these to the attention of the police and prosecuting authorities.
- Works with the Community Security Trust to protect the Community.
- Works in conjunction with the Union of Jewish Students in order to support Jewish students on campus.
- Promotes good relations with other religious and ethnic minority groups and co-operates on matters of mutual concern.

²⁶ Brian Klug, *In Search of Clarity*, CRE, 17 March 2006

²⁷ The Board of Deputies of British Jews, <http://www.bod.org.uk/> (last viewed 13 May 2008)

3. The Community and Security Trust

The Community and Security Trust “advises and represents the Jewish Community on matters of anti-Semitism, terrorism, policing and security”.²⁸ They received charitable status in 1994 and state that they “are recognised by Government and Police as a model of a minority community security organisation”.

The CST has recorded anti-Semitic incidents in the UK since 1984. They explain that “Not all anti-Semitic incidents will be reported to the CST and therefore the true figures will be higher than those recorded. No adjustments have been made to the figures to account for this...”²⁹

Their *Anti-Semitic Incidents Report 2006* stated that:

547 antisemitic incidents were recorded by CST in 2007. This is the second-highest annual total since CST began recording antisemitic incidents in 1984.

The total of 547 incidents is an eight per cent fall from the 2006 total of 594 incidents. However, this fall is not large enough to alter the long-term trend of rising anti-Semitic incidents in Britain since the late 1990s.

The fall in the number of incidents in 2007 is due to the absence of ‘trigger events’ that can cause temporary increases in incidents. In 2006 there was a significant trigger event, the war between Israel and Hizbollah in Lebanon, which led to a large rise in antisemitic incidents in the UK.

There were 114 violent antisemitic assaults in 2007, the highest ever recorded by CST. This included one incident that was classified as Extreme Violence, meaning that the victim’s life was endangered. Violent assaults were the only category of incident to increase in 2007 and make up an increasing proportion of anti-Semitic incidents in the UK, from 13 per cent of the total in 2002, up to 21 per cent in 2007.³⁰

Their *Anti-Semitic incidents report 2006* had report that:

594 anti-Semitic incidents were recorded by the Community Security Trust (CST) in 2006. This is the highest annual total since the CST began recording anti-Semitic incidents in 1984.

They noted that:

59 per cent of the 594 incidents occurred during the second half of the year. 134 anti-Semitic incidents took place during the 34 days of fighting in Lebanon between Israel and Hizbollah in July and August. 54 incidents during the year included specific reference to the fighting in Lebanon.³¹

²⁸ The Community and Security Trust, <http://www.thecst.org.uk> (last viewed 13 May 2008)

²⁹ The Community and Security Trust, *Anti-Semitic Incident Report*, 2006, p5, <http://www.thecst.org.uk/docs/Incidents%5FReport%5F06.pdf> (last viewed 13 May 2008)

³⁰ The Community and Security Trust, *Anti-Semitic Incident Report*, 2007, p4, <http://www.thecst.org.uk/docs/Incidents%5FReport%5F07.pdf> (last viewed 13 May 2008)

³¹ The Community and Security Trust, *Anti-Semitic Incident Report*, 2006, Executive Summary, <http://www.thecst.org.uk/docs/Incidents%5FReport%5F06.pdf> (last viewed 13 May 2008)

4. European Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism

The European Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism was established in 2007 and is based in London. It receives funding from the UK Government (see page 8 above). Its website explains that it was established as:

... a think-tank dedicated to examining the growth and development of antisemitism in the world today. The intellectual approach of EISCA is predicated on the notion that contemporary antisemitism is best understood by exploring its historical origins in conjunction with its ongoing metamorphosis throughout the ages and up to the present period.

As such, EISCA aims to provide an on-line, web-based resource to the most comprehensive scholarship and writing on antisemitism, drawing on and linking the reader to the latest research conducted by authors and institutions working in the field. Comprehensive in its scope, EISCA is nevertheless particularly devoted to the examination of the discourse of antisemitism as manifested in the written, visual and electronic media.³²

³² European Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism, <http://www.eisca.eu/> (last viewed 13 May 2008)